



# BEGINNERS

# GUIDE



**Westcon-Comstor,  
your preferred value-added distributor.**

We want to help you get through all the baby  
proofed packaging that is wrapped around Azure...

And get straight to the point.

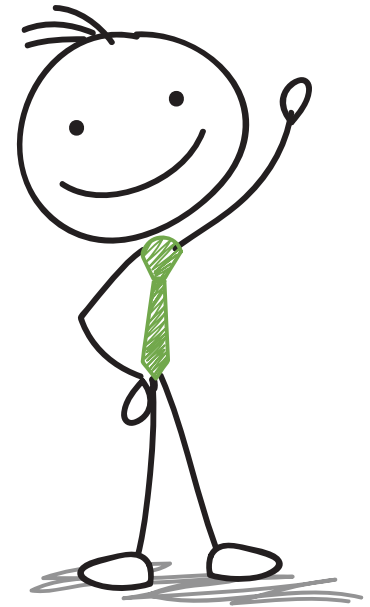


by Westcon-Comstor  
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# WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH MICROSOFT AZURE?



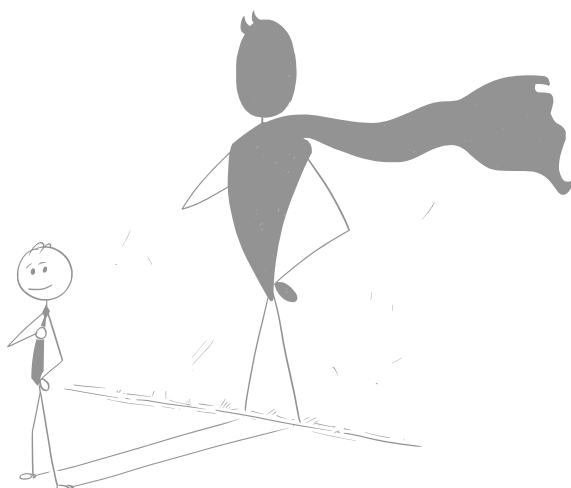
Microsoft Azure (formerly known as Windows Azure) is an open platform made up of a growing collection of integrated cloud services that include: computing, database, mobile, networking, storage, analytics, web, and more. The flexibility of this platform makes it easy to scale up or down to meet business needs under a pay-for-use, per-minute billing business model.

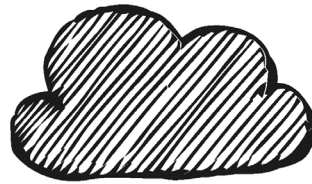
## Ok but why does this matter?

If you're a developer, you can take advantage of the integrated tools and built-in templates in Microsoft Azure to build web-based and mobile apps (think big here). It supports the same technologies millions of developers and IT professionals already use and trust. After your apps are published, you can run them from any of the worldwide network of Microsoft datacentres. Having a global footprint means that you have a lot of options for running your applications and ensuring a great customer experience.

## Not convinced that putting your info in the ether is a good idea?

To address data security and privacy concerns, Microsoft has made an industry-leading commitment to the protection and privacy of data. They've been recognised by leading data protection authorities and were the first major cloud provider to adopt the new international cloud privacy standards. They have also launched Azure Government, a stand-alone version of Azure designed for U.S. public agencies with rigorous compliance requirements. Which means it pretty much ticks all the global checkboxes.





# CLOUD COMPUTING

## Working with Microsoft Azure in Cloud Computing

Microsoft, is stepping up its game in the application development and deployment market, and has taken its .Net platform into the cloud computing community. Azure is Microsoft's Platform as a Service (PaaS) strategy that was announced in 2008.

Microsoft defines the Azure platform as "an Internet-scale cloud services platform hosted in Microsoft datacentres, which provides an operating system and a set of developer services that can be used individually or together."

