

VIEWPOINT



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Choosing Your Connection to the Cloud

Why a private network connection to cloud-based applications is the right decision for your enterprise

What criteria should companies use when deciding how to connect to the cloud?

For most private applications driven by things like business continuity/disaster recovery [BCDR], big data analytics or enterprise resource planning [ERP] systems, there are three primary criteria: security, application performance and bandwidth requirements. These applications demand high levels of security, the ability to move large workloads, and consistent, predictable data flow.

Level 3® Cloud Connect Solutions employ our global private network and security services to create reliable, highly responsive and secure cloud ecosystems that customers can count on to deliver their critical applications while protecting their IT assets and information. Not only does the network connect an organization to the cloud, it's also a key driver of the performance of cloud-based applications. Without a solid network strategy, successful migration to the cloud is virtually impossible, so it's critically important companies ask the right questions and carefully vet potential carriers.

How can companies determine a carrier's ability to provide the level of network performance and security they need?

Companies should look for private connectivity to the desired cloud resource for enhanced performance and security. Equally important, solutions should be designed to meet the underlying business needs; for example, reliability and latency requirements of supported applications, latency guarantees and dynamically burstable bandwidth.

What should companies look for in SLAs specific to cloud-based performance?

Definitely look for availability SLAs and latency guarantees, which are important considerations for the majority of enterprises. However, don't confuse network SLAs and cloud-service SLAs—they're separate.

Do all carriers offer the same level of flexibility to tap into bandwidth dynamically and pay for only what is consumed?

Each carrier takes a slightly different approach, but the key is "dynamic." Level 3's bandwidth-on-demand enables enterprises to set up an oversized port that they can throttle up and down based on application and user demand. The enterprise pays only for what is used.

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What does Level 3 offer for connecting to cloud-based resources that other carriers do not?

We take a holistic and consultative approach to building network solutions designed to optimize migration, and we operate public, private and hybrid cloud environments. We are building out an ecosystem to make that possible with the leading cloud service providers worldwide, including private network connections to both Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Microsoft® Windows Azure™. We are able to reach the majority of AWS locations globally from our network. And we support both Windows Azure ExpressRoute Exchange and Network Service Provider models. Level 3 Cloud Connect Solutions open the door for enterprises to connect securely to leading cloud resources, optimize their applications and unlock the cloud's true potential. ■