Air Force CIO hails AWS-driven Cloud One benefits

U.S. Air Force CIO Lauren Knausenberger detailed the service branch's continuing migration to cloud services at the AWS Summit, Washington DC event on September 28. She focused on the buildout of its Cloud One cloud computing platform—which has a majority of its systems hosted with AWS—and the benefits that the platform is bringing to the Air Force.

"We decided a few years ago that we were going to be a multi-hybrid cloud, and along with being a multi-hybrid cloud, we have to do that across multiple levels of classification," including unclassified, secret, top secret, and sometimes even higher levels, Knausenberger said.

The view when she joined the service branch four years ago was much different, the CIO explained.

"All of our websites were largely hosted locally," and "we had different teams maintaining them […] and different teams securing them," she said. "Can you imagine, with what you know of the security accreditation process and government, having to independently deploy all of those things and get them accredited?" she asked, before adding, "We don't do that anymore."

Knausenberger said, "the vast majority of our unclassified systems are in Cloud One, and a large number of those are in AWS."

> "Systems are really a collection of many things," she continued. "So think of that as hundreds of applications making up those systems that I'm talking about. Over 19 million monthly logins, all of our public-facing sites, all in the cloud today."

"We have been able to close almost all of our personnel-focused data centers and consolidate hundreds of applications so the cost savings have been huge," the CIO said.

She also pointed to public metrics for Cloud One, showing several hundred thousand attacks prevented each month.

> "We take a lot of incoming fire," she said, "much like the global banking industry also takes a lot of incoming fire in the cyber domain, […] We have really set up an incredible environment that combines automation, but also our airman defenders, to stave all of that off through our cloud environment."

She also said that Cloud One has simplified identity, credentialing, and access management (ICAM) solutions.

"Today, we have one standard solution," she said. "If I want to set up an innovation lab, if I want to launch a new app, if I want to host a new business application, I can do all of that in Cloud One."

"And I can go and largely push a button [and] spin up an accredited environment," she said. "I don't have to go through the 900 steps starting over; […] Our agility has been hugely increased through this," she said.