

How cloud computing works

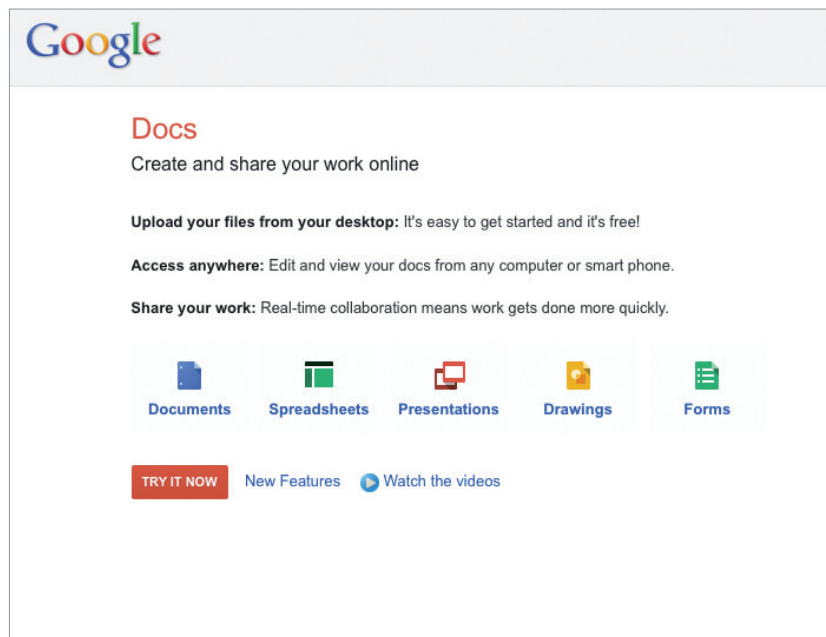
Cloud computing takes the emphasis away from local computers. It is less about the machine you use at home or on the move and more about what is happening on computers many miles away.

Instead of having to store information on your PC, smartphone or tablet, your data can be kept remotely. It will then be made available to any device that is capable of reading it.

Typically, most cloud computing is conducted via a web browser but there are other ways, including specially-made apps for computers, tablets and smartphones. These act as access points for cloud services. They also mean that you don't always need to have dedicated software installed on your machines.

The benefit of this is clear: suddenly you are not tied to your own computer. You do not even need to be tied to your own phone. All you need is a way of accessing the data and that be done from any machine.

As you can see, this differs from traditional computing because you do not need portable storage media nor are you relying on how robust or fast your machine is. With cloud computing, you are seeing programs and data being managed and provided as a service over the internet and it opens up many possibilities.



The screenshot shows the Google Docs homepage. At the top left is the Google logo. Below it, the word "Docs" is written in red, followed by the text "Create and share your work online". There are three bullet points: "Upload your files from your desktop: It's easy to get started and it's free!", "Access anywhere: Edit and view your docs from any computer or smart phone.", and "Share your work: Real-time collaboration means work gets done more quickly." Below these are five icons representing different document types: Documents, Spreadsheets, Presentations, Drawings, and Forms. At the bottom, there is a red button that says "TRY IT NOW", a link for "New Features", and a link for "Watch the videos".

Hot tip



If you have an old laptop, why not turn it into a cloud computing station? As long as it can hook up to the internet, you will be able to comfortably run most cloud services.

Don't forget



Although many cloud services are accessed via a browser, there are often dedicated desktop apps as well.