ukcloud

UKCloud Partners with VMware to Become the Leading Sovereign Strategic Cloud Provider to the UK Government

COMPANY

UKCloud

INDUSTRY

Cloud Computing

HEADQUARTERS

Farnborough, Hampshire

BUSINESS NEED AND CHALLENGES:

- Scalability, innovation incubation reducing cost and driving efficiency
- Enable secure and sovereign digital foundations
- Mitigate risk, realize cost and social value benefits while driving efficiency and innovation
- Protect and harness the value of data in the UK public sector to deliver better services for citizens

UKCloud Offers UK's Sovereign Cloud Powered by VMware

UKCloud is the only sovereign cloud provider recognized as a strategic cloud provider to the UK government, including healthcare and defense sectors. UKCloud's platform is designed for the most secure and sensitive government systems – including those at the highest security classification. It is able to host these systems because it goes beyond mere data residency (where data is stored within the UK), to also provide data sovereignty (where data is protected from non-UK laws and surveillance). The platform is solely based in the UK and operated on a 24/7 basis by UK security-vetted technical personnel.

UKCloud is one of the largest partners in the VMware Partner Connect Program, with a platform spanning six data centers, supporting more than 300 workloads across 165 customers.

The Emerging Importance of Sovereign Cloud in the UK

By early 2010, the UK government realized that it had become over-dependant on just eight multi-national IT providers. Around 80% of its £2bn annual information, communication and technology budget was spent with these providers via large, multi-year contracts. However, the delivery of these contracts were often challenging, and they were frequently late, over-budget or not fit-for-purpose.

Around the same time, the UK implemented a range of policies including 'Digital by Default' and 'Cloud First' in order to drive the transformation of the nation's digital capability. Over the 10 years that followed, the need for Sovereign Cloud became increasingly clear because UK public sector customers require more choice, assurance and expertise than commonly available from global cloud providers.

UKCloud delivers a scalable, high-assurance cloud platform while providing much better value for taxpayers. This enables the digital transformation of UK organizations while allowing an ecosystem of technology businesses to deliver secure and sovereign Software-as-a-Service to the UK public sector.

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UKCLOUD'S SOVEREIGN CLOUD REQUIREMENTS:

- Need to keep data and compute workloads in the UK
- Avoid being subject to non-UK laws and data requests
- Ensure data sensitivity and security
- Restrict data access to only UK government requests
- Have limited access to some government networks
- Requirement to follow UK-specific ISO and government cloud standards and certification
- Follow GDPR requirements
- Deploy specific solutions aimed at UK public sector organizations

BUSINESS BENEFITS:

- **Improved Control**: Data remains under sovereign jurisdiction and control
- **Improved Security**: Infrastructure, apps, and data secured against attack vectors
- **Improved Compliance**: Ensure compliance with data governance and privacy laws
- **Unlock Data**: Share and extend data with trusted countries, companies, or entities
- **Future-proof**: Protect against changing data privacy regulations, security threats, and geo-politics while avoiding cloud vendor lock-in
- **Fuel Innovation**: Consolidate national, corporate, and personal data to drive economic growth

UKCloud Leverages VMware to Deliver a Lower Cost, More Agile Alternative to Traditional IT

In 2011, the public sector in the UK was falling behind the private sector at a rapid rate, with a lack of competition in the market and increasing costs. UKCloud was formed with the aim of delivering a secure platform for the modernization and innovation of the UK public sector.

During the launch, UKCloud faced a number of challenges in creating a sovereign national cloud platform:

- **Time** – As a start-up, UKCloud needed to build a platform quickly to leverage its first mover advantage. It needed a pre-architected, pre-integrated solution that was compatible with public sector applications. UKCloud was able to leverage VMware's proven cloud blueprint to stand up an initial capability within weeks rather than months.
- **Scalability** – As a provider central to a rapidly expanding market for secure and flexible cloud services, UKCloud needed a platform that could scale and deliver superior levels of security and resilience. VMware's technology has a strong heritage in being used as a virtualization platform across all parts of government, defence and healthcare sectors. UKCloud was able to rely on VMware's maturity in engineering and proven secure and scalable cloud technology.
- **Cost** – To support the UK governments austerity agenda, UKCloud needed to drive down the cost of public sector IT through the use of automation, self-service and shared/pooled resources. VMware's investment in Cloud Director enabled UKCloud to implement a natively multi-tenant solution. This enabled economies of scale through the aggregation of multiple underutilized systems onto a single highly utilized shared platform. Further, VMware Cloud Director was engineered to provide a familiar and accessible way to achieve self-service and automated IT operations, which helped public sector organizations who already had the skills and tools compatible with VMware technologies.

VMware's Sovereign Cloud Framework Enables UKCloud to Deliver Improved Customer Outcomes

VMware Sovereign Cloud is a framework of guiding principles and best practices for delivering cloud services that adhere to the security, compliance, and data sovereignty requirements of a specific jurisdiction in which that cloud operates. This enables VMware cloud providers, such as UKCloud, to build and operate sovereign clouds that protect critical data for both private and public sector organizations. Sovereign clouds guarantee the storage of highly sensitive data within sovereign borders in the public cloud, and personnel with access have the appropriate security clearances.

