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Breaking Free from U.S. Cloud Dependence: Our Path to Cloud Independence

Chris Wojzechowski, AWARE7

IN MARCH 2025, WE DECIDED TO LEAVE.

As a cybersecurity company, we asked ourselves: can we credibly advise clients on data sovereignty while running on U.S. infrastructure?

THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

CLOUD ACT (2018)

U.S. law enforcement can compel data access from American companies — regardless of where data is stored.

"Microsoft cannot guarantee data independence from US law enforcement."

— Microsoft corporate disclosure

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION (FEB 2026)

U.S. diplomats directed to lobby against EU data sovereignty laws. DMA and DSA named as targets.

"American businesses will no longer prop up failed foreign economies through extortive fines."

— Presidential Memorandum, Feb 2026

THE COST SQUEEZE

SaaS inflation **8.7–11.4% YoY** vs 2.7% general inflation — 4× market rate

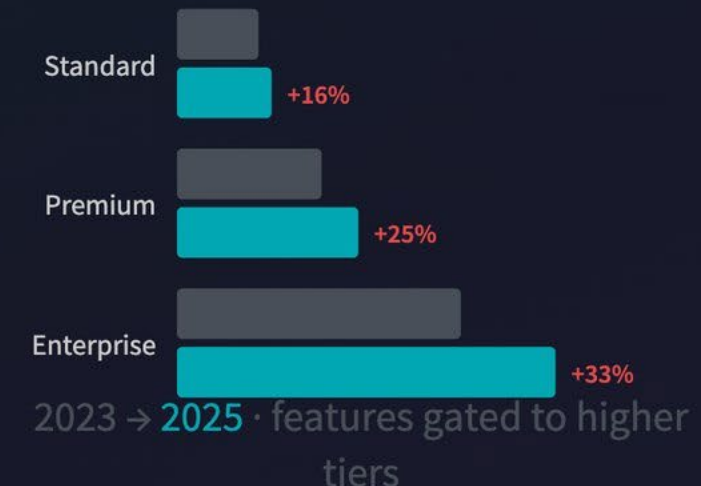
GOOGLE WORKSPACE



MICROSOFT 365



ATLASSIAN CLOUD



WHY WE LEFT

POLITICAL

CLOUD Act + Trump lobbying against EU data sovereignty

REGULATORY

GDPR, NIS2, Schrems II — legal obligations

CUSTOMER DEMAND

EU-hosted requirements for audits and compliance

COST EXPLOSION

Google +40%, Microsoft +22%, Atlassian +33%

CREDIBILITY

We audit cloud security. We can't advise sovereignty while depending on U.S. infrastructure.

Digitale Sicherheit. Für Mensch & Maschine.

THE CHALLENGE

30

people to migrate

7

cloud services to replace

0

acceptable downtime

12 months. One team. No consultants.

THE STACK: BEFORE & AFTER

Category	Before (U.S.)	After (Germany)	Type
Email	Google Workspace	Mailbox.org	Hosted DE
File Storage	Google Drive	Nextcloud + OnlyOffice	Self-hosted
Chat	Google Chat	Zulip	Self-hosted
Video Calls	Zoom	Nextcloud Talk	Self-hosted
Project Mgmt	Atlassian (Jira + Confluence)	OpenProject	Self-hosted
CRM	HubSpot	EspoCRM	Self-hosted
Infrastructure	Google Cloud Platform	Hetzner + On-Prem (Proxmox)	DE / Local

All open source except Mailbox.org (German hosted service)

ARCHITECTURE OVERVIEW

HETZNER CLOUD (GERMANY)

Nextcloud · Zulip · OpenProject ·
EspoCRM · Web Services
Standard compute · GDPR-
compliant

ON-PREMISES

AI Workloads (GPU) · Pentest
Reporter · Internal Tooling
Proxmox · Full physical control

MAILBOX.ORG (EXTERNAL)

Email Hosting
German hosted service

Internal Team — No External Consultants

MIGRATION TIMELINE



Mar '25
Email



May '25
Files



Jul '25
Chat



Sep '25
Video



Nov '25
PM



Jan '26
Infra



Mar '26
CRM

Strategy: One service at a time · 2 weeks parallel · Test → Migrate → Validate → Decommission

NEXTCLOUD: THREE BIRDS, ONE STONE

- Replaced Google Drive, Zoom, and Google Docs (partially)
- Nextcloud Files + Nextcloud Talk + OnlyOffice
- Single platform for file storage, video calls, and document editing
- OnlyOffice provides real-time collaboration — good enough for 30 people
- Self-hosted on Hetzner, full control over data

OPENPROJECT: THE POSITIVE SURPRISE

- Replaced Atlassian Jira + Confluence
- Project management actually **improved** after migration
- Better workflow for our team size and structure
- Wiki functionality replaces Confluence adequately
- German company, active open-source development

ZULIP: THREADED CHAT DONE RIGHT

- Replaced Google Chat
- Topic-based threading model prevents chat chaos
- Every message belongs to a topic — conversations stay organized
- Migration: started fresh, archived Google Chat history
- Lightweight, fast, low resource usage

ESPOCRM: THE FINAL MIGRATION

- Replaced HubSpot — our last migration (March 2026)
- CRM data is complex: contacts, deals, pipelines, email history
- HubSpot data export was the biggest challenge
- Saved for last because highest business risk
- Fully operational, team adapted quickly

INFRASTRUCTURE: WHAT RUNS WHERE AND WHY

HETZNER CLOUD (GERMANY)

- Nextcloud (Files + Talk + OnlyOffice)
- Zulip (Chat)
- OpenProject (Project Management)
- EspoCRM (Customer Relations)
- Web services and public-facing workloads

ON-PREMISES (PROXMOX)

- AI workloads requiring GPU compute
- Pentest Reporter (sensitive client data)
- Internal tooling with high data sensitivity
- Full physical control, no cloud egress

WHAT WE LOST

- Missing Google Tasks integration across third-party apps
- Real-time collaboration less seamless than Google Docs
- Some polish gaps in open-source UIs
- Fewer integrations with external SaaS tools
- No single ecosystem — multiple logins, multiple UIs

Trade-offs we'd make again.

Digitale Sicherheit. Für Mensch & Maschine.

€63.200

Annual savings after migration

110

person-days invested



< 12

months to break even

DAY ONE BUY-IN

- Team understood the 'why' — sovereignty, credibility, cost
- Involved employees in tool selection and testing
- Parallel operation periods reduced friction
- No forced cutover — gradual, voluntary adoption
- Result: zero resistance, immediate productivity

WHAT WE'D TELL YOU

1. **Start with email** — easiest win, builds momentum for the rest
2. **Run parallel** for at least 2 weeks per service — no big-bang cutover
3. **Save CRM for last** — highest data complexity, highest business risk
4. **Your team will surprise you** — acceptance was not the problem
5. **Open source is production-ready** — for a 30-person company, it works

THANK YOU.

Questions?

Chris Wojzechowski

CEO, AWARE7 GmbH

chris@a7.de

<https://a7.de>

Gelsenkirchen, Germany