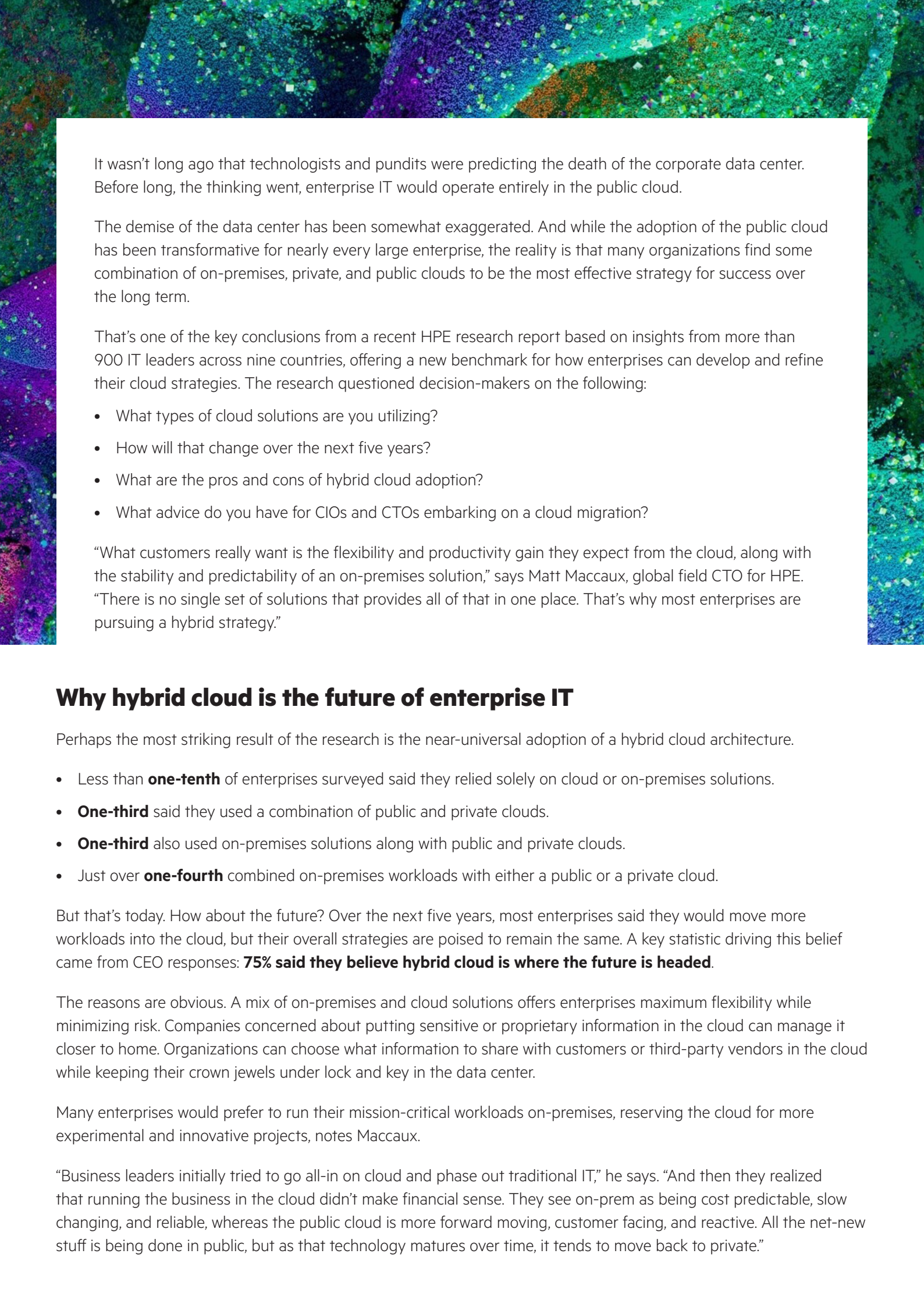




A survey of 900 tech leaders reveals hybrid cloud is the most effective, long-term strategy

Decision-makers are choosing a mix of on-prem, private, and public cloud for their enterprise



It wasn't long ago that technologists and pundits were predicting the death of the corporate data center. Before long, the thinking went, enterprise IT would operate entirely in the public cloud.

