

WHY CLOUD BACKUP: TOP 10 REASONS

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Protecting vital information is critical to an organization's survival, no matter what size the organization. Recent studies show that 93 percent of organizations that lose data because of a disaster go out of business within two years.

Increasingly, organizations are adopting cloud backup solutions to address their data protection challenges. Exacerbated by data growth, protecting data is difficult, expensive, unreliable, and unmanageable with traditional tape backup methods.

Cloud data protection solutions that combine the latest advancements in disk-based backup with secure, integrated, cloud technologies offer organizations fast and assured recovery of their critical enterprise data, while reducing costs and freeing their IT staff to focus on more mission-critical projects. Cloud server backup solutions also reduce the burden of tape management and backup operations headaches, by automatically storing the data safely offsite to protect for disaster recovery purposes. This white paper discusses the top ten reasons why organizations are turning to cloud server backup.

#1 **ACHIEVE DISASTER RECOVERY WITH SECURE OFFSITE CLOUD BACKUP**

You think you're doing everything right. You back up your data on a regular basis. You ensure that your backup equipment and configurations are up-to-date and working properly. You test your restores. Yet, when a pipe bursts in your building and spills water over your servers and backup media, you still lose all your critical data in one night.

Even if you're extremely careful about backing up your data, that's only half of the process. To truly protect your backup data, you also must move it offsite. Too many organizations store their backup media onsite, needlessly exposing themselves to risk from fire or flood. The time and money that you must spend to recreate lost data can be costly, not only in terms of lost productivity, but also in terms of lost revenue and customer good will.

On the other hand, disk-based cloud server backup uses the cloud to automatically transfer data offsite for disaster recovery. Your backup data is immediately off-premises only minutes after being updated. No matter what type of disaster strikes your organization, you can restore data from moments before the disaster occurred.

#2 FREEDOM FROM MANUAL AND COMPLEX TAPE BACKUP TASKS

The unpleasant reality is that tape-based backup is time-consuming and tedious. While organizations know that they must protect their data, those with limited IT staff would prefer to focus their time on more strategic projects central to the business, rather than monitoring the progress of manual backups, reviewing logs, and troubleshooting problems.

"Set-it-and-go" cloud backup solutions reliably and automatically offload these functions, freeing staff to work with a more direct impact on your business – competitive advantage, productivity, and profitability. These solutions also standardize and automate the backup process throughout your organization, without requiring IT staff at each location. A single backup application can protect both virtual and physical servers.

Besides freeing IT staff from manual chores, these solutions also provide IT with Web-based tools to manage and monitor all aspects of their server data protection. In addition, these solutions remove the burden of managing both a backup infrastructure and data protection process.

You can implement cloud backup solutions on a subscription basis from reliable third parties who offer them as managed services. The best of these managed services offers cloud backup with 24x7 coverage, proactive monitoring of data, instant scalability, predictable pricing, and no capital investment in traditional backup and recovery technology.

#3 PREDICTABLE COSTS FOR SIMPLER BUDGETING

Cloud backup services are uniquely suited to address server data protection, including predictable monthly budgeting and costs. The service is completely automated, providing immediate backup of server data to an offsite location, and leveraging the vendor's infrastructure and expertise. This also frees IT personnel to become better aligned with business goals.

The charge for cloud backup is a known monthly service fee, rather than the capital cost of acquiring software licenses for specific servers, which allows for simpler budgeting and predictable monthly costs.

There are no costs for software, backup hardware, maintenance, or media with cloud backup. The service provider bears the cost of the infrastructure and storage devices, now and in the future, as its customers grow.

#4 RELIABLE AND GUARANTEED DATA RECOVERY

If lightning strikes your building tonight, you must ensure that you can restore that day's data. Unfortunately, if you rely on a nightly backup process, restoring that data completely is impossible. How often do you test your internal backups? Could you fully recover your data?

Cloud backup solutions solve this problem by automatically transmitting changes in files and databases to a secure, off-site facility for more continuous backup. Your staff can achieve this level of backup with minimal effort – just set it and go – greatly increasing reliable protection of your organization's data.

The best cloud server backup solutions not only protect recently changed files that are closed, but also capture changes in open files and databases, which can represent some of your most important enterprise data. Such solutions do so without disrupting your process flow. In addition, they provide guaranteed recovery in their Service Level Agreements (SLAs).

#5 MINIMIZED RISKS AND COSTS OF DOWNTIME

Data protection is not a single activity or a one-time event. It's a complex workflow of interconnected processes that extend far beyond simple onsite backup, including the following steps:

1. Backup replication of critical data to another device.
2. Transfer of the replicated data to an offsite location to protect it from human-made or natural disasters.
3. Storage that both protects and organizes the data so that you can recover it easily and quickly.
4. Recovery of replicated data from storage whenever and wherever needed.

If your current data protection solution doesn't address all of these steps, your organization risks unacceptable exposure from partial protection that easily could result in costly, crippling downtime and the loss of irreplaceable data. In a recent ESG Data Protection survey, 56 percent of companies with fewer than 25 servers could tolerate only one hour or less of downtime.

