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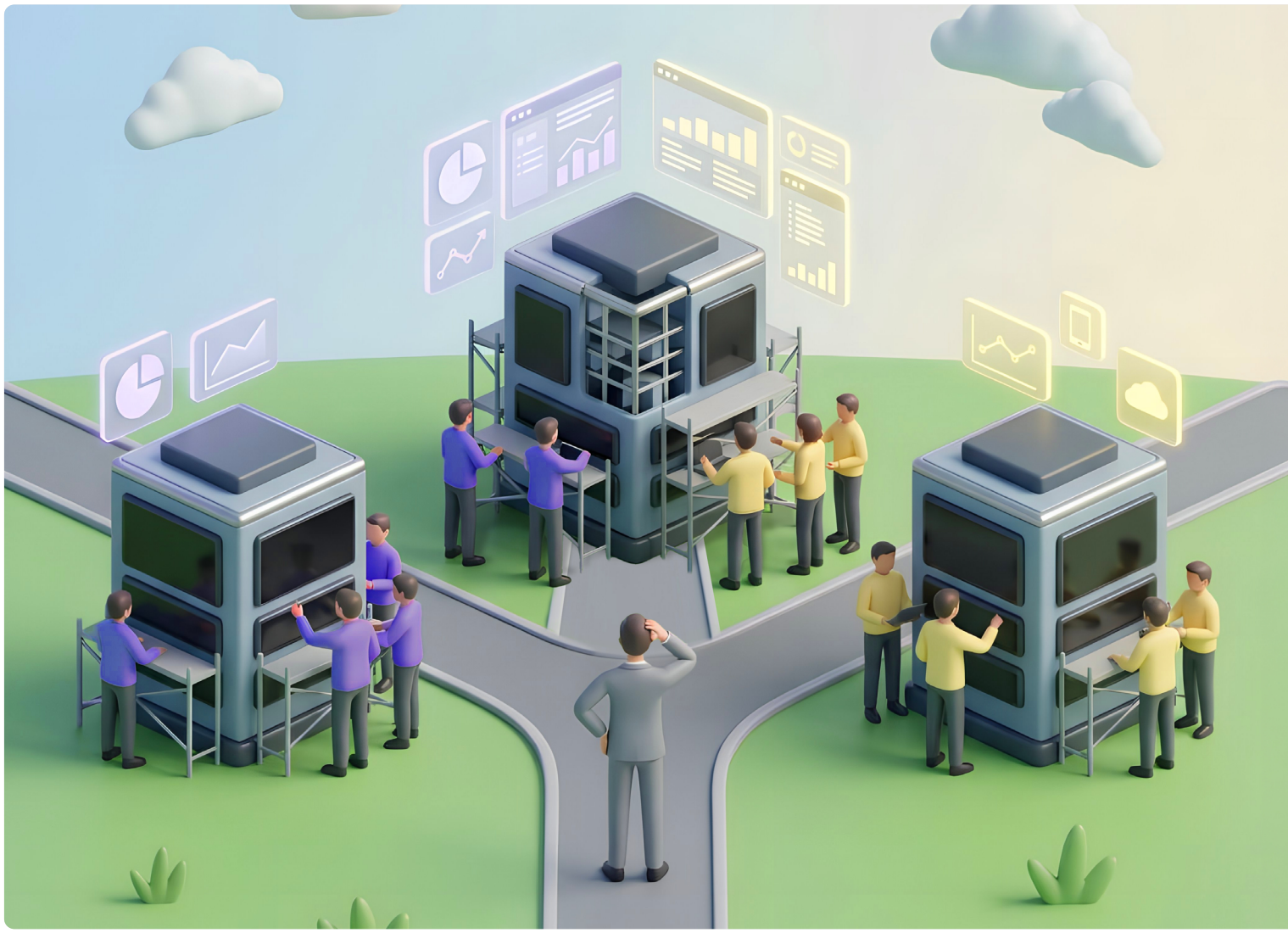
Three Paths to Modern Mainframe Hosting

A guide to understanding your options



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Organizations are rethinking their mainframe hosting approach

For many organizations, the mainframe still runs the high-value, high-volume workloads their business depends on every day. Its role hasn't changed—but the expectations around how it's hosted, operated, and supported have.

