

# Critical Mission

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## FEATURED ARTICLE

By  
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## SharePoint 2010 *The Cloud is Calling*

*More editions, new features, direct support for “Software as a Service” cloud computing options – SharePoint 2010 offers compelling reasons to get started now on your deployment planning.*

### The Cloud: A Matter of When, Not IF

2010 is a big year for Microsoft and Cloud Computing with the rollout of numerous Online Service-based products ranging from low-level platform components like SQL Server to end-user products like Word and Excel and many products in between. (See a previous Alto newsletter for details.) It’s an exciting year for anyone contemplating a move away from on-premise servers, expensive up-front licenses, and on-going maintenance and support costs.

You might be surprised to learn that SharePoint could very well be the technology that leads the way toward this new way of designing, deploying and maintaining software. Prior to the SharePoint Online edition, which we’ll cover in more detail in a moment, SharePoint Server deployment was a multidisciplinary exercise that represented a major investment in both staff time and licenses. Once you experience the rapid implementation, flexible configuration, and easy maintenance of a cloud-based service you’ll agree that it’s only a matter of time before hosted services become the norm for new systems.

### SharePoint 2010 Editions

SharePoint 2010 offers a variety of editions to help you better target SharePoint licensing for a specific audience.

- **Foundation:** the “free” edition that is a component of the Windows Server operating system. Suitable for departmental use in an intranet-only setting.
- **Standard versus Enterprise:** Standard features are typically inward-looking, adding more SharePoint-specific value over what’s included in the Foundation edition. Enterprise features are typically outward-looking, and bring data and services from the outside world into SharePoint.
- **Intranet versus Internet:** More licensing options for supporting employees inside your corporate network or any user community outside.
- **Online:** A hosted version, comparable to the Standard edition available over the Internet.

Of particular interest in our cloud-oriented take on SharePoint is the availability of the SharePoint Online edition. This edition is hosted in Microsoft data centers, which provide world-class security, scalability and availability. Instead of paying for all this infrastructure up front, you pay only for what you actually use, at \$5 per user per month. As your needs grow, simply add users and the hosting center automatically accommodates you. Your costs remain predictable and within your control.

SharePoint Online is a component of Business Productivity Online Suite, which includes Exchange Online, LiveMeeting and Office Communicator all configured as online services. You’re free to mix and

match as needed to support different combinations of user requirements.

## What's New in SharePoint 2010

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Each edition of SharePoint 2010 offers a long list of new and improved features. It would take several full-length newsletters to provide even just a brief summary of what's now available. An upcoming Alto solution briefing will offer more information about new features so I want to focus this newsletter on the cloud-specific features that make SharePoint 2010 so exciting to application architectures.

## Cloud-Specific Features

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All editions of SharePoint, not just SharePoint Online, offer compelling application integration features that make it easier than ever design solutions that blend the extensive built-in functionality of SharePoint with the unique business data and processes that already exist in your organization. Here are three that I find particularly compelling:

- Everything a user can do while using SharePoint can also be accomplished via **WebServices** accessed from other application contexts. This extends to administrator actions as well, making it possible to completely automate the process of creating and manipulating SharePoint sites, lists and content. This works independent of the location (on-premise or hosted) of the SharePoint server.
- New in SharePoint 2010, all lists support the **Open Data Protocol (OData)** for querying list contents. OData makes it possible to treat a SharePoint list as just another stream of data to be made available in other applications, where it can be filtered and joined to other data sources. Applications do not need to have any special awareness of SharePoint.
- Because **Silverlight** application code is executed *at the client*, it's possible to store Silverlight applications in a SharePoint library

and have them execute within the user's desktop context. You don't have to think of SharePoint as a separate, web browser-only application. Rich, full-featured Silverlight applications can interact with both SharePoint and the local user context.

## Summary

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The new version of Microsoft's SharePoint Server is now available -- just in time to help lead the way with planning and implementation of your organization's cloud computing strategy. SharePoint 2010 offers several editions ranging from multiple free, departmental workspaces to large-scale enterprise portals. Of particular interest SharePoint Online, where your portal is hosted in a highly secure, highly scalable Microsoft-managed data center. Whether on-premise or hosted in the cloud, SharePoint 2010 remains fully programmable and extendable using SharePoint Designer Workflows as well as Silverlight v4 and other application development tools.

If you're curious about SharePoint Online or Business Productivity Online Suite and want to learn more, Alto offers a training class designed to get you up to speed, fast on the concepts and address all your questions and concerns.

Contact Alto if you'd like a demonstration of any of the products or techniques discussed in this article. Our next solution briefing is devoted to these concepts.