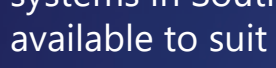


SUPERCHARGE YOUR SAGE WITH MICROSOFT AZURE



Sage is one of the most popular accounting software systems in South Africa, with numerous versions available to suit every business size and requirement. However, many versions of Sage have still not made it to the cloud and are running on servers sitting in offices or traditionally hosted Virtual Machines.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the limitations of running Sage on office-bound servers or VMs hosted in a datacentre began to show themselves. As businesses took to working from home, new business requirements kicked in. Business owners now needed to deal with things like the need to implement Virtual Private Networks and Remote Desktop Applications, which added several new layers of complexity and licensing costs to their operations.

On top of this, security requirements skyrocketed as cybercriminals began exploiting the chaos created by

the pandemic. IT staff were faced with implementing new firewalls, tightening their overall security stance, and doing the constant checks and testing that accompanied those.

Even worse is the lockdown load-shedding that cut some businesses off from their Sage servers completely when UPS's couldn't keep them up for long enough.

With all of this in mind, backups and disaster recovery strategies for your Sage solution are more important than ever, but these too come at the cost of complexity and added expense.

Clearly, running Sage on a server inside your office, or even on a VM hosted inside a datacentre, is a less-than-optimal way to operate.

Can the cloud solve these challenges?

Yes.

This document serves as a guide to what can be done to ensure always-on access to Sage by moving your Sage instance into Microsoft's Azure cloud. It will also offer recommendations for the best ways to go about implementing a cloud-based Sage solution.

A Summary of the Problem:

- Working from home adds IT complexity, risks and cost to on-premises Sage access
- Load-shedding interrupts access to on-premises instances of Sage
- On-premises servers and VMs are subject to frequent restarts and patching
- Backup and disaster recovery strategies can be complex and slow to implement
- Traditional VM's and servers cannot scale to requirements (for instance month-end)
- There are more risks than benefits to hosting Sage on a local server



Benefits of moving Sage to Azure

Microsoft's Azure cloud offers many benefits for organisations interested in hosting applications there. For Sage specifically, these benefits are numerous and overcome all of the limitations of running it on a local server inside your office, especially during and post-COVID.

Here are some of the biggest benefits of hosting Sage in Azure.

The cloud is highly scalable

When operating your own server, the hardware is entirely your responsibility. If you need more storage, you must buy hard drives and install them—the same with adding RAM and a faster CPU.

In the cloud, you can specify exactly the hardware you'd like your Sage instance to run on; if you need more powerful hardware at a later date, or you need to support additional users, you can provision those extra resources in real-time with just a few clicks. Should your hardware requirements relax, you can decrease the allocated resources in the same way.

Best of all, with Sage in Azure, Sage's performance can be automatically boosted at the end of the month to handle the increased workload volume by using Azure automation runbooks. Performance is automatically adjusted downwards during less busy periods, too.

This gives you what you need, when you need it, and does not cost you money when you don't.

Scalability Benefits Summary:

- Increase and decrease allocated hardware according to your needs
- Automatically boost app performance during busy times
- Add users without buying additional physical hardware
- What you need when you need it

Control your costs

One of the major benefits of the cloud is the fact that using it does not require you to spend a lot of money upfront. For instance, you do not need to invest capital in server hardware – that is provided for you on an "on-demand" basis by the cloud provider.

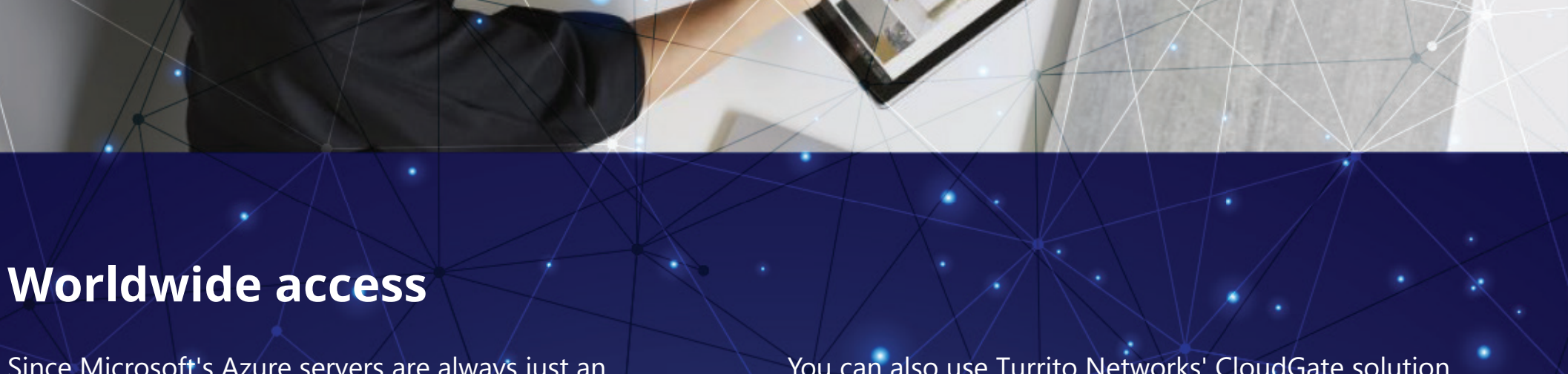
This has a knock-on benefit of saving you money on support and hardware maintenance costs. That means a lower electricity bill as you have no servers drawing power all the time, generating heat and requiring cooling and UPS/surge protection.

