

Market Analysis of Personal Cloud Services

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In previous comments in this blog, some in English (“[Personal Cloud, pending challenges](#)”, “[Discussion on Gartner Forecast about Personal Cloud](#)”, and so on) and others in Spanish (“[StackSync, un ejemplo español de Personal Cloud](#)”, “[Personal Cloud ¿un nuevo modelo de despliegue de Cloud Computing?](#)”, etc.) we have already discuss about Personal Clouds. Among the current services that could be qualified as Personal Cloud, the pioneer o probably the most mature is an application that allow sharing and synchronizing data between different devices of the same person, or even from different person but always under the fine control of the owner of the information and with its permission. The main well-known paradigm and probably the reference against others are compared is DropBox. (Note, in this discussion we are to focus in DropBox similar services, and to forget other kind of Personal Cloud Services, for example Cloud Desktop that was treated by Gartner in “[Personal Cloud to replace PC by 2014](#)” as mentioned in a previous comment on [2012-mar-20](#)).

In today comment I want analyze the market about this service, first, focusing in the main business features of this market, and after reviewing the current services and players that are competing.

The state of the market could be digested in the following points:

- Market is still in its early stages. Although there are some long-established products and suppliers, most are still young.
- The space is highly fragmented. Besides, all of the suppliers in this market, especially the smaller ones, are finding it challenging to clearly map out where they and their competitors play – and where they want to be.
- There are some significant strategic uncertainties hanging over the entire Personal Cloud SaaS solutions.
- The technology trends are difficult to read, and changing very fast.
- Acquisitions and consolidation will probably begin to occur, since some big players are outside of the market right now.

As stated previously Dropbox is a no too big company, but it’s probably the main reference currently. Besides there already are some big companies playing in this market:

- The just come Google Drive,
- Microsoft SkyDrive,
- iCloud of Apple,

known by everyone interested in this sujet. All of them (with differences, of course) are mainly cloud storage solutions, and it’s quite difficult compete with them.

However, there are other alternatives, perhaps not as well known as their large relatives, looking for some kind of specialization that open a niche market for themselves:

- **SugarSync.** Dropbox's main competitor until the arrival of Google Drive, works on both Windows and Mac, iPhone OS, Android, BlackBerry and Windows Phone. One of the main distinguishing features is that the user can simply indicate in each folder or file if he wants to upload files to the cloud and also if must synchronize all user devices or just the data at some specific.
- **Box.** A very popular and widespread alternative, is remarked all the integration possibilities it offers. Having opened its API, mainly emphasizes collaboration options offered to users.
- **Cubby.** Cubby, a product of LogMeIn, tries to become the perfect choice for those looking functionalities between Dropbox and SugarSync, allowing the user also to synchronize multiple computers simultaneously. Because of the API is not public, it does not integrate with other apps.
- **Insync.** This product may be one of the solutions more affected by the announcement of Google Drive, because this cloud is focused on access to Google Docs from different devices.
- **Wuala.** With a privacy-oriented design, the user can not even access their own files through the web, using for connection a Java web app, that assures that encryption is always processed on the device.
- **Synplicity.** Focused at business sector, provides automatic backups and is able to access multiple versions of documents, also offering the flexibility to synchronize files with different devices (Windows, Mac, Android and IOS), and other features for real-time collaboration.
- **OwnCloud.** Is a flexible, open source file sync and share solution. Whether using a mobile device, a workstation, or a web client, can be synchronized with Amazon, or Google localStorage.

Most of that solutions are USA companies that are not worried, in general, to be compliant with Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and related user's privacy rights.

Besides for the success of the solution, it's also needed to make the user feel that he's no captive of the solution, therefore standardization and/or, at least, interoperability are needed. Besides, Public Administrations and many private companies are reluctant to store their information in the cloud, due to legal restrictions and because of the lack of security, about the property and access conditions to such information.

In summary, Personal Clouds are in their infancy, and two major problems must be solved to facilitate their massive adoption by users and companies: **privacy and interoperability.**

Tissat is partnering with other European companies (Canonical and Eye OS) and R&D organizations (Universitat Rovira y Virgili, Institut **Eurecom**, and Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne) to launch the **CloudSpaces** project (partially funded by European Commission) that will face up to both challenges and we hope its research activities bring new ideas and approaches to solve them, and let Tissat to improve its [StackSync](#) service with even enhanced security features.