It's always fun to take a stroll down memory lane and revisit the past. Cloud technology history, brief as it may be, has some memories worth jogging, so hop on the nostalgia express and take a trip through the major milestones of one of the most influential technologies this side of the millennium.

Throughout cloud technology history, business solutions have become more affordable and adaptable.

Cloud Technology History: Humble Beginnings

A notoriously nebulous concept, the history of cloud technology is almost equally obscure. Ask anyone in your office what the cloud means to them, and you'll likely get a different answer each time.

Is it simply a collection of networked objects? If so, the original ARPANET could conceivably be the foundation upon which the cloud was built, according to the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). That being said, no one was streaming the latest season of "Game of Thrones" from any ARPANET nodes.
Virtualization

Outside the introduction of networking, perhaps the single greatest defining moment of cloud technology history was separating operating systems from the hardware that powered them. In the swinging '70s, users got a glimpse of the very first virtual machine operating systems.

What was the significance to enterprise IT at the time? For one, companies could finally host more than one “computer” inside a single physical environment. Considering the size of computer hardware at the time, you’d better believe it was a turning point in the cloud timeline. Otherwise, the cloud vendors of the world would need far more real estate to house their cloud environment.

Connecting the Dots

While ARPANET spawned the notion of computer networks, it wasn't until the '90s that modern internet conveniences were born. As it turns out, virtual private network (VPN) technology was the catalyst that drove enterprise buy-in.

Telecommunication providers introduced VPN solutions that essentially paved the way for today's private clouds. The combination of high-speed internet communication with virtualization provided a foundation upon which cloud technology could flourish.

"Perhaps the single greatest defining moment of cloud technology history was separating operating systems from the hardware that powered them."

Standardization

With VPN technology connecting virtual machines in massive data centers with high-speed access, the new millennium proved to be a fertile time for cloud growth. In fact, with the likes of Salesforce and others providing the first web-based cloud services, enterprise organizations around the world finally got a glimpse of the cloud's potential.

That wasn't a fleeting glimpse, either. As the convenience, speed, and efficiency of these services became clear, the market took off. However, this Wild West atmosphere wasn't sustainable in its current state. New standards for software and internet protocols were necessary to help reign in the chaos.

Companies started building API platforms to ease the burdens of integration as well. All this came together quite nicely as businesses could finally consolidate their dependence on technology into a single cloud-based platform.

'As-a-Service' Revolution

One of the last remaining hurdles holding web services back in the early 2000s was the web itself. Between Ajax forms and Flash content spilling across those 1024 x 768 screens, the web as a whole was a much colder, static place.
When Web 2.0 hit the scene, all that was about to change, according to Lifewire. Web-based software could finally operate like its desktop siblings without the reliance on archaic plugins. For enterprise organizations, this meant no longer needing to maintain a stable of third-party software to tackle daily operations. Instead, all that was needed was a simple web browser.

With the combined powers of high-speed internet, virtualization, and dynamic web content, the cloud took on a new form even Captain Planet would be jealous of. This sparked the “as-a-service” revolution.” Instead of investing hours into designing, configuring, and maintaining infrastructure to support a bevy of enterprise applications, organizations could simply use cloud solutions for business with the click of a button.

When you stop and think about how much the cloud has changed the way companies do business in the digital world, you really start to appreciate all the small pieces that came together to make it happen.

Contact Vonage Business to learn more about how cloud-based communications can aid your company.