

Beyond the Public Cloud: Why SMBs Are Reclaiming Their Data With Scalable Private Clouds

Solution brief

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For a decade, the technology industry has operated under a pervasive, widely held assumption: the public cloud is the ultimate destination for all business data. We were sold a vision of frictionless scale, zero hardware maintenance and utility-style billing. Is the public cloud truly the best, most cost-effective home for every gigabyte of your business data?

For modern small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) — ranging from agile creative agencies pushing 8K video to retail environments running intensive 24/7 surveillance — the reality of the public cloud has become an increasingly complex reality. The promise of “pay for what you use” has quietly morphed into the nightmare of “pay endlessly for what you store.”

This exact paradigm shift was the focal point of the recent Designing a Scalable Private Cloud webinar co-hosted by UGREEN and Seagate. The session provided a powerful truth: by building a network-attached storage (NAS) private cloud, SMBs can achieve enterprise-grade performance, absolute data control and effortless scalability — all while eliminating the unpredictable recurring fees of public cloud storage.

The challenge: escaping the public cloud trap

To understand why the private cloud renaissance is happening, we first must examine the pain points driving SMBs away from the public cloud. The most glaring issue is cloud cost creep. According to recent industry surveys, over 65% of SMBs report their public cloud spend exceeded initial projections by more than 20% last year. When you rely on public cloud storage, you aren’t just paying for capacity. You’re also paying for access, egress, API calls and premium tiers for faster retrieval. Over three-to-five years, the total cost of ownership (TCO) for public cloud storage heavily eclipses the capital expenditure of your hardware.

But the challenges extend beyond the balance sheet. There’s the critical issue of internet dependency. If your local fiber line is cut or your ISP experiences an outage, a public-cloud-dependent business grinds to a halt. Local performance also suffers. Even with a gigabit connection, receiving massive 4K/8K video project files from a remote data center creates latency that creative professionals can’t afford.

There’s also the anxiety surrounding control and privacy. When your proprietary business data, sensitive client files or internal surveillance footage lives on someone else’s servers, you’re surrendering a degree of sovereignty. The private cloud solves this by bringing your data back home behind your own firewall and under your control.

The solution: the power of the NAS private cloud

So, what’s the modern alternative? A high-performance UGREEN NAS enclosure populated with purpose-built, high-capacity drives like the [Seagate IronWolf® Pro](#) series. This setup creates a cloud that lives in your office. It offers the same remote accessibility and automated synchronization you love about public cloud services, but with the speed of a local network connection.

The TCO logic is undeniable: When you purchase a NAS and populate it with enterprise-grade drives, your major expenses are capped. You shift from an unpredictable operational expenditure (OPEX) to a predictable capital expenditure (CAPEX) model. Once the hardware is paid for, the storage belongs to you. There are no monthly subscription hikes, no penalties for downloading your own files and no tiering restrictions.

One of the greatest myths keeping SMB owners tethered to the public cloud is the fear that scaling on-premises hardware is complex and expensive. As explained during the UGREEN and Seagate webinar, modern scaling strategies are remarkably simple. Through a pay-as-you-grow approach, businesses can start with a partially populated NAS enclosure. When capacity runs low, scaling is as simple as sliding a new drive into an empty bay or utilizing hot-swappable capacity upgrades to expand storage pools without system downtime.



Fortress-Level Data protection built in

Owning your data means owning your data protection, but modern NAS ecosystems have made this exceptionally intuitive. You don’t need a dedicated IT department to implement enterprise-grade resilience.

A properly configured NAS private cloud supports automated snapshots — point-in-time copies of your data that capture your file system exactly as it was minutes, hours or days ago. If a user accidentally deletes a critical folder or worse, if ransomware infiltrates an employee’s laptop and attempts to encrypt network drives, you can simply roll back the NAS to a pristine snapshot from before the event. Combined with the industry-standard 3-2-1 backup methodology (three copies of your data, on two different media, with one offsite/cloud backup), a NAS private cloud offers an impenetrable fortress for your business continuity.

Purpose-built [Seagate IronWolf Pro](#) hard drives: the foundation of your private cloud

The entire private cloud architecture relies on one fundamental truth: your drives must be engineered for the task. Dropping standard desktop hard drives into a multi-bay NAS is a recipe for catastrophic data loss due to rotational vibration and 24/7 thermal stress. To capitalize on a private cloud, you need drives built for continuous, heavy workloads. This brings us to Seagate IronWolf Pro, a specialized, massive capacity 32TB drive that serves as the heart of these systems.

For NAS and creative workflows: Seagate IronWolf Pro 32TB

For the core SMB private cloud, shared storage and demanding 4K/8K creative workflows, there’s the [Seagate IronWolf Pro 32TB](#). Engineered specifically for 24/7 performance in multi-bay, multi-user RAID environments, these conventional magnetic recording (CMR) drives deliver the capacity required to consolidate years of data.

What makes the IronWolf Pro stand out is its holistic approach to data longevity. It features IronWolf Health Management (IHM), an intelligent system that actively monitors drive health and provides prevention, intervention and recovery recommendations before a failure occurs. Seagate also includes a five-year manufacturing warranty and three years of complimentary Rescue Data Recovery Services, giving SMB owners peace of mind knowing that in the event of a physical catastrophe, world-class data recovery experts have their back.

For Surveillance and NVR: Seagate SkyHawk AI

For businesses utilizing their private cloud infrastructure for physical security, the workload profile changes dramatically. Surveillance systems don’t just store files; they write heavy, continuous streams of high-definition video while simultaneously processing complex analytics. For this, Seagate engineered [SkyHawk™ AI](#).

Positioned for high-density video and edge AI workloads with capacities up to 32TB, [SkyHawk AI](#) effortlessly supports up to 64 HD cameras and 32 simultaneous AI streams. It boasts a staggering workload rate of 550TB per year and features proprietary ImagePerfect™ AI technology, which ensures zero dropped frames during continuous recording and playback. For extended peace of mind, [SkyHawk AI](#) includes SkyHawk Health Management, a five-year manufacturing warranty and three years of complimentary Rescue Data Recovery Services. If your SMB relies on network video recorders (NVRs) for loss prevention, employee safety or facility monitoring, [SkyHawk AI](#) is the reliable foundation you need.

The future is yours to own

The era of blindly renting digital real estate in the public cloud is ending. By leveraging a high-performance NAS populated with purpose-built Seagate drives, SMBs can build scalable private clouds that perfectly align with their operational needs. You gain the speed necessary for collaborative workflows, the massive capacity required for high-resolution media and surveillance, and the financial predictability that allows your business to thrive.

Data is the lifeblood of your business. It’s time you brought it home.

Ready to take control of your data?

Stop paying storage monthly fees and start building a resilient, high-performance storage infrastructure that scales with your business.

The partnership between [UGREEN NAS](#) and [Seagate](#) bridges the gap between creative inspiration and technical execution. By combining the industry’s fastest consumer NAS hardware with the world’s most reliable storage media, creators can stop managing drives and start creating content.

To learn more about the UGREEN and Seagate partnership, [click here](#).