

Hosting. We love I.T.





HOSTING

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Hosting...

Welcoming I.T solutions.

Why Claritas:

Founded in 1997, Claritas Solutions provides independent IT services and solutions across all industry sectors.

Claritas works closely with clients to understand business strategies, utilising an independent approach to defining solutions that underpins a clients business objectives.

Claritas design solutions to enable companies to gain a competitive advantage, whilst reducing costs and mitigating risk.

Claritas work with organisations in a variety of different sectors, ranging from manufacturing to finance in the private sector and securing some the UK's most prominent public sector organisations such as police and government departments. These organisations rely on the IT team of technical experts to deliver truly exceptional 24/7 service, and to ensure the smooth running of their own businesses.



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The Claritas clear thinking introduction to... Hosting.

What is a Data Centre?

Data centres are all about the location of centralised IT infrastructure. Quite literally, they are where computational data is stored and processed.

Data Centre is quite a broad term and can be used, quite correctly, in a number of different scenarios. It is usual that an organisation, including relatively small companies, locate all their servers and data storage in one or more centralised location, and users access these resources via a local area network. These centralised locations could be described as data centres.

However, the data centre name tag is more commonly associated with large purpose built locations, which may be owned by a large organisation for its own exclusive use, or is owned by a company that is intent on selling data centre services to other organisations. The term used to describe this moving of infrastructure and services to a purpose-built location is "External Hosting".

Characteristics of a purpose built data centre

There are usually several "characteristics" that a data centre possesses:

- Strong Physical Security (Doors, walls, turnstiles, formalized access procedures, security staff, CCTV, etc.)
- Good power provision, including emergency energy sources e.g. backup generators, redundant connections to the energy grid
- Good telecommunication and connectivity links
- Air conditioning to keep a steady environmental temperature/humidity is the norm
- Ability to cater for the delivery and deployment of large computer equipment (i.e. large goods-in area, lifts, ramps, large doorways)

There are various reasons why organisations choose to use data centres. To look at the advantages of using data centres is useful ie has:

- Usually more improved security than normal corporate offices
- Cheaper and a better range of power provision and connectivity options compared to other locations
- Controlled and monitored environment, including cooling, air-circulation, humidity, fire suppression systems, etc
- Improved capacity and scalability compared to non-purpose built premises
- Ability to offer shared services such as shared storage, shared backup and shared firewall



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What kind of services can be hosted?

Traditionally, web services, including static “brochure-ware” web sites and transactional web-sites, have long been prime candidates for outsourcing to external hosting. Increasingly other types of IT services are being moved to the “cloud”. These include:

- Hosted email and collaboration (including Managed Exchange, SharePoint and CRM)
- Enterprise Relationship Planning and Business Bespoke Applications
- Extranet or partnership collaboration applications
- Applications where compliance or high levels of data security are required

All of these characteristics allow IT equipment to be located and kept working. The most important part of this communications pathway, from a customer’s perspective, is the access method used to connect to the chosen provider’s network. These can be delivered in various ways.

Types of hosting

An external hosting services company can provide various types of hosting:

Dedicated or shared – Equipment and resources can be used exclusively by the customer (dedicated), or can be shared across various customers where costs and total cost of ownership can be reduced.

Fully managed, Co-managed or Self-managed/Co-located

The level of involvement of the customer in the upkeep and maintenance of a solution is another way that services are differentiated. Customers may only be looking for the physical space and environment to place their own equipment, and will then completely support their own deployment. This is called collocated hosting or collocation.

Customers may wish to use the services of a hosting company to look after some or all of its hosted deployment. It is common that customers want to maintain and managed their own applications and services, but leave the management of equipment and infrastructure to the hosting provider. This is called infrastructure management or a co-managed solution. It is usual in these types of management that clear lines of demarcation and responsibility are agreed.

Lastly, a customer may want little or no involvement in the hosting of their services, and may engage the hosting service company to provide the complete solution. The client’s access to this type of solution will be quite limited, and the hosting company is responsible for the whole service or application’s availability.



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Things to consider when buying external hosting

There are several considerations to be made when examining external hosting:

- Location of data centre in relation to the staff that may need to visit
- Physical space of equipment to be deployed (usually measured in standard rack units (u))
- Power requirements of equipment
- Shared or dedicated infrastructure
- Remote “Hands and Eyes” – Ability to get support personnel to the hosting location to provide physical activities, e.g. hard reboot of equipment, insertion and removal of physical media (such as backup tapes, USB drives, installation CD-ROMs/DVD-ROMs, etc.)
- Future requirements

Availability

It is usual that business critical applications are placed in data centre environments, and of paramount importance, is the availability of these services. The availability of solutions can be greatly enhanced by placing them in a location where connectivity, power and environmental factors are closely monitored and regulated (i.e. a data centre). Single data centre availability can be improved by the deployment of backup power generation, deploying redundant equipment or having spares close by, and the proximity of engineers and technical personal to the deployment.

It may be necessary to ensure service availability in an eventuality that affects the entire data centre (such as a major environmental catastrophe). Multiple data centres in separate geographical locations can be deployed to provide a worldwide service, which still operate in the event that one data-centre location becoming unavailable.

When designing these dual or multiple data centre deployments, care should be taken on the inter site connectivity (how data is shared between sites) and the load balancing/traffic redirection (how traffic requesting services is directed to the correct/available data centre).go down the same hole in the road, or terminate in the same piece of equipment).



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