Hosted Sage

An introduction to running
Sage Accounts on Hosted Desktops
from Your Office Anywhere

Sage Accounts and ACT! are two of the most common hosted applications and are great examples of how businesses can benefit from Cloud hosting.

This paper sets out to explain what Hosted Applications are, how they work, their features and benefits and the things to look out for when comparing hosting providers.

What are Hosted Applications?

If you are running anything but the most basic version of Sage Accounts or ACT! CRM, or need more than one person to access the database at the same time then you ideally need a server of some description to store the database. Traditionally a server would sit in your office, be running 24x7 and you would be responsible for making sure it is backed up, kept free of virus and properly patched and maintained.

With the advent of Cloud Computing, there is no longer a need to keep that server on site.

Your Office Anywhere's application hosting uses Microsoft Terminal Services or Remote Desktop services to enable you to run almost any Windows application as if it was on your local computer, when in fact it is running on a server "In the Cloud", or in reality in our UK Data Centre.

The beauty of hosted applications is that they take advantage of the economies of scale that provide an Enterprise quality IT infrastructure at a fraction of the price. The investment (and risk) involved in implementing and maintaining your own server along with associated Windows licences is no longer needed.

Cloud hosting your application requires a simple low monthly fee per user. You can add users or take users away as needed (something you can't do if you've bought software licences).

As an example a business with their own copy of Sage 50 Accounts, hosting it with Your Office Anywhere, including Microsoft Windows CALs and Remote Desktop CALs would cost from as little as £19.90 per user per month.

You would have a dedicated Windows 2012r2 Server, CPU and memory resources will increase in line with the number of users on the platform or additional resources can be rented

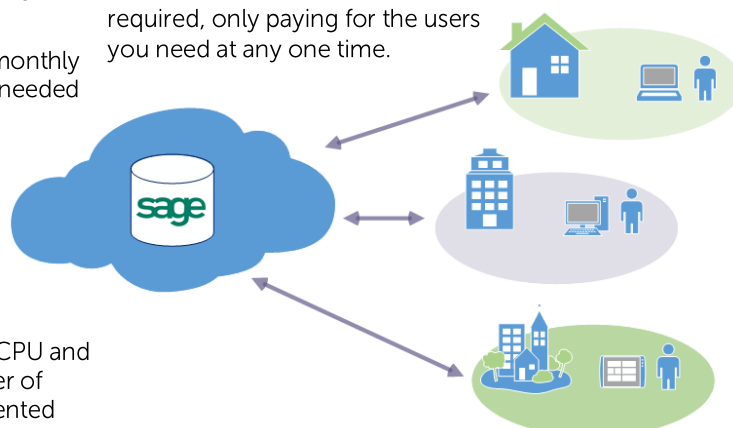where an application is particularly resource hungry.

A minimum of 10GB of storage is included on the platform and additional storage can also be rented.

Hosting Sage in this method also means you can integrate it with other applications such as Microsoft Office.

You can run your applications anywhere there is an Internet connection and on virtually any device, including MACs, PCs, iPads and Android tablets. You don't need to install Sage or ACT! itself on the device. You can also run it from a secure web site if, for example you needed to run it from a hotel, airport or Internet café. See the section later in this document on the different methods of running hosted applications

Your server and data are supported and maintained by Your Office Anywhere, including backups, antivirus and Windows Updates.

We also don't lock you into any long term contracts, after the first 2 months you can cancel at any time. You are also free to add or remove users as and when required, only paying for the users you need at any one time.

Sage 200

Sage 200 is often used by slightly larger businesses with a greater number of users. It requires a Microsoft SQL database which is often housed on a separate server from the application.

SQL server can be a significant additional cost when implementing Sage 200 on site. The server licence is close to £1000* and each individual user Client Access Licence (CAL) is about £185 per user. This is before any server hardware and Microsoft Windows licences.

Typically you could be looking at between £5,000 and £6,000 capital outlay or more, depending upon the number of users.

This is where hosting Sage 200 with Your Office Anywhere can really show financial benefits. Using our economies of scale we can host the SQL database on a dedicated instance on our enterprise class SQL server for only £40 per month, and only £7 per user per month for the SQL CALs.

This includes backing up the database along with all the usual support and maintenance of the server.

With Windows and Terminal Services/Remote Desktop CALS included a 10 user Sage 200 system would cost just over £300 per month. This would be an operating cost as opposed to capital which may also be an advantage.

Key Features

- Access your application from anywhere over the internet.
- Run Sage or ACT! on most devices.
- Share data with colleagues or associates.
- Interface with other applications on the server
- Rent not buy Windows licences enabling flexible staffing.
- OPEX not CAPEX
- Forget about server maintenance, backups or anti-virus
- Flexible month by month contract
- Enterprise class infrastructure providing resilience and security
- ISO 27001 accredited

Sage Manufacturing and other products

We can host Sage, ACT! or any other Windows based application, if it runs on Windows then we can host it on our platform. All you need is a reliable Internet connection with a decent bandwidth, 2mbps or greater.

