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# Cloud on Your Terms: Avoid "Vendor Lock In" and Take Control of Your Data

How likely is it that you're still driving your first car, or living in your first house? Not very likely. In our personal lives, we migrate to different solutions based on our needs at that time. Nobody expects us to buy a car from the same manufacturer or continue to live in the same neighborhood, just because that's where we started.

In the same way, most organizations in the past few years have invested in the private or public cloud but now find themselves wanting to move from one cloud strategy or infrastructure to another, based on business needs. However, the thought of moving data from one cloud to another makes most IT managers very nervous. At best, you don't want to sacrifice the important critical business requirements of capability, agility, cost-effectiveness, and performance. Not to mention the worst case scenario of suffering from lost data, downtime or high cost.

The good news is just because you want or need to change your cloud infrastructure, you don't have to put your company's data (or your job) at risk. A strong solution that enables you to move data from one cloud to another will help you avoid vendor lock in and stay in control of your data/ workload portability.

## FREE FROM "VENDOR LOCK IN"

It wasn't always like this. For years, enterprises accepted being locked into specific hardware or software platforms that made migration – other than through "forklift upgrades" – challenging. Even when the client-server model provided industry standards that would ostensibly make migration easier, users were effectively locked in. Refresh cycles for hardware were every three to five years at most, and learning curves associated with new platforms still meant that organizations were limited in how often they could switch to a new solution. Moreover, the prevalence of data siloes made reaching this idealistic goal impossible.

Virtualization started to change the game by de-coupling workloads from the underlying infrastructure, first for server processing, then storage, and now the network itself. This essentially turns critical parts of the infrastructure into software, creating the "software-defined storage" era.

At the same time, though, specific virtualization platforms, the infrastructure around them, and, most of all, the licensing fees associated with them resulted in legacy IT that was hard to escape. Past decisions were still holding back the enterprise from realizing the ability of data and workload portability and mobility.

With the rise of the cloud, organizations can now empower themselves by introducing tools that enable workload portability – to a certain extent. Even now, while cloud providers often have tools to convert other workloads to run on their cloud, they rarely have tools that convert them back or to another vendor's platform.

"Importability, interoperability and migration in cloud environments today is not a solved problem," says Forrester senior analyst Lauren Nelson.[1] "And when it comes to being able to make workloads truly portable, there are a lot of barriers in the way." These can range from template design, the consistency of how that template communicates about where its networking capabilities are versus its storage resources, and other basic template format inconsistencies. "At other times, there's services that are so tightly ingrained in that particular application, that it's difficult to remove," she continues. "So, true application portability becomes very difficult."

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**LAUREN NELSON,**
*Senior Analyst, Infrastructure & Operations, Forrester*



1 Forrester and Commvault Video: Keys to Hybrid Cloud Optimization

## ACHIEVING REAL-WORLD PORTABILITY

But organizations can't wait for the Nirvana of a single industry-standard that spans both public and private cloud environments making everything compatible—it's likely that day may never come. What you need is something that will help convert workloads between disparate, incompatible platforms today, without compromising on critical business requirements.

This is where a software solution, which isn't based on or tied to specific virtualization platforms or cloud services, can empower you to take back control. Because resources such as virtualization and cloud are extracting the infrastructure resources that sit beneath, you can control them through management tools, Nelson says. "Via APIs, you can monitor and manage resources from the management portal of your choosing," she says. "A lot of organizations have tried to consolidate these efforts. They may control five different cloud platforms under a single management tool, along with their traditional virtualized environment, and be able to serve this information up in a more consolidated manner."

Commvault provides workload portability across VMware, Hyper-V, Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Microsoft Azure. By capturing the appropriate metadata and context, Commvault will perform all of the necessary conversions to, for example, take a VMware VMDK and convert it to a Hyper-V VHD or an AWS AMI. This allows cross-platform restore or migration with the click of a mouse – just as simply as a user might perform a data restore operation.

Pairing this cross-platform recovery with other capabilities create real-world workload portability. For example, in development and testing environments, users can:

- Provision VMs in the cloud during the dev/test cycle
- Use efficient, deduplication-aware replication methods to move data to a different site for production, while minimizing egress bandwidth charges
- Migrate onsite for production

Similarly, in cloud-based disaster recovery, organizations can:

- Replicate data to the cloud based on application service-level agreements
- Recover in the cloud -- with no restrictions on the provider platform -- when necessary for test or an actual disaster recovery scenario.

More generally, workload portability enables cloud migration, so users can:

- Copy data from primary site
- Restore workload onto another platform in the cloud

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Workload portability helps realize the promise of the agility that the cloud can provide and that enterprises need. "Though cost savings is the factor that receives all of the attention with respect to cloud DR (and it is real enough), agility is the other major factor that makes cloud DR attractive," notes IDC. "The ability to move data between on-premise and cloud repositories, establish multiple DR sites if needed, and change providers as needed gives organizations the options to optimize recovery, convenience, and cost."[2]

Sometimes you need a pickup, and sometimes you need a sports car. Nobody would try to tell you that having once used a pickup, you could never use a sports car again. Why should your business be any different?

2 IDC, "Leveraging the Public Cloud for Faster Disaster Recovery at Lower Cost," May 2015

## RESOURCES

i commvault.com/resource-library/5522b289ec50d0ff2900057c/lightning-speed-getting-to-the-cloud-faster.pdf

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