

Why Enterprises Should Migrate Legacy Microsoft Workloads to AWS

WHITE PAPER

Many aging Microsoft applications and operating systems are still being used by enterprises that either are not ready or cannot afford to abandon them. Rather than continue to support them on premises, more and more enterprises are choosing to migrate these workloads and environments to the public cloud—particularly to Amazon Web Services.

Migrating mission-critical enterprise applications to a public cloud platform is a big driver in the sustained heady growth of public cloud spending. IDC says spending on public cloud services will hit \$277 billion USD by 2021, with 60% of global public cloud revenues derived from reliable applications such as enterprise resource planning and customer relationship management.¹

Earlier concerns about moving tier-one workloads to the public cloud, such as loss of control and fears over security and data protection, have mostly melted away. Today, most senior IT executives and their business counterparts have made public cloud an essential part of their overall digital transformation strategy, with a nod to the agility, scalability and cost efficiency of public cloud.

However, the industrywide trend of moving workloads to the public cloud seems to have bypassed many legacy Microsoft applications and operating systems. Many organisations still cling to an on-prem approach, not fully appreciating that public cloud is often a more viable option. This results in a missed opportunity for organisations to fully leverage public cloud's many benefits.

¹ ["Worldwide Public Cloud Services Spending Forecast to Reach \\$266 Billion in 2021,"](#) IDC, July 18, 2017
["Worldwide Public Cloud Services Spending Forecast to Reach \\$160 Billion This Year, According to IDC,"](#) IDC, January 18, 2018.

By the numbers

Consider a few data points about legacy Microsoft workloads:

- Microsoft ended support for its workhorse server operating system, Windows Server 2003, in July 2015. However, a year after that end-of-support milestone, nearly 20% of organisations were still using Windows Server 2003.² Even now, it is believed that a sizeable portion of organisations are still using Windows Server 2003. Whether that is due to such factors as overall satisfaction with the operating system, a desire to avoid complex upgrades or continued use of older 32-bit applications, many organisations continue to use this out-of-support operating system despite the obvious security and performance risks.
- Many enterprises also continue to run SQL Server, SharePoint, Exchange Server and other aging versions of business-critical Microsoft applications in an on-premises environment, taxing infrastructure, IT staff and budgets. For instance, take SharePoint, a mainstay collaboration platform for enterprises. Although SharePoint deployment has shifted noticeably from on premises to cloud in recent years, 40% of SharePoint users are still using the application in an on-premises environment.³

The expense and complexity of supporting legacy Microsoft applications and operating systems call for a new strategy based on migrating those workloads to the highly efficient public cloud. Ultimately, many organisations have decided it makes a lot of sense—financially and operationally—to migrate those Microsoft workloads to Amazon Web Services in order to leverage AWS skills, tools and resources.

Risks with maintaining legacy Microsoft apps and OS environments on prem

Numerous enterprises have continued to use SharePoint and other important Microsoft applications on premises for a range of reasons, such as application complexity or use of a customised version of the application. But there are a significant number of challenges and risks to maintaining aging, often-unsupported Microsoft workloads in their own data centres. These include:

- **Threat of “technical debt.”** While this is often a natural byproduct of vendors no longer supporting older versions of server operating systems and applications, it also can be

shaped by internal staff being reassigned to new projects or leaving the organisation.

- **Risk of breach, outage or availability problems.** Unsupported applications and server operating systems—which often continue to play important roles in ongoing IT operations—raise the likelihood of service interruptions, governance problems or even compliance violations.
- **Interdependencies of older versions with new apps and platforms.** It’s commonplace for new applications, workloads and processes to be built with links to older systems. This means that problems arising with the legacy environments almost certainly will impact newer, often mission-critical systems.
- **Security.** Enterprise IT and security professionals face a decision in how to retain access to familiar yet aging applications and platforms without opening up a Pandora’s box of security problems with potentially dire implications. As much as IT professionals may not have always enjoyed “Patch Tuesdays,” the absence of security patches for aging Microsoft environments dramatically heightens risks of everything from garden-variety malware to targeted, zero-day exploits.
- **Costs.** Some organisations that want to continue using older Microsoft systems may opt to purchase extended support programs, but those can be expensive. So, too, is the option of bringing in third-party support organisations to retain on-premises access to those older workloads. And, of course, there are the licensing and maintenance fees required to keep the older systems within your on premises environment.
- **IT staff prioritisation.** Some older applications and server operating systems are not considered priorities, even if they are regularly used inside the organisation. Keeping those in-house means allocating valuable IT resources to ongoing management, maintenance, upgrades and troubleshooting—time and talent that might be better used in other areas.

