



The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers

**Institute of Certified
Bookkeepers
Software Review**

2014

**MyQuickCloud – bringing the cloud to your
existing business software**

Company Overview

MyQuickCloud is a relatively new kid on the block, officially launched in February 2014 (and to ensure that my grammar is not questioned, it is marketed under one name rather than three separate words. I will now refer to it as MQC during this review). However, as with any good product, work on the concept started many years earlier in 2006, when two passionate IT geniuses, Talal Choucair and Guillaume Alexandre-Baron, founded a company called Vedivi. At that time working for larger multinational companies, they had both experienced, and benefited from, remote access and file sharing solutions. They saw an opportunity and began their work to breakdown the cost and technological barriers to bring these benefits to smaller companies. Already MQC operates across 16 countries, with thousands of small businesses using their applications.

Their website www.myquickcloud.com is easy to locate, well designed and informative. You are immediately invited to either “Learn more” or begin a “Free Trial”. There is also an option to start a live chat and my request was responded to immediately. The menu bar along the right hand top enables you to explore more about MQC and also gives access to the pricing options which are clearly displayed and not hidden behind a lengthy drill down menu. The support centre is also accessed from this menu bar so easy to find and which is an important consideration due to the technical nature of the product.

Finally, I always like it when there are pictures of the team and MQC doesn’t disappoint on this front either. Not only pictures but informative and amusing bio’s which are both interesting and fun to read. The webpage simply invites you to enter the MQC world, where the cloud comes to you rather than you going to the cloud. No need to change software packages to new applications, just easy remote access to what you, and more importantly your clients, already know and trust. So, with much promised, I needed to find out whether this new world would delight or disappoint.

Scope of Review

You can create your own cloud by simply downloading the software onto your computer, hence the title “quick” cloud. To be precise, you are not actually setting up a cloud but it is a useful way to visualise the concept of how MQC works. What you are doing is setting up the platform that will enable remote working. I, however, liked the idea that one of those clouds up there had my name on it! As a laptop user I downloaded the windows version but am sure that it is just as easy to load onto Mac and Android products.

I assumed that, as the bookkeeper, I would want to remotely access my client’s records. This is important as it defines who is regarded as the “host” and who the “client” is. The host is the computer where the data to be shared is held, the client is the user who will access

this information. So, the clients who agreed to assist with this trial became the “host” computer and I the “client”.

Finally, I tested the product with a client who uses spreadsheets to keep his records and also a company that has the desktop based accounting system Sage. It was important to look at both which will become clear as we explore the product.

I will briefly cover how to set up MQC but not focus on the technical details too much. This report will instead explore the application of MQC in the accounting world and how it can be used by bookkeeping and accounting practices. More technical information is available via the support centre on the web page which provides step by step help on both downloading and installing the necessary software.

It is important to point out that the MQC product is widely used in the accounting world so my review will quite rightly focus on how this application will benefit us as bookkeepers and our clients.

The Product – how it works

So, in simple terms, the below will explain how to install and set up MQC and how it actually works.

- **Set up Cloud**

Firstly, you must register with MQC which will create and name your cloud. This will also include setting up the cloud administrator who will control the rights and accesses of each user invited to join the cloud. This is all done by completing a simple form found on the “Getting Started” screen on the website. It is important to understand that, though you have created a cloud no data, applications or programs are stored there – it is simply used to enable the connection between host and client. The information remains where it is stored, ie, the PC or laptop of the host computer but, through the cloud created, the client can gain access to any applications published by the administrator on the host computer. Effectively, the host computer becomes a server through the cloud access.

- **Install server software on host device**

“MyQuickCloud Server” can only be downloaded by the administrator and needs to be deployed on every computer that you wish to become a host within your cloud. Currently it is only a windows based application though a Mac version is due to be released shortly. Once it has been installed the device it is on will be able to share its desktop and any applications, or programmes, which the administrator publishes.

- **Install client software on users devices**

“MyQuickCloud Client” needs to be installed on every device which users, through the cloud, will access the host computer. Downloads are available for Windows, MacOS, ipad & iphone and android. Any user can download the software onto their device, it doesn't need to be done by the administrator.

- **Invite users who you wish to share information with**

Only the administrator is allowed to add, or remove, any users to the cloud. They can do this from their user dashboard which contains a settings menu. The number of users allowed is dependent on the price plan that has been purchased.

- **Publish applications that you want to share to cloud**

Once the host computer (where the MyQuickCloud Server is installed) is added to the cloud you can start sharing (publishing) applications in the cloud. The administrator is also responsible for adding the applications or desktops that a specific user can access. This is also done through the settings menu on the dashboard. Once this process has been completed the “client” or user is ready to start their work using the cloud.

