Sovereignty and security are key to any cloud solution: Maddyness UK speaks to OVHcloud

When startups and scaleups grow, the way they store and manage their data becomes more important. This means that trusted cloud solutions are both high in demand and crucial for companies to scale quickly, while being sure their data is protected.

Founded in 1999 by Polish entrepreneur, Octave Klaba, _OVHcloud_ has grown rapidly in the last 20 years as providers of a smart, accessible cloud. Speaking to Maddyness UK, OVHcloud's Startup Program leader for Northern Europe, Philip Marais, admitted that the reason for this is the company's focus on sovereignty and security, two key concerns for any cloud provider.

The sovereign cloud

All data is subject to a host of local data protection regulations, rules which cloud providers must comply with. But for multinational cloud storage solutions, compliance becomes tricky when their operation depends on data transfers across borders with different regulations.

For OVHcloud, global expansion has not compromised sovereignty or

compliance. This is because all non-U.S. based data centres are not subject to the U.S. Cloud Act, which gives the U.S. government access to all necessary company data.

"As a European cloud leader, the way we are structured is that we have a US entity that looks after our US customers meaning the rest of the world can't see their data and they can't see the rest of the world data," explains Philip. "If you're on a European data centre with us, basically you're guaranteed that sovereignty. We can basically align with local data protection regulations and security as well."

A secure cloud creates more opportunities for growth

Startups and scaleups are moving to the cloud not only because of security incentives of knowing where their data sits and whether it complies with local data regulations, but also because smart software solutions provide greater opportunities for productivity.

Backup systems are essential for fast-growing companies to respond quickly to data recovery emergencies, meaning valuable time is not wasted getting data systems back up and running.

"The nice thing with the cloud is that you can replicate your data across different locations as well" admitted Philip. "So that means that in a disaster recovery situation, if one of your data centres has to go down for some reason, there will be other ones that can come up and you can get that uptime again to a certain level that is acceptable for your line of business."

Having access to a trusted cloud network also creates more possibilities for scalability. When companies expand their customer base and acquire more data, they need more machine power to host growing software solutions to support their customers, ensuring backup and data protection. When businesses manage their data themselves, this becomes tricky.

"Data in the past was generally stored on a computer in somebody's office, so they generally felt it was safer because it was in their own premises."

"But the cloud has got massive advantages in terms of the fact that when you've got your computer and your data centre on your own premises, you're responsible for buying every new machine as your company grows. With the cloud service provider, if you decide you need another machine, you just click a button."

For startups, turning to a cloud provider means they can avoid the operating costs of handling and expanding machines when their company begins to scale. At OVHcloud, sovereignty, security and scalability motives drive their software as a service (SAAS) solutions which allows companies to rent a machine, choose their operating system and scale accordingly.

But company data is personal to every business, meaning how it is managed for growth should be too. When cloud service providers no longer support company security requirements, moving to other cloud service providers should be smooth and easy, with data remaining protected.

"The risk today is vendor lock in," admitted Philip, meaning cloud providers "provide you with products that make it very difficult for you to move to another provider if they're not actually offering what you need anymore. That's why we've adopted open standards which give more reversibility."

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The startup programme

For startups, a trusted cloud is key to growth, but so is market access and the opportunity to network with other founders and consumers. If startups want to grow their companies using cloud solutions, they need more customer data and therefore more customers.

The *OVHcloud Startup Program* provides founders with the opportunity to build products for customers on their cloud software. Formerly a startup founder, now chairman of the board, Octave Klaba was eager to foster the startup culture within the company by providing founders with the opportunity to expand on the cloud. Since its launch in 2015, the programme has now hosted over 2000 startups selected from more than 7000 applicants.

"We've got over 500 in the programme at the moment, and we give them credits over a 12-month period to purchase products we offer," said Philip.

Startups can also access free cloud solution architect support time, as well as visibility through panel events and networking opportunities with larger partners.

A startup which has done just that is AI firm, _Fidsy_. Its founder Yigit Erol said the startup _moved to OVHcloud_ after managing their infrastructure on Google Cloud proved too time consuming.

"The big difference between dealing with one of the big cloud providers is a personalised service. Personal support is a gamechanger and something you wouldn't immediately get from other big names in the market."

For startups and scaleups, an effective cloud solution provides the infrastructure for companies to grow and feel secure while they do so. At the same time, different businesses have different needs and founders should feel they are in control of their own growth strategy. Startups should trust that any cloud provider keeps these ambitions in mind.

"It [the cloud solution] needs to be simple and it needs to be accessible, but it also needs to be reversible." concluded Philip. "Trust is an important thing for us."

Philip Marais is the Startup Program leader for Northern Europe at _OVHcloud_.

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