

# Cloud for Business Continuity: Separating Fact From Fiction

5 Things to Consider to Get the Cloud to Work for You



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## 5 Things to Consider to Get the Cloud to Work for You

### Summary:

**Lately backup has gained some respect and focus among IT staffs. However, enterprises should not yet assume recoverability of data and systems will work as planned. Enterprises acknowledge that backups and recovery are required to maintain business operations and business continuity. As the world accelerates toward a digital economy, this has never been more essential. But, at the same time, the media is full of reports of what happens when a firm's data or online system is not available. Consider the recent reports of the impact of cyber-attacks such as Ransomware, one of the most widespread and damaging causes of downtime and data loss for IT systems. This topic has captured the attention of both the media and end-users underscoring the urgent need to quickly recover data and operations.**

### Understanding Cloud-Based Solutions

To understand the use of Cloud-based solutions to address backup and recovery, Unitrends conducted a survey of a broad range of IT professionals responsible for protecting data footprints of less than 10 TB of data up through over 100 TB. Unitrends was looking to gain insight into companies' strategies regarding their implementation of these Cloud-based solutions. We learned that both those who have implemented this type of solution and those who have not faced similar challenges. However, we saw differences between the two groups, often in the degree of impact. For instance, while business continuity is a key challenge for both segments, it was the case for a higher percentage of NonCloud users. This, along with other responses, led us to conclude that many enterprises went to the Cloud to address business continuity. As a result they also have slightly greater piece of mind when it comes to their ability to maintain business continuity in the face of a disaster.

We saw that there were benefits to using Cloud for backup and recovery, and we also noticed a number of factors prohibiting its adoption, including concerns about costs and security. This report takes a look at both the advantages for those who have transitioned to cloud solutions and drawbacks for those who haven't. Throughout the review and analysis of responses, an interesting and troubling trend emerged. There are gaps in business continuity plans in both segments. Additionally, neither group is doing a consistent job of verifying that the plans and processes they have in place will work. Results revealed an alarming inclination of recoverability based on a 'Don't Test; Don't Verify' practice.

### Are Enterprises Using Cloud-based Solutions Yet to Assure Business Continuity?

Unitrends has conducted an annual survey in each of the last 3 years to understand where enterprises are in their journey toward using the Cloud for backup and recovery. This report contains the analysis of 900 responses in order to separate fact from fiction and to gain insight into what has driven some to use Cloud-based solutions and what had kept others from doing so. Additionally, the report seeks and to understand obstacles and concerns of both groups.

**Areas explored include:**

- Characteristics of today's retention landscape
- Top IT concerns
- Are those concerns truly being addressed?
- Criteria used to select Cloud solutions
- Hindrances to adoption of Cloud-based solutions for backup and recovery

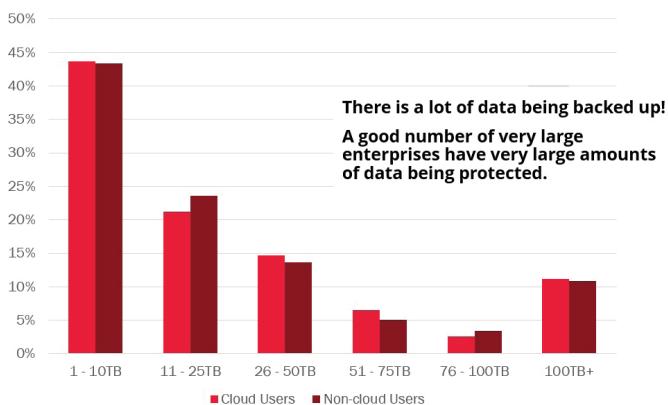
IT professionals will likely identify with the views and concerns uncovered in this report. Read on to see what you can gain from their experience.

