



The Business Case for Cloud Backup

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Introduction

In this era of skyrocketing data growth and increasing regulatory scrutiny, data protection and disaster recovery are more important than ever before, especially for small to mid-sized businesses (SMBs)¹. SMBs are also more reliant than ever on access to their data and applications to maintain normal business operations. Even a few hours of downtime can significantly impact productivity, sales, customer confidence and reputation.

With natural disasters, cybercrime and other data threats on the rise and in the news, more and more SMBs are recognizing that comprehensive data protection is not optional — it is a necessity. Data loss and downtime are not just costly, but can threaten an SMB's ability to maintain operations.

This LiveVault® eGuide discusses SMB requirements and business drivers for data protection, and explains the advantages of outsourcing data backup/recovery to a cloud backup provider.

SMB Data Protection Essentials

Every SMB needs a data protection plan that supports both backup/recovery and disaster recovery, while balancing risk and cost. Different businesses have different data protection needs, and data itself also varies in terms of its criticality to business operations, regulatory compliance and legal electronic discovery mandates. However, every SMB's data protection plan should address these fundamental requirements:

- Minimization of downtime, whatever the cause (natural disaster, equipment failure, human error, security breach, etc.).
- Access to critical data in an emergency.
- Quick access to backed-up files.
- Ability to recover files from any location over the Internet.
- Acceptable recovery time for data stored both locally and offsite, not only for individual files but also for databases and even entire servers and desktops.

Given projected data growth rates², many SMBs do not have adequate data protection today. According to Symantec, 74% of SMBs currently have no disaster recovery plan, and only 21% are “extremely confident” that they can restore backed-up data³. Moreover, half of SMBs back up less than 60% of their data⁴, leaving the rest vulnerable to irretrievable loss.

Internal data policies likewise may not have evolved alongside changes in the volume and variety of data now requiring backup. Unfortunately, many SMBs don't know what data they're not protecting until it's too late. Data loss is inevitable, and a costly event is frequently what compels an organization to evaluate new backup/restore options.



The Business Case for Outsourcing Data Protection

The major hurdles to SMB data protection are the technical difficulty and expense of performing backup/recovery in-house. Unlike their enterprise counterparts, SMBs must make do with minimal IT resources. SMBs may also lack expertise around the legal and regulatory implications of data retention and backup/recovery; a case in point being key changes in the new HIPAA rules, which went into effect in March 2013⁵.

But while the comparatively low cost of local storage can provide a false sense of security, traditional backup technologies are error-prone and frequently hamper data recovery and application uptime. Tape libraries, for instance, are notorious for the storage and retrieval problems they create, as well as for reliability issues. Tape backup is also frequently laborintensive, and results in unacceptably long “backup windows.” Fixed disk systems are faster and more reliable, but are still vulnerable to catastrophic breakdowns or simple human error.

The more “moving parts” a system has, the more points of potential failure. Hardware failure is the most frequent cause of data loss (40%), followed by human error (29%) and software corruption (13%)⁶. Natural disasters cause about 10% of data loss and system downtime. Viruses, cybercrime and the theft of laptops and other equipment are growing in frequency and significance as causes of data loss and damaging security breaches.

Why Cloud Backup is the Best Option for Many SMBs

Thanks to faster Internet speeds, combined with advances in data compression and deduplication, cloud backup options are often the most affordable, reliable and efficient data protection solution for SMBs. According to a recent Analyst Insight from Aberdeen Group, 39% of businesses are already using cloud backup — more than for any other cloud technology other than Software-as-a-Service (SaaS)⁷. At least 30% of SMBs are already using cloud backup, with about 14% more planning to adopt it within one year⁸.

Cloud backup eliminates the need to purchase and maintain data storage devices and the servers and software to run them, and also reduces demands on scarce IT resources. Often a cloud backup service is available at a fixed, predictable monthly cost.

With cloud backup services, data to be backed up is automatically transferred to an offsite data center via the Internet, eliminating the need to physically transport media (such as in an employee’s personal car). Organizations define a backup schedule, which the service automatically executes without human intervention.

Backups can encompass file servers, web servers, branch offices, and even mobile employees’ laptops. Deduplication and compression tools reduce storage volumes and backup times. End-to- end encryption options improve security for health records, financial and personal data, and other regulated data types.

Access to backed-up files “in the cloud” also takes place online, quickly and easily. Most cloud backup services offer the capability to restore servers, desktops and laptops, databases and individual files from any location via the web.