VMware's Sovereign Cloud framework helped UKCloud develop a capability designed around five key principles:

1. Data sovereignty and jurisdiction control
2. Data access and integrity
3. Data security and compliance
4. Data independence and mobility
5. Data innovation and analytics

VMware provides a robust and flexible technology to cater to a wide range of workloads and accounts for approximately 70% of all workloads on the UKCloud platform. UKCloud leverages its multi-cloud VMware Cloud Verified platform to offer customers hourly billing, easy integration with a wide range of third-party tools, standardization, compatible APIs, and an easy-to-use GUI portal. This allows customers to more easily migrate legacy applications and solutions to the UKCloud platform with little or no modification, and without the need for specialized training or cloud knowledge.

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"Denodo the world leader in data integration and data virtualization and UKCloud have come together to form a partnership. Denodo felt that the leading position UKCloud holds in UK sovereign cloud along with their deep understanding of the UK public sector makes them the obvious choice to help Denodo expand their presence within the UK government sectors."

LLOYD RUSHTON-JONES,
SALES DIRECTOR, DENODO

"Being part of the VMware Partner Connect program has fundamentally changed our business. Our customers often have very specific requirements, and VMware helps us deliver the solutions needed for complex IT environments. Having the Cloud Verified certification gives customers the confidence that we know the technologies needed to address the challenges they face and deliver the outcomes they desire."

SIMON HANSFORD,
CEO, UKCLOUD

Being a VMware partner has allowed UKCloud to differentiate themselves. VMware Cloud Verified validation enabled UKCloud to create, manage and support complex customer requirements using VMware solutions as the underlying cloud technology. It was an important step to demonstrate their technology skills, processes, commitment, and experience in providing a VMware platform for UK public sector customers.

UKCloud's Sovereign Cloud: Benefits and Use Cases

Local and central governments, defence, health, and educational organizations in the UK require the ability to support increasingly dispersed cloud environments, from on-premises through to hosted, hyperscale and edge, at multiple security tiers based on the sensitivity of workloads. UKCloud is experienced in developing and managing cloud solutions for the UK public sector, which are unique and subject to non-standard compliance and certification requirements.

Below are some examples of how specific customers use Sovereign Cloud:

- Capgemini used UKCloud's secure assured sovereign cloud platform to migrate 15.8 million smart meters.
- Office of Government Property - Direct access to government-grade networks through UKCloud enabled the Office of Government Property to deliver new services quickly.
- Genomics England worked with UKCloud to pioneer the development of a computing environment to deal with the scale and complexity of genomics sequencing data.

The Road Ahead for Future Sovereign Clouds

UKCloud anticipates more and more countries to be developing a Sovereign Cloud capability, as seen recently by France and Germany moving to have their own clouds in this space. Furthermore, market drivers such as Brexit and recent Schrems II judgments mean that sovereignty is becoming even more critical.

Recent research from leading industry analysts has identified and outlined that for the first time sovereign cloud has been recognized by countries seeking to protect and maintain their digital and data sovereignty more effectively. This has been driven in line with global economics and the want of sovereign states to develop and deliver a digital citizen experience while maintaining their autonomy.

UKCloud will continue to work with VMware to provide value added cloud services by embracing wider VMware technologies such as:

- UKCloud is able to deploy **VMware Cloud Foundation** – to provide a hybrid cloud infrastructure spanning the Edge, on-premises and hyperscale based deployments such as Azure VMware Services
- **Tanzu** – to provide native support for Kubernetes container management and cloud native application development
- **Horizon** – to provide secure and scalable virtual desktop infrastructure
- **CloudHealth** – to support customers with cost management and cost optimization services utilizing a higher classification platform

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VMWARE FOOTPRINT:

- VMware Cloud Verified Certification
- VMware vSphere
- VMware vSAN
- VMware NSX-V
- VMware vRealize Operations Tenant App
- VMware Site Recovery Manager
- VMware vRealize Operations
- VMware Cloud Director 10.1.2
- VMware vCloud Usage Meter 3.6

RESOURCES:

- UKCloud's State of the Digital and Data Report - 2021
- UKCloud's Social Value Report
- Sovereign Cloud for VMware Cloud Providers Whitepaper

Beyond the Cloud: Social Value Initiative

UKCloud is the first technology firm in the UK to have an independently validated Social Value Quality (SVQ) Mark award, and they strive to implement a carbon-negative footprint through their eco-friendly practices. Customers strive to do the right thing but it's not easy, and more and more we see customers and partners gaining value from UKCloud's social credibility and capability. For everything from the environment through to education and wellbeing, UKCloud, and many of their community of technology partners, have signed up to social value pledges which include:

- Innovating public services and solutions to help local communities manage and recover from the impact of COVID, through the delivery of outcome-centric innovative technology.
- Helping grow the economy through responsible tax practices and supply chains with every £1 spent with UKCloud generating £1.43 back to the UK economy.
- Offering education to address the national skills deficit with efforts to create new digital jobs and skills, as well as increasing supply chain resilience.
- Supporting defence communities, through the Armed Forces Covenant, UKCloud actively seeks to support military veterans to transition into civilian lives and bring their valuable skills to the business.
- Fighting climate change, by reducing carbon emissions in support of the UK's net-zero emissions pledge and taking an active role in VMware's Zero Carbon Committed programme.

This is an important independent validation of one of the core goals and benefits of Sovereign Cloud – fuelling economic growth. Learn more here.