

# Curing the Cloud Hangover

The party's over. Here's how to recover from your cloud migration—and what it's really costing you.

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Your enterprise rushed to the cloud 5-10 years ago chasing promises of elastic infrastructure and operational nirvana. Now you're stuck with soaring bills, diminishing returns, and vendors who know you can't leave. Here's how you got there—and what the hangover really costs.

Cloud computing started with genuine innovation and real benefits. The early promise was simple: rent infrastructure instead of buying it, scale on demand, move faster than your competitors. But while you came for the elastic infrastructure, you stayed because leaving became impossibly expensive.

Clouds are great. They're a vital part of modern computing, and the Internet as we know it couldn't function without them. But hyperscalers monetized your migration, locked you into proprietary platforms, and now exploit your dependency with impunity. Big consulting firms made billions convincing you to go all-in. And now—as GEICO discovered when their cloud bill came in at 2.5 times their annual projections—you're discovering that the hangover is brutal.

## How We Got Here

When Amazon Web Services (AWS) launched virtual storage and computing in 2006, it kicked off the cloud computing industry. The value proposition was clear: rent infrastructure instead of buying it, scale on demand, and move faster than your competitors.

For startups avoiding capital dilution and enterprises seeking geographic redundancy without building their own data centers, it made perfect sense: rent servers that scaled infinitely, paid for by the hour with your credit card. Startups no longer had to buy expensive hardware up front or dilute equity to finance infrastructure they might never need. “Elastic compute” was the great equalizer: an operational model that matched uncertainty with flexibility.

Enterprise IT departments began to take notice. For them, the big appeal was on-demand capacity: why buy servers for Black Friday traffic that sit idle the other 364 days a year? Instead, cloud meant that they could “own the base and rent the spike”—keeping steady workloads on-premises while using cloud bursts to handle surges, experiments, or temporary projects. It was a pragmatic way to avoid overbuying hardware while enabling agility.

Then, something subtle, but far more transformative happened: **infrastructure became code.**

IT operators moved, added, and changed their systems by typing instructions on a keyboard, rather than by spending a night in a data center. No more three-month hardware procurement cycles. No more racking servers at 2 AM. Infrastructure as Code meant you could spin up entire environments in minutes.

This completely changed computing. DevOps emerged in 2009 when Patrick Debois coined the term after the **10+ Deploys Per Day** talk at O'Reilly's Velocity Conference. It was now possible to continuously deploy applications, rather than waiting for maintenance windows. The timing created a perfect storm: Agile development approaches had emerged in 2001, pushing teams toward iterative development. By the late 2000s, cloud infrastructure provided the technical foundation for these cultural shifts. You couldn't spin up test environments in minutes with physical servers—but you could with clouds. Teams stopped delivering monolithic projects once every fiscal year and started releasing Minimum Viable Products, then iterating daily. The cloud wasn't just a new place to run software—it was a new way to **build** it.

Clouds also changed how companies handled backups, disaster recovery, and cross-region redundancy. Spinning up a failover cluster across continents became a line item instead of a capital project. The global Internet—and the organizations running atop it—became dependent on this new utility. Within a decade, cloud wasn't a strategy or even a choice. It was simply part of computing. Which is precisely what made the next phase so lucrative—for everyone except you.

## Here come the consulting shops

When multi-billion-dollar technology shifts happen, the Big Four consulting firms are never far behind. As enterprises raced to the cloud, these firms saw a once-in-a-generation opportunity. Cloud was the next wave, and they intended to ride it.

The result was a series of decade-long, multi-billion dollar cloud partnerships with tech giants:

- In 2000, [Accenture and Microsoft created Avanade](#), a joint venture that foreshadowed today's deep, symbiotic relationships between consultants and platform vendors.
- In 2015, [Accenture launched the Accenture AWS Business Group](#) to deliver migration and managed-services offerings. By 2022, the company had 20,000+ cloud specialists, 24,000+ AWS certifications, multiple joint innovation centers, and over \$20 billion in combined AWS workload migrations. The companies renewed their joint investment for another five years; and in 2025, they expanded into public-sector workloads—defense, national security, and government—through a joint go-to-market initiative.
- Deloitte [partnered with Google Cloud in 2017](#), expanding that alliance in 2022 and again in 2025 to include “agentic AI” solutions that bridge ServiceNow and Google Cloud. Along the way, it was Google Cloud's Global Service Partner of the Year four times.
- PwC and Microsoft have been collaborating on cloud transformation since at least 2008, with a significant expansion in 2015. A 2021 announcement focused on [national deployments in Qatar](#); by 2025, the partnership had [evolved into joint development of AI-agent architectures](#).
- Capgemini was named [Google Cloud's Industry Solutions Partner of the Year](#) in 2020. By 2025, their partnership expanded to a global “Agentic AI” initiative.
- In 2021, Ernst & Young extended its strategic partnership with Microsoft, citing a [US \\$15 billion growth opportunity](#). EY committed to training over 150,000 of its employees on Microsoft technologies. That alliance produced [EY's Tax Copilot](#) (2023) and [Competitive Edge](#) (2024)—both built on Azure's OpenAI Service.

Other firms, such as **KPMG, Atos, Cognizant, Capgemini**, and others, followed similar playbooks.

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## Welcome to the Cloud Migration

The world has gone digital, and with it, the way we manage our data. The cloud migration landscape is changing, and with it, the way we manage our data. The cloud migration landscape is changing, and with it, the way we manage our data. The cloud migration landscape is changing, and with it, the way we manage our data.

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### How the Cloud Migration is Changing the Way We Manage Our Data

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- Evaluate application dependencies, assess application architecture, and identify the cloud migration strategy.
- Develop the cloud migration plan, including the migration timeline, the migration team, and the migration budget.
- Implement the cloud migration plan, including the migration of applications, data, and infrastructure.

Cloud computing is a game-changer for businesses, offering a range of benefits, including scalability, flexibility, and cost savings. The cloud migration landscape is changing, and with it, the way we manage our data.

The cloud is a cloud problem, and it's time to solve it.

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