

# SLICEHOST TRANSITION

## Q&A with Mark Interrante

Here's our philosophy on this change and what we commit to:

- We intend to make the move as painless as possible for you. We're working on one-click-conversion tools to automate the process for you. We're also working on trial accounts specifically for Slicehost customers. More to come on that in future updates.
- We believe this change will be economically beneficial (i.e., lower cost) for most customers, since the utility-based pricing model will result in lower monthly fees for the majority of usage patterns we see.
- We will provide as many comparable features to current Slicehost as possible -- plus we will add new features that will hopefully be of value to you. There's more information in the Q&A below.
- We truly believe this change will be in the best interest of Slicehost customers over the long term. A big reason we purchased Slicehost was to learn from their technology and their customers so we could build up the Rackspace Cloud solutions to the Slicehost level of excellence. We want to retain or improve your product experience, not make it worse.

We will share more about timing as the plans come together. There are no changes happening that will impact Slicehost customers in the next 30 days. We're going to take our time with this transition, so that we make sure to do this right.

We have huge plans and are making substantial investments in Rackspace cloud products. We really believe that we can make it a good option for Slicehost customers. We ask you to stay with us and check out our updated products as they get released over the coming months. We want to earn your business, and we ask you for that opportunity. Meanwhile, we will keep you updated as our plans develop.

### **How hard will the migration be?**

We intend to make the move as seamless as possible. There are several changes that will happen in preparation to merge into Cloud Servers, but we will work to minimize the impact on our customers. The final conversion from Slicehost to Rackspace will be managed via a one-click conversion tool that will automate the conversion process. Throughout this Q&A, we detail the additional specific changes.

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### **Are you increasing prices?**

Raising prices or increasing revenues to Rackspace is not why we're making this change. In fact, we expect the vast majority of customers to pay less. The Rackspace Cloud Server offering is cheaper; its utility-based pricing starts at 1.5 cents per hour, and bandwidth is billed at \$0.18/GB/out and \$0.08/GB/in. To estimate your costs, please use our pricing [calculator](#). Most customers average far less than the "break point" (~60GB – 44 out / 14 in would equate to \$19.99/mo for a 256MB slice). If you use less bandwidth than that, the utility-based model will save you money. For higher bandwidth legacy Slicehost customers, we are investigating a bundled bandwidth option for Cloud Servers.

### **How will my billing change?**

As a Rackspace Cloud Servers customer, you will have the ability to add and delete servers as needed and only pay for the time the servers exist in the system. Additionally, the pricing model is different with Rackspace Cloud Servers: bandwidth is not bundled – it is \$0.18 out and \$0.08 in. Please see the Rackspace Cloud Servers pricing page for more information, which includes a pricing [calculator](#).

### **Will my slices have to move to another Data Center?**

For some of you, yes. Since our St. Louis (STL) data centers (DCs) are not operated by Rackspace, we will be transitioning STL slices to one of our Rackspace DCs. Rackspace DCs have more space, more control and house newer, faster servers. We're investing a lot in our core data centers, so we expect you'll be pleased with the results.

Our intent is for this migration to be easy and function similar to that of resizing a Slice. The major difference of this move may mean a change of IP address for our STL-A and STL-B customers. We understand that our customers rely on IP addresses in their interaction with our services and in many instances use IP addresses in interactions with their own customers as well. Changing IP addresses can be a very difficult undertaking depending upon how applications have been coded and how services are provided. Unfortunately, the IP addresses in STL either belong to the data center operator or conflict with IP space elsewhere within the Rackspace ecosystem. Over the coming months we will be investigating ways to help customers who anticipate problems with changing their IP addresses. While we do not have the final solution to overcome this obstacle we are investigating options such as: advance allocation of future IPs, use of Load Balancing as a Service to smooth the transition, and dual provisioning IPs to assist with testing among others.

We expect to start the migration out of the STL DCs in Q3 2011. We'll be sure to post more information on the forums as we get closer to June/July. As we finalize these plans, we will share the latest details, starting with an FAQ in a new thread.

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## What features will we get, and which features will we lose?

Today's Slicehost product and the future Rackspace cloud products have substantially the same core functionality, but there are a few differences, including:

**Downsize Slices** – Because of various differences in the image formats, it's not technically feasible for us to support this feature. However, we expect you'll find there are advantages to using XenServer. It gives you more control. Its VHD format allows you to choose the file system of your choice (ext3, reiserFS, etc.), have full control over your kernel, and over time add block storage.

Some slice sizes will no longer be offered – Specifically 384MB, 768MB, 1.5GB, and 3GB. Rackspace Cloud Servers operates in size factors of 2x, starting from 256MB to 15.5GB. We will map your existing Slicehost packages into the nearest equivalent Rackspace cloud packages. In less than 10% of Slicehost instances, there is not a direct Rackspace equivalent. If you currently have 384MB, 768MB, 1.5GB, and 3GB Linux slice sizes, you will be upgraded to a Cloud Server with slightly more RAM.

In most instances, the expected monthly cost (even with the upgraded Cloud Server sizes) will be slightly lower than your current pricing (depending on bandwidth usage). The table below shows the current Slicehost instance compared to the equivalent Cloud Servers instance and the associated costs for each. This [calculator](#) will provide an easy way to determine costs based on your specific bandwidth needs.

