

# Cloud Choices for Microsoft Project Server 2013

— choosing the right cloud solution for your business —

Scott Chapman, President and Co-Founder Project Hosts

## Executive Summary

When considering a Microsoft Project Cloud solution, many business and technology buyers believe they have a limited number of options from which to choose. Contrary to this perception, there are a number of cloud choices available for Project Server 2013 / 2010, each of which is designed to appeal to a specific type of business need. With nearly a decade of hosting experience in Microsoft Project Clouds, Scott Chapman, president and co-founder of Project Hosts summarizes the fundamental cloud choices available for Project 2013 / 2010, their core attributes and advantages. Scott Chapman's bio can be viewed at [www.projecthosts.com/management.aspx](http://www.projecthosts.com/management.aspx)

## What's a Cloud?

Today we have the ability to access applications and sophisticated solutions from our mobile phones, tablets and notebook computers. Thanks in part to the Internet, the "Cloud" has become the moniker and means for accessing applications (apps) and solutions quickly and conveniently. Over the past decade, many cloud-based apps have become enterprise-capable, and are now part of the fundamental tools that enable us to control our business information, communications and collaboration efforts.

End users access cloud-based applications over the Internet using their web-browser or a mobile app. The "Cloud" is in actuality, a data center facility or a combination of multiple facilities that allow secure access to computing resources in the form of applications. This is where a users', or businesses' data is stored, processed and managed. A Microsoft Project Server 2013 hosted solution is a perfect example of a cloud-based enterprise app.

## Cloud Advantages

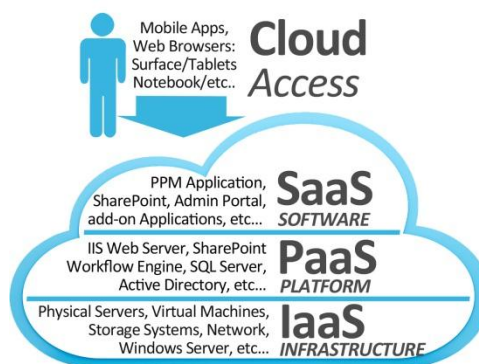
The growth and popularity of cloud-based enterprise apps has been staggering in recent years. Most proponents point directly to the economic and business advantages of this relatively new method of business computing as the reason. Industry analysts cite arguments such as computational maximization, internal resource optimization, and return on investment.

Business and technology managers offer a more pragmatic explanation, such as the ability for their businesses to get applications up and running faster, making applications more accessible to their users, reducing the strain on their IT staff, improving manageability and scalability, all while reducing CAPEX costs.

## What's Inside a Cloud?

A cloud-based service, although presented as a simple construct, is actually a highly sophisticated and specialized computing environment that is comprised of a complex array of hardware, storage, applications, systems software, networking, and many other elements. Cloud services are sometimes referred to as "Software as a Service" (SaaS) or hosted apps.

The ubiquitous availability of low-cost hardware and storage, high-bandwidth low-latency networks, service oriented architectures, hardware virtualization and automated monitoring has led to massive growth in the number of companies supporting and delivering cloud services.



The graphic above highlights some of the distinct layers that comprise a cloud platform. For Microsoft Project Server 2013 / Project 2013, the three layers: IaaS, PaaS, and SaaS combine to create the holistic cloud offering known as a Project Cloud.

Within these layers resides the Microsoft Project Server 2013 application, supported by foundation software such as the SQL database, SharePoint engine and more than 15 underlying system services. In order to deliver a 24x7 cloud experience to users, this multiplicity of software and hardware must be seamlessly integrated and managed by a highly trained team that possesses the innate knowledge and expertise to do so.

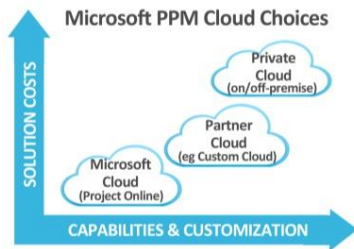
Today, however, many IT organizations fail to realize, or completely underestimate the absolute commitment they must make in order to build, integrate and manage their own, on/off-premise (private) cloud for their users. This realization was recently highlighted in a Forrester paper: "Why Your Enterprise Private Cloud is Failing<sup>1</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Ref: [http://blogs.forrester.com/james\\_staten/13-02-25-why\\_your\\_enterprise\\_private\\_cloud\\_is\\_failing](http://blogs.forrester.com/james_staten/13-02-25-why_your_enterprise_private_cloud_is_failing)

## Types of Project 2013 Clouds

When it comes to Microsoft Project cloud choices, there are three distinct “cloud types” available:

- **Private Cloud**  
Customer hosted
- **Partner Cloud**  
Partner hosted
- **Microsoft Cloud**  
Microsoft hosted



All three cloud-types deliver the core functionality of Microsoft Project Server 2013. The differences can be found in two areas, represented by the axes in the image above. First, the total cost of the solution, which in the case of a private cloud includes the infrastructure costs and all of the IT staff allocation expenses. Second, the full capabilities & customization of the solution – which may require 3<sup>rd</sup> Party application installation and integration, along with the ability to customize key elements of the solution, such as specifying a dedicated architecture.

