Better Security in the Cloud
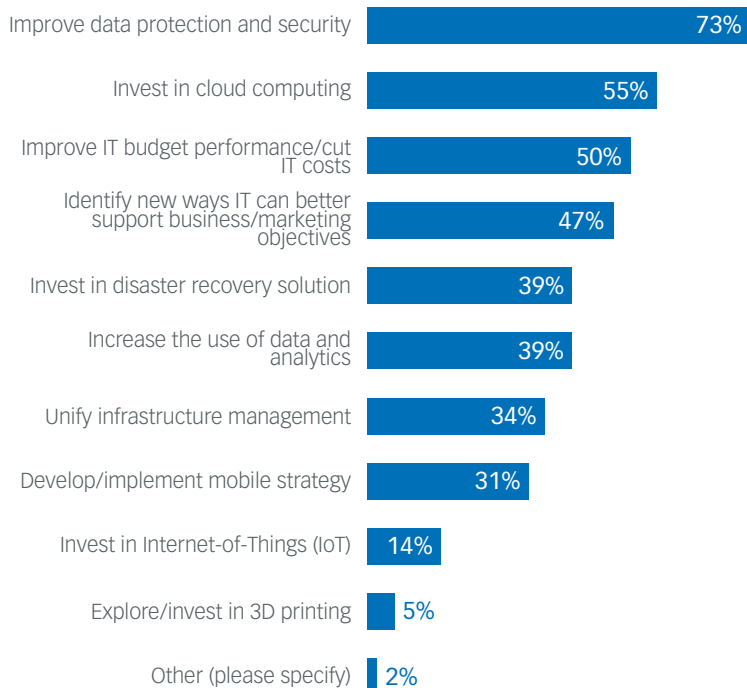
Cloud-based security services offer greater protection with reduced cost and complexity.

2015 IT Priorities

Priority	%
Improve data protection and security	73%
Invest in cloud computing	55%
Improve IT budget performance/cut IT costs	50%
Identify new ways IT can better support business/marketing objectives	47%
Invest in disaster recovery solution	39%
Increase the use of data and analytics	39%
Unify infrastructure management	34%
Develop/implement mobile strategy	31%
Invest in Internet-of-Things (IoT)	14%
Explore/invest in 3D printing	5%
Other (please specify)	2%

Source: IDG Research Services; Base: 64 qualified respondents

Few would argue with the statement that security is a top priority for IT departments at companies large and small today. Data is the currency of the digital age and the lifeblood of organizations, so strategies to protect corporate data are growing in importance and are now a topic of C-suite consideration. So with high-profile data breaches continuing to occur across industries, security leaders are revamping their strategies to keep pace. According to IDG Enterprise's State of the CSO 2015 survey, nearly half of respondents say they are currently in the process of reevaluating their security practices.

However, as companies evolve their security strategies, they often become more complex and expensive – but not necessarily more effective. Layering on products in attempts to secure IT environments from end to end often results in unnecessary cost and complexity. What's more, most

companies lack the in-house expertise required to analyze threats and keep up with day-to-day security operations. And so, despite the best intentions, many security strategies fall short of their goals and leave companies vulnerable just as threats become more sophisticated and targeted.

At the same time, IT departments are viewing cloud-based services as a better way to deliver the services business users need. In a recent survey conducted by IDG Research Services, investing in cloud services ranks as the second priority (55%) for respondents in 2015, topped only by the goal of improving data protection and security (73%). Yet only one-third of respondents are considering using cloud to achieve better data protection and security. These survey results demonstrate that an important opportunity is being overlooked.

