

## ■ What are cloud services?

Cloud services allow users to access and utilize IT resources over the Internet rather than having the same resources on board or attached to their local computer system or network. These resources can include practically any facet of information technology, from storage systems to servers (physical and virtual) and even applications. Multiple cloud services can be integrated to create robust computing solutions that require end users to have little more than a Web-connected computer.

## ■ Does using cloud services sacrifice my control or put my data at risk?

Advancements in virtualization, automation, and network security have drastically mitigated previous concerns that cloud computing does not allow individualized control over solutions, or exposes you to risk by entrusting data and operations to a third party. You and your end users can have direct access and control over cloud-enabled infrastructure, or enjoy highly customizable computing experiences. Competition within the cloud service market has created a range of industry-standard choices between which enterprises and individuals can easily migrate. And cloud services typically can improve your IT security and control by providing access to higher-level security tools and strategies at lower costs.

## ■ What is cloud computing?

The term cloud computing refers to the creation and utilization of computing “instances”—complete computing environments with the functionality of a full hardware and software stack—that are fully accessed and controlled over the Internet. The instances appear and operate as though they are traditional computer system, but all resources are abstracted. This makes computing resources ubiquitously accessible and allows for computing resources to be purchased as consumed. Computing resources can be scaled on demand, adding or resizing instances as needed without having to purchase physical systems.

## ■ What are the benefits of cloud computing?

There are many benefits of using cloud computing instances, including:

- Cloud computing enables individuals and organizations to essentially rent (or borrow) computing resources. Providers and users can avoid the costs of owning, supporting, and refreshing their own hardware and software. This effectively lowers barriers-to-entry, reduces overhead, minimizes technology investment risk, and increases access to a wider portfolio of tools and technologies. This is especially beneficial in situations where higher levels of resources are temporarily needed for ad hoc computing tasks.
- Cloud computing enables enterprises and individuals to provide rich computing experiences without needing to maintain their own data center infrastructure or possess the technological expertise required to operate such an infrastructure.
- Cloud computing provides the disaster recovery and backup benefits of geographically distributing computing resources and data.
- Cloud computing infrastructure is off-site and Internet-connected, letting users access resources regardless of geographic location, operating system, or device for greater flexibility.
- Cloud computing can provide dynamic scalability, letting users add resources on demand without having to predict and invest for future IT needs.
- Cloud computing can increase data security and integrity by centralizing storage and providing access to higher-level security tools and strategies at lower costs.
- Cloud computing provides more efficient utilization of global computing resources, minimizing the environmental impact of information technology.

## ■ What is CloudLayer® Computing?

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CloudLayer Computing is SoftLayer's cloud service that provides on-demand computing instances. These instances are automatically provisioned with enterprise-grade and open source operating systems, delivered in as few as five minutes. CloudLayer Computing leverages SoftLayer's core advantages, automated services expertise, and is built on the leading Citrix® XenServer™ platform.

## ■ What is my CloudLayer Computing Instance running on?

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CloudLayer Computing Instances leverage the industry-leading Citrix XenServer platform, Super Micro® servers, and SoftLayer's world-class data center and networking infrastructure.

## ■ What are the advantages of CloudLayer Computing?

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CloudLayer Storage provides several distinct advantages, bringing individuals and enterprises powerful options for dynamically scaling their IT resources, maximizing data accessibility, and optimizing their total cost of IT.

- **Pay As You Go Pricing:** Hourly and monthly rates with no long-term commitment let you optimize your cost/performance balance and return on computing investment. Pay only for the computing power you need and use.
- **Dedicated + Virtual + Cloud Integration:** Dedicated, virtual, and cloud systems and services can be seamlessly integrated via SoftLayer's leading Private Network into a single computing environment controlled through our Customer Portal or API.
- **Rapid Deployment:** Turn services on and off on the fly to massively scale up or down to exactly the amount of computing power you need, exactly when you need it.
- **Ease of Use and Control:** Full access and control via Customer Portal and API Customer Portal provides streamlined, simplified management of your solution and a direct connection to all SoftLayer services and tools.
- **Image Library:** Capture, template, and store system images for accelerated provisioning and simplified management.
- **Virtualization Beyond the Box:** Virtualized networking, security, storage, and management lets you create fully virtual environments, optimizing your solution well past just the server.

## ■ Who should use CloudLayer Computing?

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The on-demand scalability and ability to integrate instances into the rest of an IT environment make CloudLayer Computing an ideal solution for a range of applications, including:

- Organizations with unknown computing requirements
- Processing "batch" oriented applications (e.g. image rendering)
- Running Web-crawling applications
- Online Applications and services with variable user demand levels (e.g. Facebook)

## ■ Do CloudLayer Computing Instances utilize SoftLayer's API?

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Yes. As with all SoftLayer products and services, CloudLayer Computing Instances fully utilize the SoftLayer open-source API 3.0 for direct, system-to-system integration with other machines and the rest of SoftLayer's services and infrastructure. This allows CloudLayer Computing Instances to be designed into enhanced computing strategies, and provides customers exceptional opportunities, such as the ability to leverage the entire SoftLayer infrastructure to offer a platform as a service (PaaS).

## ■ When should I use a CloudLayer Computing Instance rather than a dedicated server?

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One of SoftLayer's advantages has always been the ability to deploy dedicated servers that are easy to remotely manage, access, and control. While this provides many of the benefits of cloud-based computing, CloudLayer Computing Instances provide an even higher speed of deployment and a degree of scalability that is more ideal for meeting certain business needs. For enterprises that face challenges such as unknown or irregular demand, dynamic shifts in Web traffic, or the need to create temporary computing environments for development and testing, CloudLayer Computing Instances can be more effective (both in performance and cost) than dedicated servers. For a side-by-side technical comparison of our dedicated servers and CloudLayer Computing Instances, visit [http://www.softlayer.com/cloudlayer\\_compare\\_popup.html](http://www.softlayer.com/cloudlayer_compare_popup.html).

## ■ When should I use a dedicated server rather than a CloudLayer Computing Instance?

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While cloud computing instances are ideal for a wide range of applications, they are not the best choice for every situation. For instance, databases and applications that have consistent performance and demand can perform better on dedicated servers and do not benefit from the elasticity that cloud computing instances provide. And some applications might have very specific hardware requirements, needing a specific processor driver, making them poor candidates for cloud computing.

## ■ Can you get CloudLayer Computing Instances without a SoftLayer dedicated server?

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Yes. CloudLayer Computing is available with or without the purchase of any other SoftLayer products or services.