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WHITE PAPER

Make Your Backups a Competitive Advantage for Greater Productivity

Sponsored by: Mozy

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August 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Firms are investing in various forms of backup to the cloud to protect their data in the event of a data loss incident or disaster. However, organizational requirements for cloud services have expanded well beyond simply a backup or protection function. Online backup is a foundational technology, but it is no longer enough. Individuals and organizations alike are seeking information access and sharing across a range of networked devices and, ultimately, continuous application and data access in the cloud. This ability to share, access, and work on information anywhere, at any time, on any device can yield a competitive advantage and drive greater knowledge worker productivity for an organization. This need for greater productivity in concert with increased user mobility is driving IT organizations to provide new cloud-based information services such as file access, file sharing, and file usage and collaboration across a diverse number of access points.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Online Backup Services

Myriad online backup services for both consumers and commercial businesses are available on the market today. At a fundamental level, firms and individuals are investing in these online backup services to protect their data from loss in the event of a physical or logical failure. Online backup services ensure that data is protected while reducing human resource requirements and on-premise capital costs. Secondarily, online backup services securely and cost-effectively move backup data offsite, thus serving as a means for disaster recovery. Use of a cloud-based backup service eliminates the need to use tape for disaster recovery and also eliminates the use of tape collection services.

In business and consumer environments today, online backup services are essential to mitigate the risk of data loss on mobile computers, devices, and server infrastructure alike. Proven in the market, online backup for these devices is increasingly a core technology in enabling a broader set of information services for individuals and organizations. These services allow for individuals in organizations and teams to access, share, and use information for greater institutional advantage and to drive greater knowledge worker productivity. However, in business and society today, laptops are just one way that people leverage information and collaborate. Smartphones, tablets, and "foreign computers" are presenting users with new modes of access to cloud-based information and services. Real-time offsite backup can unleash a world of productivity potential by providing secure, universal access to users' data.

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Why Online Backup Services Are Replacing Traditional On-Premise Approaches

The challenges with traditional on-premise deployments that lead a firm to evaluate and deploy a public cloud backup service are tied to management, cost, and reliability.

On-premise backup strategies should include a best practice where data is moved offsite, typically while resident on removable media such as tape. This introduces several challenges, including security risks, tape collection service costs, and labor in tracking tape media for rotation. Tape budgets need to be updated if data is retained on tape for long periods of time. Use of a cloud-based backup service eliminates the need to use tape for disaster recovery and also eliminates the use of tape collection services.

Backup is a costly proposition for any organization and one that historically has not added strategic value to organizations. The growth in data volumes, which is averaging 52% annually, has a downstream effect on backup. Technologies such as deduplication can help curb growth, but, ultimately, more data needs to be protected. This growth requires investment in additional backup infrastructure, including media, software licenses, tape drives, and media servers. Cloud-based backup offerings operate on a subscription pricing model, allocated out of operating budgets, and eliminate the need for capital infrastructure investment.

The nature of backups in most firms today means a never-ending process of checking for backup successes, troubleshooting failures, planning for capacity upgrades, dealing with performance bottlenecks, and initiating user restores. These routine backup processes require human resources and divert technical talent from more strategic IT projects. Backup to the cloud offerings can offload human resource requirements.

Many on-premise backup processes are not reliable in terms of ensuring that data is recoverable. This is compounded by recovery times that are compressing as business reliance on IT continues to grow. Tier 1 systems may have a recovery time objective (RTO) of zero and thus require failover services, while tier 2 and tier 3 systems may have RTOs and recovery point objectives (RPOs) of hours and minutes, respectively. Most on-premise backup solutions are being rearchitected to offer shorter recovery objectives.

Online Backup Service Deployments

To augment online backup services where data is sent to the cloud, some service providers also offer hybrid backup, which effectively allows organizations to maintain local backup copies of critical business data that are available to speed the recovery process in the event of a data loss. The local backup for fast backup and restore is combined with offsite backup for protection against local disasters. In theory, this ensures that the most recent data is available locally if recovery is needed, while archived data that is needed much less often is stored in the cloud. The use of hybrid cloud can still provide reduced capital and operational spending and improves recovery, especially a full system recovery. A hybrid approach can offer local recovery, local backup, and retained control, which may be important for some compliance-driven organizations.

