

THE ALBERTA BUSINESS OWNER'S GUIDE

Cloud, AI & Cybersecurity

Practical technology advice for small and medium businesses

A FREE RESOURCE FROM

Code To Cloud Inc.

Your Local Technology Advisor



Why This Guide Matters

You're running a business in Alberta. You're busy with customers, employees, operations, and growth. Technology should help you — not confuse you or slow you down.

But here's what I see constantly:

- Business owners who don't know if they actually own their domain name
- Companies overpaying for software they barely use
- Security gaps that could shut down operations overnight
- Opportunities to use AI that would save hours every week

This guide gives you the essential knowledge to:

- Take control of your business technology
- Avoid expensive mistakes
- Identify quick wins
- Know when you need expert help

I've kept this practical. No technical jargon. No sales pitch. Just the information you need to make smart decisions about your business technology.

Kevin Evans

Founder, Code To Cloud Inc.

Alberta



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Part 1:

Do You Actually Own Your Business?

Last month, an Alberta business owner called me in a panic. Their IT contractor had disappeared — phone disconnected, emails bouncing. And this contractor had:

- Admin access to their email system
- Control of their domain name
- Access to their cloud environment
- All the passwords

The business owner couldn't access their own website. Couldn't reset their own passwords. Couldn't even prove they owned their domain.

It took weeks to sort out. Legal threats. Lost business. Damaged relationships.

This happens more than you think.



The Three Things You Must Own

1. Your Domain Name

Your domain (like YourBusiness.com) should be registered:

- Under YOUR business name or your personal name
- With an email address YOU control
- With payment information YOU manage

Check right now: Go to your domain registrar. Who's listed as the owner?

If it's your IT contractor, web designer, or "some guy who helped set things up years ago" — fix this immediately.

2. Your Email System

Whoever is the admin of your email can:

- Read any email in your company
- Reset anyone's password
- Delete accounts or data
- Lock you out entirely

You or a trusted business principal should have admin access. Your IT provider can have a separate account with permissions — but you own the master.



3. Your Cloud Accounts

If you use Microsoft 365, Google Workspace, QuickBooks Online, or any cloud service — who set it up?

You should create the account. You're the owner. You invite contractors as users to help manage it.

Your Ownership Audit

Take 10 minutes right now to answer these:

Who is listed as owner of your domain?

Can you log into your registrar yourself?

Do you have admin access to your email?

Are you the account owner on cloud services?

Do you have master passwords stored securely?

Could you revoke contractor access today?

If you can't check all these boxes, you have work to do. The good news: it's all fixable.



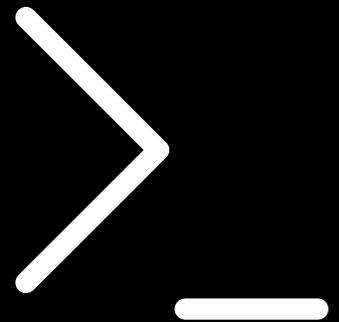
Take Action Now

Not sure where to start? Book a complimentary 15-minute call with Code To Cloud. We'll help you identify what accounts you need to check, understand who currently has access, and create an action plan to take back control.

Free 15-Minute Ownership Audit

Email: info@codetocloud.io

Web: codetocloud.io/ownership-audit





Part 2:

Cloud Essentials

for Alberta

Businesses

What Is "The Cloud"?

The cloud isn't a physical place — it's a way of accessing technology over the internet instead of on your own computer or server.

Old way (on-premise):

You buy a server, install software, store everything in your office. If the server breaks, you're down. If you want to access files from home, tough luck.

Cloud way:

You access software and files over the internet. Someone else maintains the servers. You can work from anywhere with internet. Your data is backed up automatically.

Examples you're probably already using:

- Gmail or Outlook.com (cloud email)
- QuickBooks Online (cloud accounting)
- Dropbox or Google Drive (cloud storage)
- Netflix (cloud entertainment)

If you access it through a web browser from any device, it's in the cloud.



When Cloud Makes Sense

- You need to work from anywhere — access files from home, road, or coffee shop
- You want automatic backups — no remembering to run backups
- You're tired of managing servers — no hardware failures or updates
- You want predictable costs — monthly subscription vs big upfront purchases
- You need to scale — add users in busy season, remove when slow

When Cloud Doesn't Make Sense

- Unreliable internet — if internet goes down, you can't access cloud
- Strict data residency — some industries require data in Canada
- Massive files — uploading huge CAD/video files is slow
- You're happy with current setup — don't fix what isn't broken

Stop Overpaying: Common Cloud Waste

Most businesses waste 20-30% of cloud spending:

- Paying for users who left — forgot to cancel licenses
- Duplicate services — Dropbox AND OneDrive AND Google Drive
- Wrong tier — Premium plan but using Basic features
- Zombie apps — trial from 2 years ago still billing



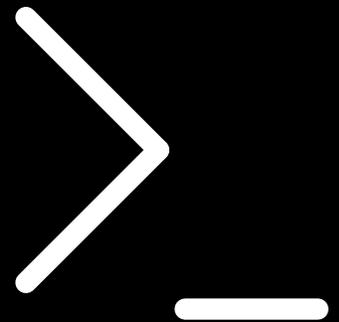
Get Your Cloud Under Control

Let's review your current cloud setup and find opportunities to cut unnecessary costs (average savings: \$200-500/month), improve reliability, enable better remote work, and ensure proper backups.

