

## “Cloud Commuting”

*Latency kills response time*

Last week, at the same day Steve Ballmer delivered his speech at the Washington University Microsoft launched the beta version of its Office Live Workspace. Reason enough for me to enjoy the blessings of Cloud Computing as a user.

I choose to work with Google Docs and Microsoft’s Office Live Workspace. To start with the latest offspring of the Cloud I opened Google Chrome and surfed to the free services of Office Live Workspace. After signing up with my own email address (you don’t need a MSN address) Microsoft surprised me, or not?

The first thing you need to do is to download IE 8! Although IE 8 was already installed on my computer the login process just stopped. So you need to use IE to sign up to the Live Workspace. The words ‘seamless integration’ that Microsoft uses in all the beautiful marketing material immediately gets another meaning. Seamless integration with Microsoft software that is what it means. What about interoperability between different vendors?

Live Workspace looks nice and does what it promise: free document sharing online. What I miss is the Microsoft Office Suite. It is not possible to use Word, PowerPoint and Excel. Yes, you can upload your documents and share it with the world, but you cannot create online Word documents, Excel spreadsheets and PowerPoint presentations. And that is what I want as a user. So you still need your own computer with Microsoft licenses to do your work. What's the use of Live Workspace?

Google's approach is different. You just can use Google doc's with any browser. So you don't need a fancy PC with expensive licenses. Fair to say that also Google uses a simple editor, but you can create on line almost anything you want, documents, spreadsheets, presentations, etc. With a simple browser you are up and running in no time and for free. The choice for a simple user or start up is not very difficult to make, but .....

## Latency

Unfortunately, there is a 'but' connected to creations on line. Between the Mega Computer Centres of the vendors and your browser is a network connection called the Internet. When you start creating rich content, you will experience latency. Your workflow will be interrupted because your internet connection is not quick enough at a certain point in time, the server you are working with slows down under high traffic or there is just another hick up somewhere in the Internet.

Imagine a lawyer’s office with 50 very busy people and a lot of contractual work to be finished before a short deadline. When everybody is creating rich content under high pressure hick ups in response times are unforgivable. Within no time everybody will be fed up by this "Cloud Commuting" and open up his chute to land on the ground again

## Lesson learned

The choice of Microsoft to go for a mix of cloud services and local processing is not so bad. Google has got a lot of feed back from their customers and launched Google Docs offline. So you can create your work offline and upload it to the Cloud. The same principle that Microsoft uses with Office Live Workspace.

Working a couple of hours with both services learn you the humble lesson that searching for information on the Internet is something different than creating rich content! The last activity works quicker and better on an infrastructure with a high speed internal network and fast servers.

## Comments

Please react on this article by sending an email to [hms@peterhanselman.com](mailto:hms@peterhanselman.com)

© hms@peterhanselman.com

+31 629 265 420