4 common misconceptions about the cloud – and how they're holding back your organisation

Cloud services may be big business – but the benefits of the cloud are not always well understood. Many non-technical leaders harbour misconceptions about the cloud that make it difficult to take full advantage of everything a cloud services platform can offer. At the recent EHI Live show, Richard Conway, Director of Microsoft Partner Elastacloud, Windows Azure Most Valuable Professional (MVP) and Insider was on hand to talk about the role cloud services can play in deploying websites and applications for devices. In an interview, he highlighted several of the misconception that keep organisations from fully embracing the cloud.

Are you making any of these mistakes?

1. Ignoring the effect the cloud can have on app development: When an organisation first looks at building an application for devices, they can be put off by the fact that covering the entire mobile market place means developing in 3 different environments, Conway says. Cloud services such as Azure -- can make the process much easier by sending out pushing notifications and updates to all users, regardless of platform. That way you can handle the essential maintenance of a mobile app without needing a deep understanding of the intricacies of different platforms.

2. Misunderstanding the security benefits of the cloud: Conway says that many leaders worry about the safety of their data once it's no longer hosted on premises. But most local data centres are easy to break into, protected by little more than a keycard, since workers need to constantly replace hardware as it fails. With Windows Azure, data centres are hermetically sealed and hardware failures are dealt with by redistributing resources – so literally no one has access to the server room. Conway notes that leaders often confuse compliance and security. The process for verifying that a cloud service complies with a security standard is long and labour intensive. Just because a service is still be evaluated doesn't mean it isn't secure, he says. Azure was accredited to IL2 last April.

3. Not understanding that open source options still need infrastructure: Many people don't realise they can develop in an open source language, and still host via Windows Azure – no .NET framework required -- Conway says. In the rush to explore open source options, many organisation leaders forget to research their infrastructure requirements. Azure can take away the friction and make deployment much simpler.

4. Not taking advantages of all the available free resources: It's easy to be intimidated by a new technology like cloud services. But many leaders ignore the wealth of resources available to help them get started the Windows Azure website. The easiest way to learn what the tool can do is try it out, says Conway.

Get more information on Windows Azure on the GCloud Framework here