

Recognising these benefits, some big organisations have transferred entire applications such as email and customer relationship management to the cloud. It seems as if the industry is going full circle – from centralised, mainframe-based computing in the 1960s and 70s through distributed PC-based computing and now back towards a centralised model, this time based on the Web. See below for a review of what is and is not possible in end user cloud computing today.

This will be our last newsletter for 2010. I am going to see a man about a dog (or should that be a Doje?) in Venice next month (and that's Venice, Italy, as they say in the States). So on behalf of all of us here at NDA, thank you for your support and tolerance during 2010 and I wish you a slightly premature Merry Christmas and an excellent 2011.

Kind regards

Nigel Davies
Director, NDA

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Cloud computing for end users (that's you!)

Cloud computing on smartphones and tablets

Let's start simple. I'm sitting at home thinking I really need a training schedule to motivate myself at the gym. So, following the old model of computing, I draw up a schedule on a spreadsheet, print it out, take the sheet of paper to the gym, record my exercises, take it home and type in the stats to the spreadsheet.

This is rather inefficient, I think, so how about putting the spreadsheet on my iPad, taking the iPad to the gym and entering the data direct to the iPad after each exercise – is this possible?

Step 1 I upload the Excel spreadsheet (and a test Word document as well) to both Google Docs and Microsoft SkyDrive. I can edit both the documents online from my PC using Google Apps and Office Live software. There are benefits already as I can now read, edit and print these documents from any location with an Internet connection. But I don't want to lug my PC to the gym – can I access the documents from my iPad?

Step 2 Open the iPad, run the browser and sign in to my Google account. Visit Google Docs and, yes, I can open the spreadsheet and perform basic editing functions (type a value into a cell) – but that's about it. There are no menus or toolbars visible and I can't enter a formula or format a cell. I can also open and read the Word document from Google Docs but can't edit it.

It's the same story on SkyDrive – I can open and view both documents in Office Live but not edit them.

Step 3. So what I need on the iPad is some cheap software that can process spreadsheet and word processed documents stored on Google Docs or SkyDrive. A quick search and [Documents to Go](#) at \$16.99 seems to have what I need – Excel and Word compatibility, access and sync files on Google Docs – but the [user reviews](#) do not encourage a purchase.

Is there a better option? Apple sell their own Pages word processor, Numbers spreadsheet and [Mobile Me](#) online data storage for the iPad. It sounds fine but the Mobile Me component costs US\$90 per annum and it's not compatible with Google Docs.

So. There is still a way to go to achieve my cloud computing goals of low cost, reliable, anywhere computing on the iPad. But on the PC it is a different story.

Cloud computing on personal computers

Here is the big picture of cloud computing on a PC or laptop as of November 2010, remembering that this is constantly changing.

Google's cloud

The Standard Edition of [Google Apps](#) online productivity software can be used free of charge. An organisation may have up to 50 user accounts. Maximum storage is 1 Gb per user. Facilities offered include Gmail, Google Calendar, spreadsheet and word processor.

[Google Apps Premier Edition](#) costs US\$50 per user per year for an unlimited number of accounts and each user can have an email account in their business name (eg Bill.Smith@yourname.com.au) with 25 Gb of email storage per user. This includes backup and archiving services. Google commits to a guaranteed uptime of 99.9%.

Microsoft's cloud

Microsoft offers a free online version of Office called [Office Live](#). Documents may be stored on SkyDrive through a personal Windows Live account with maximum storage of 25 Gb. Facilities offered include Hotmail, spreadsheet, word processor and other applications.

The business version of Office Live and Skydrive has just been re-branded as [Office 365 Small Business](#) and is priced at US\$72 - \$324 per user per year depending on the range of facilities required. This will be available in Australia in 2011.

Here is a fairly recent comparison of Office Live and Google Apps – recent is important as these technologies change quickly:

<http://lifehacker.com/5560352/how-does-office-web-apps-compare-to-google-docs>

The benefits of cloud computing include:

- No capital costs. You are using someone else's hardware and software. If there is a cost it will be a monthly rental charge
- A growing range of software beyond the ubiquitous email, calendar, word processor and spreadsheet. Myob recently introduced [LiveAccounts](#), an online version of the popular MYOB accounting software, for a fee of \$25 per month.
- Simplification. Because you don't have to maintain complex IT systems a small

business can have access to the same facilities as bigger organisations with dedicated IT departments. All you need is a computer with a browser and an Internet connection. User account management, anti-virus, backup and archiving is done for you.

- Automation. Someone else keeps the software and anti-virus up to date – no more fees for software updates.
- Mobility. You can access your data and applications from any location with Internet access.
- Scalable. You can add more users without needing to add more hardware or system resources.

The disadvantages of cloud computing include:

- It is outside your control so if your Internet connection is down then so is your IT department.
- There may be issues regarding the privacy and security of data if it is stored on server farms in multiple legal jurisdictions.
- The online versions of the applications don't offer the capability and sophistication of Excel and Word – but many users don't need the more advanced features.

