What is DRaaS, Anyway?

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Virtually every business, no matter its size or specialty, relies extensively on IT, with new products and processes emerging every year. This is especially true for 3PL and trucking companies, which depend heavily on reliable, accurate and agile data management for inventory, delivery, internal and external communications, sales and marketing, purchasing and all kinds of other transactions.

IT environments can be seen as ever-growing clusters of software and hardware, all of which are subject to breakdowns caused by anything from system weaknesses to malware attacks. Fortunately, new disaster recovery tools and techniques are constantly being created to handle new generations of technology, ballooning volumes of data, and the challenges of hackers.

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There are three key elements to a solid defense against a potential disaster. The first two are better known to logistics providers.

One is data protection, which includes tools to both defend and restore files, databases, software, and email residing on a computer or server. Another is server (OS) recovery, comprised of solutions to recover the entire server, not just individual files. Examples include image based backup, virtual machine backup, and server cloning to rapidly restore Operating System Environments, or OSEs.

The third key defense element is DRaaS, or Disaster Recovery as a Service. It may be less well-known, but DRaaS stands out because those systems are custom-built recovery environments for organizations, such as trucking companies and 3PLs that cannot tolerate downtime. This solution typically includes data protection, server recovery and a recovery network for user access if the primary site is unavailable.

DRaaS is another way of saying you are using a cloud IT service vendor as your secondary site for purposes of recovery.

The Essential Question

The essential question is how to keep the kind of complex, cloud-enabled systems typical of 3PL and trucking companies running smoothly, safely and reliably. Of course, the cloud is a game-changing tool for recovery. But as with every great innovation, it solves many problems, and also creates new ones.

While the cloud offers greater opportunities for growth, increased speed, and more productive procedures, it also increases the likelihood of costly downtime and damaging data loss. In fact, the more advanced and elaborate an IT system becomes, the greater its risk of collapse.

We think of downtime losses as a normal part of doing business, but a full-on disaster can be extremely destructive. Estimates of the exact value of lost time and data vary, but research shows how destructive a disaster can be. An Aberdeen Group study determined that losses to large businesses can reach $164,000 per hour. Then there is Amazon's infamous 30-minute shutdown in 2013 that cost the company $2 million. Smaller companies experience losses on a comparable scale.

When a system goes down, damage can pile up quickly. The sudden absence of normal functionality plus the possibly irreversible destruction of data can soon add up to lost revenue, lost customers and crushing legal problems.

How to reduce downtime? Aim for the highest availability possible. With the right tools and the right expert guidance, a high-availability environment can be created, lowering downtime from hours or even days to only minutes a year.

Is 99 Percent Availability Enough?

Competent hosting suppliers offer solutions that are superior to what the majority of companies can provide for themselves. Most of these suppliers promise 99 percent availability, an impressive claim until you consider that one percent is more than three and a half days a year, which no 3PL or trucking company wants to lose. On top of that, downtime usually strikes at the busiest times, multiplying the difficulty and stress.

If one percent unavailability is too much, and that is what many providers offer, what should you do? Find a provider that can deliver the best DRaaS so-

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lution possible. The benefits of a DRaaS solution are many. Here are some of the most important ones:

- Risk of data loss lowered to a negligible level
- Backup fortified by data replication
- Backup performed with little impact on company
- Damage to customers minimized
- IT performance improved
- Company reputation strengthened

Choose Carefully

A top-notch DRaaS strategy brings together carefully chosen services and products, along with best practices. The results are near-total redundancy and practically impregnable infrastructure. Here are some important factors to consider:

- Keep system-protection tools and methods as simple as possible. The more moving parts, the higher the risk of failure. Take as much time as you need to study each element, so that you know what to do when and if disaster strikes.

- Bear in mind that replication is different from backup. Backup files are needed for complete coverage and accurate data recovery. Replication, on the other hand, can retain incorrect data that should be removed.
- Select only scalable components that can support both stable growth and unexpected surges in activity. Optimum solutions have the elasticity to accommodate evolving system demands.
- Double the emphasis on redundancy. Replication and failover servers offer powerful defenses against data loss. A single-server system invites failure and limits scalability.
- Integrate all backup and disaster recovery solutions when possible.
- Test, retest, document and test again. To the extent possible, consider every potential malfunction of every component, as well as redundancies and possible overloads.

Contact RenovoData by website at www.renovodata.com or call 1.877.834.3684