Leveraging Technology to Deal with Disaster

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When it comes to embracing cutting-edge technology to protect business data, it appears the manufacturing sector is at or near the head of the pack.

More and more industrial enterprises are wising up to the fact that the development of a strong disaster recovery plan is a high-priority business task, and leveraging technology is one of the more effective ways to achieve that end.

Recent natural disasters, most notably the March 11 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, have only further brought to light the value of embracing technological solutions to maximize the effectiveness of a disaster recovery plan. In an effort to better understand the level of disaster preparedness in the business world, Acronis, a provider of backup and recovery solutions for physical, virtual and cloud environments, recently conducted a survey of 3,000 IT managers in small and medium companies across 13 countries. [1]

“The premise behind the survey is to understand, from different IT managers around the world, what their level preparedness is for disasters, and what is impacting their decisions or their perspectives on disaster recovery,” said Izzy Azeri, Senior Vice President and General Manager, Americas at Acronis.

According to the survey:

1. 25 percent of servers within the industrial sector are already virtualized.

2. 48 percent of IT managers believe more than half their servers will be virtualized by the end of 2011.

3. 20 percent of IT infrastructure in industrial companies is already managed in the cloud.

4. 33 percent of IT infrastructure is predicted to be cloud-based by the end of 2011.

According to Azeri, the willingness to embrace the cloud and virtualization varies from sector to sector. The manufacturing sector, he said, has certain characteristics that make these technologies a better fit for early adopters.

“The manufacturing industry may not have as many regulatory or compliance requirements as other industries,” he said. “Some industries may be a little more hesitant to deploy some of these new technologies. On the manufacturing side, they probably see the cost-benefit analysis of that pretty easily, and they’re deploying that much more quickly than other industries.”

While those results are encouraging, the survey also found many IT managers are less than confident about their company’s ability to deal with business disasters. For example, the Acronis survey found:

1. 33 percent of IT managers in the industrial sector are concerned that their backup and disaster recovery would fail in the wake of a serious incident or event.

2. 30 percent of industrial sector IT managers state that they do not have ample resources to enable comprehensive backup and disaster recovery.

3. 60 percent state that they have ample controls and procedures for backup and disaster recovery.

Azeri said the confidence level of these organizations depends quite a bit on the disaster recovery resources they have at their disposal. By leveraging technology to fit their needs, they can address their level of preparedness more easily and effectively.

“One of the things we see is cloud brings much more to these companies than their physical infrastructure ever could,” he said. “It would actually increase their confidence level to recover, because they now actually have resources that are off site and aren’t necessarily impacted by these disasters.”

But perhaps the biggest takeaway from the survey is the desire of various business organizations to have a single solution for physical, virtual and cloud environments.

According to the survey, 76 percent of the total respondents feel that is the best way to improve their backup and recovery strategy.

According to Azeri, adopting technologies, such as cloud and virtualization, has its benefits, but it also brings extra complexity. A single solution effectively guards against that.

“So if they actually have something that will help them manage the resources across those three technology platforms — the physical infrastructure, the data center and the cloud — they can increase their confidence level,” he continued. “Having that one pane of glass will really increase the confidence level for some of these customers.”

What’s your take? Let me know by emailing me at mike.schmidt@advantagemedia.com *[2].*

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