

WHAT'S YOUR MULTI-CLOUD MANAGEMENT PLAN?

"LEFT UNCHECKED, MULTI-CLOUD SPRAWL CAN DEVALUE ONE OF YOUR MOST PRECIOUS ASSETS: YOUR DATA."

RACHEL CASSIDY :: VICE PRESIDENT OF GLOBAL SOLUTIONS AND SERVICES, RACKSPACE

Whether by design or happenstance, most businesses are engaged in multi-cloud environments. In many ways, it's simpler to choose different clouds for different workloads than to manage an overarching hybrid architecture. But the multi-cloud approach does come with its own complexities.

"Over 85% of enterprises will commit to multi-cloud architectures encompassing a mix of public cloud services, private clouds, community clouds, and hosted clouds," [CIO.com](#) recently reported, citing IDC data. "Moreover, the research firm says that more than 50% of enterprises will subscribe to more than five different public cloud services and will continually add, expand, contract, and drop subscriptions based on business needs by 2018."

The concept of a single cloud platform is pretty much a fantasy, and that's just what it should be. After all, if you were running all workloads in a single cloud, you would most likely be settling for lowest-common denominator performance and availability, rather than being able to tailor the environment to suit specific workloads.

Not so long ago, the impetus behind the multi-cloud adoption trend was largely pegged to fears of vendor lock-in, but that has changed. Today, a new set of challenges and objectives is driving multi-cloud.

"Multi-cloud today is much less about resilience and hedging bets and more about matching workloads to services," Melanie Posey, research vice president at IDC, says in a [TechTarget](#) article.

Because of the stubborn challenges involved with moving and managing workloads across various platforms, "Using multiple clouds as part of a risk mitigation strategy is still more theory than practice," notes Alan Earls, in the same TechTarget article.

AVOIDING LACK OF VISIBILITY

But the potential downside is lack of visibility into what is going on across that multi-headed cloud environment. In many cases, different clouds will be managed by different groups or departments, raising anew the frustration of silos of IT assets, processes, and expertise. And with the growing reliance on APIs to leverage existing third-party services, rather than create them internally, changes to cloud services subscriptions, or even simple configuration changes, could create unwanted disruptions.

It's going to take a high degree of automation and unified management capability to overcome these issues.

"Microsoft and Amazon have built the base layer of infrastructure services and are starting to build platform technologies on top, such as automated machine learning capabilities, which will take data as an input and then automate an application environment," [Sync](#) magazine observes. "But someone has to manage the complex technology that allows this technology to work."

Like it or not, multi-cloud is the new normal, writes [Rachel Cassidy](#), Rackspace Vice President of Global Solutions and Services. "That means every business needs a plan to manage multiple clouds in a uniform way," she advises. "It's about more than just maintaining a view of resource utilization. Left unchecked, [multi-cloud](#) sprawl can devalue one of your most precious assets: your data."

For more insights from industry experts on the issues of unified management of the multi-cloud environment, read the [Managing "Multi-Cloud" Environments](#) white paper.