

# Cloud Computing

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I've been struggling with this column over the past couple of months but not been quite sure why. There are plenty of stories about cloud computing in the news with new services being launched, companies being taken over and massive investments being made in infrastructure. IBM, for example, announced a few days ago that it was investing almost £1 billion in expanding its data centres around the world and Google spent over \$3 billion buying Nest, a maker of internet-connected devices such as thermostats and smoke alarms. IBM's investments reinforces the seemingly unstoppable trend for companies, large and small, to outsource their data processing and storage requirements. Google's acquisition adds strength to the "internet of things" hypothesis that eventually most of the devices we use at home and work will be connected to the internet with the "cloud" acting as the repository for the data these "things" are throwing off.

So with all these activities taking place, why have I been struggling to write this column? It came to me earlier this week when I realised that what we call "cloud computing" is now becoming so embedded in our working and personal lives it is becoming less interesting to write about. I've seen this first hand with many of the small and medium-sized marketing and design companies I've been talking to over the last couple of years as well as with my students at the University of Brighton. Cloud-based communication and collaboration services such as Gmail, Dropbox, Basecamp and Evernote are being used by these companies without a second thought as workers need mobile access to theirs' and their colleagues' work wherever they are. The thought of being tied to a PC to access files now seems like something from the dark ages. Similarly, most of my students keep their work in the cloud on Dropbox, Google Drive or any of the multitude of services offering gigabytes of free storage. While cloud computing may still seem like a novelty to people of my generation (I'm 49 by the way) it is the de facto way of working for the next generation of workers. I teach on an undergraduate degree, BA (Hons) Digital Media but, as most media is now created, distributed and consumed in digital format, the prefix "digital" to this course is becoming unnecessary. Similarly, as our interactions with computing devices (PCs, laptops, tablets and smart phones) almost always rely on an internet connection and making calls on remote servers, I feel that "cloud computing" is really just computing and a dedicated column is no longer necessary. Therefore, this is my last cloud computing piece for eLucidate.

However, I will be back in the next edition with a new column on web and social media analytics. Understanding and using the data being generated from our interactions with websites and social media platforms is an exciting and emerging area for many information workers. My teaching and consulting work in digital marketing increasingly

involves analysing such data and using a range of tools to extract meaning from it. I look forward to writing about it in eLucidate over the coming months.