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# DON'T LOSE YOUR DATA



Data Recovery Services  
Help Before & After  
Disaster Strikes

# The Sky's The Limit



## ▶▶▶ A NEW WAY OF LOOKING AT DATA RECOVERY

The in-house counsel for a Fortune 500 company learned that the company's IT staff had moved its DR (data recovery) service to a cloud-based provider.

She immediately got on the phone with the provider's CEO and asked where her company's data was.

It's in the cloud, she was told. No, she said – it must physically reside on a server somewhere, and we need to know where it is.

She was told that the company's data resided on numerous servers around the world, and chunks of it could change location on any given day. The news made her break out in a cold sweat, wondering how secure the data was, and how many compliance and regulatory breaches were being caused by the data's scattered status.

That true story, shared by a data-recovery consultant, is an illustration of how cloud-based data recovery—sometimes referred to as RaaS (recovery as a service)—while preferable in a number of ways, also needs to be approached carefully by business owners.

### DATA RECOVERY IN THE CLOUD

As its name suggests, cloud-based DR moves all backup and recovery duties to offsite servers. The service comes in numerous forms, including

simple online backup or data warehousing that lets businesses store data on the cloud instead of on tape drives; data virtualization services that take regular snapshots of a company's server system and the data stored on them; and full cloud recovery, in which a vendor operates all appliances, data centers, physical recovery servers, and software online.

"When people talk about being able to do recovery through the cloud, very often what they mean is storage as a service," says Alan Brill, senior managing director for the Cyber Security and Information Assurance Division at global risk consulting firm Kroll Ontrack ([www.krollontrack.com](http://www.krollontrack.com)). "That's where you store data in the cloud and you can get it back when you need it, you can get it back."

Cloud-based DR is similar to traditional DR in that most of the time it's a product, and not a full solution. "A lot of people don't look at it much differently than they would look at traditional data recovery," says Mike Dillon, CTO with Quest Systems ([www.questsys.com](http://www.questsys.com)), a technology management company.

One difference is that providers offer more service-level agreements

in cloud-based recovery. "Because your data is often stored there, providers are able to say, 'I know your system; I'll have it back up in 24 hours,'" says Dillon.

### BENEFITS

Many of the advantages of cloud-based recovery become apparent with a little research. The main one is, ideally, instant access to your data and applications in case of a disaster or data loss. If your company's end-users can't get to the office, or if there's a corruption of your data on-site, you want a service that's going to offer employee access to all of their data and applications in the cloud, instead of waiting for tapes or a drive to be shipped to you or to have a server rebuilt.

"As cloud technology involves, RaaS providers are saying, 'Let's take your entire production environment and store it in the cloud,'" says Eric Webster, chief revenue officer at Doyenz ([www.doyenz.com](http://www.doyenz.com)). "A good provider can leverage your data in the cloud and provide you almost immediate recovery and access to your applications. If I were a business owner,



**Alan Brill**

senior managing director, Cyber Security and Information Assurance Division, Kroll Ontrack

*"You might not want your sensitive data residing in a country where the intellectual property laws aren't as strict as they are here."*



**George Ferguson**

business manager, HP

*"With the cloud, there are no tapes to lose and the level of packaging is higher."*



**Heinan Landa**

CEO, Optimal Networks

*"How long are you willing to go before you get your data back and reach your recovery point objective?"*

I would be asking myself, how can I maximize my uptime? The cloud can be a good solution."

The price of cloud-based recovery is also competitive with that of traditional DR. George Ferguson, a business manager for Hewlett-Packard ([www.hp.com](http://www.hp.com)), estimates that depending on the service you get, cloud-based DR can cost from 10% to 40% less than offsite tape storage. Plus, he says, "The rule of thumb in the industry is that one-third of tape backups either get corrupted or lost. With the cloud, there are no tapes to lose and the level of packaging is higher."

### CONSIDERATIONS

One of the primary disadvantages of cloud-based recovery is that, as in the example cited above, you don't always know where your data is. "Ask where the data will physically reside," says Brill. "You might not want your sensitive data residing in a country where the intellectual property laws aren't as strict as they are here."

Also, cloud-based DR isn't for everyone. "If you have multiple data centers, the cloud can be tricky," notes Dillon. "Once you get above medium-enterprise level, you should probably have something more in-depth for data recovery. But up until that point, a cloud-based provider—if they do everything—can work great."

As you begin shopping for a cloud-based DR service, there are a number of tips to keep in mind:

Determine your recovery time objective, and what type of disaster you want to plan for – ranging from a single missing file to a large-scale natural disaster. "How long are you willing to go before you get your data back and reach your recovery point objective?" says Heinan Landa, CEO of Optimal Networks ([www.optimalnetworks.com](http://www.optimalnetworks.com)) "How much data are you willing to lose? The smaller these two numbers are, the more expensive the solution becomes."

Find out the provider's security specifications. "Ask for a third-party audit report, such as an SAS-70 Type 2," says Brill. "If they don't know what you're talking about, that would worry me."

Be careful of charges for services you don't need, or that should be standard. "Don't even think of taking an 'extra charges for recovery' service option; you'll wish you hadn't," says Bill Horne, owner of William Warren Consulting ([www.william-warren.com](http://www.william-warren.com)). "And, encryption is a good idea, but not essential for most users. The watchword is, 'simpler is better.'

Find out about the stability of the provider, and whether the provider is actually doing the entire backup and recovery itself. "You may think you're dealing with a cloud-based DR provider, but they might actually only be re-selling another company's services and technology and white-labeling it," says Brill. That isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it's good to know.

Have a lawyer look at any agreement you sign to make sure you're covered under all circumstances. "Make sure there are the appropriate indemnities, protections and clauses in the contract," says Brill. "[It's important that] if the provider gets bought or if they intend to move your data to another data center, that you have some rights and some notice."

Also, ask how you can test the service out. Get references. And ask if they recover a wide range of data, such as voice data.

Finally, Dillon advises choosing a provider that will give you a service-level agreement and a guarantee that it will have your data back up within 24 hours. "Business owners don't want to be DR experts," he says. "They just want to send their data offsite to someone who can get to know their system and their users, and if there's a problem, they can take care of it quickly. The last thing a business owner wants to hear is, 'We've backed up your three servers, 2TB of data, 24 processors and 28GB of RAM. Here it is—good luck.'" ●