

Records in the Cloud (RiC)

Profile of Cloud Computing Users

Joy Rowe, Weimei Pan, Georgia Barlaoura

Overview

For cloud users, motivations for moving to the cloud range from “reduce cost” to “enabled capabilities”. However, these benefits may be a hard trade-off considering the potential risks. This is compounded by the fact that few users protect themselves from vulnerabilities through Service Level Agreements (SLA) and operate in environments with few regulations and policies. Considering the nature of the issues that users have experienced, we believe that input from records managers and archivists will promote the further development of cloud computing.

Why Survey Cloud Computing Users

- Described by some as a disruptive technology, cloud computing is expected to offer many advantages to its users, e.g. flexibility and scalability. However, little research has been done to investigate whether users have gained such benefits or to determine users' experiences with cloud computing.
- Moreover, considering the large amount of data stored and generated in the cloud, threats to the quality of the data has attracted much attention of different disciplines. However, little is from “guardians of records”--- records managers and archivists.
- This survey of the Records in the Cloud project (RiC) attempts to fill this gap.

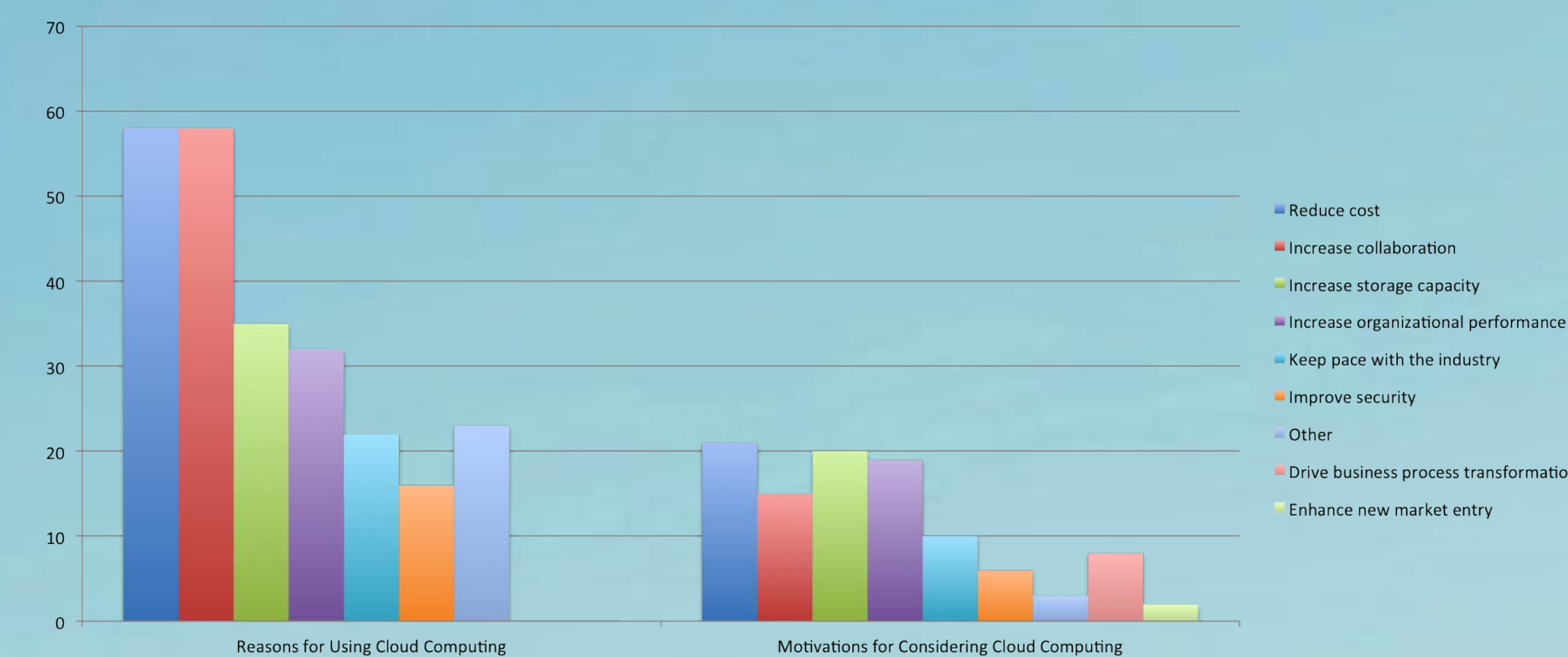
About the Survey

- Comprised of 34 nested questions, including closed and open-text.
- Targeted audience including current, past, and potential users of cloud computing.
- Distributed through email listservs and social media networks, including:
 - International archival, library and records management listservs.
 - Legal, IT and cloud security listservs in North America.
 - LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.
- Generated ~400 response from 52 countries, with half of the respondents from North America.

