

KEEPING TABS ON MULTI-CLOUD COSTS

The promise of multi-cloud is enticing. It means you can pull in multiple cloud providers to host specific workloads in the most suitable, cost-effective environments possible at the best possible cost. But do you know what you're actually getting for each cloud provider invoice you're authorizing? You will need careful accounting to make sure that you really are achieving the best cost profile.

Gartner says that [more than \\$1 trillion in IT spending](#) will be impacted directly or indirectly over the next five years due to the shift to cloud. Meanwhile, market research firm IDC projects that public cloud service providers will pull in more than [\\$195 billion in revenue](#) worldwide in 2020 – that's double the \$96.5 billion that was expected for 2016 and represents a better than 20% compound annual growth rate between 2015 and 2020.

FACTORING IN MANAGEMENT OVERHEAD

As enterprises devote growing amounts of investments to cloud, tracking that spending could become a significant cause of management overhead. SearchCloudComputing recently detailed a [multitude of factors](#) that impact the cost of cloud storage from public cloud service providers such as Amazon and Microsoft.

"As a result, the costs of cloud storage can add up quickly. Some of the common elements of cloud storage pricing include the service type, region, capacity, movement, and retention or deletion of data," writes Stephen J. Bigelow, senior technology editor with TechTarget.

It's complicated enough just tracking costs across one vendor

for one type of service. Cloud service providers are obviously feeling the heat from concerned customers and rolling out more sophisticated features to their individual billing and tracking tools, such as Amazon Web Services' [AWS Budgets](#).

COMPLEXITY TRADEOFF

But few enterprises are going to rely on just one vendor and just one service. "In a multi-cloud scenario, an enterprise can use Amazon Web Services' (AWS) Simple Storage Service (S3) for storage, Rackspace OnMetal for cloud databases, Google for big data systems, and an OpenStack private cloud for sensitive on-premises data and applications," [writes cloud industry expert David Linthicum](#). The tradeoff, he adds, is complexity.

But, where there's a challenge, there's somebody willing to help you resolve it. "Third-party cloud brokers can source, compare, and procure cloud services, and will often handle integration, management, and accounting," [writes Rackspace Chief Technology Officer John Engates](#). "Cloud management tools such as RightScale Cloud Management can help you monitor usage, performance, and costs across multi-cloud environments."

WHO SAID IT WOULD BE EASY?

Of course, such services will likely add another layer of costs. As Linthicum notes, "Tools for monitoring multi-clouds aren't free to use. And enterprises sometimes need as many as four to six tools within a multi-cloud environment, including API management,

CMPs, federated security, cost monitoring, and reporting, among others.”

Few things in IT life are easy, and it's important to determine how much you want to internalize the complexity of managing multi-cloud.

Do you really want to spend your time and budget on different types of services and/or platforms to handle the various aspects of multi-cloud, including selection, migration, security, and tracking and billing? The alternative is to offload those aspects to a multi-cloud managed services provider.