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Addressing the Need for Data Security while Moving to the Cloud

Introduction

Cloud-based systems and applications are increasingly popular across enterprises in all industries today. According to the _Flexera 2020 State of the Cloud Report_ – the largest and longest-running survey on the use of cloud infrastructure – 73% of organizations plan to optimize their use of cloud this year, making it the top technology initiative for the fourth year in a row. Fifty nine percent expect cloud usage to exceed prior plans due to COVID-19. In short, enterprises continue to prioritize the cloud as a platform for process innovation and improved organizational performance.

Cloud Security

Until very recently, one major concern about "going to the cloud" focused on data security and compliance demands. Organizations have been hesitant to relinquish control of their most sensitive data. But is an on-prem approach more secure? A growing number of

executives and IT professionals believe that a cloud-based approach may indeed be better. According to a survey conducted by Evolve IP, nearly 73% of IT executives are cloud believers; this is up from only about 50% a few years ago.

Use Case
Liberty Mutual Insurance

Liberty Mutual Insurance is one good example of an organization working to optimize their approach to the cloud. The firm had numerous on-premises content repositories that were tightly coupled to their core business applications. This made it difficult to migrate to the cloud and adapt to a changing infrastructure, especially since the over 40 billion records in play were highly sensitive. For Liberty Mutual, data security and compliance are essential. Working with ASG Technologies' Mobius Content Services as their content management system the firm established a primary content repository on Amazon Web Services. Moving off the mainframe to the cloud has provided Liberty Mutual with much greater control over archival, distribution, access, and integration of all of the content in their company while ensuring the highest levels of data security.

A Hybrid Approach

Despite the compelling possibilities, it is not realistic to assume that organizations will wholly replace their current in-house content repositories overnight in favor of a cloud-only approach. As a result, many organizations are adopting a hybrid approach that leverages the best of both worlds in what could be called a mash-up of on-premises infrastructure, private cloud services and a public cloud.

According to the Flexera report, 93% of enterprises have a multi-cloud strategy and 87% have a hybrid cloud strategy. Cloud-first policies and cloud migration are top of mind for senior IT leaders, particularly in enterprise environments.

The hybrid cloud has proven to be especially valuable as organizations have had to adapt nearly overnight to a work-at-home movement. The advantage is that it allows data and content to move between private repositories and public clouds in a more flexible way as business needs and workflows change, ultimately giving the organization greater flexibility and more options for content deployment and use. Organizations that deploy a hybrid model have a lower total cost of ownership than their counterparts that operate in an all-cloud environment. It eliminates the need for massive infrastructural requirements as it is based on a pay-as-you-need model.

Three Best Practices & Approaches to Embrace

How should you move forward? When operating in a hybrid cloud environment it becomes even more important to have a strong records management foundation to provide the basis for your efforts. Here are three approaches to factor into your plans.

1 Evaluate the Data You Have

Before you do anything, it is important to evaluate the data you have currently, where it is located and what risk/value it represents to the organization. From there, what can be eliminated? Then, what is the plan for the data you must retain? How long must you keep it, where, and why?

2 Prioritize Migrations and Retention Based on Your Assessment

With an assessment in hand you are in a position to make better decisions about your records management approach. Can you move this information to the cloud, or does it have some sort of requirement that compels you to keep it onsite? How long should you keep it? What do you do when the information has completed its lifecycle?

3 Ensure Flexibility in Your Approach

As we've seen recently, business and technology conditions can change rapidly. Be sure you attain the kind of flexibility you need to respond quickly and with ease. Don't get locked into systems and providers that take ownership of your data or make it difficult to move your data to the cloud, back on site and so forth.

Moving Forward

Organizations that benefit from the cloud will be the ones who are successful adopting a hybrid approach. According to IDC, by 2022, 70% of enterprises will integrate cloud management by deploying unified hybrid/multicloud management technologies, tools and processes. Keys to success include using thoughtful strategies that bring together the business needs of the organization along with the technological transformations that need to take place. As organizations continue to rethink business models, staffing and processes, a hybrid cloud approach becomes an attractive option for process innovation and improvements, while ensuring data security and compliance. Look for providers and partners with the right mix of expertise, capability and vision that allow you to realize the cost savings and flexibility of leveraging the Cloud where and when it makes sense for your enterprise content.

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