StorageCraft Recover-Ability Solution

Users maintain control of recovery environment with data protection suite including local and cloud computing and storage resources

James E. Bagley, senior analyst
Deni Connor, founding analyst
Storage Strategies NOW

Data protection is not disaster recovery. Simply having a local copy of backup data may provide some level of security, but in a disaster, that local copy may not be available. Simply having a cloud copy of backup data is an important step for recovery from a disaster, but consider the other issues facing a business trying to operate after a true disaster, like a flood, a fire or a super storm. First, obtaining the basic computing and storage devices to operate after a disaster may take days or even weeks. Once the computer and storage infrastructure is replaced, there is still a time- and labor-consuming period when operating systems and applications need to be installed. This all needs to happen before the backed-up data is of any use to operate the business. This all takes time and often expensive professional services. StorageCraft has been in the data protection and disaster recovery business for many years and has developed a significant portfolio of software products and services which offer the disaster recovery solutions for the very worst-case scenarios. StorageCraft has coined the term "Recover-Ability" to describe this many-faceted functionality.

The solution begins with strong local data protection technology

StorageCraft's flagship product is ShadowProtect 5. Continuously monitoring changes to data and creating recovery point images in real time, back up data is maintained on the designated storage device and is always available for rapid recovery after a storage device or system failure. But what if, say, a server needs to be replaced in its entirety? No problem, because using "VirtualBoot" technology, any local backup image can be turned into a full run-time replacement that can be deployed on a new physical machine or as a virtual machine.

Recovery time can be improved by using "HeadStart Restore" technology to pre-stage a critical system from any backup image. Even the case of dissimilar hardware is addressed by StorageCraft "Hardware Independent Restore" technology, which creates a virtual image which can be deployed onto new hardware or even new virtualization environments.

StorageCraft ImageManager provides access to these technologies through a simple GUI. Whether an organization has its own IT personnel managing the images, or are using a managed service provider for support services, or a combination of the two, the backup images are always accessible in the local environment and can be deployed immediately. IT organizations benefit from the ease of use and rapid access to backup images, and service providers are able to support more users with the same staff.

Operate during and after a disaster

Recognizing that a disaster means that an organization's computing and storage infrastructure is unavailable for a period of time, StorageCraft has developed complete cloud services, which provide a virtual data center option to keep an organization operational during and after a recovery.

Access to the cloud is for management purposes via a secure interface that allows the provisioning of cloud storage for continuous data protection and monitoring of backup images in the cloud. In the case of a local storage problem, backup data can be mounted and browsed for recovery of files and folders by either the end user or service provider. This solves a certain set of typical problems, such as the loss of a storage system or access to data for archive purposes.

The true power of StorageCraft Cloud Services is represented by its "ShadowCloud" technology. With a static IP address reserved in advance, any backup image can be virtualized and operated in the cloud and accessed via a virtual private network (VPN). Included in the StorageCraft service is the ability to operate in this manner for up to thirty days, during which an organization can acquire new infrastructure.

StorageCraft will send a drive with the backup images once the replacement infrastructure is available, using its Bare Metal Recovery (BMR) drive technology for a rapid restoration of services on the replacement infrastructure.

Relocation of a data center can have the same characteristics of a disaster

Any expanding organization knows the pain of outgrowing an existing facility. Even the best-planned movement will have a certain period of service outage. The StorageCraft cloud provides a simple means of avoiding service outages. The data to operate temporarily exists on the cloud and the VPN can provide access to the data from both the new and old facility while the move is in process. This allows new or moved systems to be brought online after they have been fully tested and requires no redundant equipment.

Our Take

The integration of StorageCraft's proven local data protection technologies with its cloud services has created a uniquely capable disaster recovery offering. Ease of operation and rapid access to fully operational applications systems from the cloud allow organizations providing services to small businesses the ability to aggregate storage capacity across its customer base for economies of scale without the need to develop specialized tools or processes.

For IT organizations, ShadowCloud provides flexibilities across a wide range of scenarios including data center movement and new platform integration.

By concentrating on the small to medium organization's needs, StorageCraft has created a solution with use cases that fit a number of requirements. The StorageCraft Recover-Ability solution is unique and should be considered for deployment by organizations and service providers in the SMB market.