



 eBook

Breaking Free from Hardware Hassles

BREAKING FREE FROM HARDWARE HASSLES

Backup is not a new idea; it is one of those functions that has been around almost forever. But the danger of the familiar is it's easy to take things for granted—to make assumptions or to fall into the, "We've always done it that way," trap. Even technologies as familiar as backup continue moving forward, and if you don't take time to rethink your assumptions periodically, you could miss out on a better, easier, faster, and less expensive way to get the job done. Maybe a better option exists now that wasn't on the table when you bought your current backup product. Maybe some of the things you think you simply have to live with aren't really necessary anymore. Let's look at some assumptions.

ASSUMPTION: YOU NEED AN APPLICATION SERVER TO HOST YOUR BACKUP APPLICATION

While server hardware itself isn't typically onerous, buying a server is only the beginning. It will need an operating system license. It will need ongoing patching and maintenance. It will need power, cooling, and floor or rack space. It can potentially consume your time and add just a little more to your management burden.

REALITY: BACKUP CAN OFTEN BE HANDLED NICELY BY HOSTED, SAAS APPLICATIONS

Backup products offering hosted, web-based management consoles are designed to free you from a whole set of hardware management hassles. The idea is to let someone else pay for the supporting OS. Let someone else patch it, power it, and cool it. Additionally, a hosted, web-based interface is meant to help you easily manage backups and even perform simple recoveries from almost anywhere—even a mobile device. This reduces the need to use VPN to log into the server. Just pull up a browser, log in, and you're ready to go.



But the danger of the familiar is it's easy to take things for granted—to make assumptions or to fall into the, "We've always done it that way," trap.

ASSUMPTION: YOU NEED LOCAL STORAGE DEVICES TO HOLD ALL YOUR BACKUPS

On-premises products do a fair job of putting backups onto local storage devices, but data keeps growing. According to a recent survey, over the next two years, 43% of businesses expect their data storage needs to grow between 1 and 99 terabytes, and 10% will need to increase their data storage by a full petabyte¹. While storage is typically more efficient than in the past, storage costs can vary. One major cost for high-end storage is the proprietary software used to provision and manage it. Beyond the hardware cost, think about how much time you spend in evaluation and purchase cycles for still more storage capacity or replacements when older devices fail. How many hours do you spend each month provisioning and managing storage? Wouldn't it be nice to have some of that time back?

REALITY: DIRECT-TO-CLOUD BACKUP IS DESIGNED TO REDUCE LOCAL STORAGE REQUIREMENTS—SIGNIFICANTLY

You may choose to keep a local copy of some of your most important data, but it should be your choice. By opting for a cloud-first backup solution, you instantly solve part of the famous 3-2-1 backup strategy—where three copies of your data are stored across two media, with one copy located offsite. Your production data plus the version in the cloud are two copies of the recommended three, and one is offsite by default. For your most critical data, you can choose to keep a local backup copy on the media of your choice, and you can meet the full 3-2-1 requirement.

ASSUMPTION: A PROPRIETARY APPLIANCE IS EASY FOR REMOTE OFFICES OR CUSTOMER LOCATIONS

Appliances are often built for simplicity when plugging in and starting up. But if you deal with multiple office locations or customers, you have to physically go there, or else pay shipping and hope the configuration is done correctly. You must consider a suitable place to put it. A poorly ventilated closet under a leaky water pipe isn't ideal, but without expert IT guidance, it might end up there. There is also a cost tradeoff that comes along with the "easy" label. Budgets don't always allow for spending thousands of dollars upfront for a specially branded backup appliance.

What if that branded commodity hardware (for which you may have paid a premium) suffers a mechanical failure? That requires staff time to fix. Even worse, the device won't take backup data while it is down. That's a real risk of appliance-dependent backup products that, many times, people don't often think about until it's too late.

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¹Survey Reveals Tech Trends Reshaping Data Storage," Enterprise Storage. <http://www.enterprisestorageforum.com/storage-management/survey-reveals-tech-trends-reshaping-data-storage.html> (Accessed October 2018).

Finally, sizing your appliance can be problematic. Being forced to choose and commit to buying an appliance, before you know how efficiently that product handles deduplication and compression of your specific data, can result in either underprovisioning (requiring upgrades or replacements too soon) or overprovisioning (spending more money up front than you need). Replacement costs aren't negligible—according to a recent study, 64% of companies are increasing their budget to upgrade old hardware. Tying yourself to an appliance-dependent backup solution can also take away an element of flexibility concerning how much you choose to invest in protecting different types of data with different types of technology.

REALITY: GOING APPLIANCE-FREE CAN MAKE MORE SENSE IN MANY CASES

Historically, appliances were built to help overcome inherent weaknesses in first-generation backup software and network bandwidth limitations when sending backups to a secondary location. Onsite physical appliances with heavy computing power were used to gather and consolidate backups of various devices and send them to the cloud outside business hours, when the impact on the network would be minimal.

But the world has changed. Most backup software today is engineered to be more efficient. Network bandwidth is often better. Some modern backup software uses advanced compression and byte-level deduplication, designed to help you send differential backups directly from each device to the cloud nearly any time, as often as you want, without having to worry about network concerns.

An appliance-free, cloud-first backup solution can help give you flexibility to protect different types of data as you need. Less critical data, with a more forgiving recovery time objective (RTO), can be sent directly to the cloud and stored exclusively there, helping reduce the cost of unnecessary local storage devices or appliances. But cloud-first doesn't have to mean cloud-only. Critical data you need to recover fast after a disaster can be stored locally—using hardware you either already have or can buy inexpensively. This is meant to help allow for fast recovery where you need it, balanced with cost savings where it makes sense.

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ASSUMPTION: BACKUP TO THE CLOUD MAKES THINGS MORE COMPLICATED

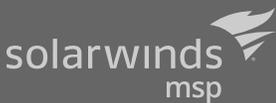
For many traditional backup providers, cloud is a bit of an afterthought. Their entire processes are often built around on-premise data storage, and if you want to add cloud capabilities, you may have to buy a separate license. You'll have to shop for, contract with, and pay a separate cloud storage provider. You'll have to decide whether to go with a local private cloud provider, choose a large public cloud vendor, or set up your own secondary DR location via co-location. It sounds complicated.

REALITY: MODERN, CLOUD-FIRST BACKUP CAN BE SIMPLER THAN WHAT YOU'RE PROBABLY DOING NOW

Data protection products designed for the cloud and sold as a service have several key advantages. First, the pricing is often all-inclusive. The hosted management software and data storage in a private cloud are typically included in a single, predictable price. If things go wrong, you have one vendor to work with (which can decrease finger-pointing discussions between backup and cloud vendors). Second, the hassles of buying, provisioning, maintaining, and upgrading data storage hardware are handled for you. The cloud backup vendor often handles security considerations, such as encryption and physical security, but you still hold the encryption key. Finally, a clean, unified management console can let you see the status of server, workstation, document, and Microsoft® Office 365® backups at a glance—with color-coded charts to immediately see where to click and drill down.

TRY SOLARWINDS BACKUP FREE TODAY

Have you been living with unnecessary backup cost and complexity? Are you interested in exploring other options? [Start a free 30-day trial](#) of SolarWinds® Backup and see for yourself: solarwindsmsp.com/products/backup/trial



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