Small and midsize businesses cloud trust study:
U.S. study results

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Background

Microsoft Trustworthy Computing commissioned research, conducted by independent company comScore Inc., that focused on small and midsize businesses (SMBs) — companies with between 25 and 499 PCs — in France, Germany, the U.K. and the U.S. The study surveyed cloud users and noncloud users. It was conducted blind — respondents were not aware of Microsoft Corp.'s connection with the research. In addition, respondents were not qualified in terms of the cloud vendor, products or services they use.

The study had two goals:

- To better understand the cloud's benefits relating to improved security, privacy and enhanced service reliability; better time management; and cost savings
- To better understand perceptions about security, privacy and reliability that act as barriers to cloud adoption

For the purpose of the study, cloud users were defined as those that use one or more of the following services: data storage, email/calendar, online productivity, customer relationship management, database service, application hosting/management, manage and secure computers, enterprise resource planning, and compute capacity to run application code.

This document summarizes the key findings from the research conducted in the U.S. For more information, including findings in the other countries in which research was conducted, go to http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/news/presskits/security.

Snapshot of U.S. findings

Benefits (of the cloud)

- Time saved managing IT (51 percent) and fewer internal IT resources needed (50 percent) were considered the biggest benefits of cloud services by SMBs.

- 94 percent of SMBs have experienced security benefits in the cloud that they didn't have with their on-premises service, such as up-to-date systems, up-to-date antivirus protection and spam email management.

- 91 percent of SMBs said the security of their organization had been positively impacted as a result of cloud adoption.

- 75 percent of SMBs that use the cloud have experienced improved service availability since moving to the cloud.

- 96 percent of SMBs that use the cloud said they are confident their cloud provider can quickly and effectively restore services during an outage.

Reinvestment (of savings as a result of using the cloud)

- One-half of SMBs that use the cloud have been able to pursue new opportunities because of time saved managing security in the cloud.

- 70 percent of SMBs have reinvested money saved as a result of moving to the cloud in areas such as product development and innovation, marketing, and expanding into new markets.

- Improving customer service (36 percent) was cited as the main savings reinvestment for SMBs that have adopted the cloud.

Barriers (to cloud adoption)

- 32 percent of noncloud users felt if there were industry standards for cloud security, they would be more likely to consider adoption.

- 60 percent of SMBs that do *not* use the cloud cited concerns around data security as an inhibitor to adoption.

- One of the top reasons SMBs (42 percent) haven't adopted the cloud is because they are concerned about its reliability.

Comprehensive U.S. findings

Benefits
- **51 percent of cloud users said that since moving to the cloud they spent less time managing IT overall, and 50 percent said they used fewer internal IT resources.**
- 43 percent of cloud users said they wished they had moved to the cloud earlier.

Security
- **94 percent of SMBs have experienced security benefits in the cloud that they didn't previously have with their on-premises service, such as up-to-date systems, up-to-date antivirus protection and spam email management.**
- **91 percent of SMBs said the security of their organization had been positively impacted as a result of cloud adoption.**
- Nearly all SMBs that use the cloud (91 percent) said their cloud provider made it easier for their organization to meet compliance obligations.
- 59 percent of cloud users said they benefitted from their systems being up to date since moving to the cloud.
- 55 percent of cloud users have reduced the amount of time they spend managing security since moving to the cloud.
- More than one-half of cloud users said data security had improved since adopting the cloud.

Privacy
- 62 percent of respondents said their levels of privacy protection increased as a result of moving to the cloud.
- 49 percent of SMBs said they feel very comfortable with their cloud provider's ability to manage data privacy.

Reliability
- **96 percent of SMBs that use the cloud are confident their cloud provider has mechanisms in place to quickly and effectively restore systems during an outage.**
- As a result of improved service availability, 86 percent of SMBs have saved time since moving to the cloud, and 68 percent of those same SMBs saved money.
- **75 percent of SMBs that use the cloud said they experienced improved service availability.**
- 73 percent of cloud users said they are more confident in the integrity of their data now that they are using a cloud service.
- Two-thirds of SMBs that use the cloud said that, compared with their former on-premises solution, their cloud service provider is able to restore service more quickly.
- 61 percent of SMBs that use the cloud said both the frequency *and* length of downtime had decreased since moving to the cloud.

Reinvestment

- Since moving to the cloud, 69 percent of SMBs said they have saved money. **70 percent of SMBs have used their savings to fund activities that benefit and grow their businesses:**
    - **36 percent have invested in customer service**
    - 24 percent have invested in product development and innovation
    - 21 percent have invested in marketing
- **One-half of SMBs that use the cloud have been able to pursue new opportunities because of time saved managing security in the cloud.**

Barriers

- **60 percent of SMBs that do not use the cloud cited concerns around data security as an inhibitor to adoption.**
- 45 percent of SMBs that do not use the cloud are concerned about the lack of control over data in the cloud.
- **One of the top reasons SMBs (42 percent) haven't adopted the cloud is because they are concerned about its reliability.**
- 39 percent of SMBs that do not use the cloud cited compliance as a reason why they have not adopted cloud services.
- Factors that would lead noncloud users to consider cloud adoption are the following:
    - **Having industry standards for cloud security (32 percent)**
    - Having a comparison report of current IT infrastructure versus using a cloud solution (31 percent)

Note: With pure probability samples of 106 (U.S. cloud) and 105 (U.S. noncloud), one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results for U.S. cloud users and nonusers would have a sampling error of +/- 9.5 and 9.6 percentage point(s), respectively. Besides sampling error, all sample studies and polls may be subject to several additional sources of error that cannot be calculated, including, but not limited to, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-study weighting and adjustments. It should be noted that the sample used in this study is based on those who initially self-selected for participation; therefore, no complete estimate of sampling error can be calculated.