- **Ensure files to be shared are available to all users**

The files that you wish users to access must be shared correctly so that each user can open them. So, for example, if your company uses spreadsheets to record and manipulate data these would need to be shared so that the remote user can open them. A remote user cannot simply log onto the host computer and open any file, it needs to be ones they have been given access to. This is a step that I initially missed and wondered why I couldn't see any files even though I had access to the application. Individual files can be shared or a folder created where all shared files are saved.

- **Off you go!**

With all the above in place you are ready to go. The dashboard is clearly designed and easy to use and once applications have been published they will appear on the dashboard. To open them simply double click as you would on your desktop and within minutes you can start using the software. It is easy, as the administrator, to make changes to change the set up of the cloud so your MQC stays live and users and applications can be added and removed depending on the business need. With the technical set up out of the way the actual management of MQC is quite simple and users can quickly and easily access shared applications, files and programmes.

MQC and the bookkeeper

MQC is not just an accounting product but can be used by any organisation that would benefit from remote access and file sharing. However, we are going to focus on how the product can benefit us, the bookkeepers. A high proportion of MQC's customers are accountants and bookkeepers because the product provides a perfect solution for remote working which is extremely useful to us and beneficial to our clients.

We are not necessarily "IT techies" and it is quite understandable if you had to read the above section a couple of times to understand the concept! The pain of the initial set up needs to be more than compensated for by the benefits it provides. The biggest benefit is with those clients who keep their own records, whether it be in an office or at their own home. We visit this type of client regularly, perhaps once a week, or month, and have to deal with whatever has occurred in their accounts world since our last visit. In some instances this can be a painful process! We can't deal with any questions fired at us in between our visits as we don't have the records in front of us; we also can't complete any further work in areas such as credit control or cash flow management which would be of benefit to our clients. The availability of cloud based accounts applications is changing the way we can engage with our customers by enabling remote access at anytime, anywhere. But cloud based applications do not suit all.

Some clients will embrace cloud based technology and are willing to change from their existing desktop packages to gain the benefits cloud based applications have to offer. However, many business owners are change adverse and would rather work with what they understand and know than risk the disruption that change brings. MQC provides a perfect solution in this case as there is no need to change the systems that are being used; rather than taking the company to the cloud you can offer to bring the cloud to your clients. All the benefits of a cloud based application are now available to the packages they are already using.

To use MQC in this way with our clients we would firstly set up the account, name our cloud and take the administrator privileges. We would be the "client" so would download the "MyQuickCloud Client" software onto our device, whether that be PC, Macbook, tablet or phone. The computer at the business would be the host so we would need to download the "MyQuickCloud Server" onto this device. Once all this was in place we can, as administrators, add the applications we need access to and in doing so will have "cloudified" our clients' accounts systems. Simple!

The number of "hosts" we have and therefore the number of applications available on our cloud will depend on how many of our clients would like to use this system of remote working. This will also determine the price plan that we need to buy in at. Furthermore, the MQC approach is highly versatile so only the applications that we need to access on our clients computers have to be published; we are not just able to access all the data on the computer, just the applications they would like to share with us. This data security will appeal to many of our clients.

The work that is undertaken through MQC is done directly on the clients' host computer, without moving or synchronizing data across. So MQC is not like those remote access systems where you take control of the screen remotely, therefore the mouse on the host computer stays firmly in the control of that user who can get on with their work without disruption while we use MQC to get on with ours.

A consideration here though is, quite obviously, two people cannot work on a file, for example a spreadsheet simultaneously. So, if you try to open a file that is in use you will receive a warning telling you this and will be able to either open the file in 'read only' mode or request a notification when the file has been closed by the other user. If logging into accounts packages such as Sage or Quickbooks the existing user rights will apply. So, if it is a multi user system you will be able to open it even if someone else is using it but if it is a single user system then only one person at a time will be able to open the package.

One final but very important point is that the host computer must be switched on and active for a connection to be established. If the host computer is either switched off, or in power saving mode or hibernating, it will not be possible to access it remotely. It may be necessary to change the power saving options of the host computer if you would like to access files and applications out of office hours.

Key Benefits & Strengths

- Remote working and file sharing through the use of cloud technology.
- Easy and quick to set up a "cloud" and to download the software onto different computers/software.
- No need to change existing packages or applications.
- Clear and informative webpage with good support centre including set up videos, "how to" guides and a knowledge base for technical queries.
- Flexible approach as individual programs and packages can be published to the cloud rather than the whole desktop.
- Remote access does not interfere with host computer which can continue to be used.
- Supports both specific accounting packages and other software such as Excel and Word.
- Robust data security as only the files that need to be shared can be published to the cloud.
- Flexible pricing plans currently with a 14 day free trial period.
- Dynamic feedback loop where customer's critique is used to improve product.

