

Cyber risks for those with heads in the cloud

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Australian home computer users and businesses are being warned to consider more closely the risks associated with cloud computing, as well as its many advantages.

Speaking during National [Cyber Security](#) Awareness Week, technology law expert Nigel Wilson from the University of Adelaide's School of Law says that while the use of cloud computing is rapidly growing, many still do not understand the potential problems associated with it, and the legal pitfalls.

Cloud computing is where users store their data on remote servers, through private or public cloud servers or a combination of both. There are many advantages to personal and business users of cloud computing, such as not needing to upgrade data [storage capacity](#), thereby saving on costs.

"Cloud computing is an important technology and has been rapidly adopted by major corporations, governments and others right around the world, and for good reason. But like all technologies of this nature you need to be careful when using them," says Mr Wilson, who is Co-Director of the Technology Regulation and Information Policy Research Group at the University of Adelaide Law School.

"Security of data and protection of identity are major issues. Web and computer-based technologies, such as cloud computing, have an ever-present risk of hacking, [data corruption](#) or loss.

"When data is stored 'in the cloud', often on remote servers located outside Australia, complex issues can arise from a forensic and legal point of view."

Mr Wilson says that those using [cloud computing](#) should also understand whether or not the main service provider is subcontracting out some of its services.

"If legal agreements are in place, they will be between the user and the main service provider. But if subcontractors are involved, it's important to know who are they, where they are located, and what services they're providing to the cloud [service provider](#). This is an important issue from a legal point of view because the user's agreement is not with those subcontractors.

"Because the location of external service providers, their servers and their subcontractors can be across different countries, this creates difficulties across legal jurisdictions. You need to be very careful when stepping outside of your jurisdiction because legal processes and protections may be completely different."

Provided by University of Adelaide

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