

VMhosts adopts CIF Code of Practice

Cloud Service Provider drives trust in the industry
with commitment to Cloud best practices



Certification

The Cloud Industry Forum (CIF) Code of Practice, managed by CIF's independent certification partner, APM Group, is a credible, certifiable tool that allows CSPs to demonstrate that they meet specified requirements of transparency, accountability and capability. It aims to standardise enterprises offering Cloud Services to provide clarity and assurance to end users seeking to migrate to the Cloud.

The use of the CIF certification mark on a vendor's website serves two clear purposes: it makes a public declaration of professional and commercial intent on the part of the Cloud Service Provider and it provides a visual mark of recognition that engenders confidence in the end user that the organisation is open and professional in its commercial activities.

About VMhosts

Founded in 2010, VMhosts is a technology-focused company that provides high-performing Cloud-based solutions, including professional business hosting, email hosting and backup & disaster recovery services. Based in north London, the company prides itself on its service and the high levels of support that it provides to its customers.

Why choose the CIF Code of Practice?

As a relatively young company transitioning into Cloud Service delivery, VMhosts sought a way to independently validate their services and prove to potential customers that they were a trustworthy Cloud Service Provider (CSP). Gordon Howes, Technical Director, VMhosts, explained:

“Businesses recognise Cloud as a key delivery model, and faith in ‘the Cloud’ has increased rapidly, but a question mark still hangs over the capabilities of individual providers. You are essentially entrusting a third party with your livelihood when you use Cloud Services, but with so many CSPs out there, it's difficult to know whom you can trust, or how much you can take a provider on their word alone. How do you know, for example, that your data will only be stored in the UK in top-of-the-range data centre facilities? This is where certification and standards come in to play. But with few real Cloud standards currently in operation, there were few directions we could turn to.

“We wanted a way to prove our credentials and capabilities to customers and prospects, and to take the guesswork out of their Cloud procurement. When we were introduced to the Cloud Industry Forum and their Code of Practice, we immediately recognised its appeal and value to the industry, and set about achieving the certification,” Gordon continued.





About the Cloud Industry Forum (CIF)

The Cloud Industry Forum (CIF) was established in direct response to the evolving supply models for the delivery of software and IT services that has expanded well beyond the traditional on-premise method to one that now embraces hosted and/or, pay-as-you-use Cloud solutions.

CIF's purpose is twofold: To drive a common and public level of transparency about the capability, substance and best practices of online Service Providers (SaaS, PaaS, IaaS, Web hosting providers etc) through a process of Self Certification to a Code of Practice. Second, this Code of Practice, and the use of the related Certification Mark on participant's web sites, will provide comfort and promote trust to business and individuals wishing to leverage the commercial, financial and agile operations capabilities that the Cloud-based and hosted solutions can offer. CIF will ensure the integrity and governance of the Self Certification process through regular random audits as well as investigate complaints from parties that challenge any specific participants Self Certification status.

Certification process

From start to finish, the certification process took two months to go through. Though the certification took time and effort to complete, VMhosts was in a fortunate position owing to the fact that it already had many of the required processes and practices in place.

"The Code of Practice requires us to have formal procedures in place for the entire Cloud lifecycle, from initial migration, day-to-day management, and formalised complaint-handling procedures, to the end of the contract and migration off of the platform. While we had already adopted best practices in many of these areas, some required a bit of reshaping to fall completely in line with the stipulations of the Code of Practice.

"It did, however, require us to pull together and complete a solid amount of documentation – some of which is quite technical and complex. While this didn't pose any significant problems, it did mean that we couldn't just race everything through. It called for concerted effort on our part, although as and when we did have problems, the accrediting organisation, APM Group, were always on the other end of the line to help and offer guidance. Here, they proved to be an invaluable asset."

"Now that we have certified our customers know that we meet the stringent standards set by an independent and trusted third party"

The benefits

VMhosts started to see the benefits of the Code of Practice soon after they achieved the certification. The big benefit, according to Gordon, has been felt with their customers, for whom it has brought peace of mind.

Another major advantage is that VMhosts' customers benefit from increased transparency. With all the necessary information about VMhosts readily available on their website, potential customers can very quickly determine whether or not they will be an appropriate Cloud provider that can meet the needs of their business.

"CIF certification provides validation that VMhosts is a capable and credible CSP. Since 2010 we have rapidly established a strong reputation for the safe and secure delivery of Cloud Services, something that we are building on with the Code of Practice. It just takes the guesswork out of selecting a CSP. Now that we have certified our customers know that we meet the stringent standards set by an independent and trusted third party. It's now one of the first things that we raise with new business prospects.

"The scheme requires us to host clearly on our website vital information about the business and our practices, including who owns the company, where data will be held, and information about our supplier arrangements. Equipped with this information, potential customers can immediately determine that we are trustworthy and are transparent about our operational practices."



The Cloud Industry Forum

Sword House, Totteridge Road, High Wycombe HP13 6DG
 t 0844 583 2521 e info@cloudindustryforum.org