

Mastering THE Shift FROM Legacy IT TO Hybrid Cloud

Recognise the upfront gains of
a hybrid cloud architecture by
breathing fresh new life into legacy



N E X T D C

**In the digital era,
the focus of organisations remains firmly
locked on creating a new dimension of
business value and differentiation, with
a focus on minimising risk, innovation,
transforming systems and processes, and
creating memorable customer experiences.**

Whilst all this change accelerates, there are equally important challenges around sweating down the cost and optimising the performance of legacy infrastructure as you progress your Hybrid Cloud strategy.

For most, 'legacy' isn't a single entity. It represents an extensive range of hardware and applications which are at the heart of many business processes including customer databases, inventory management, and other irreplaceable back office systems.

Legacy is alive and kicking

With IT now largely focused on business-enabling digital transformation projects, most legacy systems are still being used and maintained without immediate plans, or at least a firm transition plan, to replace them.

While the use of consumable cloud services is becoming the IT model of choice, organisations still rely heavily on infrastructure still based on-premises. Even in the most advanced environments, there are always technology components such as legacy platforms and core systems and workloads that remain in-house.

The problem this poses is that spreading core business services, applications and data across a Hybrid Cloud environment multiplies complexity – for security, infrastructure reliability and resiliency, vendor management, application visibility – and creates a new dimension of pressure and possibilities.

This report discusses the important considerations for optimising the functionality of your Hybrid Cloud architecture. We'll explore tips to driving operational value by ensuring your hybrid strategy is seamlessly integrated and interconnected to the clouds and ICT services important to your organisation – and the performance advantages this option for streamlining hybrid IT can create:



Reduce the risks of an unplanned crisis impacting transformation projects that are enabling current business priorities



Consolidate as much of your IT infrastructure footprint as possible into your operational hybrid architecture. Ensuring they're integrated and positioned closely to the rest of the critical hybrid services driving operational value.



Reduce the impacts of latency on Hybrid Cloud performance



Extend the life of legacy and establish a strategic end-of-life plan for ageing applications

Merging legacy with transformative business strategies

IT organisations are challenged with sharing equal focus across all transformation and business enhancement projects, while simultaneously sweating down the cost of sustaining and eventually replacing legacy infrastructure.

Replacing legacy systems, or even focussing primarily on it while other business optimisation projects are prioritised, is unlikely. However, there is an opportunity to better align your layered strategies, integrating old architecture with new and bring the two closer together.

This approach to legacy is less disruptive to the transformation agenda and helps reduce the resource allocation required at end-of-life.

So, what's the best strategy in building and optimally running a Hybrid Cloud environment that also helps you gracefully nurture legacy infrastructure to its end-of-life state?

Keep it modular

Clearly delineating between the components of hybrid architectures, means you're primed to tackle one stack at a time. It ensures those areas that can't be prioritised right now, maintain stability and continue carrying out its core functions until the business is ready to pivot.

As you navigate through your transformation cycle, there is an element of planning required around how you map the services. Every month, quarter and year, should see the legacy footprint shrink. Taking a series of small steps along the way to retire your legacy helps mitigate the risk of legacy becoming a crisis project at end-of-life.

21st century IT environments are built to support redundancy, enhance flexibility and highperformance - but importantly they're designed to enable and accelerate business strategy. These are characteristics that aren't necessarily inherent in legacy.

Breathing fresh life into legacy

Housing legacy directly next to the clouds and other technology initiatives that are enabling your business, optimises the proven benefits of hybrid environments. It reduces costs, saves time, improves performance and vastly improves the customer and user experience.

The first question you need to ask is; “Do you have an end-of-life strategy for legacy?” With focus centred on innovation, increasing agility and negating disruption, it’s easy to get distracted from this consideration.

Unless you have a proactive plan to bridge the gap between current state and future state, you’re vulnerable to potentially having to deal with legacy as a crisis at some stage – adding internal disruption and ultimately delaying value enabling projects. Inevitably, replacing that payroll app, billing solution or other critical system that’s been around forever will need to be prioritised ahead of transformation projects if it hasn’t been nursed into retirement.



Transitioning legacy to a Hybrid Cloud environment make the benefits of colocation compelling.

Hybrid building blocks

Having a plan to transition legacy to a desired future state buys some time, keeping it relevant as a business tool and warding off potential crisis projects. Getting it off your premises and into a specialist colocation facility is a great place to start. This puts it within the closest possible proximity to the cloud platforms and other consumable ICT services which are setting the course for the future.

