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SPRINGBOARD TO THE CLOUD

An Infrastructure Journey for the Public Sector **Beyond Cloud.**

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Executive Summary

The UK Government first introduced its Cloud First Policy in 2013, updating it in 2019 to state that when procuring new or existing services, public sector organisations should consider and fully evaluate potential cloud solutions first before considering any other option.

With many large public sector outsourcing contracts due to expire expire in the near term, Local Authorities, Health Trusts and Central Government bodies are seeking to move away from these large outsource programmes of 10 years ago that locked them into expensive and rigid contracts, with many IT services either not fully delivered or deployed years later.

Even those organisations that have already taken back control of their IT estates and adopted cloud during the pandemic to enable remote working are still left with legacy, cumbersome workloads based on-premises with a small portion of estates moved to public cloud. Further to this, digital chaos, where disparate solutions both on-premise and in the cloud work inefficiently, is proving troublesome for organisations to work effectively between the multiple infrastructure environments.

These on-premises legacy workloads are time, resource and cost intensive, and in some cases pose security risks that require

continual patching to secure. This has left more and more public sector organisations wanting to harness the flexibility of cloud services to free up time, resource and cost to reinvest in frontline services or to modernise legacy applications.

However, many organisations recognise they aren't ready to move everything to the public cloud just yet. They therefore need a solution that enables them to realise the benefits of cloud in the short term, while delivering the flexibility, security, cost and resource efficiencies to modernise legacy workloads.

An interim solution is required that bridges the gap between large outsourcing contacts or legacy on-premises workloads and true public cloud service delivery.

This whitepaper examines the issues, processes, and technologies that can be adopted to provide public sector organisations with a

springboard to the cloud – a two-hop approach to transition, then transform to true public cloud delivery from legacy on-premises servers.

About the Author – Rob Walton

Rob Walton is the Business Industry Director for Public Sector at Six Degrees. He has been working in the IT industry for more than 25 years. In his role at Six Degrees, he is responsible for setting the business strategy for the Public Sector team, as well as working with public sector clients to help them with their digital transformation strategies.

Rob helps clients build platforms that support digital transformation and act as enablers for organisational change, as policy, fluctuating budgets, demographics, and technology all impact our daily lives.

Introduction

Many public sector organisations own large legacy estates, frequently outsourced and maintained by a prime contractor or now brought back in-house, and their infrastructures could take years to change. Untangling the plethora of systems that have become interwoven over the years isn't easy. And while starting again and building platforms from scratch sounds great, it can be time-consuming and expensive.

Many large outsourcing contracts are coming to an end, and the inefficiencies present in many of them often make it preferable not to renew or extend. What's more, when the public sector is procuring technology under the Technology Code of Practice[1], adopting a Cloud First approach and ensuring efficiencies of service is paramount. Large, legacy on-premises estates from the noughties must be looked at through a new digital transformation lens and brought up to speed with the needs of modern-day services for Local Authorities, Health Trusts and Central Government bodies.

This whitepaper explores the following themes:

- **Change Isn't Easy**

- **Choices and Challenges**

- **A Springboard to the Cloud**

- **Reaping the Benefits**

- **Keeping Service Users and Security at the Centre**

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technology-code-of-practice/technology-code-of-practice

Change Isn't Easy

Breaking away from an existing provider can be a daunting prospect – the enterprise IT technology landscape has changed radically over the past 10 years, and the skills needed in-house, from Microsoft Azure certified engineers to Oracle Cloud architects, are thoroughly in demand and highly sought after as they are in short supply.

The risks of getting it wrong are well-known. There have been plenty of headlines accusing public sector bodies of wasting hundreds of thousands of pounds of taxpayers' money on the wrong IT choices, and there is also sometimes a fear around the security of cloud adoption – perhaps because it is new and unknown for some organisations, despite the fact that cloud environments can be far more secure than old on-premises kit.

But it's a complex job to migrate services affecting thousands of people to a new provider, and organisations can be guilty of making panicked decisions at the end of their contract, such as signing up to expensive contract extensions because they don't have a suitable alternative solution in place and continuing a service fit for end users is better than suffering downtime to end user services.

Choices and Challenges

So, what options do public sector organisations have when they're coming to the end of their outsourced contract, or when they're running on-premises servers in house and face the prospect of adopting cloud while running legacy applications?

There are several, but they all present their own challenges and bring their own problems:

1. If they haven't yet exited an outsourcing contract, they could decide to stick with the existing outsourced provider and renew the contract because they don't have the time to pick apart their IT services and find new strategies for each area. But that would merely entrench the inefficiencies that blighted the previous contract.

2. Alternatively, they might choose to take the contract, shift it to a new provider, and re-tender for another multi-year contract because it seems like the easiest and least risky option. But it's still a leap in the dark, and people are naturally cautious about changing providers. And of course, it leaves them locked into another supplier for a long period of time.