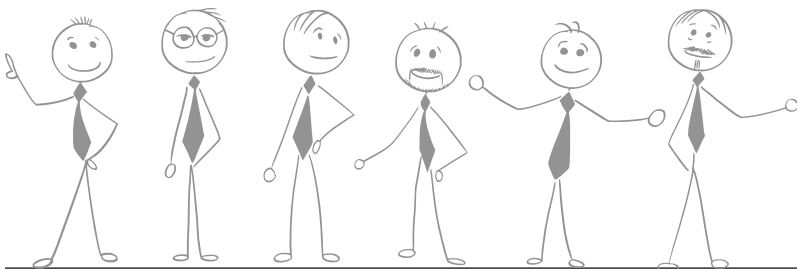
This is a lot to absorb so we understand if you need to take a step back. In short its everything you need for your business to run, in a technology sense, and it is all hosted in the cloud.

Microsoft's overall strategy is a combination of on premise computing services coupled with cloud-based services. The idea is that developers may want to build some applications that live on-site, while other components will live in the cloud. Azure helps make this a reality.

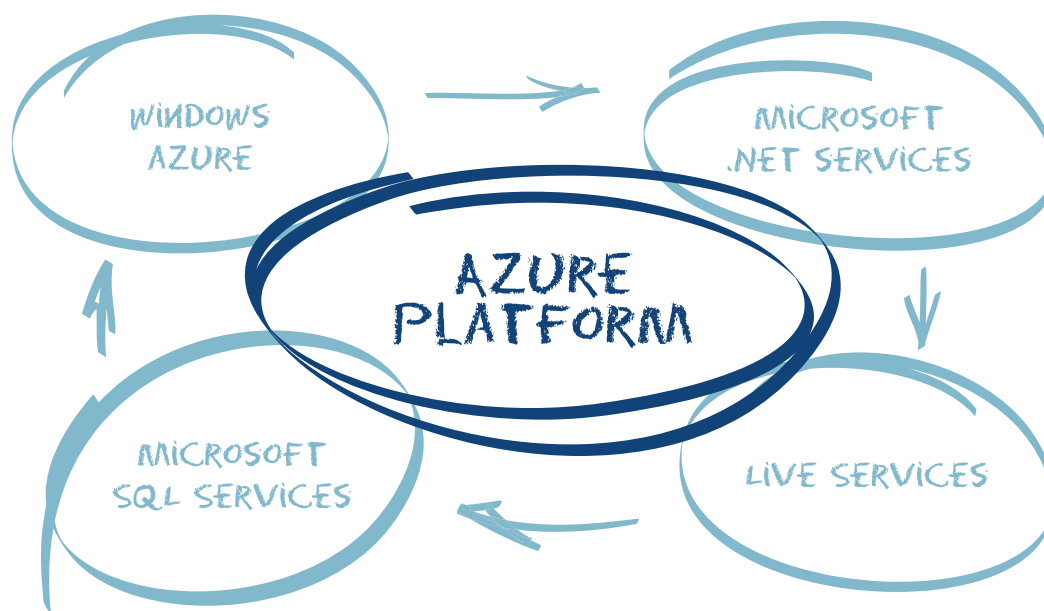
Microsoft calls this strategy "software plus services". The heart of Microsoft's strategy is to allow developers to use the same underlying technology and enablers to build both on premise applications and cloud applications. Starting to make sense? It's all about a consistent experience.

While the main focus of the Azure platform is to bring Microsoft's familiar programming model to the cloud, Microsoft also intends to support other programming models, including Ruby on Rails and Python. For interoperability, Microsoft supports various Internet protocols, including HTTP, REST, SOAP, and XML.

If you aren't sure what these are you probably don't need to. Otherwise there are always the great oracle's Google and Bing!



The Azure platform is composed of four different components:



### Windows Azure:

This Windows environment runs applications locally and stores the related data on servers inside the Microsoft datacentre.

### Microsoft .NET Services:

These are the same .Net services that Microsoft has in its Windows environment. It has been extended to support cloud-based as well as on premise applications.

### Microsoft SQL Services

These are the same data services Microsoft offers on premise that have been extended to the cloud. However, if you want to take advantage of Azure's scaling capability, you must rewrite the SQL code. The goal of SQL services is to provide an asset of cloud-based approaches for storing the data in the cloud. The data services expose both SOAP and REST interfaces as data access methods. For data storage, Azure doesn't use a relational model.

### Live Services:

This set of services allows developers to connect code developed in the Windows Live platform into the cloud. These services include a framework intended to integrate, connect, and synchronise code. The platform also includes support for different programming languages and allows all resources to include a URL address.