You also save on insurance costs because you are not paying to protect your server hardware from theft or damage. Software and operating system licensing fees are reduced and flexible according to how your Sage VMs are configured, too.

Paying only for the cloud resources you use gives you a predictable monthly cost, as well as the flexibility to spend exactly according to your IT needs.

Cost Benefits Summary:

- No capital investment required
- Saves on support and maintenance
- Reduces electricity usage and costs
- No need for server insurance
- Predictable monthly costs



Worldwide access

Since Microsoft's Azure servers are always just an internet connection away, you can access your Sage server from anywhere in the world that offers internet connectivity when it is hosted in Azure.

Furthermore, you can securely access it using any method that you like. This can be via IPSEC, VPN, or Remote Desktop.

You can also use Turrito Networks' CloudGate solution to publish the Sage app directly to your desktop.

We also offer the ability to incorporate Azure Directory credentials, allowing you and your staff to access Office 365 and your Sage applications using a single sign-on.

Cost Benefits Summary:

- Access Sage from anywhere there is internet connectivity
- Secure access via IPSEC, VPN, RDP
- Azure Active Directory integration for single sign-on
- Publish Sage apps directly to desktop with CloudGate

Guaranteed Reliability, Security, Compliance

Unlike local servers, Azure is guaranteed by Microsoft to be available 99.95% of the time.

And since Azure also offers secure and fast backup and recovery services along with regional failover capabilities, any interruption to your Sage service will be quickly restored.

At the centre of Microsoft's cloud strategy is the notion of trust. To ensure customers can indeed trust Microsoft with their data, Azure makes use of the best cybersecurity technologies to keep your Sage data safe.

Furthermore, Microsoft works closely with the governments of every country it operates in to ensure

its data-storage policies are in line with the data-governing legislation of the land.

That means Sage data stored in Azure is POPIA-compliant by default; Azure also supports over 90 additional data privacy certifications, including GDPR and ISO 27001.

Lastly, when you need detailed reports, Azure offers a huge variety of reporting tools to choose from that will pull together exactly the stats you need to see in report form.

Guarantees

- 99.95% availability
- Fast backup and recovery
- Strong cybersecurity measures
- Compliant with local data laws
- Comprehensive reporting tools



Implementing Sage in Azure

The newer versions of Sage allow the Master and Common databases to be natively hosted inside an Azure SQL VM.

Azure SQL VMs do not require Windows, meaning you do not have to pay for an operating system license. Installation and configuration times are also significantly reduced, as are support requirements.

The optimal configuration of Sage in Azure is to employ multiple virtual machines; these govern Sage apps, Sage's data, and user access. This config guarantees redundancy and security and enables easy support and management. It also ensures that recovery time is as low as possible, and the damage is kept to a minimum

should some sort of security incident or corruption take place.

This type of Sage architecture does, however, require some Windows and RDP licensing; fortunately, this can be easily bundled into Azure usage and billing.

Smaller organisations can also save money by having Sage applications installed directly on their endpoints and pointed to the appropriate Sage database over a virtual private network. While the savings here are significant, they come at the expense of the redundancy and security of the multiple VPN model described above.

Implementation

- Several ways to implement
- Multiple VMs or single VM and endpoint app access
- Security and redundancy vs lower cost



Your Options:

Here are the Sage in Azure options for businesses of various sizes. The size of the business determines how many virtual machines are necessary and how the Sage application is accessed.



Micro/SOHO enterprises

The Sage application is installed on endpoints, and one virtual machine is needed for the SQL databases.



Small Enterprises

One virtual machine for the SQL databases and Sage application.



Medium to large SMEs

One virtual machine for the Sage application and user access, and one elastic SQL VM for the Sage databases.



Mid-Market

Multiple virtual machines for Sage applications and user access. One mirrored and elastic SQL VM for the databases.

Summary of benefits

- Access to Sage from anywhere
- Security, compliance, and redundancy
- No need for major up-front investment
- Predictable monthly costs
- An infrastructure that scales automatically

Note

No matter where the Sage applications live, the connection to the SQL database simply must be secured.

Implementing Sage in Azure also frees you from:

- Paying for, managing, and maintaining your own server hardware
- Server electricity, cooling, and maintenance costs
- The risk of losing access to your Sage server via load shedding
- Having to insure your on-premises hardware
- Worrying that month-end demand will overwhelm your infrastructure

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[Book a free consultation](#)

[Contact us](#)

Are you currently running your Sage solution from an on-premise server that you look after yourself? Does moving your Sage instance into the cloud sound like a really good idea?

Then contact us today. We'll be happy to discuss your unique requirements and offer an optimal solution that leverages the Azure cloud to meet your exact Sage requirements.