Findings

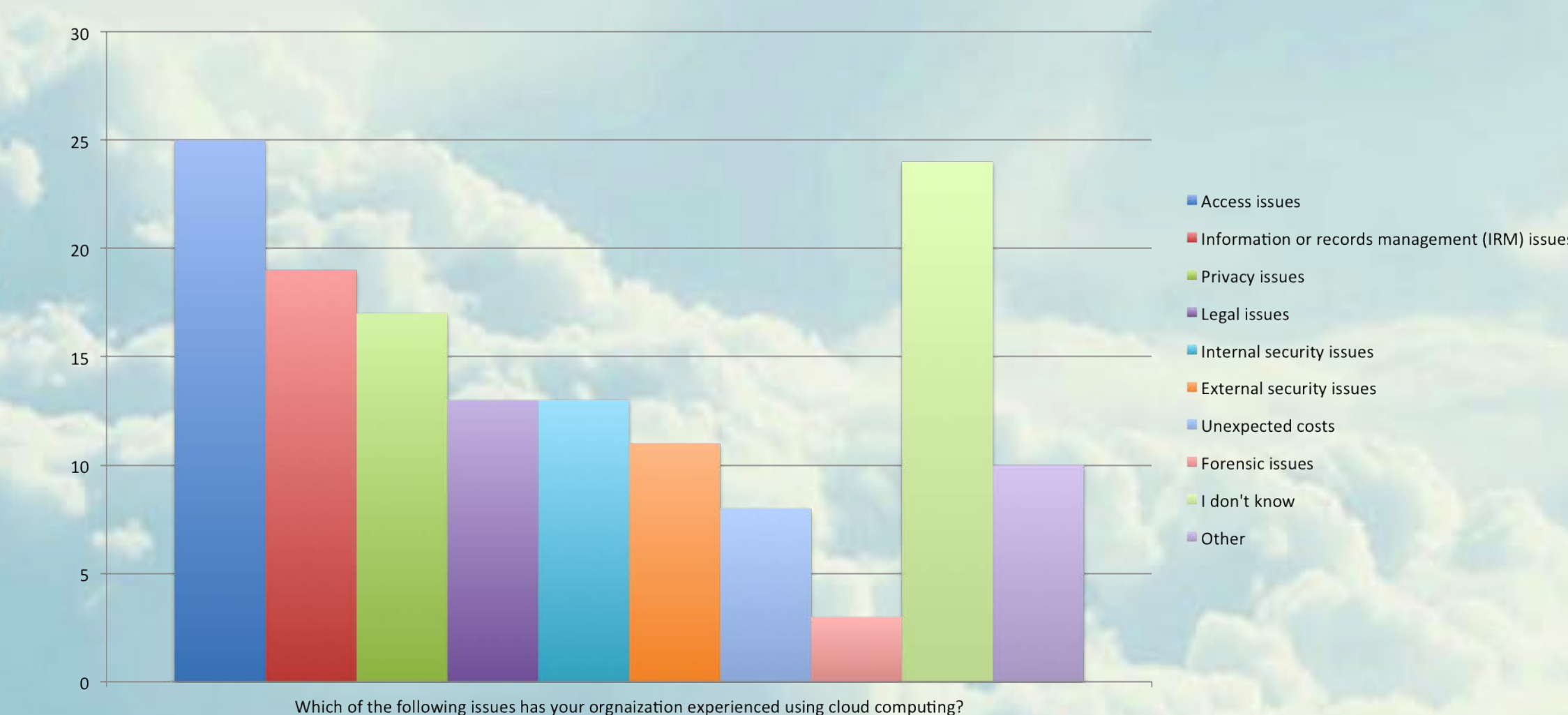
Why do users choose the cloud?

- The primary motivations for current users and potential users are almost identical.
- “Reduce cost” is ranked as the highest.
- The high ranking of enabled capabilities, e.g. collaboration, storage capabilities, etc. imply cloud computing may change the way organizations work.
- Organizations have high expectation that cloud computing will have a transformative effect.



