

Successfully managing risk in a digital world

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At a time when IT staff need to deliver on the backup, recovery, and business continuity needs of organisations, decision-makers must be able to successfully manage risk.



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In South Africa, the recent launch of Microsoft Azure and Huawei Cloud means the cloud and 'as-a-service' offerings have become even more compelling for local organisations irrespective of size.

Yet, the disaster recovery needs of SMEs and big organisations are still vastly different and require a more customised approach. Options like Disaster Recovery-as-a-Service (DRaaS) can radically transform the technical environment of a business and position it for growth.

Just as with other cloud-based offerings, DRaaS is customisable to the specific needs of a business. So, whether it is a large organisation looking to manage multiple branches, devices, and remote workers, or a small company wanting the peace of mind that its important documents are backed up, DRaaS can meet those expectations.

Replicating physical or virtual servers

Essentially, DRaaS replicates either the physical or virtual servers of an organisation to provide failover in the event of a disaster. When an outage occurs for whatever reason, decision-makers do not have to wait for either their on-premise servers to be recovered or having their IT teams travel to off-site locations to get backups. It provides a more seamless transition and puts availability at its core.

In fact, such is the potential of DRaaS, that the global market is expected to grow from \$2.19bn in 2017 to \$12.54bn by 2022. And in the segment, it is anticipated that managed service providers will have the highest growth rate for the period.

For South African organisations still sitting on the sideline considering when to make the transition to the cloud, the need is clear – adapt or be left behind.

Digital impetus

Business continuity in this digitally connected landscape is a business imperative. The risk of natural disasters or man-made ones can result in potentially significant data loss especially if this is done on-premises. Fire, flood, theft, and even damaged equipment can irrevocably impact the availability of a company.

Given the financial and reputational consequences if data is lost, stolen, or otherwise compromised, decision-makers need to be more proactive when it comes to managing risk. Not only is the pressure from a regulatory perspective clear (think of the consequences outlined in the Protection of Personal Information Act), but customer demands in a competitive market mean failure is not an option.

The digital environment is one where availability forms the cornerstone. Accessing data from any device, irrespective of location or time are fundamental components to differentiating the business. Not only does DRaaS provide backup and availability needs as required, but it incorporates all the value-added features that operating in a cloud environment offer - security, cost-effectiveness, scalability, and customisation.

Having multinational data centres operating in the country will give further impetus to these and other, related offerings. Not only will the cost of services in the country come down, but the reduced latency in delivering solutions locally mean businesses can remain focused on their strategic challenges instead of worrying about business continuity.

From an availability perspective, local data centres also represent information being confined to within the borders of the country, ticking a further essential regulatory box.

Cloud migration

Several local businesses have embraced migrating to the cloud for their availability needs. As a likely transition path, many start with backup-as-a-service (BaaS) as it has the least impact on the existing ecosystem but offers significant benefits.

However, once the first step has been taken and decision-makers start experiencing the ease of use and capabilities of cloud-based services, they add DRaaS for their mission-critical workloads.

Of course, the best DRaaS solution in the world means very little if the recoverability and validity of data is not tested continuously. This is as important as the data itself, otherwise, corruption could force the organisation to be in a critical position of not having access to the information needed to continue with operations.

DRaaS is an invaluable component to the availability and business continuity demands of the modern, connected organisation. But even though the full value of DRaaS might not be realised immediately, the right disaster recovery plan

could prevent an outage from becoming a catastrophe for a business. Embracing it, along with the advantages local data centres provide, can position a business well for the digital future.

ABOUT KATE MOLLETT

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