Gartner: The Cloud Office Opportunity

Written by Marco Attard
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Contrary to expectations most organisations have **not** moved their office software to the cloud--Gartner estimates **just 8%** of overall WW (excluding China and India) enterprise office system customers are already up in the cloud.

Thus global enterprise cloud office users total around 50 million.

However the analyst predicts cloud office systems will see a shift on H2 2015, before penetration reaches 33% by 2017.

"Despite the hype surrounding migration to the cloud, big differences in movement rates continue, depending on organisation size, industry, geography and specific requirements," Gartner says. "While 8% of business people were using cloud office systems at the start of 2013, we estimate this number will grow to 695m users by 2022, to represent 60%."

Unsurprisingly email is "pivotal" to the decision of moving to the cloud (or not). Gartner estimates 10% of enterprise email seats will be either cloud-based or SaaS by end 2014, before growing to "at least" over 30% by 2017.

A second cloud office adoption driver is the growing amount of devices users access office

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systems on. Back in 2007 users accessed office systems on one device (enterprise PC). But in 2013 that number is up to 4 devices (chiefly smartphone, tablet, personal PC, enterprise PC). Such growth can push organisations to the cloud in order to reduce the IT burden of software installation, maintenance and upgrades of locally installed office software.

Cloud-based models also bring customers savings in the shape of per-user (as opposed to per-device) payment models.

When it comes to early adoption the analyst suggests the higher education, discrete manufacturing, retail and hospitality segments are most likely to adopt cloud-based office software at present, while heavily regulated segments such as intelligence, defense, financial services and healthcare are the least likely.

"There are many cases where businesses-— particularly smaller ones and those in the retail, hospitality and manufacturing industries-— should move at least some users to cloud office systems during the next 2 years," Gartner concludes. "However, readiness varies by service provider, and caution is warranted."

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