

GET YOUR HEAD INTO THE CLOUD!

At One Horn, we were an early adopter of Cloud computing. We started by moving our phone system, a traditional PBX (Private Branch Exchange), from our basement office to a Cloud server way back in 2007. From there we added our fax, email, QuickBooks, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System, and eventually the core database of Stratebo™, our proprietary TMS (Transportation Management System) to our Cloud platform. Our original motivation was to increase our operational efficiency as we were moving to a paperless environment and to give access to our system to our growing agent network. However, one New Year's Eve, we lost power at the office while we were out of state and realized that we had to speed up the process of getting the servers out of the office and into a safe environment.

Everything has been running smoothly for years, but I still often get comments like, "Aren't you scared to lose your data?" or "Isn't it risky that someone will steal it?" Most of the time, the people who make these comments have very little understanding of the risks involved with Cloud computing, yet they shy away from taking advantage of this modern

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technology. So let's delve into the two main fears I hear from those reluctant to adopt Cloud computing and do a reality check.

FEAR OF LOSING YOUR DATA

As a computer engineer, I find it difficult to understand why people would think their data is safer where they can see it. We use Rackspace as a Cloud provider (any of the leading Cloud providers offer similar services), and as you can see from our comparison on page 21, the risks of losing data are far greater when your data is stored on the computer under your desk.

Cloud Computing - A loosely defined term for any system providing access via the Internet to processing power, storage, software or other computing services, often via a web browser. Typically these services will be rented from an external company that hosts and manages them. (definition from Dictionary.com)

FEAR OF SOMEONE STEALING YOUR DATA

So let's ask the question: Who would steal your data?

1) RANDOM INTERNET HACKERS?

This is the one I hear the most often. People see in the news that Target got hacked, so they conclude we can't use the Cloud, because it is too dangerous. Target was a worthwhile "target," because a successful hacker could hope to get millions of credit card numbers which could be resold. What would they steal from you? The names of your customers? Although there might be a market for this, it is not a big one and not an easy one to resell stolen goods.

2) YOUR COMPETITORS?

This assumes that a competitor would hire a hacker to break into your database and steal the data. Although this scenario is a bit far-fetched, the likelihood that your computer under your desk would be better protected from an attack than the Cloud is about 0 percent. Maybe CH Robinson has enough techies around to achieve the kind of security that you would get from Rackspace or Amazon (yes the same company where you buy books is a huge Cloud provider), but I doubt it.

3) YOUR EMPLOYEES?

The risk that an employee steals your customers is a real risk, but it has nothing to do with the Cloud. Actually, if the data is in the Cloud, it removes a lot of ways that an employee could simply copy the database. But

let's be real, if an employee is around your office there are plenty of ways of finding out who your customers are without needing a computer.

IN FAVOR OF THE CLOUD

Cloud computing has enabled us to improve our operational efficiency by reducing the amount of downtime that we used to endure due to server maintenance, power outages and also from being able to access the servers from wherever we are whenever we want.

One thing that most people don't realize is that when you use a Cloud provider, you not only get servers but you get tons of techies always available to help you. Depending upon your needs, it can be free or for a certain fee you can sleep soundly not having to worry about anything. Our offices were in the path of Hurricane Sandy when it hit New Jersey two years ago. We had no power, no phone, no internet for about a week. What was the impact on our business? Zilch. We did get Internet by making hotspots out of our smartphones, but the point is, I have a lot of friends who were out of business for a week or two and are still afraid of the Cloud. To me, it makes no sense, and I hope you can now see why leveraging the Cloud makes a lot of sense. ■



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COMPARING RISK OF DATA LOSS

MY DATA ON THE CLOUD (I USE RACKSPACE)

Nine Internet Providers for redundancy.

Backup systems for power and air conditioning to ensure the computers keep running.

Advanced fire protection, and a fire at any single location wouldn't disrupt access to my data.

Backups on top of backups in different geographic areas of the country. 219 locations for image and document storage with each image saved in more than one location, just in case (CDN-Content Delivery Network).

Keycard protocols for employees and video cameras around the clock.

MY DATA ON THE COMPUTER UNDER MY DESK

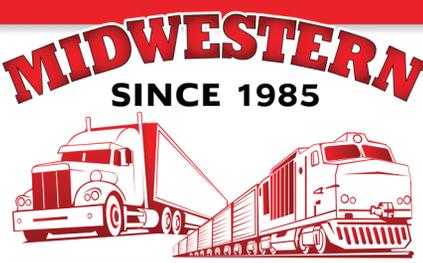
Single Internet provider (if it goes down, I'm out of business).

No backup power system (if power goes out, I'm out of business).

If my office catches fire, I'm out of business, and maybe for good.

If my kids or employees play with the computer and accidentally re-format the disk drive, then I'm out of business.

Low-level standard office security (door locks/basic security system).



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