### The Microsoft Cloud

The Microsoft Cloud is a standard multitenant solution called “Microsoft Project Online.” Released in February 2013, this is Microsoft’s first cloud service offering for Microsoft Project. It provides core Project services using a shared, multitenant model and is targeted to a broad range of customers including small to medium-sized businesses and distributed departments within a larger organization.

Microsoft Project Online can be lightly configured by customers and partners, supports only “marketplace apps” (apps written to a specific API for Project Online), has restricted admin controls to infrastructure components, and a one-size-fits-all approach to terms, conditions and security policies.

### The Private Cloud

A Private Cloud is a customer-created solution that is typically hosted and managed by their own IT organization, either on premise or within their off-site datacenter facility. A Private Cloud can deliver all the business and technology advantages that an enterprise may require for a highly tuned and fully customized Project 2013 or 2010-based cloud solution.

Customizations can include items such as: conforming to company-specific security policies, supporting custom-code and 3<sup>rd</sup> party applications, requiring a dedicated solutions architecture (as opposed to shared multitenant), and real-time reporting customizations. However, all of this customization will come at a huge cost and IT commitment. As such, Private Clouds, while once very popular, are now giving way to Microsoft’s Cloud and Partner Clouds.

## The Partner Cloud

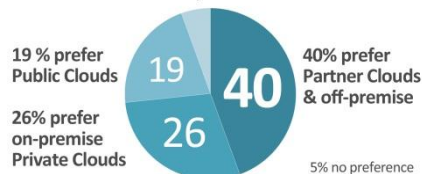
A Partner Cloud, as the name implies, is a solution or platform that is available from certified Microsoft Hosting Partners. These partners are Microsoft proficient (i.e. certified) in both the Project Server “application”, and in “hosting”, which includes the hardware and software infrastructure and operating policies necessary to host and manage a Project Server cloud service.

While differences exist between vendor service offerings in this category, Partner Clouds generally deliver a mix of benefits from both a Microsoft (Public) Cloud and a Private Cloud. More recently, with the introduction of Microsoft’s Project Online cloud service offering, Partner Clouds tend to focus on meeting the needs of larger organizations – delivering a highly customized Project Server implementation, while at the same time reducing the IT staffing expenses and the CAPEX that would have been required to host it on/off-premise in a Private Cloud.

An example of a Partner Cloud service offering is our own PPM Custom Cloud. Similar to a Private Cloud, a Custom Cloud

### Customer Cloud Preferences

Source: CapGemini 2013



provides a hosted Project Server 2013 or 2010 deployment that is capable of supporting a dedicated solutions architecture, support for custom code and 3<sup>rd</sup> party applications, customer-specific security policies, and automated real-time reporting.

### Choosing the Right Cloud

Choosing the optimal Project Server cloud depends on your unique business and technology requirements. The chart below highlights some of the core differences between Project Clouds. While many businesses may be satisfied with Microsoft’s new Project Online offering, others will seek a more customized Project experience that is tuned for their business and users.

|                                 | Microsoft Cloud           | Partner Cloud                                    | Private Cloud                                    |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| Enterprise Security             | Certified                 | Certified, Customer Policies                     | Corporate Policies                               |
| Architecture Onsite integration | Multitenant / via web API | Dedicated / via VPN                              | Dedicated / Native                               |
| App Integration / Admin         | Online apps / PWA Admin   | Full trust apps / OS Admin                       | Full trust apps / OS Admin                       |
| Reporting Tools / Data Sources  | Excel, PowerPivot / OData | Excel, PowerPivot, SSRS / Odata, OLAP, direct DB | Excel, PowerPivot, SSRS / Odata, OLAP, direct DB |
| Contract language               | Standardized              | Flexible   | Internal   |

LEVEL OF CONFIGURATION & CUSTOMIZATION →

Organizations that need more customization, advanced applications support or business flexibility will need to evaluate the option of either creating their own Private Cloud or leveraging a Partner Cloud platform. The choice between a Private and Partner Cloud comes down to four elements: cost economics, deployment timeframe, ability to fully dedicate IT staff, and a long term commitment to support the IaaS, PaaS, and SaaS infrastructure. Understanding your cloud options and selecting the cloud that is best suited to your business will help you gain the maximum value available from a cloud solution.