**Spoiler Alert – There is a Lot to Protect:**

The importance of data is intensifying as the world moves toward a digital economy. Transactions are conducted online, data and images are stored digitally. There is little difference in dimension of the data footprint protected by the approximately 50% of respondents who use Cloud solutions for backup and the 50% who don't. Many enterprises protect up to 10 TB of data; not a surprise as the majority of existing enterprises are small or medium size. But note the other end of the spectrum where a significant 11% of IT departments are responsible for protecting and recovering over 100 TB.

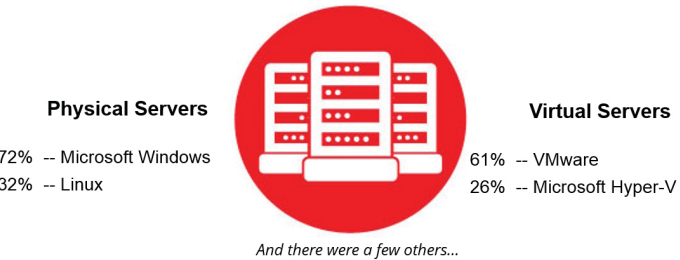
This footprint will only increase going forward. Half of the respondents indicate that they are dealing with excessive data growth. One frequently cited cause of this expansion is the impact of regulations. Particular industries including financial services and healthcare are particularly affected as regulations determine how long customer and patient data must be archived. 28% of Cloud users report that the

**Amount of Protected Data**



**57%** Percent of Companies Have Compliance or Regulatory Requirements for Retaining Data Long Term

impact of regulations on their enterprise's long term storage requirements was a driver to their adoption of Cloud-based backup and recovery solutions. To make the life of the IT professional even more of a challenge, backup windows, or the time slots in which to do the back-up of the growing footprint, are shrinking. More needs to be done, but more quickly. The final macro trend is that most IT professionals are protecting mixed environments. Both physical and virtual servers are in use. And frequently, more than one type of operating system for each is deployed. Is this likely to change? Not based upon the results of the survey.



**Most of you have to protect physical AND virtual servers.**

**Most Pressing Requirements:**

Disasters of all types and sizes occur from the accidental deletion of an email from your company's top client through complete wipeout of your data center. And events often occur in bunches, such as the day that a midsize retail outlet experienced failures of 2 drives within a single RAID array – within 6 hours! Data loss is frequent and costs of downtime are reported to range from \$90,000 to \$300,000 per hour depending on industry, size of company, and business model. It's no surprise that 37% of you – Cloud and

**31%** Of Respondents Experienced Data Loss Within the Last Two Years



48%

of Cloud users did included Ability to **RECOVER DATA** as a Purchase Decision for cloud



46%

Noncloud Users who would consider a Cloud's ability to **Quickly RETRIEVE DATA** to be critical

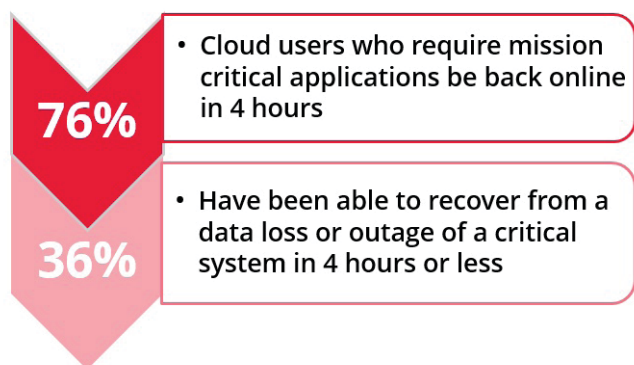
NonCloud users alike, cited recoverability of data as one of your top challenges.

In fact, half of the survey respondents indicated that this was a key reason that they began to evaluate and then adopt Cloud-based backup and recovery. The ability to recover data, when needed, in a cost effective manner was widely cited as one of the main criteria used to select a particular Cloud service.

