

Which Backup Option is Best?



Asigra.

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Why Protect Your Data?

This guide is designed to help business professionals assess their options for adopting or upgrading a backup and recovery system. While it may seem obvious why you should protect your data with backups, a professional approach to planning a defense requires that every conceivable threat is recognized and addressed by the solution you finally select. Data loss disasters have many causes and every one of them is too common to ignore.

- Human error -- accidental deletion
- Hardware failure
- Software failure -- file corruption
- Viruses
- Hackers
- Stolen computers or drives
- Natural disaster -- fire, flood, etc.

In addition to planning for all of the threats, it's also critical that you understand that backup is only half of the protection equation. Without a quick and surefire recovery, your company could still be severely hurt by a data loss.

The value of providing the best backup and recovery system for your data is at the very heart of business continuity. How your company responds to a data loss crisis will have impacts on both your financial bottom line and your professional image. With the best data backup and recovery system:

- Following a data loss emergency, you will still be in business with a minimum of lost sales and productivity.
- Your business reputation will remain intact when customers see how quickly and professionally you recover from a data loss incident (if they notice at all.)
- Your business will avoid great expense for tech support, which may or may not be able to recover lost data.
- Your business will be in compliance with privacy laws and industry standards. The threat of data theft is minimized.

Establish Value of Data for Backup.

When it comes to backup and recovery solutions, one size does not fit all. Deciding on an effective system comes down to the value of the data that you want to protect. Unimportant data doesn't need an expensive backup solution. Data that is the lifeblood of your business needs the best protection you can buy.

To assess the value of your data:

- 1. First, categorize the business data that you want to backup – the important, the very important and the absolutely critical.**
- 2. Ask yourself “What is the value of this data for every hour it is unavailable?”**

- 3. What are the consequences if this data was lost forever?**
- 4. What are the consequences if it fell into the wrong hands?”**

By categorizing your data according to its value, you will be able to create a plan that best matches backup cost to the quality of protection required. Then you can establish a system according to the following considerations for each of the three main backup technologies.

Backup Options: Local, Cloud and Hybrid Cloud/Local

To help you wade through all of the considerations in selecting a system, we've created a table that identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the three kinds of backup options.

Local backup: This is the method of backing up to a local tape or disk drive that businesses employ on-site. It's good for fast recovery but the original and on-site backup can be lost in a fire.

Cloud backup: Answering the need to store data off-site, Cloud systems use the internet to upload backup data to a remote data center. The best Cloud solutions automate this process so the user can basically just 'set it and forget it.' There are two levels of Cloud backup systems: business-class and consumer-class. Unlike business-class, consumer-class systems are very inexpensive (or free) but offer little support, security or extra service.

Hybrid Cloud backup: Simple cloud systems have one problem: in a data crisis when large volumes of data need to be restored from the cloud, Internet data transfer by normal ADSL or cable is often too slow. A Hybrid Cloud system solves this by adding an integrated local backup to the cloud backup system. The same software automation ensures 'set it and forget it' simplicity while the duplicated local data means data can be restored in minutes instead of hours.

Consideration	Local	Cloud	Hybrid
	Including CD/DVD, flash drives, tape drives, hard drives	Including consumer class and business class online backups plus corporate WAN	Cloud backup with integrated local backup for rapid recovery
Your company's focus on core strengths and outsourcing strategy for support services	A considerable amount of time and expertise are required to maintain a bullet-proof backup system. Is that a good investment of your resources?	Cloud backups are basically "set it and forget it." Your staff can focus on business.	Business class hybrid systems minimize the need for staff intervention and handling. The cloud part is still "set it and forget it."
Ongoing costs to sustain a backup system – monthly charges for maintenance and storage plus staff time required for disciplined backups, training and recovery drills	Considerable time and effort is required to assess all of the true costs associated with sustaining mechanical backup systems.	Consumer class cloud systems are competitive, especially when all costs of mechanical systems are factored. Business-class systems are more expensive but may still be competitive.	Hybrid backup systems are ostensibly the most expensive.
Data volume	If reliable staff time is not too expensive then local media backups can be quite economical, especially for small volumes.	More volume means more expense but some providers offer tiered pricing.	Most expensive but tiered pricing from business class suppliers helps to mitigate the cost of duplicate backups.
Offsite challenges (media must be stored offsite to prevent fire or other disaster from destroying both original and backup): physical media requires a disciplined system to get it offsite. All offsite media must be stored securely to prevent theft and ensure quick retrieval.	Locally-stored backup media is useless in the event of fire or other disaster. To prevent loss of both original and backup, physical backup media must be stored in a separate location. And you must be able to retrieve it quickly from that location when you need to restore data.	By definition, cloud backups are stored safely offsite. Unfortunately, with ADSL or cable speed connections, full data recovery can take hours or even days depending on the volume. Some business class cloud backup services ensure faster recovery by offering emergency courier delivery of physical media.	The best of both worlds: some business class systems offer integrated solutions for both offsite and local backups.

