



# Buyer's Guide to Cloud Monitoring

**9 Key Questions to Ask When Choosing  
a Cloud Monitoring Solution**

# Monitoring the Cloud

If your organization has a network, you're almost definitely using cloud resources: [93 percent of businesses do](#), and most are planning on increasing their cloud investment. And for good reasons - the cloud provides unparalleled business advantages like scalability and agility. However, your cloud resources need to be monitored just like the rest of your network resources.<sup>1</sup>



The problem is that the management tools that come with your cloud resources are usually just not good enough. They may give you plenty of information about those resources themselves, but that's not good enough for troubleshooting problems that can cross multiple network areas. If you're finding that the cloud resource tools from the vendor are yet another set of logs you need to scroll through in search of errors, you need to look at investing in a true cloud monitoring solution.

With that in mind, then what should you be looking for? There are plenty of competing monitoring products on the market that claim to solve this problem, but the goal of this document is to outline the key features you want to look for. Read this buyer's guide before you start evaluating cloud monitoring solutions and you won't end up dissatisfied with your choice after purchase. Because, as every IT professional knows, the only thing worse than spending time and money on a solution is having to tell your boss you need to do it all over again when that solution doesn't work!

## What to Look For

So you've got a budget and you're about to dive into the marketplace in search of solution. Do you know exactly what you're looking for? What can you use as a yardstick to compare the different solutions available? What differentiators should you care about?

The following is a list of questions you should keep in mind as you review and evaluate cloud monitoring solutions. All of these may not apply to your particular network or requirements, but if you've asked them all while doing your research you're going to be able to easily weed out the ineffective solutions from the ones you're looking for.

### 1 Does It Monitor My Most Important Metrics and Events?

The first one is a bit of a trick question in that it requires you to ask yourself a few questions about your own requirements. What exactly is it that you **must** monitor? Not everything that can be measured needs to be reported. Figure out the metrics that matter to your organization's goals and keep them in mind as you assess your options. A solution that monitors a thousand different metrics poorly is probably not going to be a better choice than a solution that monitors only the dozen metrics you care about well. Take some time to review exactly what your network does and consider what's going to be useful to you. Then ask whether the cloud monitoring solution under consideration addresses those specific requirements.

### 2 Does It Show Me Everything in Context?

Your cloud-based resources are part of your overall networking infrastructure and they should be managed that way. Most vendor-supplied cloud management tools will only report on their own cloud resources, leaving you trying to compare data from more than one system. A good cloud monitoring solution should allow you to see everything (cloud and physical resources) in context so you can quickly drill-down to issues and isolate the cause of problems that span technology silos.

<sup>1</sup> For details on what cloud monitoring is and why you should do it, check out our eBook ["Cloud Monitoring and the 9 Best Practices You Need to Adopt."](#)

### 3 Does It Report All the Data on One Platform?

Experienced IT pros will understand how critical this is. You have your own physical networking infrastructures in addition to cloud services to monitor and you need solutions that can report data from different sources on a single platform. This allows for calculating uniform metrics and it results in a comprehensive view of performance. Every cloud provider will include monitoring tools, but those tools probably don't integrate with your existing monitoring solution. [Research proves that having too many management tools severely degrades IT response time to networking issues and destroys IT productivity.](#) Having one tool that reports on the ENTIRE networking environment makes troubleshooting faster, easier and eliminates finger-pointing.

### 4 Does It Proactively/Automatically Take Actions?

Alerting you and your IT staff is a good start, but your team needs to be able to proactively handle issues in the cloud. If activity exceeds or falls below defined thresholds, the right cloud monitoring solution should be able to automatically add or subtract servers to maintain efficiency and performance. The same thing goes for performance issues. Not only will this make your team much more productive, it makes you look good by resolving issues before they impact end-users.

### 5 Does It Track Long-Term Trends?

Usually cloud service provider tools only maintain data for a limited time (about 30-60 days). That's not nearly adequate for long-term trend analysis. An effective cloud monitoring tool should maintain that data in order to show trends over several months at least. Network activity in January is likely to be very different from network activity in July, but that's impossible to analyze within a 30-60 day window. Understanding long-term network trends can make it easier to run your network more efficiently, saving both time and money.

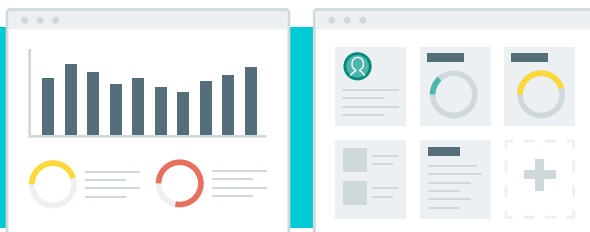
### 6 Does It Track Cloud Usage and Costs?

The ability to scale is a key feature of cloud services, but increased use can trigger increased costs. This is one of the most unpleasant surprises an IT team can encounter. Your cloud monitoring solution should track how much of your organization's networking activity is on the cloud and how much it costs. Idle resources aren't a big deal when it comes to on premise networking equipment like servers and routers, but most cloud resources cost money if they're not being used – and MORE money if they are. [A monitoring solution that alerts IT when cloud resources exceed budget or usage limits can save your organization a fortune.](#)

### 7 Does It Monitor the Experience of Your End-Users?

Just because it looks good to you doesn't mean your end-users are happy. You need to know what users experience when using their cloud-based applications. Your solution needs to monitor metrics like response times and frequency of use to get a complete performance picture.

A good cloud monitoring solution should support customizable dashboards.



## 8 Does It Let Me Share Its Output?

Regardless of whether or not you have a NOC, network status and performance should be something that can be seen at a glance by anyone. A good cloud monitoring solution should support customizable dashboards that provide instant visibility into what's up, what's down, what's seeing heavy usage, what's idle, etc. Not only does this make it easier for you to troubleshoot, it allows the entire IT team to see issues develop and resolve them proactively before they impact end-users. Note that this also applies to reporting capabilities; how easily can you export relevant data for stakeholders? Does the cloud solution export graphs and charts, or do you have to download that data into a spreadsheet and generate them yourself?

## 9 How Does the Vendor Provide Ongoing Support?

Everyone offers support, but not all support offerings are equal. Network issues don't occur conveniently between the hours of 9-5 and if that's your only support window you are going to have a problem. Look into when you can get support, where that support is based, and whether it's coming directly from the solution developer or a reseller. Also take a look at how much this costs as many vendors offer different tiers at different prices. Finally, check to see if the vendor has an active customer community; often you're not the first person to encounter a specific problem and someone else has already posted a solution.

## Conclusion

You've determined that you need to monitor your cloud resources and you've reviewed all the questions you need to ask vendors. Now comes the hard part: choosing a monitoring tool for your entire networking environment. We have our own opinion on [the most effective tool out there](#), but it's important to do your own due diligence. Keep the above questions in mind as you evaluate solutions, but bear in mind that the most important requirements are going to be how well it integrates information from the cloud provider, how well it puts that information in context with the rest of your networking environment, and how well it lets you proactively resolve issues before they impact your end-users. Remember that you're losing money once an end-user is impacted by a network issue and a good network monitoring solution allows you to be proactive instead of just reactive!

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