

Battle of the clouds convenience V's security risks

Eoin Blacklock, managing director, keepITsafe, today stated that the overwhelming problem with “cloud computing” is the lack of awareness as to where customer data is being stored. Customers should always know where it’s stored so they do not break any data protection rules and gain a better understanding of the cloud.

Companies need to ask the following questions of their providers - Is the data stored in multiple datacentres? After hurricane Catriona many organisations all over the world who had hosted services "in the cloud" quickly learned that their data was actually stored in a datacentre in New Orleans which was now underwater.

Just like the clouds in the sky, there are many different types and the fear in the industry is that not all providers will store the data in a secure environment and in multiple locations. With many companies now using applications which are external to their office network it has become much more security focused.

Being able to access your files from anywhere and from any computer is one of the great conveniences of the always-on Internet. Online file storage has been around for quite a while, but the latest generation of services are so cheap and easy to use that there is almost no reason not to back some of your files up into the cloud.

In 2009 many businesses saw their data grow to staggering levels therefore data storage options needed to fit this growing need. Simply put data is multiplying. Not only are businesses faced with future data growth, but saved data is also still of great importance especially in some industries. This is part of the reasoning behind the growing trend towards cloud computing. “The average data volumes being backed up are about 50GB per client, which is, in fact, a ten-fold increase from the 2005 level of 5GB” stated Eoin Blacklock, managing Director, keepITsafe.

So what are the security rules and what should you ask of your cloud computing supplier? It’s a balancing act – Trying to balance risk with the clouds convenience is the ongoing battle with cloud computing.

- Taking responsibility for cloud computing security is a huge area. There is a shared responsibility with your cloud provider for the security of your data; therefore it's essential to conduct a thorough review of your provider's security to ensure good governance, preferably against a proven standard such as ISO 27001. Providers prove their diligence in the area of security with such a standard – ask the question!

- Data Encryption - Many "cloud" providers of hosted email and hosted CRM do not encrypt the users data making it possible for the employees within the hosting company to view the information. This is preventing large corporations from using Cloud services such as hosted email.

- Data Replication - Where is the data being stored and mirrored? Eoin also stresses the importance of data being stored across multiple datacenters, again increasing security and reducing the effects of “natural disasters” on customer data.
- Compliance - Reduce the risk of security breaches by making sure your provider is compliant and has standards of practice.
- Awareness of vulnerabilities – The consumer needs to identify the hosted providers who are trustworthy and those who are not. Look for testimonials, certification, reference sites, and information of where the data is stored. Be informed and this will allow you to make an informed decision.

About keepITsafe

keepITsafe are Ireland's largest online backup provider and the only ISO27001 certified online backup company in Ireland. The company have more than 1,500 clients and 150 partners on their books. The company was formed in 2003 with a passion to eliminate the headache and burden of backup for their customers. The success of the company stems from its fully managed and fully monitored service along with its investment in key infrastructure in two of Irelands leading datacentres – Digiweb and Data Electronics. Working with customers to make sure that their backups are flawless and data can be restored from any location is key to keepITsafe's credibility in the IT space. keepITsafe continue to push the boundaries of backup and to educate business owners in the areas of online backup and the legalities associated with the data protection act. Data loss has detrimental effects on businesses, what keepITsafe can guarantee is that you will never lose a file again by using their solution. <http://www.keepitsafe.ie> or www.onlinebackup.ie