Across industries, organizations are re-examining their mainframe environments as they face new realities, such as:

- Aging hardware and upcoming refresh decisions
- Increasing operational complexity and cost pressure
- A shrinking pool of experienced mainframe talent
- Data center consolidation or exit initiatives
- Higher expectations for resiliency, security, recovery, and compliance
- Interest in refocusing internal teams on modernization initiatives

These pressures often prompt organizations to reassess how their mainframe should be managed. This guide helps you understand the most common mainframe hosting models used today.

Three hosting models, explained

There's no single "right" mainframe hosting answer for every organization. Many align to one of three models, depending on how much ownership and operational responsibility they want to retain. These models are often delivered as part of broader Mainframe-as-a-Service (MFaaS) offerings. At a high level, they differ in where the mainframe runs and who's responsible for running it day to day:

1 **Fully Managed Hosting**

2 **Remote Hosting**

3 **Remote Infrastructure Management (RIM)**

These models fall along a spectrum—from environments primarily managed in-house to those largely operated by a partner.

Here's how each one works.

1 Fully Managed Hosting

What it is

Fully Managed Hosting centralizes hosting and operations with a single partner, reducing the internal responsibility for running the environment. The infrastructure, platform operations, and day-to-day management are handled on your behalf, allowing your teams to focus on the applications and business outcomes the platform supports.

How it works

- **The mainframe runs in a partner-managed or approved colocation facility**
- **A partner manages hardware lifecycle, platform operations, and operational support, shifting capital investments into predictable operating expense**
- **Clients retain ownership of their applications and business priorities**

What it solves

Fully Managed Hosting is often considered when organizations want to significantly reduce operational burden and step away from running mainframe infrastructure themselves.

2 Remote Hosting

What it is

Remote Hosting allows organizations to keep their mainframe hardware in their own data center or a colocation facility, while shifting responsibility for running and supporting the environment to an external partner. In this model, the mainframe stays where it is—but the operational responsibility moves.

How it works

- **The mainframe remains in a client-owned or client-designated location**
- **A partner remotely manages the infrastructure and platform operations**
- **Day-to-day operational work is handled by the partner's mainframe teams**

What it solves

Remote Hosting is often a fit for organizations that want operational relief and expert support, without making immediate changes to hardware ownership or data center strategy.

3 Remote Infrastructure Management (RIM)

What it is

Remote Infrastructure Management (RIM) focuses on operational support rather than hosting. In this model, the client retains full ownership of the mainframe and data center, while a partner provides the people and expertise to help run the environment.

How it works

- **The mainframe remains fully client-owned and client-hosted**
- **A partner provides operational expertise across agreed-upon functions**
- **Day-to-day responsibilities are shared based on the client's staffing and priorities**

What it solves

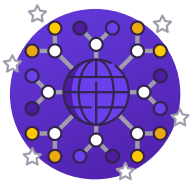
RIM is often used to stabilize operations, address skills gaps, or provide continuity as internal teams change or retire.

Finding your path forward

Understanding different hosting models isn't about making a final decision—it's about clarifying direction. You can start by considering factors such as:

Current environment and constraints

Operational priorities and risks



Longer-term modernization or transformation goals

Most organizations naturally recognize themselves in one of the scenarios below.

If this sounds like you:	You may want to explore:
Your hardware is aging, and exiting the data center is becoming part of your long-term strategy.	**Fully Managed Hosting**
You want to retain hardware ownership, but managing the platform is placing increasing demands on your internal teams.	**Remote Hosting**
You want to keep the platform, but your team needs additional operational support or specialized expertise.	**Remote Infrastructure Management (RIM)**

Looking at your options is an important step toward finding a path that supports both today's needs and your longer-term strategy.

Ready to clarify your next move?

We're here to help you think it through. Our teams bring decades of experience supporting mainframe environments across these approaches and can help you understand which MFaaS model is the right fit, right now.

Let's connect