

WHITE PAPER

Don't Tempt Fate:

DRaaS Provides Cost Effective Disaster Recovery



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Cloud Technology Delivers DR Solutions for all Size Businesses.

How long can your mission critical systems be out of commission? A day? An hour? A minute? Do you feel like you are prepared and nothing will happen to your business? In an “every second counts” business environment, your business continuity is increasingly threatened by the day, as your and your customer’s tolerance for down time is decreasing by the second. Your business is being attacked from internal threats (employee or administrator error) and external threats (natural disaster, cyber security threats, etc.).

Even the biggest and most tech savvy of companies is not immune. On January 27th, Facebook services, including Instagram, were down, not for just a few minutes, but for a full hour. Facebook issued a statement saying the outage was caused by a change the company implemented that affected their configuration systems. In the statement, Facebook officials said, “We moved quickly to fix the problem, and both services are back to 100% for everyone.” Some would argue that an hour isn’t very quick, especially when you think about the number of people — and businesses — whose continuity depends on Facebook. Front page news from a configuration change, something every company does on a regular basis. Indeed the downtime dilemma crosses company size, industry and region.

A business’s disaster recovery (DR) strategy is critical to maintaining business continuity. No wonder 66% of Forrester survey respondents report disaster recovery to be a high or critical business priority (Source: Forrester 2013). A key part of a disaster recovery strategy is determining whether the ability to recover is more effectively handled on premise or remotely in

an outsourced hosting environment. While many CIOs want to keep DR systems running in-house, protecting core systems can be complex and expensive. The majority of organizations are not equipped to provide the requisite remote data centers, expertise and recovery software and hardware systems.

Cloud-based DRaaS solutions provide businesses with the best of both worlds: a strong and reliable disaster recovery strategy within a cost efficient solution. In fact, sales of cloud-based DR services are expected to increase 23% by 2016. The opportunity is real and it’s growing.

A December 2013 [Ponemon report](#) found that 91 percent of data centers had experienced unplanned downtime in a 24-month timespan. And companies paid a high price for that downtime: Complete or partial unplanned data center outages in a 12-month period in 67 data centers across the United States totaled a collective loss of more than \$46 million, according to the Ponemon report.

“Industries with revenue models dependent on the data center’s ability to deliver IT and networking services to customers — such as telecommunications service providers and ecommerce companies—and those that deal with a large amount of secure data — such as defense contractors and financial institutions — continue to incur the most significant costs associated with downtime,” stated the report.

Preparing for the Worst

A company's ability to resume business after an outage is directly tied to its ability to compete in today's dynamic and demanding business environment.

There are many different ways to look at disaster recovery, but, at its core, it's pretty simple, said Scott Good, Senior Product Manager at CenturyLink Business. "Disaster recovery is the ability to get your business back up and running after a calamity. Period," he said. "Revenue or brand protection, application protection, basic data replication — that's what we're talking about here: Is it an immediate thing that's affecting the company's revenue and reputation or brand? A fix has to happen — right away."

The first step is to accept that disasters happen and that they are happening more frequently. Not just of the technology kind, we have witnessed floods, fire, hurricanes, tornadoes, tsunamis ... Mother Nature certainly contributes her share to the disasters that can interrupt business operations. Human error is also a significant factor whether with malice or not it is frequently the reason for downtime.

At this point in the report, you may be thinking to yourself, "No problem — I have a disaster recovery system in place. If my systems get taken down, I can get the business back up and running in no time." But can you? To determine your disaster recovery readiness, check to see if you can answer "yes" to the following questions.

- Are all of your data and systems replicated? Offsite?
- If systems at your primary site did go down — or go completely dark — can you count on the network between the primary site and the secondary site? Do you know who owns that network?
- Has the disaster recovery plan been tested? How often?
- If the plan is for an individual business unit, has that plan been tested for integration with the company's general DR plan?
- Is the technology specified in the plan still in use at the company?
- Are the people/job roles specified in the plan still with the company?

