CLOUD LAPTOPS

Have you looked for a new laptop lately? If so, you may have noticed that they are being sold with **smaller memory** hard drives. Most consumers are concerned about having ample storage on their devices yet the latest equipment is offering less. Why? As more and more information is being globally distributed between people and companies, storage space on individual devices has become increasingly scarce, thus resulting in the wider use of "**Cloud storage**". What exactly is this and why do you need it?

Whether you realize it or not, if you have an email address, you are using "Cloud" storage; if you purchase anything online or use Google Docs (to share information) you are using "Cloud" storage. The major tech and retail companies today all offer "Cloud" storage: *Google, Microsoft, Apple*, *Amazon* to name a few, and despite the security concerns voiced by many, "Cloud" storage continues to grow. We already know that the Internet and Web grow by simply having more users connected and more devices in operation, especially mobile ones…and a by-product of this phenomenon is the need for more personal storage space for all those photos, documents, music and videos. As with everything in life, there are Pluses and Minuses…

One benefit of "Cloud" storage is that the service you use is **provided and managed by someone else**, hence you need not buy licenses for additional software and be concerned with their updating; you need not worry about viruses or backing up your created files (e.g. Google Docs)... other parties are responsible for keeping your data safe. All you need to know is that with web-based services you can focus on whatever your job is and leave the rest to others – sort of your own IT employees.

Another benefit is basic "Cloud" services are **free** and **on-demand**; only buy or rent when and what you need. You may not be digging into your own pocket to pay - remember when you store hundreds of emails and photos on your Email account, you're doing it for free.

Some negatives of course exist:
- "Cloud" services usage depends on a reliable, stable internet connection which may not exist in many areas for many people.
- Since greater dependency is made on service providers, can your problems be resolved quickly and easily if one arises?
- Probably of most concern is the potential privacy and security risk of storing valuable data on someone else's system somewhere else in the world.

Judicious use of "Cloud" storage is a must; there are lots of new "Cloud" storage services being offered but as with any product, the consumer needs to be well-informed for his/her own protection. The more mobile we become with our devices, the greater our desire/need for "Cloud" storage - it is a natural progression of this technology and is unavoidable.

WISHING ALL OUR CLIENTS AND FRIENDS
AROUND THE WORLD
A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!