

ONLINE BACKUP: KEY CONSIDERATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Think about where your enterprise would be if it lost its data. Now think about where it would be if you could not get the data back. If you've been in business for any length in time, it's safe to say that no data means no business. These days, data is growing exponentially, so business continuity planning is essential for businesses of any size. Because of this growth, IT staffs are managing far more projects than in the past and struggle to support more infrastructure and human resources due to the amount of time that they spend on managing backup tasks. The bottom line is that IT staffs are solving difficult issues everyday in order to maintain optimum data availability.

BACKUP CHALLENGES

Relying on data and application availability creates internal and external challenges for business owners and their IT staffs. But to understand the many advantages of online backup, the challenges that businesses face in protecting their business-critical data must also be understood.

Traditional tape-based backup, for example, is unreliable and requires intense management. Although supporters of tape-based backup claim that tape costs less and is easier to move around, it also increases the need and the effort to administer backup and recovery tasks. At the same time, backup and recovery speeds are slower, getting the data offsite requires manual intervention, and not to mention the delay when retrieving the tapes for recovery purposes.

This type of backup system has proven to be error-prone for many system administrators. Tape-based backup has also had a negative effect on critical objectives such as supporting distributed environments and complying with regulatory requirements.

ONLINE BACKUP

Online backup answers these challenges. It does this by leveraging existing infrastructures to protect servers and desktops against data loss, while maintaining security and efficiency. The main contrast of online backup is its ability to instantly move backups securely off-site, away from the business core and away from potential disaster. If companies want to protect their business-critical data, online backup only makes sense.

As backup technology matures and IT administrators grow weary of tape backup, many businesses are strongly considering the move to online backup. The advantages of moving from tape backup and even disk-to-disk make it a main contender in the backup market. Security, reliability, scalability, and availability are the main reasons why online backup and recovery is gaining so much traction. Let's face it, reporting requirements and rapid data growth have businesses struggling with geographically dispersed data.

BANDWIDTH REQUIREMENTS

Online backup works best in environments with unlimited bandwidth. But since most small businesses are not able to afford it, bandwidth is a major

concern, especially when businesses are using more services that rely on the Internet. And Internet users in any organization do not want to deal with the pangs of a slow data pipe. Therefore, it is important to look for online backup solutions where bandwidth throttling preserves bandwidth even when backup processes are running.

Server Performance

Today's online backup methods are also good news for IT staffs and end users alike, who expect exceptional performance levels from company servers. Server performance is no longer an issue because after the initial full backup, data snapshots are taken at regular intervals, decreasing the need to constantly hit the server. Users hardly ever know that anything is happening during the snapshot process because only those files that changed since the last snapshot are processed. Work continues as usual and productivity is not affected.

Security

Transporting data can be a major concern, but today's online backup uses industry-standard 256 bit AES encryption algorithms. This level of encryption eliminates any concern about data transportation across private or public networks. Gone are the days of having to manage tape manually and getting untrained staff involved in remote locations. By centralizing resources, online backup actually improves the security of backup tasks. Data security is literally the lifeline of any business, and is a key factor in providing complete business continuity.

Costs

It used to cost an arm and a leg to store data offsite, especially when tapes were involved. Thanks to online backup, however, business wallets are expanding. These days, prices vary with the amount of data being backed up, and often with the service-level guarantees. A general rule of thumb is to multiply the amount of data by the price per gigabyte at a given level of service. Many vendors require a minimum of 10GB and offer storage capacities up to 1TB (terabyte). Monthly fees usually incorporate software installation, phone and e-mail support, data center monitoring, and staff training. In most cases, offsite space can be scaled up as needed (scalable on demand), but some vendors require that you to buy larger blocks of space, depending on the amount of data being backed up.

Compliance

Using online backup solutions also helps businesses to satisfy regulatory compliance requirements. Regulations including Sarbanes-Oxley, FINRA (Financial Industry Regulatory Authority), HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act), and GLBA (Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act), among other regulations, demand that safeguards surround sensitive information. Online backup fulfills these regulation requirements.

ZENITH'S APPROACH TO ONLINE BACKUP

Zenith makes backup disaster recovery a cinch. The company's disk-based NAS takes snapshots of your data every 15 minutes—that's an excellent worst-case scenario. You're only ever 15 minutes behind schedule, should your business be interrupted with unforeseen circumstances.

And what's more, the snapshots do not impact your environment in any way. Zenith performs an initial base backup, and then subsequently backs your data up incrementally, so only the changes made to your data get backed up.

Zenith's BDR solution backs up files by the block level, which is actually below the file and folder level—further reducing the backup window. After your data is backed up, Zenith synchronizes the data to a network destination, effectively copying it for archiving and disaster recovery purposes. You can schedule data synchronizations or run them on your own time as business demands. If anything gets in the way of the synchronization process, administrators are notified through alerts that a failure has occurred.

Zenith's offsite co-location facilities offer secure storage through an industry standard 256-bit encrypted tunnel. This security provides the necessary peace of mind that you need—to be certain that your backups are safe and sound, both during and after data transfer. Zenith also offers low-cost offsite replication options.

In the event that your core business location is destroyed, Zenith has your back. In fact, Zenith will ship you a BDR by next-day air to temporarily replace your "business". This temporary BDR lets you virtualize your servers until your hardware is back in place. The BDR also functions as a standby server that can be activated in minutes if a server crashes. This level of redundancy is not normally available to small to medium size businesses without a high cost.

12 REASONS TO CHOOSE ZENITH OVER CONVENTIONAL BACKUP METHODS

- 15 Minute Snapshots
- 256-bit AES Encryption
- Windows Server Support For 32 and 64-bit OS's
- Disk Based Backup
- File & Folder Restores
- System Restores
- Recover Using Drag & Drop Functionality
- Exchange Message Level Recovery
- Database & Application Level Recovery
- VSS (Volume Shadow Copy Service) Aware
- Sync to External Drive Options
- Multiple Restore Points Locally And Offsite

CONCLUSION

It is clear that traditional backup methods no longer cut it when data is growing so quickly, IT staffs are burdened with more projects, and the cost just doesn't make sense anymore. Today, businesses are demanding that their data is safe, secure, and can be recalled at a moment's notice. Using an online backup technology that offers frequent data snapshots, saves time and eliminates the user having to recreate corrupted or deleted files, means peace of mind for any business.

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