Fortunately, cloud server backup solutions offer a single low-overhead solution that addresses each step in the data protection workflow – and actually reduces the risks and cost associated with each step. These solutions provide the following benefits:

- Fast, comprehensive, and continuous data backup
- Automatic and immediate transmission to an off-site location
- Secure storage that reflects your specific retention scheduling and policies
- Rapid recovery at the level of granularity you want

This kind of “hands off, lights out” comprehensive and continuous backup means that, in the event of a disruption or disaster, you can restore data from a point in time just moments before the interruption, rather than from the previous evening (or earlier). It dramatically improves your ability to meet Recovery Point Objectives and reduces the cost of downtime.

#6 FAST DATA RESTORES

Organizations run in real time and rely on digital data: anything from payroll and customer files to email and other important applications. When disaster strikes, you don't have the luxury of waiting hour after hour to recover your data. Your organization cannot afford the cost of downtime, lost revenue, and other consequences.

Since cloud server backup services immediately move data off-site by backing it up to disk over the cloud, you can restore that data rapidly. Instead of waiting hours, cloud-based recovery enables you to restore your data in minutes, which is suitable for smaller file sets.

The best cloud server backup services transmit only the changes in files and databases—a highly efficient approach that not only optimizes fast recovery, but also helps protect against data corruption, one of the most common causes of data loss. These services also give you control over how much bandwidth they use during any specified time, so that you can plan and manage your workload and data flow. These solutions also offer an optional onsite rapid recovery appliance to allow you to recover large amounts of data and still meet stringent Recovery Time Objectives. In addition, a portable storage device is available to transfer bulk data (such as an entire server) from the offsite copy.

#7 TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SERVICE PROVIDER'S EXPERTISE AND RESOURCES

Why worry about the costs and risks associated with maintaining and managing the data protection process, when you can rely on a trusted cloud backup vendor to do the heavy lifting? When using a cloud backup provider, you are leveraging their expertise to securely protect and provide uninterrupted access to all your data. You achieve significant competitive advantages by leveraging the latest technology, infrastructure, and scalability that a cloud backup solution provides. In addition, you free up your valuable staff resources for other projects that have a more direct impact on your productivity and the profitability of the business.

Cloud backup solutions offer better cost control with predictable pricing. The service provider bears the cost of scalable resources and updates technologies as disk-based backup evolves. This option gives your organization flexibility as it grows and changes—another key to remaining nimble in a competitive environment. The best cloud server backup services provide trusted, proven experience in protecting customer data in the cloud. These services give you peace of mind that your data is protected in secure data centers.

#8 OFFLOAD REGULATORY COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS TO SERVICE PROVIDER

Today, most industries are adopting their own ever-changing regulations for governing offsite data protection and retention periods. For example, in healthcare, HIPAA requires patient information confidentiality, but if an office assistant puts the backup media containing the confidential information in his car and decides to stop at the store on the way home, the patients' confidential information is exposed to theft or damage. Similarly, organizations must retain certain financial records for many years, but if you can't recover those records, you could be held personally liable.

Organizations recognize their fiduciary responsibility to protect critical data assets. With cloud backup, you can stay ahead of the game. Cloud server backup services enable you to automatically move your data off-site to a secure facility—a requirement for many industries. As privacy and records retention regulations take effect, cloud backup offers protection that traditional onsite methods never can, because data is always secure—during transmission, storage, and access.

Another benefit of outsourcing server data protection is that the best solutions help you demonstrate consistent, repeatable processes and controls for information protection. The same Web-based management tools that simplify managing and monitoring backup and recovery also allow you to control archive features that ensure compliance with organizational and regulatory rules.

#9 WELL-MANAGED CLOUD MORE SECURE THAN YOUR OWN

Your enterprise server manages large amounts of sensitive data—customer data, employee records, intellectual property, and more. You would never expose these vital assets to external parties. Yet, by failing to secure data through encryption, organizations leave themselves vulnerable to competitors, hackers, and just plain human error.

Using cloud server backup, with storage at a highly secure offsite location, your data stays safe. The best cloud solutions encrypt your data before moving it through a secure cloud channel, and then keep your data encrypted at the offsite location. Only authorized users with the correct keys can decrypt it.

#10 EASE OF SETUP AND USE, SET-AND-FORGET, NO TRAINING REQUIRED

If you do experience a disaster and must get your data back, traditional tape recovery methods can take too much time. Yet, no organization, large or small, can afford to lose access to its critical data for hours, let alone days.

Two of the great benefits of cloud server backup services are the ease of use and wide range of control that these solutions offer users during recovery. You can choose which functions should happen automatically, yet retain the ability to manage and monitor the entire backup and recovery process anywhere and anytime.

When you must recover from a site disaster – or if you want to restore data to a different location for any reason – authorized users can simply log on to a Web interface, select the files that they want to restore, and specify the destination. The restore process begins automatically, recreating data at the desired location, even if it's thousands of miles away.

Cloud backup systems that automatically capture system information, as well as data, enable you to easily restore a full system to alternate hardware at a new location, with only minimal technical staff assistance.

In addition, by using solutions that allow you to control retention scheduling and policies for data, you can select the level of protection appropriate for specific types of data on a per-server, or even per-folder, basis. You also can retrieve specific versions of data quickly over the Web from a catalog of saved versions.

SUMMARY

Many organizations don't identify critical vulnerabilities in their existing data protection methods until disaster strikes. By then, it's too late. Cloud server backup solutions automatically protect mission-critical data from natural and human-made disasters, virus attacks, human error, equipment failures, and other disruptions.

This white paper has presented the top ten reasons to use this type of data protection solution, to encourage you to examine your own data protection strategies to identify potential risk and to improve cost effectiveness.



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