ITC INFOTECH
Business-friendly Solutions

HOW TO CHOOSE A CLOUD BACKUP SERVICE PROVIDER

Why Should You Protect Your Data?

Sooner or later — by mischief, misfortune or mistake — it is statistically likely that you will lose precious data.

A 2007 Carnegie Mellon study indicated that 2 to 4% of hard drives have to be replaced every year. That's just one indication of the threat from hardware failure. The study didn't look at other causes of data loss: accidental file deletion, file corruption, viruses, hackers, stolen equipment or natural disasters. So, when your data is suddenly gone, how will you get it back?

It's About the Recovery

Many people think the only question is "What is the best way to make backups?" That's certainly a critical question but business data is the very lifeblood of your business. You can't afford to look at only half the equation. Questions about recovering data are even more important and to the point:

- Is there any doubt that what I've backed up can actually be restored in the event of a crisis?
- How difficult will it be?
- How long will it take to get everything running again?
- How much money will I lose waiting for data to be restored? For an hour? A day? A week?
- Will I have the right help if I need it in an emergency?

Data backup is a little like buying car insurance: Should you focus on an insurance company's price and how easy it is to buy insurance? Or should you focus more on what might happen if you actually have an accident — when you really, really need the company's support and a quick settlement?

Ultimately it comes down to trust. Trust in the professionalism of the people advising you on data protection. Trust in the backup and restore processes. Trust in the hardware and software.

Making the right choice is critical to your success. We have designed this resource to help you choose a cloud backup service provider that:

- Meets your needs
- Provides comfort in their level of support and is easy to work with
- Uses the right technology
- Provides value beyond the software

Key Considerations When Assessing Prospective Cloud Backup Service Providers

Trust in the Service Provider

- Does the service provider have a good reputation?
- How long have they been in business? How stable is their company? How many customers do they have?
- What kind of customers do they have? Are their customers of a similar size and environment to your company?
- Does the service provider have experience in the same or similar industry (vertical) as yours?
  - Do they have experience helping with data disaster recovery under conditions seen in your business?
  - Are they familiar with laws and standards of your industry?
- What sort of press or recognition have they received?
  - Is their recognition based simply on price and brand image, or on their history of supporting customers in a data crisis?
  - Is their press recognition mostly from consumer or business press?
  - Do they have customer testimonials on web sites?

> **How long have they been in business? What kind of customers do they have?**

Trust in the Service Provider's Technology

- What technology is the vendor's service based on?
- Is it DIY? Best only for photos and music? A so-called business version of a consumer service? Or is it truly business class?
- If more expensive, is it more than I need?
- Does it require monitoring or intervention?
- If it's "set it and forget it," can I really trust it?
- How exactly are backups done and how will it affect my daily operations?
- Is it fully integrated? Does it work well with my particular operating system and applications and services?
  - Will it work well with software or systems I may want to implement?

- Software sophistication? Is it feature-rich? Customizable for specific needs?
    - Does it offer full, incremental and continuous data protection services?
    - Does it make data recovery testing easy?
    - Does it include backup file validation?
    - Autonomic data healing?
- Is it easy to configure and maintain?
    - Does it require much technical knowledge or aptitude?
    - How long does it take to set up and what does it involve?
    - Is it necessary to install extra software, which requires technician time, system shutdown and reboot?
    - Is there 24x7 support?
- Does it require more space and power for extra appliances?
- How well does the platform work with remote offices? Laptops? PDAs? Smartphones?
- I have too much data to do a full restore over typical ADSL or cable lines. Does the vendor provide 24/7 rapid physical delivery of data in the event of data emergency?
- What are the options for a bare metal restore?
- I have many servers and a more sophisticated IT environment. Does the platform work well with virtualization?

Trust in the Security Offered

- How does the service provider ensure security of data and how do they demonstrate that?
- Has their service been tested and sanctioned by credible third parties i.e. government and standards organizations?
    - Does the service comply with minimum laws and standards of my industry? Does it go beyond?
    - Is it certified by a standards organization to ensure security against data theft?
    - Does it meet or surpass the insurance requirements of my business?
    - If necessary, can the service provider readily comply with an e-discovery request?
- How does the platform provider backup and restore the data they store?
- Does the platform provider have a Disaster Recovery Plan? How many redundant data centers? How dispersed?
    - In case of disaster at the first, do they have a second data center with duplicate data that can be switched to immediately so there is no interruption of service? Is it far enough away that it won't be hurt by the same disaster?
    - Do they have the same security at their backup data center?

- Do they have a Business Continuity plan?
    - Even if the platform provider's DR plan protects your data in a natural disaster, will they still be able to operate as a business under extreme conditions to ensure uninterrupted service? The most stable companies plan, prepare and drill for all contingencies, including threats such as epidemics.