Considerations

- **Set up.** In reality the downloading of the software and initial set up is relatively simple but for those who are not technically minded it can be quite daunting. Don't be put off by this and seek support and assistance from the MQC team to ensure it is done correctly.
- **Hibernating/asleep host computer.** Like most things in life if your host computer is hibernating or asleep nothing is going to happen!
- **Data compromise.** To ensure data is protected correctly only one user can access files at a time. This may mean that you won't be able to work on the spreadsheet or other such file if it is already in use. The access properties of accounting software such as Sage and Quick books will also apply in remote working.
- **Support Available.** The support available will depend on the price plan subscribed to (please see below). The basic plan only includes email support which could prove frustrating.
- **MAC version essential.** Currently the "host" download is only available for Windows and the promise of a MAC version in the next release will be a much needed development.
- **No internet connection.** As with all cloud based applications if you can't connect to the internet you can't access the remote computer! Also be mindful of internet speeds as these can slow down the speed at which you can work.

Value for Money

The packages you can choose from are clearly displayed and explained on the pricing webpage. The three options you can choose from are:

- **Standard £10 per user per month**

This is the basic level. It offers any user access to one application from the host computer. Further hosts can be added at a charge of £8 per month. The available platforms for the "client" software are just Windows and MacOS and support is by email only. Email enquires generate a ticket and are guaranteed to be responded to within 24 hours though often replies are much quicker than that. This is a limited package but will offer the user the opportunity to get used to the system.

- **Pro £18 per user per month**

This will allow up to four applications to be published and also the desktop view in remote working. Again, additional hosts can be purchased at £8 per month which will also increase the amount of applications available to add. Further platforms (iPhone, iPad and Android) are available for the “client” software and the live chat support line can be used. I would anticipate that new users would upgrade to this price plan relatively quickly and for many bookkeeping and accounting practices this is a very cost efficient plan to use.

- **Enterprise £37 per user per month**

The main difference with this package is that hosted applications are set up and fully managed by MQC in one of their data centres. This is much closer to existing cloud solutions rather than the cloud being used for remote access and file sharing. Support is also now available over the phone. There is however a £20 set up fee for this level where the other two are free.

A recent development after customer feedback has also led to a flexible approach over pricing for the bookkeeping and accounting practices. It is now possible to have users on different price plans according to the business need.

All packages are subscription based so you are not tied into a contract. You can either decide to charge your clients for the use of MQC or offer the service as an added benefit of using your practice.

The pricing plans seem reasonable and fairly charged although I believe that new users would soon upgrade from the Standard package to the Pro. The total cost of subscription could soon escalate if many of your customers decided to use MQC so ensuring the cost of subscription is covered either by charging for MQC or incorporating as part of your fee structure would be essential.

Summary of Review

Whether you like clouds or not the skies seem to be littered with them nowadays. Some of us really don't mind the cloudy days, grateful that no longer does our laptop or PC hold all our precious data and programs. If anything happens to my laptop now, including the potential of me throwing it out of the window some days, all my data is safely stored on a cloud with my name on it ready for a rainy day! Others are more suspicious of this technology, certain that some hacker will come with a warm weather front and blow all the clouds, and therefore the data they hold, away.

MQC offers cloud support in otherwise sunny skies. It uses the cloud technology to, in their own words, “cloudify” your computer. Rather than going to the cloud, the cloud comes to

you offering much of the benefits of remote access and file sharing without having to use new applications and software. MQC offers those that want to stay with their existing software and systems a simple yet effective cloud working option.

For us, as bookkeepers, it offers us yet another way of adding value to our clients. For those suspicious of the cloud we now have a viable alternative in MQC which is safe, secure and leaves their data stored on their computer. This will be attractive for a percentage of our practice, though that percentage may start to decline as further developments and advances are made in cloud technology. For the moment though MQC offers a unique opportunity to have both clouds and sun in your sky, the best of both worlds, with only the winds of change possibly upsetting the weather.

Did this world disappoint or delight? For me it certainly delighted. Yes, the initial set up took time and patience but with the excellent support that MQC offer I soon could easily, quickly and effectively access my clients files and accounting packages. Sage and Excel opened on my screen as though I was sitting in my client's office – it really was that simple. In 2006 Talal and Guillaume set out to bring the benefits of remote working and file sharing to smaller companies; they have achieved this with a simple and versatile product that is well worth a look at.

Disclaimer

The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers having reviewed MyQuickCloud software package cannot be held responsible in any way for the actions of the company MyQuickCloud or their software. This review is merely an unbiased overview of the software package as at August 2014. Any enquiries should be directed to MyQuickCloud.