### Slicehost Sizes and Costs

256MB \$20/month  
384MB \$25/month  
512MB \$38/month  
768MB \$49/month  
1GB \$70/month  
1.5GB \$100/month  
2GB \$130/month  
3GB \$190/month  
4GB \$250/month  
8GB \$450/month  
15.5GB \$800/month

### Rackspace Cloud Server Sizes and Costs\*

256MB \$.015/hour (\$10.95/month)  
512MB \$.03/hour (\$21.90/month)  
1GB \$.06/hour (\$43.80/month)  
2GB \$.12/hour (\$87.60/month)  
4GB \$.24/hour (\$175.20/month)  
8GB \$.48/hour (\$350.40/month)  
15.5GB \$.96/hour (\$700.80/month)

\*Bandwidth additional \$.18/G out & \$.08/G in

### Backups are independent of your slice

In the Slicehost model, backups are stored locally. In the Rackspace Cloud model, backups can be

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stored independently. This allows the backup to be preserved even after deleting the slice.

As @freelock (a Slicehost Customer) [said](#):

@KnightlyComputing you do have to explicitly turn on the backup service, and it was a bit tricky to find, but out of the gate it's the same as Slicehost - automatic daily and weekly, plus on demand.

But the big difference is you can name a backup and store it in CloudFiles, and have as many of those as you want. And then you can use those as the base of a new instance! This alone is the biggest reason we're happy with CloudServers -- it's reduced the provisioning time from 2 hours of configuration to 5 minutes!

We do have to rsync the server over to our customer's accounts, but that still takes a lot less time than setting up all our tools fresh again.

### **Product Portfolio**

Rackspace is in the midst of major investment and build out of its cloud products, and this will provide a host of new options to Slicehost customers. New services to Slicehost users would include Cloud Files (and backups to Cloud Files – detailed in this Q&A), Cloud Load Balancing, hosted email options, hosted calendars, hosted SharePoint, managed cloud, backup/virtual drives to the cloud (Jungle Disk) – all from Rackspace.

Finally, as we finish the transition to OpenStack, even more features and functionality will become available. See Mark's [post](#).

### **What will happen to the Slicehost SliceManager? What's the plan for Control Panels?**

At some point, SliceManager will be retired and replaced by the next generation Control Panel we are currently building. It's based on the technology from our recent acquisition of Cloudkick, along with the experience we've had with Slicehost. It will be fast and responsive, expose even more functionality, and be designed for ease-of-use. In addition, monitoring will improve significantly as we incorporate Cloudkick monitoring technology.

### **What are the plans for the Slicehost API, particularly DNS?**

At the point you transition to Rackspace cloud, you begin using the Rackspace API endpoint. There is additional functionality scheduled to allow for DNS management through a Rackspace programmatic interface. For Cloud Server customers, we have developed a [DNS as a Service](#) offering currently in private beta. Stay tuned for more details in future.

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**How will this change be rolled out? What is the timeline?**

Nothing that directly impacts Slicehost customers will occur in the next 30 days. We hope to complete all the transitions in the three-to-twelve-month timeframe (to be complete by May 2012). Once we automate the migration process, we'll announce that the migration period has opened, and you can choose when you want to migrate.

**Will Slicehost support IPv6?**

No. The conversion to IPv6 requires additional code to handle different types of IP addresses. The timing of IPv6 is one of the things that's driving this change. Rackspace Cloud Servers and the OpenStack code will support IPv6.

**I have more than one slice with Slicehost, will they all transition at the same time?**

Yes, your account will be moved to the Rackspace Cloud along with any remaining Slicehost balance for all slices.

**What will happen to my Slicehost account balance?**

All account balances (positive or negative) will be transferred to your new Rackspace Cloud Servers account.

**Rackspace has stated that Cloud Servers will transition to XenServer – is this true for Slicehost?**

Yes, we will shift our hypervisor to Citrix XenServer from our current Open Source Xen, which we call "Xen Classic." XenServer is experiencing strong adoption by our customers and partners and is the hypervisor we currently use for our Windows offering. Standardizing on one hypervisor will ensure a smoother transition to OpenStack. We are aware of some functionality differences, including the inability to downsize a slice; however, we have weighed the tradeoffs, and feel the added benefits of XenServer, including its out of the box capabilities, management features and APIs, outweigh the drawbacks of not being able to size down.

Please know we will be providing migration assistance for anyone who requests it, to make this transition as smooth as possible. For example, we intend to provide a one button "convert me" process within the control panel. Our commitment to Fanatical Support stands and we'll help our customers in any ways necessary to make the migration happen successfully for them.

**Will you be offering new images?**

Over the course of the next several months, we will continue to expand our portfolio of Cloud Server images. We continually listen to our customers, and right now, RHEL 6, FreeBSD, Debian 6 are the most requested images, followed by OpenSUSE and a few others. To vote on your favorite images or submit ones that are not already on the list, please visit our product feedback forum here.

**Will I need to change my nameservers from ns\*.slicehost.net?**

You will eventually need to transition to Rackspace nameservers, but that process can happen independent of your move to Rackspace.

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