Cloud Backup Drivers for SMBs

For organizations that must frequently upgrade their storage capacity, need to mitigate the risk of business interruptions, and/or are not confident about their ability to restore lost data, cloud backup can address these concerns quickly and with minimal upfront investment. Common business needs that cloud backup helps SMBs meet include:

- Cutting IT infrastructure costs without sacrificing efficiency
- Managing and reducing IT complexity
- Supporting business continuity and disaster recovery strategies
- Enabling file sharing with tablets/mobile devices
- Supporting business growth and additional users
- Accelerating data recovery and reducing the down me associated with data loss

Among the biggest advantages of cloud backup is that data is stored offsite, and in many cases is also replicated across multiple data centers for even greater redundancy and availability. Offsite storage is a cornerstone of business continuity planning because it enables operations to recover faster in the event of a natural or man-made disaster.

Considerations for Choosing a Cloud Backup Provider

What factors are most important in choosing a cloud backup vendor? Reliability and cost are certainly key. Many SMBs also look for solutions that support a mix of onsite and offsite backup.

Other factors to consider include: data transfer rate, security/encryption options, use of redundant data centers, specifics of reporting and SLAs (including service levels for data recovery), and the quality and availability of the vendor's customer support. Continuous data protection (CDP or near-CDP, also called real-time backup) is also important to SMBs that want to maximize data protection for their most recent data.



Why LiveVault®

LiveVault® is a turnkey, full-service, business-class cloud backup service provider established in 2002. With 9,000+ clients worldwide and 600+ resellers, LiveVault is the exclusive cloud backup provider for Ingram Micro.

LiveVault offers fully automated backup solutions that can combine offsite protection with local backup options, all for a cost-effective and predictable monthly charge — and no hardware purchases required. Easy to install and configure, LiveVault’s “agentless” solutions require no additional software for backup of Microsoft SQL or Microsoft Exchange. Access to protected data is available online. Delta blocking incremental backup along with data compression and block-level deduplication accelerate backup performance and reduce backup volumes.

LiveVault’s business-class infrastructure includes a primary data center located in Massachusetts. All client data is immediately mirrored to backup data centers in Massachusetts, Louisiana and Toronto. In the event of a disaster impacting the primary data center, a backup data center stands ready to handle client requests. LiveVault has yielded 99.99% uptime over the past five years. Its infrastructure is SOC 2 Type II audited.

Conclusion

Data is the lifeblood of every organization, and protecting it from loss is vital to maintaining operations. Like businesses of all sizes, SMBs are rapidly embracing cloud backup solutions as the most efficient and cost-effective way to ensure data protection and disaster recovery while addressing regulatory requirements.

LiveVault is a leading business-class cloud backup provider with a focus on meeting SMB requirements. LiveVault makes it easy to get started with cloud backup, while offering the capabilities SMBs need most, including unsurpassed 24x7 customer support, high performance and exceptional reliability.

To find out more about how LiveVault can protect your data and your business, visit www.livevault.com.

Resources

1. An SMB is often defined as a business with one to 1,000 employees. Data volumes for organizations of this size can range up to 100 terabytes, with projected data growth rates from 10% to over 100% per year (the average being about 40%).
2. “The Digital Universe in 2020: Big data, Bigger Digital Shadows, and Biggest Growth in the Far East.” IDC, December 2012. (<http://www.emc.com/collateral/analyst-reports/idc-the-digitaluniverse-in-2020.pdf>)
3. Symantec 2012 Disaster Preparedness Survey.
4. Symantec 2011 SMB Disaster Preparedness Survey, January 2011.
5. This guidance refers to just one of multiple impacts on storage:
<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/administrative/breachnotificationrule/brguidance.html>
6. <http://www.acspc.net/dataloss.php>.
7. <http://www.aberdeen.com/Aberdeen-Library/8441/Al-cloud-storage-down-me.aspx>.
8. “How SMBs are Backing Up: Solutions, Trends & Challenges,” Spiceworks, March 2013.

About LiveVault

LiveVault® is the turnkey, fully managed cloud server backup and disaster recovery service of choice for thousands of enterprise customers worldwide. With more than 16 years of experience in SaaS data protection, LiveVault is a leader in streamlining and reducing the costs and complexities of companies' data security. LiveVault's 24/7 actively monitored, unified solution includes advanced systems for open file backup and offsite data mirroring, flexible long-term retention, legal hold support, and disaster recovery in the cloud. Learn more at www.livevault.com.



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