Why making the move to public cloud makes sense

The widespread move of critical workloads to the cloud has accelerated in recent years—and for good reason. Whether it’s facilitating scalability, lowering Capex and total cost of ownership, reducing the administrative burden on internal staff or leveraging the substantial technical resources of cloud service providers, cloud is now a critical part of nearly all

² “Windows Server 2003 Still Used by 18 Percent of Orgs,” Redmond Magazine, July 12, 2016

³ “Microsoft SharePoint Market Analysis, 2017-2021,” Radicati Group, June 26, 2017



enterprise IT strategies. How much so? Research indicates that most enterprise workloads will be deployed in the cloud by the end of 2018.⁴

And public cloud is increasingly the architecture of choice for migrating Microsoft workloads. The cloud offers a wide range of benefits for organisations looking to shift legacy Microsoft applications and platforms from on-premises environments. These include:

- Stable, reliable environments that have been “battle-tested” over several years.
- Well-established and well-resourced public cloud platform providers.
- Excellent tools to support a “lift and shift” migration without costly, time-consuming and resource-intensive refactoring.
- Fast time to value, due to the superior TCO value proposition, lower Capex investments and reduced software licensing commitments.
- Better performance and availability compared with the older in-house infrastructure that often runs older Microsoft workloads.

- Built-in technology refresh that leverages the substantial resources and experience of leading public cloud platform providers.
- Better utilisation of valuable internal resources, such as staff and budgets.

Why moving legacy Microsoft workloads to AWS makes sense

Once an organisation has decided to migrate its legacy Microsoft applications and platforms to the public cloud, it often goes hand in hand with a commitment to AWS as its environment of choice. AWS not only is the established leader in a wide range of public cloud services, but it has developed and deployed a wide range of migration tools specifically aimed at legacy Microsoft workloads.

These include:

- AWS Relational Database Service (RDS), a fully managed database service to run Microsoft SQL Server to facilitate the creation of web, mobile and custom business applications.
- Amazon EC2 for Windows Server, an agile development platform that is tightly integrated with Visual Studio and .NET.

⁴ “Moving Microsoft Windows Workloads to Public Cloud,” 451 Research, March 2017

- AWS Systems Manager Run Command, which helps automate administrative tasks across a wide range of instances.
- AWS Direct Connect and Amazon Virtual Private Cloud for multi-tiered security.
- AWS OpsWorks, which facilitates the creation of a DevOps methodology with automated package installations, database setups and Chef code development.

Migrating to AWS also helps organisations with the essential elasticity and scalability still required even with legacy Microsoft applications and platforms, as well as global service and support and the ability to seamlessly integrate with on-premises resources to create an efficient and cost-effective hybrid cloud approach.

Finally, moving to AWS comes with a number of economic benefits. For instance, AWS' low-latency fibre connections between geographically distributed data centres enable multisite high availability and reduce the number of licensed SQL nodes. Additionally, all Microsoft license types can be used on AWS; even without Software Assurance, dedicated instances can be deployed by BYO licensing.

Why partnering with Ensono ensures a successful AWS migration

Another important benefit in migrating your legacy Microsoft workloads to AWS is the very broad and deep ecosystem of AWS solutions providers. One of those solutions providers with a proven track record of successful AWS migrations is Ensono, which has worked with Microsoft operating systems and applications for more than 20 years and has had a successful AWS practice for more than five years.

Ensono holds the AWS Microsoft Workloads Competency rating, and its team includes over 50 AWS Certified engineers, who

have 100 technical certifications among them; many also hold numerous Microsoft certifications. Ensono approaches each engagement with a consultative, problem-solving approach that includes unique approaches for "older estates" that need help in sorting out what they have and where they should be going.

Additionally, Ensono has managed Microsoft applications and operating systems for more than 20 years. Ensono offers a wide range of IT service management tools and services, many of which are custom-built to meet the unique needs of individual enterprises. Ensono also brings a wide knowledge of technical, architectural and process interdependencies, knitting together data centres, different types of cloud environments, multiple infrastructure types and a wide range of business- and mission critical workloads.

Conclusion

There are a host of reasons why organisations need to move their legacy Windows applications and server operating systems from on-premises environments to the cloud. Typical drivers include economics, operational efficiencies, security, compliance or simply the need to free up in-house IT resources to concentrate less on hands-on management and more on digital transformation and other strategic initiatives.

Whatever the motivation, more and more organisations are moving those workloads to the cloud, frequently to the public cloud. And once they commit to a public cloud environment, the logical next step is to turn to AWS and its ecosystem of reliable, experienced cloud service providers to make the migration as seamless as possible.

Moving legacy Microsoft workloads to AWS is a smart move, and working with Ensono completes the journey. Ensono's experience, consulting skills, migration aids and IT service management tools across environments and geographies make it an invaluable resource in transitioning legacy Microsoft workloads to the cloud.

For more information about working with Ensono to migrate legacy Windows applications and operating systems to AWS, please visit:

<https://www.ensono.com/uk/cloud/managed-aws>