The demise of the data center has been somewhat exaggerated. And while the adoption of the public cloud has been transformative for nearly every large enterprise, the reality is that many organizations find some combination of on-premises, private, and public clouds to be the most effective strategy for success over the long term.

That's one of the key conclusions from a recent HPE research report based on insights from more than 900 IT leaders across nine countries, offering a new benchmark for how enterprises can develop and refine their cloud strategies. The research questioned decision-makers on the following:

- What types of cloud solutions are you utilizing?
- How will that change over the next five years?
- What are the pros and cons of hybrid cloud adoption?
- What advice do you have for CIOs and CTOs embarking on a cloud migration?

“What customers really want is the flexibility and productivity gain they expect from the cloud, along with the stability and predictability of an on-premises solution,” says Matt Maccaux, global field CTO for HPE. “There is no single set of solutions that provides all of that in one place. That's why most enterprises are pursuing a hybrid strategy.”

Why hybrid cloud is the future of enterprise IT

Perhaps the most striking result of the research is the near-universal adoption of a hybrid cloud architecture.

- Less than **one-tenth** of enterprises surveyed said they relied solely on cloud or on-premises solutions.
- **One-third** said they used a combination of public and private clouds.
- **One-third** also used on-premises solutions along with public and private clouds.
- Just over **one-fourth** combined on-premises workloads with either a public or a private cloud.

But that's today. How about the future? Over the next five years, most enterprises said they would move more workloads into the cloud, but their overall strategies are poised to remain the same. A key statistic driving this belief came from CEO responses: **75% said they believe hybrid cloud is where the future is headed.**

The reasons are obvious. A mix of on-premises and cloud solutions offers enterprises maximum flexibility while minimizing risk. Companies concerned about putting sensitive or proprietary information in the cloud can manage it closer to home. Organizations can choose what information to share with customers or third-party vendors in the cloud while keeping their crown jewels under lock and key in the data center.

Many enterprises would prefer to run their mission-critical workloads on-premises, reserving the cloud for more experimental and innovative projects, notes Maccaux.

“Business leaders initially tried to go all-in on cloud and phase out traditional IT,” he says. “And then they realized that running the business in the cloud didn't make financial sense. They see on-prem as being cost predictable, slow changing, and reliable, whereas the public cloud is more forward moving, customer facing, and reactive. All the net-new stuff is being done in public, but as that technology matures over time, it tends to move back to private.”

Flexibility vs. complexity: The pros and cons of going hybrid

Many enterprises still rely heavily on legacy applications that aren't cloud compatible. For them, going hybrid is an easy decision. For others, it's a question of balancing flexibility and customizability against complexity and risk. The cloud allows enterprises to spin up computing and storage resources as needed, then shut them down when they're no longer in use. It's ideal for businesses that need to quickly scale to meet fluctuations in demand, avoiding excessive capital expenditures on underutilized servers.

On the other hand, managing multiple cloud services is inherently more complicated than managing a single-vendor ecosystem. And cloud sprawl and vendor lock-in are real concerns for many IT leaders.

- Ultimately, 61% of survey respondents said hybrid offers more control.
- 57% said it offers the right level of security and allows for better data governance.



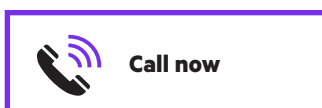
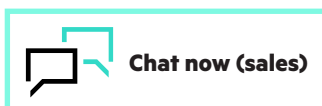
Hybrid cloud adoption is a journey, not a destination

One key insight from the survey is that adopting hybrid cloud is a marathon, not a sprint. A thoughtfully designed cloud strategy is a living, breathing organism that needs to adapt as circumstances change and new technologies emerge. Completing the shift to a hybrid strategy is not as important as doing it the right way. And because no two businesses are exactly alike, the way they adopt hybrid cloud will also differ.

For the vast majority, hybrid remains a work in progress. While 23% of respondents claimed they've perfected their cloud strategy, the real work is probably still ahead of them, says Maccaux. Most enterprises are saddled with years of technical debt, and the devil is always in the details.

"I haven't talked to a single HPE customer who says their hybrid cloud strategy is complete," says Maccaux. "The experienced ones realize it's something that will continue to evolve for the foreseeable future."

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