We are very flexible and will work closely with you or your implementation partner to provide the most appropriate infrastructure for your application and database.

We can also competitively quote for Sage or ACT! licences if you don't already own your own licence, as well as licencing and hosting applications such as Microsoft Office to work alongside or interface with Sage or ACT!. Please get in touch and we will happily draw up a quotation the same day.
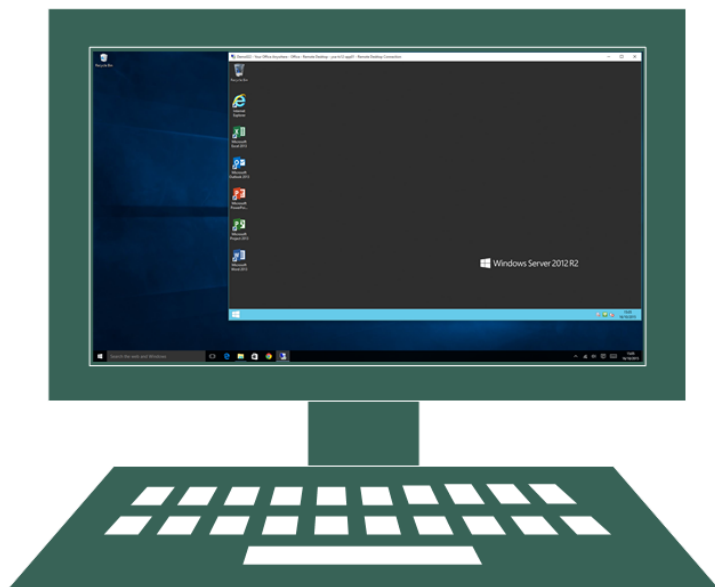
* Prices correct at time of writing - June 2015 - based on SQL Server Std 2014 purchased under the Microsoft Open Licence Programme

Three ways to run your hosted desktop/applications

Hosted desktops from Your Office Anywhere use solely Microsoft technology to deliver the desktop or individual applications running on them.   There are 3 different methods of running the desktop or applications and it is down to the customer's preference or specific circumstances which method is used.
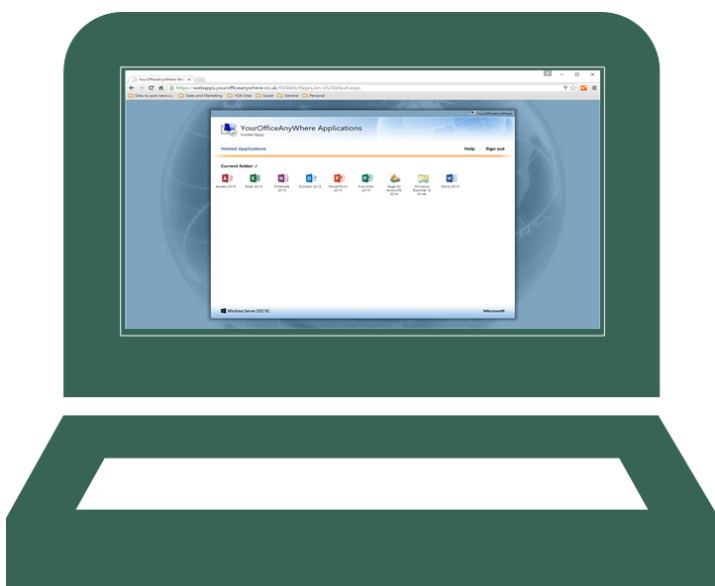

Full Remote Desktop

A desktop within a desktop. In the picture opposite you can see a hosted desktop (black screen) running on a Windows 2012 server.   The hosted desktop is running on a Windows 10 PC, but could equally be a MAC, iPad or Android tablet

The Remote Desktop can be run full screen or reduced down as required by the individual user.

RemoteApps and Desktop Connections

Instead of a full desktop , individual applications can be published to a Windows 7, 8 or 10 Start Menu/Start Screen.   The application, once launched, will look and behave exactly like a locally installed application, they also have access to a hosted Home Drive (H:) and a shared data (S:) drive, to enable multiple users to work on the same data.

Web Portal

With an easy to remember URL and secure authentication users can access their business applications from a web browser anywhere there is an Internet connection.

Great if you want to check in from home or while on holiday and don't have a laptop.

Your Office Anywhere

Technical Pages

The Hosted Servers

Every Your Office Anywhere hosted desktop customer gets their own dedicated Windows 2012r2 server.   This is a virtual server with a starting specification of 2GB RAM and 1 processor core.

The virtual server runs on one of dozens of physical server "Hosts", the hosts each have 96GB RAM and 8 processor cores.   As the customer's server is virtual if there was ever a hardware problem with a host, or it was just overloaded we can move the customer's server to another host instantly and seamlessly with no interruption to the users, they won't know it's happened.

Each physical host runs many virtual servers enabling maximum utilisation of resources which in turn reduces costs.

