

# Addressing the Opportunities and Challenges of Cloud Computing

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☒ Cloud computing enables users to store data on a network of servers that can be as far apart as the world is wide allowing real-time access to information from anywhere with Internet access. According to a recent International Data Corporation (IDC) [report](#), public cloud services revenue, already at \$45.7 billion in 2013, will grow at a compounded annual growth rate of 23 percent through 2018.

Government officials and public and private companies have already taken advantage of the cloud by using it to advance many industry practices, including the facilitation of improved accessibility, decreased maintenance times, streamlined data sources, enhanced flexibility and reduced costs, among other measurable benefits.

But while the influx of industry groups entering the cloud computing field is growing, some organizations still face certain challenges that hinder the adoption of this innovative technology. Security concerns, customization issues, and lack of awareness and skills around cloud computing are all factors that could deter its proper implementation.

In an attempt to address these challenges, the National Institute of Standards and Technology ([NIST](#)) has announced that it will develop three new working groups to fulfill cloud requirements from the [U.S. government's Cloud Computing Standards and Technology Roadmap](#), which details the high

priority tasks essential to cloud adoption in the federal government and other areas.

These new working groups will focus on cloud services, the federated community cloud and interoperability and portability.

NIST's Cloud Services Group will use the "NIST Cloud Computing Reference Architecture" to provide clear and consistent categories of cloud services to ensure that customers are able to understand and objectively evaluate products before committing to a potentially costly, long term contract. Meanwhile, the Interoperability and Portability working group will identify any issues concerning what's needed to facilitate cloud computing systems and discover best practices for the exchange, use and reuse of information in the cloud. In addition, the Federated Community Cloud group will be tasked with developing a framework to support disparate community cloud environments.

CNSI is harnessing the advantages of cloud computing on behalf of our clients, including the development of the [first ever cloud enabled Medicaid Management Information System for Michigan and Illinois](#). As more organizations and government agencies transition to the cloud, it will be important to follow NSIT's developments that will lead to greater implementation of this important technological advancement.

What are some other examples of cloud computing's impact on health care? Tweet @CNSICorp to let us know! Follow CNSI on [Twitter](#).