

Quickbooks in the Cloud: How Mobile Does Your Company Want to be?

Adam Stern



Employee demand for anywhere/anytime access to data and applications from any device is fueling a trend by accounting firms — and their clients among small- to mid-size manufacturers — to move QuickBooks to the cloud. To increase productivity, the growing mobile workforce requires that these organizations enable remote use of multiple devices, including smartphones, tablets, iPads, PCs and laptops.

With a QuickBooks terminal server, the application is installed and run on the hosting provider's terminal servers. Users gain access to the application remotely via an online connection. This helps to create a collaborative environment where CPAs, bookkeepers and manufacturers can share and exchange information and files in real time. Changes are updated instantly and accessible to the other members, enabling CPAs to monitor the work done by bookkeepers and verify them when and where necessary. And now that enterprise ERP solutions can live and prosper in the cloud — and that CSPs can install, manage, update, protect and support ERP software for a low monthly fee — the question has shifted from “to migrate or not to migrate?” to “which cloud environment suits us best?”

While enabling a mobile workforce can raise concerns about security, data protection and integrity typically is greater with a hosted solution than with an in-house implementation. That’s because commercial hosting services maintain multiple levels of security, firewalls, encryption, backup power and hazard prevention.

To ensure that QuickBooks application and data can't be accessed by unauthorized

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parties, remote users are provided with access passwords. Most CSPs (cloud service providers) implement the latest security strategies and comply with industry standards to ensure security and reliability. A conscientious CSP takes into consideration authentication, data integrity, confidentiality and availability when designing the structure of its cloud environment, then builds it over secure servers located within authorized data centers. Consequently, accounting firms and CPAs needn't worry about security when empowering mobile access to a QuickBooks terminal server.

With QuickBooks cloud hosting, mobile workers can access the application from anywhere, without any physical or device constraints. This increases database access speed, since there are no bandwidth restrictions. Users experience the very same QuickBooks functionality on the terminal server as they do on their desktops.

Beyond the seamless operational benefits of QuickBooks hosting for the manufacturer and its remote workers, several other advantages come into play. QuickBooks hosted in the cloud does not require hardware installation or configuration on the servers. Because servers are set up and monitored at the CSP's remote location, the organization does not incur any capital or operational expenses. System scalability also reduces costs — accounting firms can scale up or down as needed. The “pay as you go” business model of QuickBooks terminal server hosting makes it especially useful at tax time. Rather than buying new hardware to accommodate the additional QuickBooks workload, the firm can simply scale up in January and scale down after April 15 (or the quarterly filing period, as the case may be).

QuickBooks hosting on terminal servers tends to be extremely reliable, and the CSP's expertise can further minimize downtime. Because users gain access to an application that is in all ways identical to its desktop counterpart, there is no additional learning curve.

As an accountant might say, it all adds up: QuickBooks terminal server hosting is a smart option for accounting firms and those manufacturers who want to increase the productivity and efficiency of their mobile workforce.

Adam Stern is founder and CEO of Infinitely Virtual (www.infinitelyvirtual.com [1]), which offers cloud-based InfiniteERP. Twitter- @iv_cloudhosting.

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