Cloud benefits are clear

As the survey results indicate, many companies continue to struggle with the idea of turning over the highly important task of securing data to a cloud service provider.
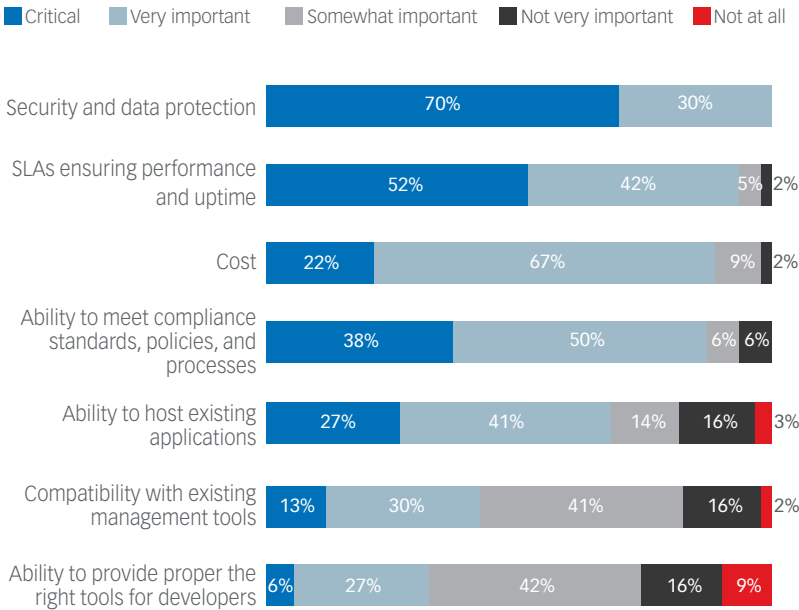
"The cloud's growing prevalence is drastically changing the way we do business and conduct our daily lives. As the digital exchange of business and personal information increases, data security and privacy are paramount and must be protected at all levels," says Jonathan Trull, chief information security officer with Qualys. "The cloud offers many benefits in securing business data, and as people better understand these advantages, we are seeing a mindset shift for adopting cloud services to manage and implement IT security programs."

One of the most significant benefits of cloud-based security services is that companies can turn over their security operations to experts. Instead of having to hire security analysts and practitioners, companies can rely on the extensive knowledge and experience of a service provider that specializes in the field. And because they no longer have to concern themselves with keeping up with software patches and threat alerts, IT staff can focus on more strategic initiatives and let the security service provider handle the important – but often tedious – task of dealing with the

TOP CONSIDERATIONS FOR EVALUATING CLOUD PROVIDERS/SOLUTIONS

■ Critical ■ Very important ■ Somewhat important ■ Not very important ■ Not at all

Consideration	Critical	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all
Security and data protection	70%	30%			
SLAs ensuring performance and uptime	52%	42%	5%	2%	
Cost	22%	67%	9%	2%	
Ability to meet compliance standards, policies, and processes	38%	50%	6%	6%	
Ability to host existing applications	27%	41%	14%	16%	3%
Compatibility with existing management tools	13%	30%	41%	16%	2%
Ability to provide proper the right tools for developers	6%	27%	42%	16%	9%

Source: IDG Research Services; Base: 64 qualified respondents

constant stream of security information and updates. For these reasons, a company's data is likely to be better protected by a service provider – one that has built a business around its security technology and expertise – than it would be by the in-house IT department.

Other benefits of cloud-based security services include:

- **Lower costs.** Companies can avoid the up-front costs of purchasing, configuring, and installing the hardware and software required to implement their security strategies and take advantage of the cloud's pay-as-you-go model. This turns CAPEX into more predictable OPEX, and allows companies to pay only for the services needed. And because they are buying in volume, service providers can purchase infrastructure technology at a discount, and then pass those savings on to their clients.

- **Faster time to value.** Respondents to the IDG Research Services survey say it takes, on average, four and a half months to procure and deploy a new security solution. Given how quickly threats evolve and permeate existing security measures, new solutions can be rendered obsolete before

they are even put in use. Not only does this practice expose a company to risk, it also wastes IT resources. With cloud services, companies can be up and running within a few hours.

- **Scalability.** With cloud services, companies pay only for what they use. No longer must companies over-provision "just in case"; rather, security services can be expanded to accommodate more users or data, or scaled back as needed. Additional security features can also be added quickly and easily.

- **Always up to date.** This is particularly important with security, since companies need to be aware of new threat information as it becomes available. With cloud services, companies can rely on the provider to not only stay on top of new threats, but also analyze whether these threats apply to clients' environments, and protect them accordingly.

Choosing the right provider

When it comes to partnering with a cloud security service provider, companies should make sure they find the right fit. Organizations in highly regulated industries need to ensure their provider adheres to all compliance mandates that apply, and all companies should make sure a provider can meet their internal compliance standards and policies. Companies should look for providers with proven track records in protecting organizations that operate in similar industries or with similar processes. And they should explore service-level-agreement parameters to be sure that the security services offered meet their own risk-reduction and performance goals.

Qualys is the leading provider of continuous security and compliance management solutions that enable organizations of all sizes to easily and cost-effectively ensure that IT environments remain secure and complaint. Based on a single software-as-a-service platform, Qualys Cloud, all of the company's continuous security and compliance solutions can be deployed within hours anywhere around the globe, providing an immediate view of an organization's network assets, network and application security posture, vulnerability management and remediation workflow, and compliance with regulations and organizational policy. Qualys' continuous security and compliance solution is widely deployed around the world.

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