> **How well does the platform work with remote offices? Laptop? PDAs and Smarphones?**

Trust in the Contract

- Does the vendor offer a Service Level Agreement? Are the guarantees, penalties and recourse offered in the SLA sufficient?
- Can I customize the SLA to meet my specific needs or is it one-size-fits-all?
    - Can I negotiate my own RTO and RPO?
    - Does the service provider have the expertise to help me set appropriate SLA benchmarks for my business?
- Does the SLA specify a response time to initiate a restore?
- Does the SLA specify all details about security including advertised policies and certification?
- Can I negotiate a penalty for failure to meet the SLA?
    - How can non-performance on the SLA be measured outside of a data disaster?
    - If the vendor fails to meet the SLA, is the penalty simply a waived monthly fee or is it really meaningful e.g. a termination clause?
- Is the service provider promising more than they can possibly deliver?
    - No provider can guarantee a definite time for data recovery without having absolute control of every part of the equation – hardware, data volumes, software, personnel, processes, etc.
- Does the service provider offer an exit strategy or does their technology lock you in?
    - If, after a while, you're not satisfied with the provider or if they go out of business, are you stuck in a hopeless situation? In other words, do they have enough faith in their service and stability to offer an exit strategy, which will effectively motivate their best efforts to keep your business?

■ Is their backup platform offered by many other providers? Can you move to another vendor without moving your data to another platform? How difficult will it be?

> **Can I customize the SLA to meet my specific needs?**

Trust in the Value

■ Are there different pricing options for different types of data?

- ■ For example, is there standard pricing for the critical data of daily business operations AND lower pricing for archival data stored for regulatory compliance?
- ■ Is there automatic movement of aged data to take advantage of pricing tiers?

■ What happens if my business and data grows or shrinks rapidly?

- ■ Are there discounts (sliding scale or tiers) for increasing volumes of data? Is it automatic?
- ■ If my data volume grows too great and expensive to outsource, does the vendor offer a solution that allows me to keep the software system but maintain my own storage?
- ■ Can the service provider's solution readily accommodate a mix of systems i.e. public-private (hybrid) cloud backup?
- ■ Does the vendor have the talent and resources to help me design and build my own backup storage architecture? Or will I have to start from scratch and educate a new vendor about the technical nuances of my business?

Trust that Everything Will Work Well Together

■ Is a stand-alone backup service provider okay for my business or do I need more integrated services?

■ Does the service provider offer supplementary services that may help me build an integrated data protection plan e.g. antivirus expertise, data cleaning, hardware lifecycle management, etc?

Trust in the Customer Experience

■ Do I like the company and its people? Can I count on dealing with the same people?

■ Will the service provider share and help me to leverage the best practices of their other customers?

■ Do they understand what's involved in migrating from my

existing backup system? Can they help me with that?

■ Do they offer a test drive so I can experience not only a backup of my data but, more importantly, the recovery process?

■ Is their focus on selling a backup service or a recovery service?

- ■ Backup is the easy part – there is no rush or stress. But what about a recovery emergency? Imagine your data is suddenly gone, your business system is offline and everyone is panicking and looking at you? How well is the vendor's solution and their service going to help you then?

■ What priority will the service provider give my business if their other customers are hit by a data crisis at the same time e.g. a massive virus attack?

■ Do they demonstrate a high level of discipline when it comes to data protection e.g. do they support and encourage Disaster Recovery Drills?

■ How personal is their service?

- ■ Too big to care about my company during a crisis?
- ■ Too small to respond quickly during a crisis?

> **Is a stand-alone backup service provider okay for my business or do I need more integrated services?**

■ Does the service provider care enough to appraise my existing operations and hardware as part of an overall data protection plan?

■ Does the vendor consider the bandwidth limitations of my ISP?

■ Does the service provider understand my business?

- ■ The needs of my business and how the solution must address those needs both currently and in the future.
- ■ Does the service provider fully understand:

    - ■ The backup and recovery challenges I am now experiencing?
    - ■ My current data volumes and growth?
    - ■ Operating systems I currently run and how this may change in the future?
    - ■ My Recovery Time Objectives?
    - ■ My Recovery Point Objectives?
    - ■ My IT staffing and competence levels?
    - ■ How they can help me lower my operational and management costs?

- Is the vendor transparent about everything?
- Will they provide contacts so I can ask questions of their existing customers?
- Have any of their customers ever complained about hidden fees or surprise charges?
- Will they allow me to see the platform storage facility and its security?
- If I have customers that are dependent on my system security, will the vendor also allow them to see the platform storage facility and its security?
- My computer has been stolen. Will they and can they provide a loaner until I can replace mine?

About ITC Infotech

ITC Infotech is a specialized global scale - full service provider of Domain, Data and Digital technology solutions, backed by a strong business and technology consulting focus. The company caters to enterprises in Supply Chain based industries (CPG, Retail, Manufacturing, Hi-Tech) and Services (Banking, Financial Services and Insurance, Airline, Hospitality) through a combination of traditional and newer business models, as a long term sustainable partner. ITC Infotech is a fully owned subsidiary of USD 7bn ITC Ltd – one of India's most admired companies.

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