

**Computer Troubleshooters
Redlands**

**Service Centre
5A/69 Shore Street
Cleveland 4163**

carl@ctredlands.com.au
www.ctredlands.com.au

**T: 1300 769 939
T: 07 3488 2438**

**PO Box 1275
Cleveland 4163**

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When your server is not your server

Did you know that you can have all of the business benefits of a server, without physically owning a server? These benefits include a common storage location for shared information, email and calendaring features and remote access, to name a few. However servers are often thought of as an expensive initial purchase, requiring ongoing maintenance and future upgrades. If your business is seasonal you may find that your technology needs also peak and drop with demand, yet you have to allow for those peak demand times.

In most cases, a server is not running at its full capacity 100% of the time. Technology companies are taking advantage of this fact by letting businesses share servers. This is now made possible by a couple of key factors: 'virtualisation' of software (which enables multiple software systems to run on one physical box) and high-speed internet access. 'Farms' of high performing servers can be created that you can access when you need them ... and only pay for that access when you need it.

Servers are located in specialised 'data centres' which are designed to house multiple computer systems. The location of the centre is irrelevant, as you access it via your high speed internet connection. The term 'cloud computing' has been coined, referring to the fact that in a computer network diagram, the internet is represented as a cloud shape. This kind of 'on demand' access has also given rise to terms like 'Software as a Service'. This refers to your ability to pay for accessing software during the time period that you need it, for the number of staff you need it for at that time - instead of needing to purchase a license outright.

This centralised storage and processing capability is great if you have multiple locations that need to easily share information (e.g. use the same database), without you needing to build your own server infrastructure. If you grow your operations, you're not faced with having to add additional server hardware. Your 'server' also benefits from the data centre's other features such as power redundancy, backup and recovery strategy and systems monitoring and management. Often this underlying management is included as part of your access fee.

The downside to not having your server at your location is that your internet connection becomes critical, as it's your only access link to your information. Consider channelling some of your cost savings towards paying for a business-grade and some redundancy (such as a second internet line or backup cellular internet access).

Talk to your local Computer Troubleshooter to see if your business would benefit from having its server in the cloud.



**Contact your local Computer
Troubleshooters**

**Carl Harbinson
1300 769 939**