You can then make incremental steps to consolidate your infrastructure including the ability to take immediate advantage of the resilience, security and power efficiency that comes with premium colocation data centres.

Compartmentalising each legacy component into its own building block and integrating it into the rest of your hybrid architecture in its current state gives you options to nurture it towards planned retirement.



Monitored, managed and measured

With a strategy in place, the next step to ensure legacy remains both functional and manageable in a hybrid scenario; is to ring-fence and consolidate dispersed systems into a single, centralised legacy platform wherever possible.

Creating a series of building blocks, with each having its own risk profile around security, compliance and DR, enables you to efficiently deal with them one by one in a logical sequence.

Often these building blocks can be slotted into existing utility data centre services and are a direct cross connection away from the rest of your hybrid architecture.

With these legacy applications now wrapped in a strategy for consolidation and transition, you can start planning the best way to ease ageing systems to a dignified, planned end-of-life whilst negating a potential crisis.

Approaching end-of-life for legacy as a planned transition strategy - including moving it and other mission critical infrastructure that resides onpremise - into a specialised colocation facility, you'll start to recognise opportunities for significant space savings. You will also see reduced ongoing maintenance costs and improved power utilisation across the infrastructure underpinning the legacy.

Where to stack your building blocks

Depending on how the future-state of your legacy has fallen into place, you need a physical end destination for your Hybrid Cloud architecture. For some, the case to keep some infrastructure components in-house will still be open for discussion, but for most the new blueprint for transitioning legacy to a Hybrid Cloud environment make the benefits of colocation compelling.

It's pivotal you find a data centre provider that meets your safety, security and availability requirements without hindering accessibility for operational staff. It should also house a comprehensive connected ecosystem that facilitates seamless access to public cloud platforms along with the other critical IT services that underpin your environment.

Colocating legacy systems within close and direct proximity to the hybrid sprawl of clouds, networks, platforms and other ICT services, represents immediate latency and DR improvements achieved with a high-speed, internal Cross Connect between diverse components of your hybrid architecture – returning an optimised LAN performance.

End-of-life crisis avoided

Projects to strategically place legacy platforms into a secure and stable blueprint do require resources that would otherwise have been allocated to meeting the current business strategy. However, the complexity of the work to reach this transitional state is far less than what's required further down the track when it's time to retire and replace legacy altogether.

At this point you have established:



A strategy to transition all legacy platforms



Defined potential legacy threats and consolidated the hardware platform in one place



A blue-printed migration and/or risk management strategy

Creating a blueprint to help manage the transition of legacy enables you to build your business justification around how to avoid an end-of-life crisis.

Building a watertight justification for legacy will help support your bid for executive sponsorship in having legacy functions paper-clipped to other businessenabling cloud initiatives and programs.

It also leaves you well positioned to continue reducing the technology debt by progressively moving other legacy applications to their prescribed target state.

Legacy risks mitigated; business strategy enabled

Your staged approach to legacy results in an architecture comprising of two functional environments, colocated next door to each other.

These resilient environments are easier to manage, fast and seamless to scale and are closely integrated with one another.

Target state/ blueprint

Optimally functioning,
colocated Hybrid Cloud
deployment.

Legacy

Modularised environment
that continues to shrink
with retirement and/or
ongoing migration.


Supporting legacy and other on-premises infrastructure with colocation is an important component of your broader Hybrid Cloud strategy as it:

1. Enables you to place a defined management wrapper around the environment
2. Eliminates the challenges of managing infrastructure on your own premises
3. Reclaims space and resources so you can focus on the things that need to get done now to continue growing the business.

Sadly, there is no silver bullet that eliminates all the challenges of efficiently managing legacy to its end-of-life state, whilst navigating the complexities of transforming the business concurrently. There are however practical measures you can take now to ensure a smooth transition to that moment in time when legacy is no longer best positioned to perform the critical function it has in the past.

Yes, you may need to take some medicine now and devote some resources to colocating legacy systems closer to your hybrid infrastructure, but the longterm prognosis will be vastly improved. You will have avoided a full blown crisis that could otherwise sneak up on you and distract you from larger transformative projects that are driving productivity, cost reduction, customer engagement and business agility objectives.

Improving the management, security and resilience of legacy in the short-term is a bonus as you buy some time to plan the future state of an optimised Hybrid Cloud environment.



Call 13NEXT and speak to a specialist about how we can help you efficiently and predictably manage your legacy and optimise your Hybrid Cloud environment.



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