

# A Decade and a Half into “Cloud First,” it’s Time for the Evolved Cloud



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More than a decade ago – in November of 2010, to be precise – Jeff Zients, chief performance officer and deputy director for management at OMB, gave a presentation on the Office of Management and Budget’s (OMB) 25-point plan to reform federal information technology management. Included in this 25-point plan was what many have come to know as the “cloud first” pol-

icy.

According to Michelle Rudnicki, the President of NetApp U.S. Public Sector, “...I remember at the very beginning...a lot of the conversations were around, ‘What is [the] cloud and are we going to the cloud?’ We’ve come a long way since then... we’ve moved on from, ‘Are we going or are we not going?’ to, ‘Everybody’s there.’”

**“Today, the cloud is ubiquitous, but a number of new problems have arisen for federal agencies.”**

Rudnicki shared that sentiment during GovExec’s Roadmap to Modernization event in December of 2022. Speaking with Andrew Werner, the SVP of Federal Technology at GovExec, Rudnicki would go on to explain how the abundant cost, scalability, and agility benefits of the cloud have resulted in a rapid cloud migration across the government

### **More complexity = higher costs**

Today, agencies are leveraging multiple cloud services from multiple different cloud providers, and they’re leveraging several different cloud-based applications. As a result, their networks are getting increasingly complex.

This almost insatiable appetite for cloud services, and their rapid adoption – further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic – has certainly delivered the scalability, mobility, and efficiency that agencies were looking for. But it also resulted in cloud sprawl, data silos, and cloud islands that create management and transparency challenges. And those challenges can combine to increase costs and security vulnerabilities.

“The challenge that we see is, as you look across an organization at the enterprise level... we’re seeing islands of clouds...pop up all over the place,” Rudnicki explained. “And with that, you’ve got added complexity. You’ve got different clouds, different types of clouds. Some people are using SaaS providers. Some people are using one hyperscaler, [while] other people are using another hyperscaler. It adds complexity. It also adds to cost [because]you don’t have the transparency across all these different environments.”

### **The evolved cloud**

If the cloud is going to continue to live up to its promise of delivering cost savings for agencies – and if its countless number of entry points are going to be managed and monitored – the cloud has to evolve. This was a sentiment that Rudnicki shared at another cloud-focused event, the FCW Cloud Driven Transformation Workshop, which was held in November of last year.

“...as we see...multi-cloud growing larger, we’re actually seeing a need [for] the evolved cloud... an environment where you’ve got simplified management and capabilities [that] inherently help you with building security and protection for your data,” Rudnicki said. “[The evolved cloud] gives you visibility into your sustainability...[allows you to] optimize and manage human resources, tools, and applications, [and have transparency into] overall cost.”

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**Michelle Rudnicki**

The evolved cloud will give users a single data pane allowing them to have all their data services transported between edge, the core (data centers), and cloud(s) that will inherently secure and protect your data. All of this is made possible by NetApp's BlueXP, which gives users the ability to see all their resources on a single pane of glass – increasing transparency, making your data estate easier to manage, and expanding the power of agencies to monitor their infrastructures for security threats and malicious actors.

Another solution, Amazon FSx for NetApp ONTAP, a fully managed, shared storage solution available in the AWS Cloud, has simplified creating scalable, high-performance hybrid environments. Combined, these tools make the management and control of cloud workloads significantly easier – allowing for the simple “clicking and dragging” of data, workloads, and applications from one cloud to another. This same functionality can also be used in multi-cloud environments with clouds from disparate hyperscalers.

The cloud delivered on its promise – it gave agencies the scalability, flexibility, efficiency, and cost savings that they were looking for. But all the “good things” that agencies have received from migrating to the cloud are starting to evaporate because of cloud sprawl and a lack of transparency. If the cloud is going to continue to live up to its promise, it must evolve. And tools such as BlueXP and Amazon FSx for NetApp ONTAP are making that evolution possible.

