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Technology Support and Post-Adoption Information Technology Service Use: Evidence from the Cloud

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Abstract

Does a provider's technology support strategy influence its buyers' post-adoption IT service use? We study this question in the context of cloud infrastructure services. The provider offers two levels of support, basic and full. Under basic support, the provider handles simple service quality issues. Under full support, the provider also offers education, training, and personalized guidance through two-way interactions with buyers. Using unique data on public cloud infrastructure services use by 22,179 firms from March 2009 to August 2012, we find that buyers who receive full support use the service 34.85% more than other users. We further show that buyers who have full support deploy infrastructure services more efficiently, increasing the fraction of servers they run in parallel by 3.53 percentage points relative to those who do not. Furthermore, buyers who drop full support and switch back to basic support continue using 15.01% more of the service and have a proportion of servers running in parallel that is 2.82 percentage points higher compared to buyers who have never received full support. These findings provide suggestive evidence of buyer learning as a result of provider support.

Keywords: IT service, organizational learning, IT use, cloud computing, infrastructure-as-a-service, technology support, service strategies.