3. Another option would be to move everything to the public cloud, and deploy all services to Oracle Cloud, Amazon Web Services or Microsoft Azure. But most applications would need to be rewritten to be cloud-ready, as they would typically have been hosted on infrastructure that was more than five years old and out of warranty. This would involve huge costs, people resources, time to complete and stranded workloads on-premise are causing digital chaos in organisations.

4. They might decide to move all services back in-house, but finding the staff to manage 10-year-old applications and legacy infrastructures (and the budget for those purchases) with the high capital investment for infrastructure could be a struggle and misalign with the Cloud First policy.

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A Springboard to the Cloud

Is there another solution?

Yes, there is. Public sector organisations could choose to work with specialist technology partners such as Six Degrees, who provide a springboard to the cloud through a unique approach.

How do they do it?

Six Degrees delivers a springboard to the cloud by moving legacy infrastructure and applications into their own data centres and UK Government-approved public sector cloud, migrating cloud-ready services straight to the public cloud where appropriate, and managing them all centrally. This approach enables public sector organisations to bridge the gap between their existing outsourcing arrangements and true public cloud service delivery.

How is this done?

Specialist cloud technology partners like Six Degrees can:

- Lift and shift existing applications (for x86 and non-x86 workloads) and host them for public sector organisations, migrating services gradually as needed.

- Host applications on their own infrastructure, powered by their cloud services.

- Move some cloud-ready services to the public cloud through partnerships with global hyperscale cloud providers such as Oracle Cloud or Microsoft Azure.

- Use their specialist skills in digital transformation, DevOps, and cloud migration, as well as their partner networks, to assess your current infrastructure estate and understand what is required to migrate whilst keeping services running to help public sector customers become cloud-ready across their entire organisation.

- Six Degrees delivers a springboard to the cloud by moving legacy infrastructure and applications into UK Government-accredited data centres and clouds.

Reaping the Benefits

In addition to a range of services that suit the different workloads, applications, and legacy systems in existing environments, specialist cloud technology partners like Six Degrees can provide the expertise to help public sector organisations move gradually towards an industry standard, automated technology service delivery model.

This means that when public sector organisations decide to move to a new outsource programme in the future, whether it be three years or longer, their IT is in better shape and simpler to move and transform.

Specialist cloud technology providers like Six Degrees can act as a bridge between all of the services public sector organisations require today, and their future aims of becoming public cloud-ready. While no organisation can become cloud-enabled overnight, it can reach that goal faster if it chooses a provider that knows how to get there.

This approach removes inefficiencies, helps to rationalise infrastructure, and provides a number of cost savings. They include:

Uncovering and removing inefficiencies in the existing IT environment through low server usage;

Rationalising applications and infrastructure so organisations can turn off the parts that aren't working;

Re-architecting applications to run on public cloud infrastructure or newer hardware that costs less to maintain; and

Rationalising and optimising security using native controls in cloud environments to release the need for additional endpoint security services they may be paying for.

Keeping Service Users and Security at the Centre

By supporting legacy workloads that are not ready for hyper-scale cloud providers, Six Degrees can help public sector organisations end their existing high-cost contracts with prime system integrators, or move away from their own data centres.

Most importantly, this means putting the focus for Local Authorities, Health Trusts and Central Government bodies back onto the service user by freeing up time and resource to prioritise them. Working with a proven provider that has migrated workloads from on-premises to a public sector cloud will ensure no service downtime and continual management and optimisation of hybrid or multi-cloud workloads. This also helps to reduce costs while delivering the advantages of moving to the cloud, such as speed of deployment, faster time to market, increased agility and flexibility, and pay-as-you-go billing.

What's more, building security front and centre in a cloud migration isn't easy – you need to understand your risk appetite and build controls and governance in-line with that. You also need to understand the native security controls within cloud environments to ensure you are configuring and, even more importantly, monitoring them accordingly to protect your estate wherever it resides.

Six Degrees can guide organisations through migration and installation, covering all the bases and ensuring the best possible outcomes, while keeping service and security at the centre of their efforts. We can bridge the gap to help you move to the cloud in a safe, controlled, and cost-efficient way.

Six Degrees. Beyond Cloud.

We help customers enjoy all the game-changing potential of cloud. We create secure, flexible platforms that set organisations free to achieve and exceed their boldest aspirations, whatever those may be.

Our industry-leading security protects against today's and tomorrow's cyber threats, while our unrivalled technology stack means maximum productivity and efficiency, even with a remote workforce.

With a formal service agreement and the most flexible financial terms in the industry, we go above and beyond for every customer.

To find out more about Six Degrees and Springboard to Oracle Cloud, visit **6dg.co.uk/springboard-to-oracle-cloud**

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