

Disaster Recovery – Can We Really Trust the Cloud?

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Held on October 15, 2015, this webinar on the cloud's abilities to deliver effectively on disaster recovery was moderated by Jim Love, CIO and Chief Digital Officer, ITWC. Dave LeClair, Vice President Product Marketing, Unitrends, and a cloud and continuity solutions expert was the guest speaker. The following content comprises two articles written about the webinar (and published on ITWorldCanada.com) together with poll questions asked of the participants in the live webinar and their responses.

In survey after survey, we find Canadian enterprises are lagging in the adoption of cloud computing. And the primary concern that makes them hesitant to adopt cloud computing is security.

Fact is, with best security practices applied, the cloud is as secure as an on-premise data centre. What's more, a cloud solution offers scalability and redundancy that would be far more expensive to incorporate into an on-prem solution.

Disaster recovery and business resumption are on the minds of CIOs of companies of all sizes. Not only can they no longer afford service interruptions, but the potential of the cloud to offer a realistic and affordable backup and recovery service is compelling. Downtime today is measured in the hundreds of thousands of dollars per hour, and duplicating data stores in discrete geographic locations, paying the real estate costs of data centre facilities, and duplicating maintenance staff is an expensive proposition. Today's enterprise simply cannot run on an architecture that doesn't provide for disaster recovery and business continuity strategies.

Enter the secure cloud, where managed services allow enterprises to address the issues that challenge a disaster recovery strategy.

Redundancy. The core of a disaster recovery strategy is replication of data and processes in the event that the primary system fails. Rather than having to rebuild a live copy of the system, having an up-to-date copy can help put systems back online in minutes or hours, not days. And that's critical as so much more consumer and business-to-business commerce takes place online.

Scalability. Should a disaster recovery event demand more compute capacity, a cloud-based architecture can quickly scale to accommodate demand, and at a "per-cycle" cost, rather than forcing the purchase and configuration of more hardware and software.

Portability. A key principle of a disaster recovery strategy is that mirrored systems must exist in discrete locations. A backup data centre is no use when it's in the same basement where the primary system was knocked out by a flood. Cloud environments allow replication of key systems across a network that could be city-wide, nation-wide, or even transnational. Moreover, to be even more bulletproof, systems can be remodeled in a tertiary site should the primary site go down — backup for the backup.

Automation. Cloud environments can be designed to autonomously respond to various conditions. They can respond to increases in demand; they can detect when primary processing should be shifted from one system to another; they can ensure that the most time-sensitive data and applications are available on a disaster recovery site to ensure the minimum of information and transactional data is lost.

During the actual webinar itself, the speakers explored the cloud as a realistic and affordable possibility for backup and disaster recovery. Guest speaker, Dave LeClair, Vice President Product Marketing, Unitrends, discussed five concerns which are top of mind with CIOs:

1. Planning and Deployment Complexity

"Cloud vendors need to simplify things with regard to backup and disaster recovery," says LeClair. "A recent survey of 1,600 IT execs and admins showed a large percentage are still unsure about the cloud and find it

difficult to sort through all the options.” Unitrends’ free online tool at <http://www.bcdrlink.com> addresses this. It details disaster recovery and BU best practices, and helps organizations build, customize and store their disaster recovery plan off site.

You can reduce complexity says LeClair, simply by choosing an integrated cloud-empowered BU solution. “Integrated means you can move copies of your BU to an offsite location like the cloud, easily see that they got there and ran on schedule, and then start testing, all with a few clicks,” he says. “Trying to do this with a third-party tool means all the steps needed to tie into the BU solution are potentially all on you.”

2. Data Sovereignty

This can be another headache for CIOs. Digital information is subject to the laws of the country in which it’s located, making for a “complex and emerging space,” says LeClair. For example, he says the U.S. government has been trying to exert laws for access rights to certain types of data for national security purposes, arguing data doesn’t have to be housed in the U.S, just accessible from the U.S., for them to obtain it. Read the fine print and select a vendor who’ll tell you where your data may go.

3. Cloud Costs

Costs vary dramatically, starting at one cent per gigabyte for “cold storage”. While these seemingly inexpensive options may be right for some, LeClair cautions that additional fees may accrue quickly. “Unitrends’ offering may seem more costly at first blush,” he says, “but we actually become the better option within about a year of service.”

