

EMAIL IN THE CLOUD

NIFTY CLOUD EMAIL SERVICES MAKE BUSINESS-ON-THE-MOVE A CINCH.

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Email is critical to business. But it's not directly related to the products or services you sell. You should be focusing on your bottom line, not on making sure your email is working. The good news is that a variety of reliable and affordable hosted services are now available.

WHAT MAKES THE CLOUD COOL?

Cloud computing is simply the technology used to access services offered and hosted on the Internet, or 'in the cloud'. Everything an IT system has to offer is provided as a service, so users can access these services on the Internet without having to own or manage the resources involved.

Considering that the biggest chunk of most IT budgets is spent on salaries and maintenance, a hosted service will cost significantly less, and comes with 24/7 monitoring, as well as uptime levels that few companies are able to achieve at their own premises with their own staff and systems. That leads to our next point



– hosted providers can do it better.

Cloud email vendors store the information on their own enterprise-class servers and manage the entire system for you. This reduces the time and energy you spend on keeping your email up and running. A growing number of businesses want email isolated as an enterprise-class cloud service. Vendors offer this along with all the required archiving, compliance, and spam and virus protection features, as well as a scalable infrastructure that grows with your business without you ever having to worry about it.

According to CloudEmail101, the cloud

has gone mainstream. Recent research indicates that 84% of small and mid-size companies and 69% of large companies worldwide are willing to consider, or are currently reviewing or already using software-as-service (SaaS) solutions. A major consideration for South Africans is that a big part of this growth is a result of the increase in broadband Internet access. However, another key factor is that cloud email vendors are making better, simpler and more affordable software, so you don't need to be an IT nerd to set it up or use it.

CHOOSING A RELIABLE VENDOR

Big players such as Microsoft, Cisco, and Google are trying to lure businesses away from on-site email servers and into the cloud. They have ramped up their cloud-based solutions and offer safe, robust alternatives to on-premise solutions.

GOOGLE GMAIL FOR BUSINESS

Gmail for business offers 25GB of storage per user, powerful spam filtering, BlackBerry and Outlook interoperability, and a 99,9% uptime service level agreement. Gmail for business is designed primarily for the Web, but it has a Microsoft Outlook plug-in.

- ▲ Cost: US\$50 per year per user for a 25GB inbox
- ▲ www.google.com/apps/intl/en/business/gmail.html

MICROSOFT EXCHANGE ONLINE

If you're nervous about moving to the cloud, this is a great option. Exchange Online is the Web version of Microsoft's ubiquitous on-premise email client. Features include the ability to log on to your account and clear your cellphone of sensitive data if it's lost or stolen.

- ▲ Cost: US\$5 per person per month for a 25GB inbox
- ▲ www.microsoft.com/online/exchange-online.msp

CISCO WEBEX MAIL

Launched last year, Cisco WebEx Mail works well with the popular WebEx Web conferencing portal and doesn't require plug-ins to work with Outlook.

- ▲ Cost: US\$5 per month per user for a 5GB inbox
- ▲ www.webex.com/enterprise/cisco-webex-mail.html

EASY WEB CONFERENCING

Travel takes time and costs money. Try out these great web conferencing solutions and save on both.

VOXAIR

Vox Telecom's Voxair is a high quality and easy-to-use teleconferencing solution for both multi-branched businesses and out-of-office users. Voxair offers separate billing for each participant, as well as the option for participants to make use of their free minutes. On top of that it's free to existing customers when calling from the Vox network. To get started, dial 01 0001 0001 from any telephone line (fixed or mobile) in South Africa, enter a four-digit conference call ID and PIN and join the conference. No reservations or contracts are required and there is no limit to the number of

participants or duration of the call. For more information, go to www.voxair.co.za.

DIMDIM

Dimdim's push button simplicity lets everyone host or attend live meetings, demos and webinars using just a web browser. You can give presentations, share web pages, whiteboards, voice, video – even record your events – with no software to install and no hassles. The first time you join a Dimdim web event you'll see what's meant by easy – click URL and you'll be in your web meeting in seconds.

Dimdim is free for small meetings of up to five people. It costs US\$25 per month for unlimited use with many more participants. For more information, go to www.dimdim.com.

