ECM in the Cloud: Content Made Easier
New survey from IDG finds growing confidence in the security of cloud-based solutions

CLOUD-BASED ENTERPRISE CONTENT MANAGEMENT (ECM) adoption is rapidly approaching a tipping point. Although today nearly one-third (29%) of organizations are using homegrown, on-premises ECM offerings and another 27% are using a third-party on-premises solution, only 20% are tapping third-party solutions in the cloud.

But within 12 months, everything could change.

That's according to a new Quick Poll survey from IDG Research, which found that the number of organizations using ECM solutions deployed in the public cloud will expand, with nearly one-third of the respondents planning such a move. Another 24% will use a third-party ECM solution deployed in a private cloud. This reflects an overall satisfaction and comfort with cloud-based applications and services noted in another recent IDG study, the 2016 **IDG Enterprise Cloud Computing Survey.**

The Quick Poll survey asked IT decision-makers at companies with 250 or more employees to discuss ECM deployment trends. To qualify, respondents were required to work in IT management at the manager level or above.

The survey found that an increase in cloud-based ECM investment is more likely when specific criteria are in place. For instance, 55% of the respondents said they were more comfortable when providers encrypted sensitive information. The same percentage stated that providers holding security and compliance certifications (such as ISO) added to their comfort with cloud ECM. Other criteria mentioned by respondents include authentication and access control (cited by 51%) and clear agreement and communication regarding responsibility for aspects of data security (cited by 47%).

Surprisingly, the physical security of the hosting data center was not an issue for most of the respondents, with only 29% saying that it would increase their comfort level. In addition, only about one-third (35%) of the respondents said separation of usage of storage, memory, and routing between users would bolster their confidence. IT leaders are also worrying less in general about the security of data stored in cloud-based ECM systems. In fact, their confidence in cloud-based ECM is about the same as in any enterprise cloud solution; according to the survey, 82% of the respondents are confident about the security of data stored in enterprise cloud solutions and 78% are confident about the security of data stored specifically in cloud-based ECM solutions.

In the Eye of the Beholder

Although confidence is growing, that doesn't mean that users aren't conscious of issues traditionally brought up about the cloud. For example, cloud users are still somewhat concerned about security, privacy, and lack of visibility, according to the survey. Respondents are most worried about the risk of security breaches as data moves between their internal networks and their ECM cloud provider (an issue mentioned by 43% of them). More than four in 10 said they are concerned with privacy of sensitive and regulated data. IT executives at larger companies are more concerned about any ambiguity regarding the responsibility for aspects of data security.

These results can be viewed in the light of IDG's latest *Cloud Computing Survey*, which finds that "concerns about the security of cloud solutions remain a barrier to implementation, although the concern has decreased from 2014."

The *Cloud Computing Survey* also finds that nearly half (46%) of the participating companies reported that the leading issue that needs to be
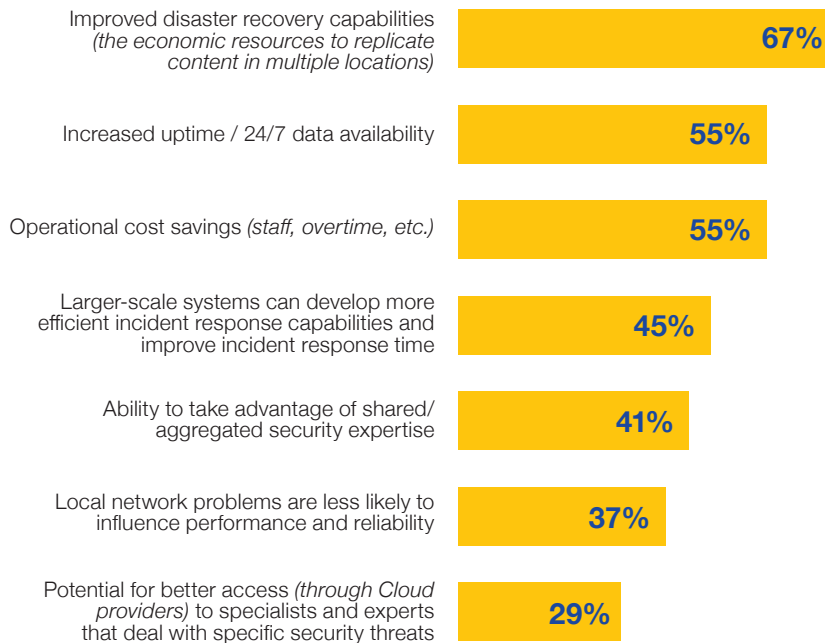
Figure 1.: The Most Appealing Advantages of Cloud-Based Enterprise Solutions

Improved disaster recovery capabilities *(the economic resources to replicate content in multiple locations)*	**67%**
Increased uptime / 24/7 data availability	**55%**
Operational cost savings *(staff, overtime, etc.)*	**55%**
Larger-scale systems can develop more efficient incident response capabilities and improve incident response time	**45%**
Ability to take advantage of shared/ aggregated security expertise	**41%**
Local network problems are less likely to influence performance and reliability	**37%**
Potential for better access *(through Cloud providers)* to specialists and experts that deal with specific security threats	**29%**

Source: IDG Research, November 2016

Hyland's ECM offering in the Hyland Cloud has 99.99% historical uptime over the more than 13 years it has been available

addressed or resolved before fully embracing the cloud is ensuring that cloud service providers' security meets their compliance requirements.

That said, respondents to both surveys clearly see the benefits of a cloud-based offering. About two-thirds (67%) of the IT leaders who responded to the *Quick Poll* survey said that improved disaster recovery capabilities are most appealing for their organizations. More than half (55%) cited increased uptime and 24x7 data availability and said that operational cost savings are key. *(See Figure 1.)*

Although these are real benefits of cloud-based ECM, customers also see big improvements and savings from the infrastructure management that comes with cloud services, according to Marc Cianciolo, manager of cloud business operations and compliance at Hyland, a leading provider of ECM software (OnBase).

"It's the marriage of ECM expertise with the expertise of a hosted infrastructure," Cianciolo observes. "It's really easy to say a hosted service is going to mitigate hardware or capital expenses associated with building an infrastructure, but the real value is coming from the management of that infrastructure. Resources across database, network infrastructure, security, compliance, R&D—it's the value of not having to worry about those things so customers can focus on their core competence."

Making the Right Choice

When it comes to choosing a cloud ECM provider, users can maximize benefit and minimize risk by choosing a vendor that has its finger on the pulse of the industry. For instance, when a cloud provider adheres to National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) security protocols, ISO security management certification standards, and other industry frameworks and guidelines, it's a good bet that that company takes security seriously.

Uptime should also be a consideration. Users have very little tolerance for downtime, so CIOs should look for vendors with a long track record of success. Hyland's ECM offering, OnBase, hosted in the Hyland Cloud, has 99.99% historical uptime over the more than 13 years it has been available in the cloud. This is longer than most other companies in the space have offered a cloud deployment.

Finally, organizations must also be careful to compare apples with apples when it comes to cost. Although it's easy to say that—using simple math—a cloud-based ECM system costs more in the long run, that's actually a misconception. On-premises ECM solution cost figures must also include the amount spent on hardware and software upgrades as well as resources needed to manage the application and the infrastructure.

As IDG's *Cloud Computing Survey* points out, lowering the total cost of ownership, replacing on-premises legacy technology, and enabling business continuity are the top business goals driving cloud investments. Cloud ECM—when undertaken correctly and with the right vendor—can achieve all of the above, leading to customer and employee satisfaction as well as greater innovation. ◼

To learn more, go to OnBase.com/Cloud