

# THE FUTURE IS NOW

## Why cloud-based construction management is a must and how Viewpoint technology is transforming operations for contractors in Australia

A decade or so ago, the technology powering today's construction projects was nearly unimaginable in many contractors' eyes. From BIM to drones to powerful construction management and business intelligence software, technology is fueling larger, more ambitious projects, with stronger profit margins for contractors. In fact, just Australia's governmental infrastructure projects alone (rail lines, roads, bridges, etc.) that are currently scheduled are estimated at over \$100 billion.

Yet, with more power lies more responsibility. Staying on top of projects that are much more complex, involve more stakeholders, and rely on the parsing and analysis of significantly more data can be a daunting challenge. Today's construction demands mean that contractors need to access data and collaborate at a moment's notice in order to make informed decisions in real time.

### BUILDING TO THE CLOUD

It's no secret that cloud computing is here to stay. The majority of businesses across nearly every industry are migrating their operations to a hosted cloud environment. The chief concerns about user access and data security that permeated software conversations just a few years ago have largely been put to rest as new technologies and data security measures have made cloud operations even more secure than most on premise deployments.

An early-2018 survey by Software Connect<sup>1</sup> on construction technology trends noted that 87 percent of contractors are now open to reviewing cloud/hosted software for their construction management needs. Most are already relying on mobile applications, with daily field reports, customer/job information and document management and sharing being the most common uses. That contrasts starkly with a construction industry that was still significantly lagging in technology adoption just a few years ago.

So why the change? Cloud-based construction management software is helping contractors work in real time—something they couldn't do before. Whereas it previously could take days, weeks, even months to collect, log and analyze construction data coming from multiple sources and remote locations, cloud-based software expands access beyond the back office to the field and to everyone on the project team. This allows for instantaneous visibility into project health, and the collaborative tools for vital project decisions to be made in real time, thus mitigating project delays and reducing errors.

Cloud software also reduces capital expenses and IT strain as it is no longer tied to physical servers that have to be maintained. Nor do IT staff have to stress over mass software updates that impact a broad range of users across the organization. With cloud computing, software updates are rolled out automatically, so end users simply log in and start using new functionality. And, as *Network World* points

out in a recent article on cloud computing trends for 2018<sup>2</sup>, increased cloud storage capacity, the rise of internet quality and 5G networks and exponential growth of cloud services are making it even easier to do business in the cloud.

### VIEWPOINT DELIVERS CLOUD-BASED CONTROL

Viewpoint, the established leader in ERP, project management and mobile solutions for the construction industry, not only embraces the cloud, the company designs its suite of software solutions for it. The company recently deployed its Viewpoint Enterprise Cloud offering for its Vista ERP software for Australian clients. This provides users with a complete, hosted construction ERP solution that allows clients—many doing heavy mining, civil and infrastructure work—to manage financials, materials, equipment management, project management, and much more in real time—all in one platform.

“Viewpoint allows us to analyze our data better which allows me to make better decisions as the business owner,” said Declan White, director of the Perth-based Monford Group, a construction services provider for the infrastructure, resources and energy sectors.

Viewpoint will be expanding project management and collaboration capabilities with the release of the highly-popular Viewpoint Team solution for contractors in Australia later this year. Viewpoint Team is a collaborative, cloud-based and next-generation project management platform that connects the back office with field operations and the extended project team of subcontractors, materials suppliers, architects, owners and more. Users can store and share documents and certifications, manage RFIs, submittals and issues, generate daily logs and much more. Intuitive dashboards provide quick insight into projects, allowing the transparency that all stakeholders need to have in real time.

Additionally, Viewpoint Field View is a powerful field management toolset that harnesses the power of mobility for quality, safety, closeout and defecting. Task management, reporting and dashboards keep projects moving, improve accountability, save time and deliver better projects.

For small- to mid-sized contractors, Viewpoint's cloud-based JobPac solution compiles real-time financial management, project and plant management, equipment and payroll data into one easy-to-use solution designed to increase visibility into construction project status, ultimately improving productivity and profitability.

### CONNECTING THE OFFICE, TEAM AND FIELD

For software to be effective in running the multiple facets of the construction organization, it needs to be integrated. Though contractors can utilize multiple software programs and connect them—in most cases—through application program interfaces (APIs), it doesn't necessarily mean those software functions are truly integrated. For one, APIs need to be constantly managed and updated as software changes. And, how data is viewed and analyzed in one program many still not translate to how it is done in another,



meaning duplicate data entry, reworking data and more processes may still be required.

That's why Viewpoint has a dedicated integration strategy for its construction clients, transforming their operations by connecting the Office, the Team and the Field. Viewpoint delivers systems built from the ground up with true integration between products and functionality. This allows different roles, both inside and outside of a contractor's organization to work in ways relevant to them, while maintaining a single, trusted source of data throughout.

Applications in the office for functions like accounting and HR require rich functionality and capabilities to handle tasks like job cost reporting, budgeting or payroll. Meanwhile, out in the field, project managers, superintendents, and field teams need tools that let them get information about the job and record data in real time, no matter where the project is. Operating in the cloud, these solutions give visibility to the entire project team—from the owners and architects to the subcontractors and vendors—ensuring that real-time project insight is always at hand.

“We can have live data and accurate information to share with the project teams,” said Niall Walsh, Monford Group's HSE quality and safety manager. “I would recommend Viewpoint to other companies that are lacking that integration and want to bring their disparate parts of their company together.”

Sources:

1SoftwareConnect's Construction Technology Trends—2018 Report

2Network World's 5 cloud computing trends to prepare for in 2018