High Rate of Those Having Experienced Issues, Most of Which Related to Access

- Despite respondents' short-term experience with cloud computing (less than three years), 36% of users have already encountered issues.
- These issues are mostly related to access.
- Records and information management issues are among the highest.



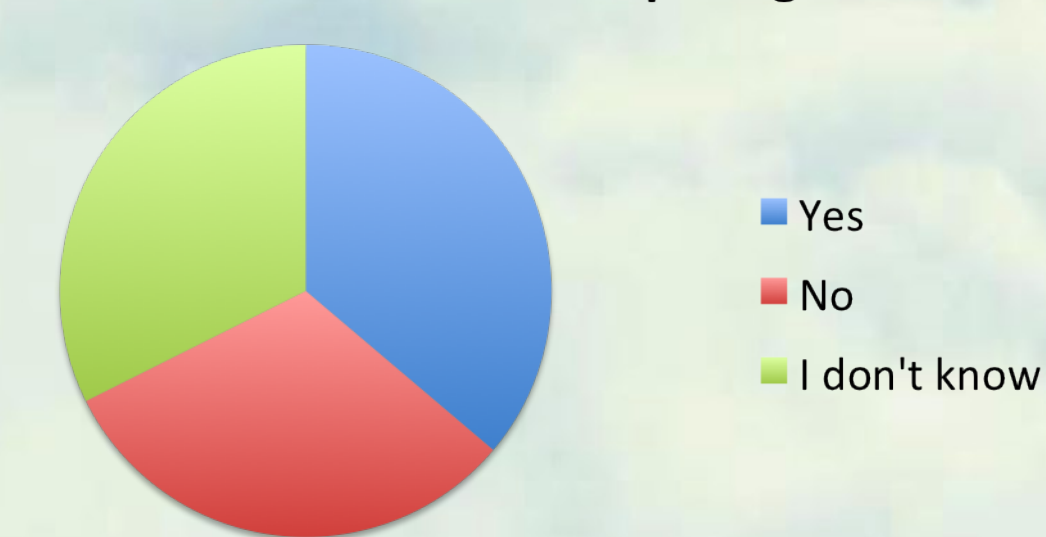
Most Users Do Not Negotiate SLAs

Decision-makers tended not to negotiate a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with their cloud providers but instead signed standardized contracts (62%). However, the comments from respondents reveal that there are positive associations between SLA and the performance of the cloud: “We have not been using it long and have not experienced any issues that I am aware of at this time. Our contract language addresses potential issues with cloud computing which we hope will ward off some of the potential issues listed above.”

Did your organizations negotiate a Service Level Agreement?



Has your organization experienced any issues with cloud computing?



Metadata Tops the List of Important Issues

This list of issues have identified the areas that future research should focus on to promote further development of cloud computing.

Issues negotiated in SLA		
Ownership of data and metadata		93%
Appropriateness of technology and security		87%
Backup and recovery		87%
Availability of service (up/downtime)		73%
Retention and destruction of records		60%
Legal hold or e-discovery		60%
Location of cloud servers		53%
Information management		53%
Multi-tenancy disclosure		27%

Implications

- With cloud computing still in its primary stage, “reduce cost” is perceived as the primary motivation for using cloud computing. This may change once cloud computing has gained widespread use in an organization.
- Users' lack of experience and related knowledge with cloud computing make organizations vulnerable to its risks.
- The lack of regulations and standards in place for cloud computing make this situation worse.
- Service Level Agreement (SLA) would be a great tool to protect organizations if only more organizations chose to use it.
- While the nature of the issues need the knowledge from records managers and archivists, the survey suggests that this participation is absent up till now.
- Further development of cloud computing requires the participation from different interested parties.

Records in the Cloud (RiC)

Records in the Cloud (RiC), directed by Dr. Luciana Duranti, is a 4-year collaboration between the University of British Columbia (UBC) School of Library, Archival and Information Studies, the Faculty of Law, and the Sauder School of Business; the University of Washington School of Information; the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Information and Library Science; the Mid-Sweden University Department of Information Technology and Media; the University of Applied Sciences of Western Switzerland School of Business Administration; and the Cloud Security Alliance, supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Insight Grant.

Find Us

Joy Rowe (MAS) joy.rowe@alumni.ubc.ca
Weimei Pan (PhD student) weimei.pan@alumni.ubc.ca
Georgia Barlaoura (MAS) georgiabarlaoura@alumni.ubc.ca