Consideration	Local	Cloud	Hybrid
The regulations and standards under which your business operates	It's very difficult for local media storage to meet standards set by industry or government for protection of personal and financial data.	Only the best business class solutions meet industry and government standards.	Only the best business class solutions meet industry and government standards.
The capital cost of purchasing backup hardware and software	Inexpensive hardware and software solutions are likely to be the least secure and the most trouble to maintain.	No capital cost for hardware or software	No capital cost for hardware or software
Technical expertise and resourcefulness of staff available in event of a data loss crisis	Do you have more than one tech-savvy person who can manage data recovery from physical media under the extreme pressure of a data loss emergency?	With consumer class cloud backup, you're probably on your own for data restoration. Business class ensures there is always an expert technician on hand to help you.	Only business class offers integrated hybrid solutions with expert technicians available to help in an emergency.
Transport time (time it takes for backups): slow, tedious processes are a disincentive to disciplined backups	Can be relatively quick if there is low volume of data and no need to change disks or tapes. Still, there is time required to label media and move it to storage.	Backups are done automatically and in the background while you continue to work. No intervention is required from staff.	Some handling is required for local backup but it is minimal since only the most current data needs to be stored locally.
Seek time: time it takes to find a single file or files on backup media for a partial restore	This can be very quick if the local media is on disk and the disk is handy. Much slower if the media is tape or disks that are not handy.	Depends on file size and how long it takes to download but for smaller files, this can be very quick.	Very quick either way: restore small files from cloud or large files from local media.
Recovery time (time it takes to restore a complete backup): offsite solutions need high-speed connections and/or a courier for rapid transport of physical media.	First consideration is how long it takes to locate and load the physical media. (How easily can you find backup tapes or disks and retrieve them in an emergency? Are they labeled properly?) Once loaded, recovery is very fast.	With large volumes of data, typical ADSL or cable connections are relatively slow. It is probably faster to physically transport physical backup media from the cloud storage facility by courier. This service is available from business class vendors.	Recovery using the locally stored media is very fast.

Consideration	Local	Cloud	Hybrid
Professional support: required to implement a new system	Some systems are relatively simple; others are more complicated. Either way, more than one person should master the physical processes.	With business class systems, professional support is always available.	With business class systems, professional support is always available.
Hardware reliability of backup and restore system: Are you absolutely sure the backup was recorded perfectly and can be restored?	Mechanical reliability of machinery is the Achilles heel of physical media. Moving parts can fail or get out of alignment resulting in corrupt and therefore useless backups.	Nothing to break or fail	The physical media may fail but there is always a backup for the backup in the cloud.
Security against data theft: You are aware of your legal responsibility to protect personal information aren't you? This includes certifications required by your industry.	This depends on the rigor of security for your physical media storage. More security requires more expensive training, safeguards and elaborate procedures.	Consumer grade systems offer little help in meeting stringent security certification requirements. The best business grade systems are certified to tough government and industry standards.	Consumer grade systems offer little help in meeting stringent security certification requirements. The best business grade systems are certified to tough government and industry standards.
Flexibility: Trouble, time and cost required if you want to move to a different backup system. Does the backup technology (or contract obligations) inhibit changing systems?	A substantial investment in staff training, hardware and software may discourage you from changing platforms.	<p>Term contracts may inhibit changing technologies or vendors but terms are normally only one year.</p> <p>Business class systems usually have many vendors offering the same service. If you don't like your current vendor, you can move to another vendor but still keep the same system and software.</p> <p>Business class vendors offer contracts that allow you to move from their consumer class to business class systems or vice versa depending on your needs.</p>	<p>Term contracts may inhibit changing technologies or vendors but terms are normally only one year.</p> <p>Business class systems usually have many vendors offering the same service. If you don't like your current vendor, you can move to another vendor but still keep the same system and software.</p> <p>Consumer class systems do not offer integrated hybrid solutions.</p>

Finding an Asigra Service Provider.

For over a quarter of a century, Asigra has nurtured a global ecosystem of Managed Service Providers and Resellers — a partner network of thousands of IT organizations ranging from multi-billion dollar publicly traded companies to small specialty shops. Serving more than 100,000 end-user businesses, these partners provide the Asigra solution as a Public Cloud (SaaS) or Private Cloud (software) or Hybrid Cloud solution.

To be Powered by Asigra, every one of our partners receives sustained training and technical support, ensuring their ability to provide customers with the highest level of expertise.

All of this means end-users can select their ideal backup and recovery solution from an impressive array of customized solutions and expert service providers.

Contact us for help finding an Asigra service provider that can meet your company's specific needs.

About Asigra

Asigra transforms the way businesses manage and protect their data by delivering market leading cloud backup solutions that seamlessly and efficiently manage, scale and deliver data protection services. Asigra Cloud Backup™ is built for new and existing MSPs/VARs who focus on data protection, IT constrained organizations, and industries with compliance mandates that are looking to improve their backup with a secure, reliable and predictable data protection cloud backup model. With 25 years of experience as backup/recovery pioneers, Asigra

technology protects more than 400,000 sites globally ranging from the Global 100 to SMBs. The world's largest and most profitable service providers including CDW, HP and Terremark Worldwide power their cloud backup services using Asigra technology. Asigra is headquartered in Toronto, Canada, with offices globally.

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