Many organizations commonly believe they can effectively recover from a disaster, but they don't actually have the people, processes and products in place to deal with today's complicated threat landscape, customer expectation for 24/7 uptime, and increasing data volumes. And many don't consider all the elements of disaster recovery planning — communications, readiness, testing, understanding, training and ability — when assessing their own DR competency.

The Disaster Recovery Preparedness Council noted in its [State of Global Disaster Recovery Preparedness Annual Report 2014](#) that more than 60% of those who took the survey do not have a fully documented DR plan, while 40% said their DR plan was not very useful when it had to be put into place. Further, the report states, one-third of organizations participating in the survey test their DR plans only once or twice a year, and 23% never test their DR plans at all. Alarming, the report also found that 65% of companies that do test their plans don't pass their own tests.

Making the DR Difference

The problems are all too real, and the solutions can be overwhelming, expensive, difficult to manage, and, as the Disaster Recovery Preparedness Council found in its research, ultimately ineffective.

The good news is that the cloud provides new recovery opportunities for businesses. Cloud-based DR solutions allow businesses to deploy a cost efficient solution, removing the need to provision a remote site, have physical and virtual infrastructure there and ensure dedicated high-speed data links are in place, as well as a redundant operating system and application licenses. In short, Cloud infrastructure coupled with Disaster Recovery Management software

make business continuity more accessible for agencies and often delivers traditional value at much lower prices.

New Disaster-Recovery-as-a-Service (DRaaS) solutions are augmenting the power of the cloud, enabling businesses to run hybrid production IT systems in their multiple data centers during normal operations, and to spin up exact replica data centers as the need arises. Most importantly, DRaaS can help businesses attain and maintain the kind of agility and resilience that is critical in today's ever- and quickly changing world.

There are many advantages to Disaster-Recovery-as-a-Service, including:

- The ability to move disaster recovery activities and infrastructure from capex to opex.
- The ability to adopt a flexible, pay-as-you-go model
- The ability to quickly and easily scale DR protection as business needs (or outside security influences) dictate
- Regular testing to ensure that the DR plan in place meets immediate organizational needs
- Access to DR expertise and services, allowing businesses to focus on their core competencies

A recent report by research firm TechNavio noted that the DRaaS market is expected to grow at a CAGR of more than 50% through 2019. "Adoption of hybrid cloud disaster recovery services by businesses eliminates the need for a secondary disaster recovery

site, enhances traditional disaster recovery solutions and delivers disaster recovery solutions for remote offices," according to a [BusinessWire story](#) on the report. "Hybrid cloud DRaaS will also help reduce expenses, retain data on premises for fast local recovery and protect physical and virtual operating systems and applications."

DRaaS offers the ability to cut costs with a flexible, pay-as-you-go model, to effectively scale DR protection as needs dictate, to test regularly to ensure your DR plan will work when it's most needed and fulfills your need for an effective and affordable business solution.

As companies in all industries work to balance today's 24/7 business demands with increasing (and increasingly dangerous) security threats, the cloud and disaster recovery as a service are providing real, effective platforms that enable organizations to effectively plan for the worst while they focus on being the best.

About CenturyLink Cloud®

CenturyLink Cloud is the complete platform to manage your entire business-application portfolio from development to business-critical workloads. CenturyLink Cloud offers high-performance, scalable, self-service virtual machines across our global network of data centers, including Hyperscale instances for distributed workloads that require maximum performance. And CenturyLink Cloud provides built-in automation, orchestration, and management tools for an IT-ready and developer-friendly platform that is flexible, scalable, cost effective and highly manageable.

For more information, visit www.centurylinkcloud.com/disaster-recovery

About CenturyLink Business

CenturyLink, Inc. is the third largest telecommunications company in the United States. Headquartered in Monroe, LA, CenturyLink is an S&P 500 company and is included among the Fortune 500 list of America's largest corporations. CenturyLink Business delivers innovative private and public networking and managed services for global businesses on virtual, dedicated and colocation platforms. It is a global leader in data and voice networks, cloud infrastructure and hosted IT solutions for enterprise business customers.

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