The host servers are housed in a state of the art data centre, accredited to ISO 27001 for Information Security Management.   The data centre has a host of security and availability measures including multiple internet connections through different providers, uninterruptible power supplies and diesel generators.

Data is stored on a high spec Storage Area Network (SAN) with fast disks running at 15,000rpm

Backups

One of the advantages to hosted desktops is running your systems on "Enterprise" class infrastructure.   This is particularly true of backups which have often been a headache for small businesses, remembering to take tapes off site or worrying about whether something has been backed up correctly or having the skills to restore it.   Data, Operating Systems, and Databases are backed up to disk and then transmitted offsite to a second data centre in case of disaster.

The backup policies for Your Office Anywhere are as follows:

- Documents such as Word or Excel stored on the Shared drive are backed up three times a day. Backups are retained for 20 days.

- Server operating systems, which may include applications and their databases are backed up once a week with 1 copy being retained.   Where it is necessary to store volatile data on a server instead of a shared drive, this can be backed up more frequently.

- SQL Databases are backed up daily and copies kept for 1 week.

- All Exchange servers are backed up daily. Items in Recover Deleted Items are retained for 30 days

- We can provide specific backup requirements for customers please provide your requirements and ask for a quote

Server Management

Hosting with Your Office Anywhere means you can forget about the day to day maintenance and management of your server, we look after all of that.

All servers have Anti-Virus installed and centrally managed.   Critical Windows updates are deployed centrally and any Operating System issues are dealt with by our dedicated UK help desk.

When your operating system comes to end of life and is no longer supported we will upgrade your server to the latest version at no extra cost.

Why Choose Your Office Anywhere?

At Your Office Anywhere we have been delivering Cloud hosting solutions longer than almost anyone is in the market long before anyone coined the term "Cloud" and certainly longer than names like Microsoft Azure or Amazon Web Services.   In that time we have learned what customers want from a hosted desktop service and have developed a platform which delivers flexibility, scalability, security and convenience at a really competitive price.   As an organisation we are proud to be certified for ISO 27001 Information Security Management System, so you know your data is safe with us.

Listed below are some of the features and benefits you should look for in a hosted desktop provider, that come as standard with Your Office Anywhere:

- UK Helpdesk manned by Microsoft Certified Professionals available on call 24/7 for critical issues.

- Helpdesk available by phone or email, plus access to knowledgebase.

- Monitoring of CPU and Memory usage for performance of the server.

- Ability to remote control customer's PCs to assist with supporting issues.

- Installation of any software that is supported on a Terminal Server solution.

- Managed (Locked Down) desktop to simplify user experience and reduce downtime/support calls.

- Anti-Virus on the Server.

- Windows Updates on the Server

- Rental of Microsoft licences, and licence reporting for compliance.

- Upgrades to latest versions of Microsoft applications.

- UK Data Centres - Important for customers who must keep their data in the UK. Note: Microsoft and Amazon don't have UK data centres.

- All Infrastructure: servers, switches, storage etc. owned by Your Office Anywhere.

- Ability to "Snapshot" servers prior to software upgrades.

- Failover to alternate host server in the event of a hardware failover.

- No long term contracts, just rolling 1 month contract.

Free Trial

Moving to the cloud can be a big decision, especially for established businesses for existing on premises infrastructure.   To make the decision easier we can provide a free trial/demo account for you and your colleagues to try the solution for a couple of weeks.   The trial server includes a copy of Sage 50 Accounts and Microsoft Office 2013, including Outlook and a working email account.

Test Server

To test how a particular application runs we can provide you with access to a Windows 2012r2 or Windows 2008r2 server, help install your software and provide you with demo accounts to make sure that your application works as you expect it to on our platform.   This is all free of charge.

Your course to the Cloud

Sage Hosting is just one of the many Cloud computing solutions available on the Your Office Anywhere platform. Choosing the right solution depends upon individual circumstances, there is no one size fits all, and for some businesses Cloud may not be the answer.

Our technical sales team is staffed solely by experienced, time served IT consultants who specialise in working with businesses to understand the challenges the business is trying to overcome, the constraints (financial, technical, geographic), and identify the solution that is right for that business. Whether that is public cloud, private cloud, or a hybrid (which is probably the most common), and if a cloud solution isn't appropriate for your business or circumstance we will tell you.

If you are considering moving to the Cloud, or you are a new business starting up and looking at what options you have to provide your business with the flexible IT solution it needs, please get in touch. We can provide no obligation advice, indicative costs or formal quotations. We don't employ high pressure sales techniques beyond perhaps calling or emailing you to follow up on a proposal.

To get in touch either call our Technical Sales team on **01282 500318**

or email **sales@yourofficeanywhere.co.uk**

Other white papers available:

- Hosted Desktops
- Hosted Exchange
- Hosted Servers
- Private Managed Cloud
- Applications Anywhere - RemoteApps and how to get them

- Telephones Anywhere - Hosted Telephony, Voice over IP
- Documents Anywhere - Hosted SharePoint 2013 – OneDrive for Business
- Hosted SQL server
- Access Database Hosting
- Hosted Desktop for Charities

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