

White Paper on Backup
March 2011

Why Backup? Cloud Based Security Makes Sense

A few years ago, TopTenREVIEWS used a funny opening sentence in its article on why you should backup your data. “Superheroes need it, police rely on it and everyone that uses a computer should use some form of it.”¹ The bottom line that was stated then, and is even more relevant in 2011, is that everyone needs to backup, and today the most cost effective and efficient way to backup is through the cloud. To manage a small or medium sized business and ensure that a company’s data is secure, need not be the work of a superhero.

The trend towards online cloud backup is especially evident in the SMB market. Simply put, online backup is often the more cost effective approach to data backup that a company can take. A recent Wall Street Journal article quoted Rajen Shet, the senior product manager for Google Apps, on the overall importance of the cloud for SMBs. “A small business typically does not have an IT staff, so the last thing they want to do is stand up (install) an email server or some other kind of server,” or worry about data security or backup the article added. “They would much rather get down to business and let the IT take care of itself.”² More and more small and medium sized businesses are finding both security and affordability in online cloud backup, and the trend shows signs of increasing exponentially.

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Reasons for using Online Cloud Backup

Using an Online Cloud Backup is easy and economical for SMBs. On Jim Lehrer’s PBS Newshour, journalist Spencer Michels described it so. “It’s like hiring taxis instead of owning a car, if you don’t need one all the time. It’s cheaper, and you don’t have to worry about upkeep

¹<http://data-backup-software-review.toptenreviews.com>

²Richmond, Riva, “With Cloud, Microsoft Ups Ante for Small Business,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 12, 2010 <http://online.wsj.com>

and breakdowns and parking”³ Especially in these recent years of economic downturns, cost is a huge motivator for businesses looking for data backup. The cost is usually one fee, which can be annual or monthly, based on the size of the online storage and can include an unlimited number of PCs.

Another benefit of Online Backup is that it is remote and offsite. It creates an active backup that is accessible to the account holder from any web browser and allows for secure file sharing via email. All backups and recoveries can be handled remotely. The need for a technician to arrive on site and handle the tape backups is eliminated, also lowering the cost. This is particularly appealing to small businesses that do not have the resources of an IT department or a dedicated IT staff. Remote access is also desirable because a business owner or employee can access files and information when out of the office.

An appealing factor of Online Cloud Backup to the SMB user is that it is easy to use. Usually, it can be set up in fifteen minutes. Businesses don't have to worry about the complexity of IT. Once the online backup is set up, the customer has nothing to worry about, and there is no training required.

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One of the most significant reasons that a company looks for Online Cloud Backup is to be assured of data and disaster recovery. We need only look at the News to see an increase in the number of computer attacks and security breaches. Current history of tragic disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina, remind us of how real and significant natural disasters can be. Disaster recovery differs from traditional Data Backup in that it gives the ability to continue business quickly after a catastrophic event, which could include not only natural disasters but crippling viruses and hardware malfunctions. Traditional Data Backup (i.e. tape or external drives) is often insufficient in getting a business up and running in a short amount of time, and its systems are notoriously unreliable and likely to fail in the event of data loss. The cost to companies in losing data is measured not only in the cost of retrieving data but also in lost revenue and productivity. With Online Cloud Backup, data can be recovered within moments of a disaster. It can also provide unmatched redundancy, enabling quick disaster recovery and migration of workloads.

³PBS Newshour, July 9, 2009

Here is some interesting information on disaster and data loss.
According to statistics from HP and Score, the cost of continuous human management of a system and the cost of replacing tapes/drives every few months can produce the following:

- 40% of all data loss is due to hardware failure
- 29% of all data loss is due to human error
- 13% is due to software error (corrupt files)
- 9% is due to theft
- 6% is from viruses
- 3% is from hardware destruction

A common fear regarding Online Backup is security, but backing up in the cloud can provide excellent data protection and security and should actually be a primary reason to go to the cloud for backup. "Leading cloud providers usually offer extraordinarily high levels of physical and logical data security, as well as robust security systems to protect their customers' data."⁵ Using Online Cloud Backup, storage is at a secure offsite location, keeping data safe. Most often, data is stored encrypted in an offsite location, and only users with the correct keys have access to encrypting it.

Features of Online Cloud Backup

Online Cloud Backup has many features that are appealing to the SMB customer. Most notable is that a business can backup an unlimited number of PCs from one account. Businesses can also have instant backup as soon as they modify a file on their PC.

Web access is an important feature of Online Cloud Backup. It enables the user to access all data from any browser. You never have to be without a critical file. All files can also be shared; all that is needed is an email address. It is also beneficial that the user never has to have a large attachment bound. Additionally, there is easy capability to share photos, videos, etc.

Online Cloud Backup now provides mobile access, which makes it fully realize its claim of remote accessibility. iPhone and Blackberry apps keep the user's important files easily accessible. In other words, if you are at an appointment, on the road, your information is at hand when you need it. Access to your information anywhere and anytime is the one of the most current uses of technology for the present and the future, and to stay competitive, companies need to stay up to date with their technology.

⁴HP and Score, "Impact on U.S. Small Business of Natural & Man-Made Disasters," http://www.score.org/pdf/HP_Download_ImpactofDisaster.pdf, 2007

⁵"Why Cloud-Based Security and Archiving Make Sense," Osterman Research, Inc. March 2010

The most important features of Online Cloud Backup are that it does not require human involvement after the initial backup. It provides redundancy, where the data is protected from hardware failure and it is redundant in various data centers. Archiving and instant access are important features that are simple to use. As far as protection, Online Cloud Backup provides encrypted protection from theft and also from disaster by being located in separate locations.

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According to the recent study, *The Future of Cloud Computing in Government*, by the 1105 Government Information Group Custom Report, “cloud computing will become the dominant platform for new applications, as well as the most popular solution for existing applications as they age and need to be replaced.”⁶ As businesses, organizations and government move more to the cloud, vendors have improved on security and ease of use and can offer superior products. For the SMB user, Online Cloud Backup makes economic sense, in that it keeps costs low, provides the highest level of encryption for security, stores all data safely, and gives the SMB user cutting-edge accessibility. You certainly do not have to be a super hero to use Online Cloud Backup, but its 21st century features can stand up to any super hero.

⁶s8, “The Future of Cloud Computing in Government,” 1105 Government Information Group Custom Report. <http://www.FCW.com/DownloadingCloudComputing>, 2011