While 54% of those using Cloud-based solutions indicated they were used for Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity, we found that there is room for improvement. It's taking longer than is acceptable to resume use of critical systems after an outage. The learning is that Business Continuity, not simply Data Recovery, is the actual requirement. The costs of an outage continue to mount until customers and employees alike are able to resume use of the online systems.

Cloud-based solutions can help, but you need to know what to look for. Identify your business critical systems. Thoroughly discuss with your vendor, options for application

### Recovery Times ≠ Recovery Objectives



recovery. How is recovery defined? Is it simply spinning up a server and leaving it up to you to restore back to your data center or your alternate disaster recovery site? Or, are you able to actually incorporate that replica into your operations to utilize while repairs occur at your primary site? And how long will it take and is that SLA guaranteed? What is the process for moving that system back into your data center when you are ready? Some services include loading it onto a physical disk and overnighting it to you. What is included in your current or candidate solution? And how much will it cost? Ask the right questions, and you will likely find that Cloud will help you to meet your recovery time objectives.

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### The BIG Gap:

Perhaps the biggest surprise of all in analyzing the results of the survey was the dichotomy between the emphasis placed on recovery and the lack of attention on verifying that the recovery processes actually work. Close to half cited the ability to recover as a major concern. And close to half of enterprises included the ability to recover as a purchase criteria when evaluating Cloud services.

Best practices indicate that backup and recovery should be tested on at least a quarterly basis. Are all files thought to be backed up also able to be recovered? Can they be done within the stipulated Recovery Time Objectives (RTO)? If you are in a regulated industry or need to comply with other audit requirements, are you getting reports validating that your objectives and metrics are being met?

The survey responses revealed that at least 60% of enterprises are failing at this. Testing is occurring, at best, annually. The time to test recovery procedures is before, NOT after a disaster strikes. Evaluate Cloud-based recovery solutions for their proactive testing capabilities. Seek reports that can be used for audit purposes to validate that regulatory and other requirements are being achieved. What did the results denote were the most crucial elements

missing from common backup and recovery practices? Our data suggests the following are the most critical backup and recovery needs in the eyes of IT:

- The ability to recover data
- RTO's of critical applications
- Long term retention driven by regulations

The following were not cited but should have been:

- Comprehensive business continuity plans
- Recovery assurance and verification

## Are Cloud-based backup & recovery solutions being used to address these needs? If not, could they? How Can They Help?

### ENABLING DATA RECOVERY

Yes, Cloud-based solutions are enabling many enterprises to recover data. It is, in fact, a key reason to evaluate use of cloud and was a purchase criteria for 48%. It was also cited as a driver that would motivate 44% of NonCloud backup and recovery users to evaluate a change in their approach.

### ACHIEVING RECOVERY TIME OBJECTIVES

There was some difference between the segments when it comes time to resume operations of critical applications.



Those utilizing Cloud-based applications fared slightly better. For example 36% of Cloud users vs the 31% of NonCloud-based solution users had recovered critical applications in 4 hours or less. Unfortunately, 76% also have 4 hour RTOs. The good news is that there are solutions

and services that will deliver that SLA. Unitrends DRaaS guarantees a 1 hour SLA for the spin up and access to critical applications in the Unitrends Cloud. Be sure to probe SLAs of offers as you shop.

### ADDRESSING REGULATORY RETENTION REQUIREMENTS

Substantially more users than nonusers of Cloud-based backup and recovery solutions cited long term retention driven by regulations as a top requirement, 60% vs 40%. Regulatory requirements appear to be a driver to use

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Cloud solutions. 28% of Cloud users included this criteria while evaluating solutions and 48% reported using their Cloud storage for this purpose. So yes, the Cloud can and is helping to address long term retention requirements. Be certain to understand costs of capacity if this is a key driver for you. As long term retention is certain to grow the data footprint, it's essential to understand whether costs are based on the size of the data to be protected, as is the case with Unitrends Forever Cloud, or the size of the footprint used in the Cloud.

