

ACT! and Cloud Computing

A White Paper from Tandem Training & Consulting

Jon Klubnik

June 2010

What is cloud computing? Cloud computing represents a paradigm shift from the typical client server or pc based hosting of data and applications. Each of these platforms was limited to a particular machine and usually to a particular geographic location. If your computer crashed or you are outside of the office, it was difficult to access that data. Cloud computing is a metaphor for the internet. Typical cloud computing providers deliver common business applications online that are accessed by a web service or web browser while the software and data themselves are stored on a series of servers in a commercial datacenter.

Tandem's Cloud Computing Solution – our cloud computing solution is multi faceted and consists of our datacenter, our servers, our technical team and our ACT support team.

Our **datacenter** is located just outside downtown Dallas. We chose this location because of its security and its location away from the coast and its close proximity to key internet backbone trunks. It is highly rated and independently audited to verify compliance with government and industry standards We have a reliable safe guard in the event of natural disasters. The collocation site has certified technicians on site 24x7x365.

Our **servers** are highly reliable Dell Blade servers running VMware and offering fully redundant and high uptime performance. The servers themselves are fully redundant and hot-swappable. The server images are backed up nightly, and the client data itself is also backed up separately every day. We have a dedicated and RAIDed six terabyte backup device that is also fully redundant. We have secondary server hardware on standby on site. We also have support agreements with all manufacturers in the event of a hardware failure.

Our **technical staff** is responsible for the health and maintenance of our servers. They are certified by Microsoft, Citrix and VMWare and have over 20 years of experience. We have multiple sources of technical support at our disposal.

Our **ACT support staff** are all fully employed by Tandem and come from a variety of disciplines. We are technically trained but pride ourselves on our people skills. We have staff with Business Degrees, MBA's and engineering degrees. Our average employee has 2.5 college degrees and over 10 years of industry experience. We have a full time "ACT! Concierge" available to support our Level 1 help desk operation and to answer general questions about ACT.

When might Hosting ACT! in the cloud make sense to you?

We have found that a hosted ACT solution makes sense for many of the following scenarios;

- 1) You have **an outsourced an IT Department**. Because we are specialized in ACT, you can usually get the technical aspects of what we do along with the training aspects from a single source. Our skill set in ACT goes far beyond that of the local "computer guy"
- 2) ACT is **not supported in your organization** –if your IT department is either unwilling or unable to support an ACT! software solution in your organization, we can help. Because

our staff has been extensively trained in supporting ACT in all types of environments, it is usually more cost effective to have Tandem manage and host your ACT project.

- 3) You have a **geographically dispersed team**. – Getting to all of your data remotely can be a challenge. Having it centrally located and managed increases uptime and decreases cost.
- 4) **Larger teams benefit** from our assistance in the management of your database. We are available to watch for usage patterns and training inconsistencies. Doing something right the first time greatly increases the chances of success of your project. Our years of experience help insure that this will happen.
- 5) We are perfect for the **virtual office and the virtual worker**. Our Citrix based solution allows you to “turn” on an employee almost immediately. There is almost nothing to load on their workstation, not domain to add or configure and no servers for your to maintain. We are a great fit for growing and mobile work forces.

There are three ways to view ACT remotely.

ACT! for Web – our lowest cost solution, ACT! for Web (APFW) is easily accessible via the Internet Explorer web browser. Although it lacks some of the marketing and administrative features of the full desktop product, it is easiest to deploy and access and is many times a good solution for sales professionals seeking a shared company database. There is also the benefit of nothing loaded on the client computer and near immediate deployment. We can literally have you up within an hour. This is an online only solution. There is no access to your data if you are not connected to the internet. This is also a secure solution in that if a computer is lost or stolen your valuable information is not lost. Most add on software requires the ACT desktop product and therefore is not functional via ACT for web.

ACT! Premium Synchronization - Benefits of this solution include offline access to your data and use of the full windows desktop program and most of its features*ⁱ. Most ACT adds ons work in a synchronization environment. Because ACT must be installed and maintained on each users workstation, this solution can be more costly to maintain. Users must be trained and responsible for keeping up the sync process as it is client initiated. Access to other user’s data is not in real time and is dependent upon all parties performing synch. Finally, this configuration is susceptible to security risks in there may be data loss due to physical loss of the computer and damage to the data not yet synchronized. Generally speaking a greater level of trust and responsibility is required if sync enabled users.

ACT! over Citrix (thin client) – This is our flagship product. Citrix allows you to log in remotely to our server. From your perspective, the programs show up on your system just like any other program. However, the program and data reside on the server. All that passes to you are screen views and keyboard commands. There are no programs to load on your machine, just a small IE Plug-in. Our Citrix platform works on old machines, slow machines, Windows-based and Mac based machines, including IPADS.

With our Citrix based solution, you use the full Windows desktop ACT product with none of the limitations incurred by the ACT for Web platform and none of the administrative and security risks of the ACT Sync model. ACT! over Citrix is fast and secure and it's very easy to deploy. ACT integration is fully functional, but only with Citrix based MS Office. It does not integrate with Microsoft Office on your local machine. IF this is a requirement, a combination Citrix-Sync model may be employed.

With our Citrix based solution, we also bundle Microsoft Office and can provide a shared virtual folder in the cloud for your team. Imagine being able to log in to your system from anywhere!

For More Information Contact

Tandem Training & Consulting

www.ActTrainer.com

info@acttrainer.com

Toll Free (866) 710 4228

* There are only a couple of things you cannot do remotely via a deployed synchronized database. These include the addition of new fields to your database and some administrative functionality.