

Local Physicist Co-Founded Cloud Computing Company



By William Laforme, Lynnfield Patch
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For many of us, cloud computing is still a somewhat vague concept that involves email and online documents that different people can edit simultaneously.

However, as this technology continues to emerge and mature, a growing number of business niches and individual companies also find themselves poised to benefit from its potential.

One such example is [FolderWave](#), which uses cloud computing technology to provide services to academic institutions.

"The layman's explanation is that the cloud is where storage and computing capacity exist (provided by a vendor) so all you really need on your laptop/iPad etc. is a browser. All your software runs in the cloud," explained FolderWave co-founder Bruce Ryan - a physicist and Lynnfield resident who got his PhD in high energy physics from Princeton. "To those of us who have been around for a while it's 'déjà vu all over again'... time sharing."



Lynnfield resident Bruce Ryan's company, FolderWave, provides cloud-computing based services to academic institutions.

According to Ryan, the field of high-energy physics is an extension of nuclear physics and involves some of the experiments often seen in the media that involve accelerators, sub-atomic particles, and so forth (The most common pop culture reference to this field can probably be found in the Da Vinci Code books and movies). At the time, Princeton had one of the earliest online managed experiments, and Ryan found himself very interested in it. Around that time, he was also advised to go and work in research and development for IBM - which he did after graduation.

A native of Lynn, Ryan has lived in Lynnfield for about 40 years on a property that still boasts a barn, tractors and horses. Ryan, who is descended from New Brunswick farmers, remarks half-seriously that at this point, he might even be the only farmer left in Lynnfield. A daughter and three grandchildren also live next door in town.

The business concept for the Westford-based FolderWave began to emerge about a decade ago, when Ryan was discussing technology and financial aid with longtime friend and colleague Frank Campanella, the former executive vice president of Boston College. From there, a financial aid application soon emerged that could give the institution a hand with help from a fairly young technology.

"We'd like to say we were brilliant and we were one of the first cloud companies, but the fact is we listened to people," Ryan told Lynnfield Patch in a recent interview.

From financial aid, Ryan recalls how it was a "logical next step" to begin aggregating other tools and technology to offer more of a "soup to nuts" range - including services like document management, workflow management, and data upgrades - and many other high-volume applications for that matter.

"We do it all, and refer to it as our 'soup to nuts' approach which people intuitively understand This represents the logical extension of the cloud concept, a state currently reached by very few," said Ryan.

Right now, he reports that the company works with six major universities and some 2,000 secondary schools. If and when the time comes, Ryan also noted that the company offers a built-in capability to handle different alphabets from around the world, such as Chinese and Japanese.

FolderWave currently has about a dozen employees and also works with a number of subcontractors. So far, Ryan reports that the company has not sought out venture capital investments, although he points out that with the cloud computing sector increasingly heating up and with the company itself seeing substantial growth, investors may eventually be sought to help expand areas like sales and marketing.

About FolderWave

FolderWave, Inc. (www.folderwave.com) is a cloud-based company offering products and services designed to significantly improve complex, high-volume time-dependent process and data management operations in many operational areas in higher education.