Cloud computing for the big boys

[This article](#) gives a succinct overview of cloud computing for larger organisations from a Chief Information Officer's perspective.

Of wine and robots

A few months back I hosted a dinner at which we compared Hardy's Arras sparkling wine (made entirely from Tasmanian grapes) with Krug's excellent non-vintage champagne at four times the price. I remember thinking how well the Arras stood up to the competition. So it was interesting to see James Halliday give the Arras an equal score to the Krug NV of 97 points in his top 100 wines last weekend. If you are looking for a special Christmas Day tittle you could do a lot worse than [Arras 2003](#) vintage, at around \$60 - \$70.

And to the thoughtful person who sent Helen an ad for a robot lawn mower at \$2,400. I managed to defuse the situation by telling her the thing mows at random and does she really want a lawn that looks like it was cut by the same guy that does David Beckham's hair. So far this year she is ahead by a robot vacuum cleaner and a computerised garden watering system. Let's keep things in perspective, eh?

What's on at NDA this month

If you are looking for a short dose of intensive project management training, try [Managing Successful Projects](#) in Hobart on 24/25 November.

[Time Management](#) is always a favourite and something most of us need to keep working on. We have a **two for the price of one** offer on this course in Hobart on 1 December and Launceston on 2 December.

Rock climbing 'armless'? - watch [Johnny Dawes](#) climb steep rock hands free.



Upgrade Your Training and Assessment Qualification (TAA)

The Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104) has been superseded by a new qualification - Certificate IV in Training and Education (TAE40110). This is the qualification of choice for:

- Private training organisations
- Trainers and assessors in a workplace or industry context
- Independent training contractor
- TAFE trainers

To meet the new Australian Qualification and Training Framework (AQTF) standard and work in the industry you **must either have the new TAE40110 qualification or be working towards it**. RTOs have until June 2012 to ensure trainers hold the new qualification.

NDA can upgrade your old Certificate IV in TAA (TAA40104) to the new Certificate IV in Training and Education (TAE40110) quickly and painlessly through an RPL process for only \$295 - [see here for details](#).

Please note that you cannot upgrade from the even older BSZ40198 Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training.

If you require further information please call Kristina on 03 6334 4910 or email kristinac@nda.com.au.

Office 2007/2010 Conversion

Office 2007 and the ribbon marked a complete departure from previous versions of Office, causing skilled users to look like novices as they scrambled to find familiar commands in the new interface.

If you are moving from an earlier version of Office to either Office 2007 or Office 2010 you will want to get your head around the new interface and the ribbon as quickly as possible. NDA offers a half-day [Office 2007/ 2010 Conversion](#) course that may be just what you need. The course can be attended as a hands-on public course or presented as a show-and-tell seminar at your premises. **Call 1300 765 736 for details!**

Forthcoming Training Courses

The following courses will shortly be presented by NDA, some at significant discounts on standard rates (**to obtain the discount, please phone Jodie on 1300 765 736** and mention this email when making bookings):

Hobart – IT Courses

[MYOB Payroll](#) 29 Nov - \$285

[MYOB Advanced](#) 30 Nov - \$285

[Excel Basics 2007](#) 2 Dec - \$240

[Excel Introductory 2007](#) 2/6 Dec - \$480

[Designing Simple Websites](#) 3 Dec - \$285

[Outlook](#) 9 Dec - \$240 **two for the price of one**

[Word Basics 2003](#) 14 Dec - \$240

[Word Introductory 2003](#) 14/16 Dec - \$480

Hobart – Business Skills Courses

[Managing Successful Projects](#) 24/25 Nov - \$570

[Time Management](#) 1 Dec - \$285 **two for the price of one**

[Superior Customer Service](#) 10 Dec - \$285

[OH&S in the Workplace](#) 17 Dec - \$285

[Business Writing Skills](#) 21 Dec - \$285

Launceston – IT Courses

[Word Advanced 2007](#) 18/19 Nov - \$480

[Crystal Reports Introductory](#) 22/23 Nov - \$570

[Designing Simple Websites](#) 3 Dec - \$285

[Word Introductory 2003](#) 15/16 Dec - \$480

[Word Advanced 2003](#) 17/20 Dec - \$480

Launceston – Business Skills Courses

[Time Management](#) 2 Dec - \$285 **two for the price of one**

[Superior Customer Service](#) 10 Dec - \$285

[Conflict Resolution and Assertiveness](#) 14 Dec - \$285

[OH&S in the Workplace](#) 15 Dec - \$285

[Professional Telephone Techniques](#) 22 Dec - \$285

Devonport – IT Courses

[MYOB Setup and Operation](#) 16/18 Nov - \$570

[Access Introductory / Intermediate 2007](#) 29/30 Nov - \$480

[Designing Simple Websites](#) 1 Dec - \$285

[Office 2007 Conversion](#) 2 Dec - \$195

[Excel Intermediate 2007](#) 7/8 Dec - \$480

[Excel Advanced 2007](#) 8/10 Dec - \$480

[Access Introductory / Intermediate 2003](#) 13/14 Dec - \$480

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