

# THE ADSTOCK SCIENCE CLUB



At our last meeting, I demonstrated how to dismantle a PC, and then re-assemble it, working. I gave a brief talk about some of the more important internal parts and how they fitted together. Towards the end I posed two questions “What is Cloud Computing?” and “Why is it important?” with the intention of flagging up to the group one aspect of modern life that may start playing an increasingly important part but is little thought about. The computer (PC and MAC) as we know and love it may not be around for much longer!

Do you know what the term Cloud Computing means? If not don't worry, you are probably one amongst many. Of course all those who work intimately within the computer/IT industry do. Is this something that you should know about or in fact be interested in? Or is Cloud Computing something best left to the professionals, who obviously have our best interests at heart?

For the last decade or so the IT industry i.e. Microsoft, Apple, Google, IBM and Oracle, to name a few, have been touting the benefits of Cloud Computing, evangelising to all those who'd listen, about how it will make our lives simpler, increase productivity, provide added security to our data, allow easy access to all our documents, pictures and emails no matter where you are in the world.

If you haven't heard this Clarion call it's because the message has really only been broadcast within the IT industry itself, and to related businesses. For if the vast majority of the working masses (including many businesses) did find out about, and understood, the implications, they may not feel too happy.

What is Cloud Computing? Well, you have probably been using it day to day without knowing it for some time. Face Book, Twitter, Gmail, Google Calendar and many other online applications are in fact using Cloud Computing. What all these “apps” have in common is that they are accessed through the Internet and are not actually running on your home computer. With the advent of the latest crop of all singing and dancing web enabled mobile phones you are even more plugged into Cloud Computing than you realise. Basically Cloud Computing is a term which describes the transition of all your computing and business requirements i.e. word processing, photo manipulation and storage, organising and holding meetings, data storage and more, to the big amorphous Cloud called the Internet. In other words, in the not too distant future, applications such as Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint etc. will only be available as a paid for service over the Internet. They will not be stored, as is currently the case, on your computer's hard drive. In fact your PC will no longer have a hard drive where your personal folders, documents, pictures, music etc. can be stored. Your PC will be nothing more than a web terminal, a portal to the Internet. You will not have any control over where your personal data is stored, or who or what has access to it and how secure it is kept.

On the other hand the IT industry will tell you that you have nothing to worry about, it will be cheaper (including hardware) for you to use applications, you do not need to concern yourself about virus's or data security, that ease of access goes without saying and that you will have strict control over your personal information and data.

Well, as you may have realised, I am just a little sceptical about some of these and other claims. I hope this makes you consider some aspects of the modern technological world in which we live which you may not have previously even known existed.

If you have any opinions on this, strongly agree or disagree with anything I have said then email me with your comments. If printable, I may include some of them in the next issue of the Clarion.

All welcome at the next Science Club on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August, where we will be discussing Hydrogen Fuel cells.