Free Cloud Cost & Readiness Assessment

Email: info@codetocloud.io

Web: codetocloud.io/cloud-assessment





Part 3:

AI for Small Business — The Real Story

What Is AI (Artificial Intelligence)?

AI is software that can learn patterns and make decisions without being explicitly programmed for every situation.

Traditional software vs AI:

Traditional: You tell it exactly what to do. Every scenario must be programmed.

AI: You give it examples and goals. It learns patterns and handles new situations.

Examples: Your phone's voice assistant, Netflix recommendations, spam filters, ChatGPT.

For business, AI is best for repetitive tasks that require some judgment — writing emails, answering questions, analyzing data.

What AI Can Actually Do for You Today

1. Automate Repetitive Tasks

- Email drafting — first drafts of customer responses
- Data entry — extract info from invoices into your system
- Scheduling — coordinate calendars, book appointments
- Social media — generate post ideas and captions



Real Alberta Business Examples

Local Restaurant:

Uses AI to generate weekly social media posts. Saves 3 hours/week. Cost: \$20/month.

Retail Shop:

AI chatbot answers "What are your hours?" and "Do you have X in stock?" Captures leads after hours. Cost: \$50/month.

Accounting Firm:

Uses AI to draft initial tax planning letters. Accountant reviews and personalizes. Saves 5 hours/week. Cost: \$30/month.

Notice a pattern? These aren't million-dollar AI projects. They're simple, focused applications that solve specific problems.

What About AI Agents?

AI agents are the next step — they can complete entire tasks, not just help with one piece.

Example: Customer Service Agent

Instead of just answering questions, an AI agent can look up order status, process returns, schedule appointments, and update your database — all without human intervention.

AI agents are powerful but require more setup. Start with simple AI tools first, then explore agents when you're ready.



What AI Can't Do (Yet)

- Replace your judgment — AI suggests, you decide
- Handle complex relationships — customers want humans for important things
- Understand your business automatically — you need to train and configure it
- Work without oversight — AI makes mistakes, you need to review outputs
- Replace your expertise — it's a tool to amplify your knowledge, not replace it

Your First AI Project (15 Minutes)

Let's get you started with AI today — no tech setup required.

Project: Use AI to Draft a Customer Email

Step 1: Go to ChatGPT (chat.openai.com) or Claude (claude.ai) — both have free versions.

Step 2: Give it context. Example: "I run a landscaping business in Alberta. A customer asked about spring cleanup. Write a friendly response explaining we offer spring cleanup, it includes debris removal and lawn assessment, pricing starts at \$200, and we can schedule a free quote."

Step 3: Review the draft. Edit to match your voice.

Time saved: 5-10 minutes per email. Do this 10 times/week = 1 hour saved weekly.



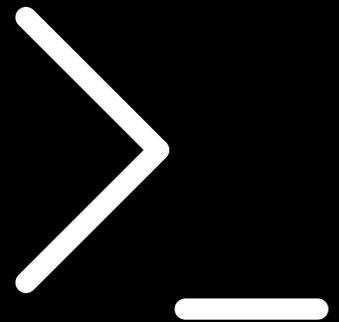
Explore AI for Your Business

Not sure where AI could help in YOUR specific business? Let's figure it out together. In 30 minutes, we'll identify your most time-consuming tasks, show you 2-3 AI tools that could help, and give you a simple implementation plan.

Free AI Opportunity Workshop

Email: info@codetocloud.io

Web: codetocloud.io/ai-workshop





Part 4:

Cybersecurity

That Actually

Matters

What Is Cybersecurity?

Cybersecurity is protecting your business data, systems, and money from digital threats — hackers, viruses, scams, and human mistakes.

Think of it like locking your store:

Physical security: Lock the doors, alarm system, cameras, safe for cash.

Cyber security: Strong passwords, backups, employee training, antivirus software.

Just like you wouldn't leave your store unlocked overnight, you can't leave your business data unprotected online.

"We're too small to be a target."

I hear this all the time. It's not true. Hackers don't care about your size. They care about easy targets. Small businesses are often the easiest — less security, fewer resources to recover.

The Real Threats Facing Alberta Businesses

1. Phishing Emails (The #1 Threat)

Fake email that looks like your bank or Microsoft. Employee clicks, enters password, hacker gets access.

2 Ransomware



The 5 Things That Actually Protect You

1. Strong Passwords + Password Manager

Use a password manager (1Password, Bitwarden). Generate random passwords for each account. Cost: \$5-10/month per user.

2. Two-Factor Authentication (2FA)

Even if someone steals your password, they can't log in without the code on your phone. Enable on email, banking, cloud services. Cost: Free.

