

Sage Construction and Real Estate

Cloud security with
Sage Construction Anywhere



sage

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Cloud computing's advantage for construction companies

In construction, access to back-office financial and operations systems from a remote site is often needed to make decisions and stay productive. For many industries like construction, cloud technology is being considered and adopted as the new answer for remote work. Some businesses are outsourcing to the cloud just to save on the cost from having in-house technical experts. But when considering how to improve remote operations, a well-matched cloud application, especially in construction, can do better than just give an answer to internal resource constraints. Cloud applications can increase agility and competitiveness, enhance team collaboration, strengthen decision making using current data, and improve productivity—particularly when the back-office systems are integrated into the cloud.

A report by “Information and Communication Technologies”¹ affirms that cloud computing is particularly suited to the construction industry because of its many key players working across various locations. When considering which type of cloud solution may be a suitable business fit, research firm Gartner advises businesses to focus “near-term efforts on application and data integration, linking fixed internal and external applications with a hybrid solution.”² Gartner’s research conclusions reinforce that leveraging on-premises systems with cloud technology has strong merit. In construction, the heart of on-premises systems is the back office. It’s commonplace for a remote worker to need access to billing, invoices, financials, projects, payroll, or other data. However, when a cloud application offers an improvement to remote business operations, addressing strong security measures is always advised.

Security concerns

Although the cloud’s potential is touted far and wide, many companies have concerns about cloud security, whether in regards to cloud technology itself or in response to workers’ using mobile devices. A survey from Microsoft found that 44 percent of small and mid-sized businesses (SMBs) still believe cloud computing is unproven and risky. Another 51 percent of responding SMBs said data privacy was one reason to give pause before migrating to the cloud.³ Other research sources cite management concerns about potential increased data leakage or breaches, decreased visibility into operations, less awareness into general risks, and risks associated with workers bringing their own devices to work.⁴

1. http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/xpl/login.jsp?tp=&arnumber=6141425&url=http%3A%2F%2Fieeexplore.ieee.org%2Fxppls%2Fabs_all.jsp%3Farnumber%3D6141425

2. <http://www.gartner.com/it/page.jsp?id=1971515>

3. <http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/news/presskits/telecom/docs/SMBCloud.pdf>

4. <http://www.cio.in/article/top-five-key-cloud-security-issues?page=1>

When workers use their personal devices like a tablet or smartphone for business purposes, the reality is, it's hard for companies to do anything but respond. Mobile device use at work continues to increase. The risks are significant if companies don't lead by setting up and communicating mobile best practices and policies, enforcing safeguards, and identifying suitable applications.

International Data Corporation forecasts that mobile workers will number 1.3 billion worldwide by 2015,⁵ and 37.2 percent of the total workforce will be operating outside of a traditional office setting by that time. The Cloud Security Alliance reports that with the increasing use of mobile devices on the job there is "tremendous concern for enterprises worldwide".⁶ Experts within the industry recommend setting up precautionary measures before any worker's device with confidential data is lost, such as setting up passwords, malware protection, and remote wipe capabilities.⁷ Companies are also advised to implement access controls, encrypt data, and identify and limit the number of people who can view certain files.

The Sage commitment to security

Despite concerns, many experts are recognizing that with the right planning, the cloud can actually improve general security.⁸ A fall 2012 survey reports that "on-premises systems and applications aren't necessarily more secure than those in the cloud".⁹ Choosing a provider that focuses on the continual changes in security and technology trends can also free up a company to concentrate on its core business.

Sage third-party audits

Sage is committed to security excellence. This excellence is demonstrated by its ongoing contract with a third-party expert to assess the security of Sage Construction Anywhere. Before any new release, strong measures and testing are taken to examine the security of the solution. In the most recent third-party audit, Comsec, a global information security consulting firm, found no vulnerabilities across the entire Sage Construction Anywhere site. As Sage solutions continue to improve and use the best new technologies, customers can be assured that Sage will continue its over 40 year commitment to being proactive about the security needs of its customers.

Microsoft® Azure™ security

Sage Construction Anywhere is built upon Microsoft's industry-leading cloud services platform, Azure.¹⁰ Through leveraging Microsoft's application hosting platform, regarded by many as the industry standard, Sage Construction Anywhere customers are assured of the highest levels of data integrity, availability, and confidentiality.

5. <http://www.idc.com/getdoc.jsp?containerId=prUS23251912>

6. <https://cloudsecurityalliance.org/csa-news/data-loss-mobile-ranks-top-threat-enterprises/>

7. http://www.govinfosecurity.com/articles.php?art_id=4650

8. <http://searchcio.techtarget.com/news/2240163146/Cloud-based-storage-replete-with-pros-and-cons-gaining-traction>

9. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/joemckendrick/2012/09/19/cloud-apps-somewhat-more-secure-than-on-premises-apps-survey/>

10. <http://www.microsoft.com/online/legal/?langid=en-us&docid=11>

Sage application architecture security provisions

Sage Construction Anywhere has been architected with key provisions that produce the protection your business needs for keeping information confidential and safe and at the same time create new collaboration opportunities with project teams. These provisions include:

- **Sage Construction Anywhere Connector**—Sage has built its secure web services platform from the ground up. The Sage Construction Anywhere Connector initiates all cloud communications and provides protection from the cloud by managing the handling of all exchanges with on-premises company information. This configuration is a key component for providing users freedom to access company data anywhere there is Internet connectivity while safeguarding the company systems from firewall or server breaches.
- **Encryption**—All communication between your back-office financial and operations solution (Sage 300 Construction and Real Estate, for example) and Sage Construction Anywhere is encrypted with 256-bit SSL security.
- **Securing customers' information**—Sage Construction Anywhere uses secure web services for connections between servers and mobile devices to mitigate unauthorized access, network eavesdropping, and other threats. Customers are also assigned their own dedicated secure site so data is safeguarded from others.
- **User management by project**—Project files are stored and secured by project and by folder. In a single step, you can categorize and secure files so they can be seen by all participants, seen by only those participants from a single vendor, or seen by a specific person.
- **Advanced folder security**—Advanced Sage Construction Anywhere folder security settings give you the trust to extend specific information access to an entire project team. These access options provide the ability to identify and ensure that only the right people see confidential documents such as contracts or invoices.
- **Notifications and audit trails**—Audit trails and online reports are available to track who requests, accesses, and views information stored on Sage Construction Anywhere. This is particularly beneficial for legal protection and contract compliance.

Conclusion

Sage has been a market leader in construction-specific business management for over 40 years. Providing strong security for its customers has always been an integral part of its software planning and development, and Sage is fully committed to security excellence as technology issues and opportunities continue to change. With the right security measures in place, cloud technologies can help you operate more efficiently and extend your business opportunities. The momentum for adopting cloud applications is building as more contractors and owners realize the cloud's potential. Imagine what your construction firm can accomplish with constant access to project data and the ability to work from virtually anywhere.

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