

SERVERLESS ARCHITECTURE

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10 Advantages (and Disadvantages) of Serverless Architecture

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The serverless computing market is expected to grow to \$7.72 billion by 2021, according to a [global Function as a Service \(FaaS\) market report](#).

Serverless architecture is the computing framework providers use to offer cloud-based backend services to companies like yours. The concept is based on providing specific applications and functionalities to users. These are uploaded to a platform and made available to clients, without requiring them to install their own server.

If your organization is evaluating serverless architecture, this post will help you navigate the pros and cons to be aware of.

Why Companies Would Want to Go Serverless

Many organizational challenges could be resolved (or at least minimized) by going serverless, including the high capital investment required to purchase and configure a traditional server. Server equipment and personnel require substantial space but offer only limited computing capacity, which impacts the ability to scale.

When a company invests in extra capacity, they often find it goes wasted when they aren't using their full resources. And if they don't invest in capacity, there's a chance of exceeding monthly limits due to activity spikes that can result in downtime. Lastly, security risks are higher for platforms managed in-house than those managed by experts.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Serverless Architecture

While the term "serverless" isn't *entirely* accurate—because backend services are still provided by a server—all space/infrastructure issues are managed by the vendor, so clients don't need to be concerned with them.

Advantages of this setup include:

1. A serverless platform allows developers to create code and run it directly in the cloud without being concerned about hardware requirements, operating systems, or servers. This not only saves space, but also significantly reduces the time required for development.
2. The serverless environment works well with agile development protocols, enabling developers to focus on the code and deliver fast results. The shorter development period offers multiple benefits, including faster time to market and quicker software releases.
3. Companies may achieve lower costs because they no longer need to purchase maximum server capacity that might only be used occasionally. Instead, they're charged according to *computing usage*, while the infrastructure is provided by the vendor.
4. The elimination of server management as an IT function can also reduce personnel costs, since companies no longer need to employ workers to buy hardware, provision equipment, or source bandwidth.
5. Increased flexibility and rapid elasticity give developers the option to scale as needed, especially when building applications with a wide range of functionality. These also work well for microservices, which can be performed as functions.
6. In a serverless environment, application code can be run close to the end user, which reduces latency.

Few technologies are completely without disadvantages, however, and serverless architecture has a few downsides you'll need to take into consideration:


1. Nothing is perfect. The serverless model can exhibit higher latency in certain scenarios. For example, when a user request first arrives, the platform may need to perform a cold start. Developers can overcome this by keeping services "warm," which keeps everything preloaded and ready to execute.
2. Debugging and monitoring are more difficult because the serverless environment, by definition, does not run locally. Debugging across a network introduces several challenges. New techniques and tools may be required to step-through code and inspect values. Furthermore, specific instances of serverless functions may come and go depending on how they're managed by the host. The higher the number of functions in an application, the greater the challenge.
3. Currently, the market is facing a lack of independent standards, posing a risk to the use of serverless architecture. Another concern is vendor lock-in, which makes it difficult for companies to switch providers and reduces the pool of developers organizations can choose from.

Despite these issues, Serverless architecture provides many solutions to organizations in need of streamlined processes and modernization.

Dive into our [Enterprise Architecture Modernization Kickstart](#) to discover the best way to streamline your processes, improve efficiency and performance, and keep up with dynamic, real-time data demands through a modernized architecture aimed at maintaining your competitive edge.

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Steven is Anexinet's Lead Content Strategist, focused on Enterprise Mobile Products, with a diverse background in literature and humor. He has helped countless Fortune 500 companies define the direction of their digital campaigns and web/mobile applications. Additionally, he co-founded Apperian, a Boston-based mobile technology company.

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