3. Regular Backups (And Test Them!)

Automatic daily backups, stored offsite. Test restores quarterly. If ransomware hits, backups save you. Cost: \$50-200/month.

4. Employee Training

15 minutes per quarter: spot phishing, never share passwords, lock computer when away. Most failures are human error. Cost: Your time.

5. Keep Software Updated

Updates include security patches. Turn on automatic updates for everything. Cost: Free.



Security Red Flags

You need help if:

- You don't know who has access to what
- You've never tested your backups
- Your team shares passwords
- You're not sure about industry requirements
- You use the same password everywhere
- You don't have 2FA enabled
- Software hasn't been updated in months

Industry-Specific Requirements

CPAs / Accountants:

PIPEDA compliance, CPA Alberta Code of Conduct

Healthcare:

Personal Health Information Protection Act (Alberta)

Retail (credit cards):

PCI-DSS compliance, secure payment processing



Part 5:

When to Get Help (And How to Choose)

DIY vs. Hiring an Expert

You can probably handle yourself:

- Setting up password manager
- Enabling 2FA on your accounts
- Organizing cloud subscriptions
- Trying AI tools for simple tasks

You should get help with:

- Compliance requirements (PIPEDA, PCI, etc.)
- Security audits and risk assessments
- Complex cloud migrations
- Custom integrations between systems
- Anything where mistakes are expensive



Questions to Ask Before Hiring Anyone

About ownership:

- Will I own my accounts, or will you?
- What happens when our contract ends?
- Can I log into everything myself right now?

About security:

- How do you secure access to customer systems?
- Do you use two-factor authentication?
- Have you had security incidents? How did you handle them?

About transparency:

- Will you document what you set up?
- Can I see references from similar businesses?

Red Flags:

- Vague answers about ownership
- Pushback when you ask for admin access
- No written contracts or agreements
- Unwilling to provide references



What Is a Fractional CTO?

CTO stands for Chief Technology Officer — the person who makes technology decisions for a company. But hiring a full-time CTO costs \$150,000-\$250,000+ per year. Most small businesses can't justify that.

A Fractional CTO gives you expert technology leadership part-time:

- Strategic guidance — help you make smart tech decisions
- Vendor management — evaluate and negotiate with IT providers
- Security oversight — ensure you're protected
- Project planning — cloud migrations, system upgrades, AI implementation
- Team support — advise your internal staff or contractors

How it works:

You get a set number of hours per month (typically 5-20 hours). You can call, email, or meet as needed. No long-term contracts. Cancel anytime.

Who needs a Fractional CTO:

- Growing businesses planning major technology changes
- Companies with outdated or unreliable systems
- Businesses in regulated industries (healthcare, finance, accounting)
- Anyone who needs expert tech advice but not a full-time hire



Your Next Steps

Start Here: Pick One Thing

Don't try to fix everything at once. Pick ONE action:

Quick Wins (This Week):

- Check who owns your domain name
- Turn on 2FA for your email
- Try AI to draft one customer email
- List all cloud services you're paying for

Medium Effort (This Month):

- Set up a password manager
- Audit your cloud spending for waste
- Test your backups
- Review who has admin access

Bigger Projects (This Quarter):

- Complete security training with team
- Ensure compliance with regulations
- Implement AI for a business process



Get Expert Help

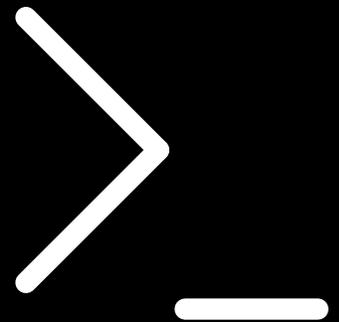
Not sure where to start? Book a free 30-minute strategy call. We'll review your current situation, identify your biggest risks or opportunities, recommend 1-3 priorities, and give you a clear action plan. No obligation. No sales pitch. Just practical advice.

Book Your Free Strategy Call

Email: info@codetocloud.io

Web: codetocloud.io

Book Online: codetocloud.io/strategy-call





About Code To Cloud

We're based in Alberta and work with small and medium businesses across Western Canada.

What we do: Fractional CTO services, Cloud migration and optimization, Cybersecurity assessments, AI implementation and training, Technology ownership audits.

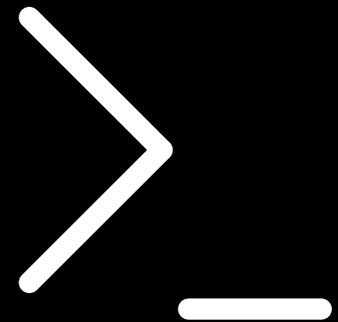
What makes us different: You own everything (we're guests in your house), No long-term contracts, Plain language explanations, Alberta-based and we understand local business.

Get in Touch:

Email: info@codetocloud.io

Website: codetocloud.io

Follow us: [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), [Podcast \(Spotify\)](#)



Share this guide with other business owners who could benefit.

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