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Challenges with Today's Online Backup

Data Inaccessibility in Sharing, Access, and Reuse

Some public cloud backup services will store the data in the cloud in native file format, meaning that no restoration process is required. Instead, users or administrators can browse for files and copy them back as needed. However, most enterprise-grade services will encapsulate the backup into a proprietary format for additional functionality or performance gains. This means that data that is resident in backup is not readily accessible without conversion from the backup format to its native format. Content and data in backups cannot be shared or leveraged for any business purpose, and there is no accessibility of data to a larger community of users — especially over geographically dispersed environments. Increasingly, users want to leverage cloud services for data sharing, data mining, data distribution, backup, and long-term retention functions without procuring multiple, distinct and separate services.

Making Backups Strategic and Enabling Greater Productivity

Online backup is a foundational technology that is enabling greater workforce productivity, making backup a strategic asset by leveraging it for collaboration, file sharing, file access, and file use. Service providers are leveraging backup services to enable higher levels of worker productivity to individuals, departments, and organizations. This increased productivity comes from providing functions pertaining to collaboration and data sharing, managing accessibility, reuse and leveraging the value of the data, and improvements in disaster recovery scenarios.

File Sharing and Collaboration in the Cloud

As a result of increasing mindshare around cloud strategies, firms are beginning to think more broadly about their online backup approach. When it comes to public cloud backup services, the thinking is shifting from a more device-centric approach where assets need to be backed up to a human-centric approach where user information is accessible, synchronized, and shared with on-premise resources. Human access to information wherever and whenever on any device is consistent with future service demands.

If an organization is paying a service fee to park data for backup or disaster recovery, why not make use of that data? Hence, a backup cloud is increasingly becoming an avenue for primary data use cases and workloads. For small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) that may not have material investment in file server/sharing or collaboration tools, this direction makes sense. The availability and the viability of cloud infrastructure services have widened IT options for most businesses, but especially for SMBs. With the products, services, and support of their cloud IT infrastructure providers, these firms can now compete more effectively while staying focused on the core competency of the organization. Public clouds have changed the dynamics associated with how SMBs can access IT services while avoiding the issues implicit with a native — build it, staff it, manage it — IT strategy.

File storage, sharing, and synchronization services in the cloud are increasingly being combined with backup services. Cloud-based file services provide individuals and organizations with visibility into secure, permission-based folders that contain user files. Like traditional NAS, folders have read, write, and delete privileges granted based on a user's role or need. Files within folders likewise have access rights associated with each of them. The location of the files is virtual, meaning that they could be on any cloud server in the network. Some services offer a hybrid cloud offering with local NAS. Data can be kept locally and uploaded to the cloud, or local drives can be mapped to enable dragging and dropping files to cloud locations. Important factors to keep in mind when considering these services are functions such as change tracking, offline support, versioning, time stamping, and user interface and device support.

Like the deployment of cloud backup services, the process of loading files to the cloud for the first time can be time consuming. FTP transitions or seeding devices for uploading content to the cloud may be something to consider.

Data Reuse

Part of extending the value of backup services is to make both the service and the data itself more useful. Organizations and government bodies are recognizing the benefits of making their data open and reusable. Public cloud archiving services, whereby emails, files, SharePoint objects, and other information are indexed and retained in a cloud for long periods of time, are increasingly being seen as content repositories. These content repositories are rich in the sense that the data is indexed and searchable. Hence, the data is in a state where it could be mined and leveraged for a variety of use cases, notably:

- **Sharing and collaboration.** Teams, organizations, and project-based groups require the ability to share files, iterate on content, track versions of documents, and enable shared access to information. Microsoft Office documents are often rich with content, which can be leveraged for business advantage and/or to increase worker productivity.

OVERVIEW OF MOZY'S STRATEGY

Underpinning Mozy's strategy is the company's comprehensive solution, which offers simple, automatic, and secure online backup specifically for desktops, laptops, and servers. Mozy's core strength is in protection, and the company is leveraging this foundational technology in enabling secure file *access* to increase worker productivity across a mix of access points, including mobile devices, tablets, and laptops. Mozy is increasingly focused on providing secure, universal access to user and organizational data for the explicit purpose of information sharing and collaboration. While serving the needs of the remote worker community, Mozy is also focused on providing IT with administrative controls over the features that enable the data to be leveraged for productivity.

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SUMMARY

This paper illustrates that backup to the cloud provides the foundational structure for greater business productivity and competitive advantage for firms. Today, organizations and workers need to share and access information and collaborate on projects, products, and customers. Online backup services are increasingly spanning different user- and IT-oriented functions, including continuous application and data access, as well as information access, sharing, collaboration, and reuse. Increasingly, these services must be provided in a way that allows the worker of today and tomorrow to not only complete necessary tasks but also do so at an accelerated pace, thus driving competitive and productivity advantages.

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