### INCOMPLETE BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING

Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery (BC/DR) were the most commonly cited reasons (60%) for having adopted Cloud-based solutions for backup and recovery. They were also the most popular reasons that would motivate the rest of you to move (44%) to Cloud-based solutions. We learned too that 54% who are now using the Cloud for recovery are doing so specifically to address BC/DR requirements. What is concerning, is that the disaster recovery plans appear to be falling short of complete. For example, in responding to where, in the event of a catastrophic event in their data center, operations would resume, 65% using Cloud indicated that they either had no plans or that it would be some other place within their enterprise. How can Business Continuity resume with no designated recovery site or an uncertain plan? There are Disaster Recovery services available to guide you through planning to ensure elements are properly identified. Unitrends DRaaS, complementing the Unitrends Forever Cloud provides a White Glove Service which spans the entire process, from setup to disaster recovery to failback, including expert help to work with you to create a customized DR plan specific to your environment.

### RECOVERY ASSURANCE

The single most interesting observation of this survey is in the area of recovery assurance. This addresses validation and testing to ensure that recovery processes perform as required. This assurance is a key concern of 46% and a purchase criteria for 48% of those using Cloud-based solutions. BUT – a full 60% are testing the ability to recover only one time per year or even less frequently! Testing is expensive and manually intensive. But putting your business at risk in the event you are one of the 31% likely to experience an outage over the next 24 months is not acceptable either. There are solutions, such as Unitrends Recovery Assurance, capable of automatically testing recoverability. Unitrends does this in a virtual sandbox without interrupting production systems or IT staffs. This Recovery Assurance solution also includes testing dependencies among critical applications and validating workflows required to resume your business operations. With Unitrends Recovery Assurance, business continuity and disaster recovery testing becomes an automated process with absolutely no manual intervention necessary, dramatically lowering the cost of testing while providing you with a guarantee that you can recover.



## 5 Things to Consider to Get the Cloud to Work for You:

We've learned from this year's results that users and nonusers of cloud-based solutions for backup, recovery and continuity have common needs. Regardless of where you are on your journey to the cloud, you are likely to be concerned about your ability to:

- Backup increasing amounts of data
- Cost effectively manage long term retention
- Recover data when you need to
- Resume timely operations of critical applications
- Be certain of your disaster recovery plans

Many of you using the cloud for backup, recovery and business continuity, are enjoying benefits including:

- Flexibility to scale your capacity up or down (usually up)
- Efficiently address your requirement for off-site storage
- Play a role in your plan to ensure business continuity

To be confident that you do derive those benefits and have your particular needs addressed, we urge to consider the following when building your continuity plan and evaluating cloud options:

1. Are your long term retention requirements including capacity and time-frames able to be addressed?
2. On what are the cloud charges based?
3. What kind of recovery assurance or testing of your DR plan is available?
4. How would your cloud assist you with business continuity in the event of a disaster in your data center?
5. Are your SLA's for RTO, data location, availability, support, etc. able to be met?

As you proceed with your journey and address these considerations, let us know how Unitrends can help you. To learn more, visit [unitrends.com](http://unitrends.com).

### About Unitrends

Unitrends is trusted by business visionaries, IT leaders and Pro's who know that in today's digital world protecting their ideas and keeping their business running is non-negotiable. The Connected Continuity Platform™ enables organizations of all sizes to protect their data and assure business continuity for their physical, virtual and cloud based environments.

Unitrends offers the industry's broadest portfolio of cloud empowered continuity solutions in a single super intuitive platform delivering unmatched flexibility as needs evolve, providing 100 percent confidence in recovery and business continuity.

Unitrends' Continuity Solutions are backed by a global support team that consistently achieves a 98% satisfaction rating and are sold through a community of thousands of expert technology partners, service providers and resellers worldwide.



Ready to jump start your backup and recovery plans? Download free tools today!