When you put the pieces together, Microsoft has created a platform that allows developers to use familiar tools such as Microsoft's Visual Studio and .Net services and then store the data in a Microsoft-owned cloud platform. Therefore, developers familiar with building .Net applications will be comfortable with Microsoft's cloud approach.

Like Google, Microsoft has a pay-as-you-go consumption model for its PaaS offering. And like Google, Microsoft doesn't charge for development and testing phases. It begins charging customers when the applications are deployed.

So again. Let's summarise. It's a seamless experience. It lets you get on with what you need to and it is a developers dream. You can also pretty much build a born in the cloud company – think Uber – and not own ANY of your own tech. Pretty nifty right?



# OFFICE WEB APPS

## Smart Computing with Windows Azure

Windows Azure is a set of technologies and services that empowers businesses to take advantage of the scalability and agility of cloud computing. The technology not only allows businesses to store data in the cloud, but also allows them to build and connect applications in the cloud similar to how businesses currently do it on premise.

**The flexibility** of this platform makes it easy to scale up or down to meet business needs under a pay-for-use business model. If you are a developer, Windows Azure is a great platform to develop and run applications in .NET, PHP, and Java, hosted in Microsoft datacentres.

**The platform** essentially eliminates the need to buy servers and allocate resources to manage the infrastructure, allowing organisations to focus more on responding to customer needs and growing their business.

**The database** component to the Windows Azure platform is SQL Azure. This relational database which is hosted in the cloud, is built on Microsoft's SQL technology, and runs in the same datacentres as Microsoft's Windows Azure.

**The growing** list of Windows Azure platform users includes companies and organisations, such as 3M, NASA, General Mills, Volvo, Xerox, T-Mobile, and Pixar. Not to mention the local Spaza shop in Dobsonville. #JustSaying.

In a white paper published by Microsoft entitled "The Economics of the Cloud," you find that Pixar Animation Studios runs its computer-animation rendering process on Windows Azure because every frame of its movies would take eight hours to render if it were running on a single processor. This means that on a single processor, an entire movie would take 272 years to render!

With the Windows Azure platform however, Pixar is able to get the job done as fast as they need to because the cloud business model allows a user to pay the same for 1 machine running for 1,000 hours as he would for accelerating the process by running 1,000 machines for 1 hour.



## SO WHY AZURE?

Some key considerations here are:

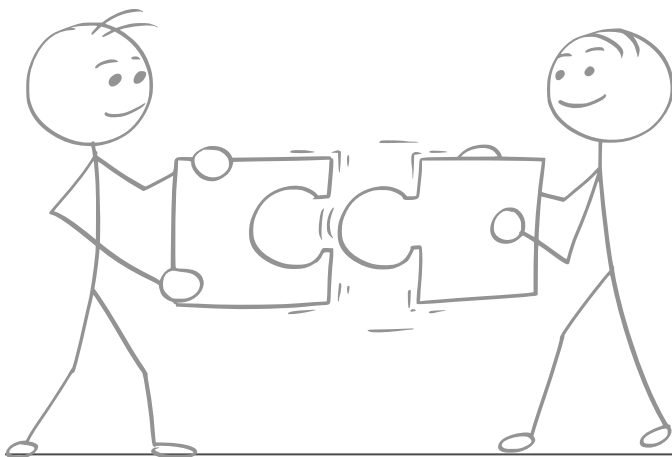
- You don't have to own it to use it
- You only pay for what you use
- You can do ANYTHING you did on site, in Azure, and the process is seamless
- It's not just for the big guns, think the Donsonville Spaza shop, its scalability and usage models and payment schemes lower the barriers to entry for who can use it

Azure is a big thing because it takes YOU the CUSTOMER to heart.

If you are developing on it, hosting your business on it, or using it to start a new business, you own the nature of how you use it without having to own the tin needed to host it.

With Azure the only limit is the imagination of your technical team.

If that's a problem we can suggest you add some millennials to the payroll. But please be prepared for the gratuitous hashtagging and Instagramming of the sheer AWESOMENESS of Azure.





Westcon-Comstor we are the industry leading information technology value added distributor.

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