4. WAN Transfer Rates

So much worse than waiting a month for your terabytes of data to reach the cloud via the WAN, is informing your CEO while in the midst of a disaster that he/she has to wait a month for it to return via the WAN. Unitrends’ Cloud Seeding puts your data onto physical media and sends it the cloud provider lickety-split. After that, you’re doing only incremental updates,

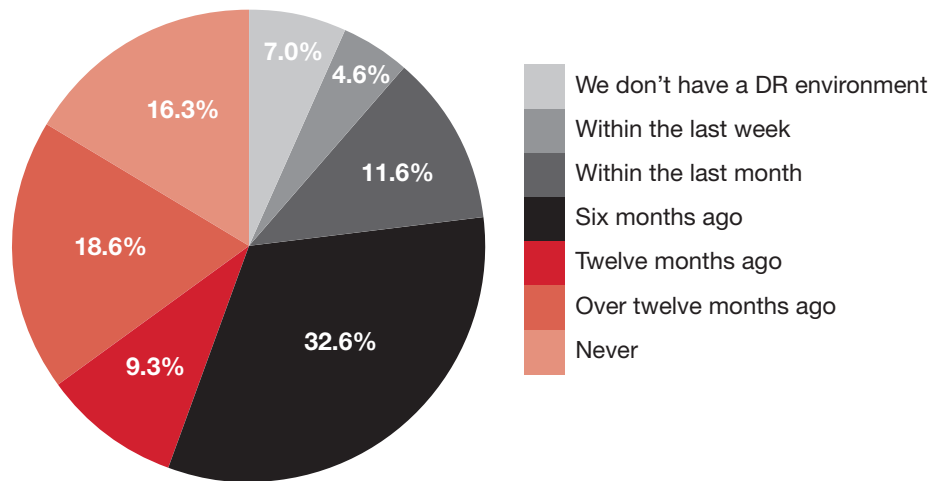
which are much smaller and WAN-friendly. “Obviously reverse seeding is critical,” says LeClair. “Ensure your vendor will get your data back into your hands via physical media within 24 hours of a disaster.”

5. Recovery Assurance

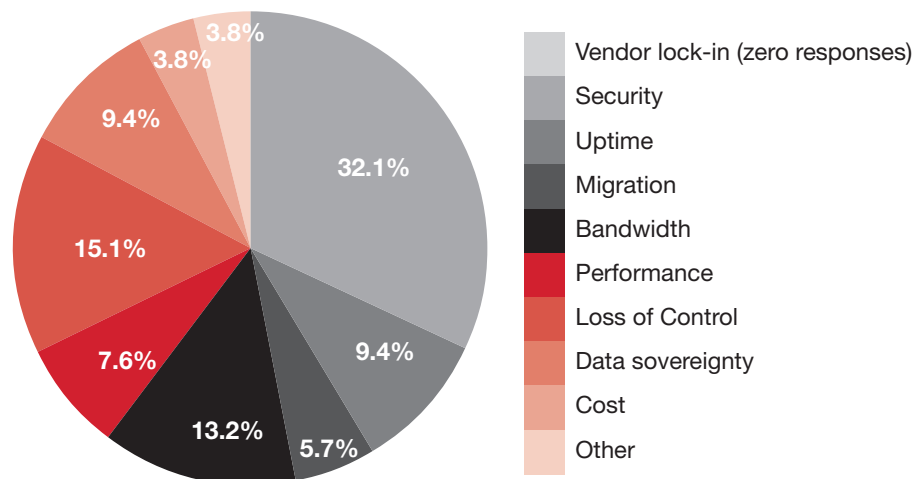
Automating everything possible including planning, backups, and testing will free you to focus on real work. But how can you be sure your backup and disaster recovery environments are staying in synch? LeClair points to Unitrends’ Recovery Assurance which automates your disaster recovery environment and backup testing which enables you to test as often as you need to. And, for complete peace of mind, reports are emailed to you automatically, providing at-a-glance assurance that your disaster recovery environment is working as it should be, when you head home at night.

Participants were also asked to engage in two poll questions, as follows:

Poll one: When was the last time you tested your DR environment?



Poll two: What is your greatest concern with respect to the cloud?



To listen to the webinar and download the presentation [click here](#).

About Unitrends

Unitrends delivers award-winning business recovery solutions for any IT environment. The company's portfolio of virtual, physical, and cloud solutions provides adaptive protection for organizations globally. To address the complexities facing today's modern data center, Unitrends delivers end-to-end protection and instant recovery of all virtual and physical assets as well as automated disaster recovery testing built for virtualization. With the industry's lowest total cost of ownership, Unitrends' offerings are backed by a customer support team that consistently achieves a 98 percent satisfaction rating. Unitrends' solutions are also sold through a community of thousands of leading technology partners, service providers, and resellers worldwide.

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