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## A Farewell to Storage



Issues around security also can lead multinational corporations to consider managed-storage services. Multinational corporations tend to have more data traveling over wide-area networks, with more people in more locations accessing the data. That can cause concern about who has rights and access to specific information, which leads to concern about what data is encrypted, how it's encrypted and who manages the encryption keys. Companies certainly can encrypt the data themselves, but managed-storage providers offering remote backup services have the ability to automatically encrypt data as it is moves to the storage environment, removing yet another burden from the customer.

But perhaps the biggest driver of all is the need to ensure business continuity and disaster recovery — something that is exacerbated in companies with operations in many locations around the world. If a huge natural disaster occurs in a country where a multinational corporation has a major data center, it could affect their operations elsewhere — or even shut down operations entirely.

That's the reason why companies like P&G have enlisted the help of managed-storage service providers — in this case, HP — to handle their IT infrastructure. In the case of P&G, HP manages the IT infrastructure for business processes occurring in many different countries spanning different continents. If a disaster should take out any of the data centers HP manages for P&G, the company is protected because of failover capabilities built into the managed-services infrastructure.

"Business continuity and disaster recovery were the primary factors that tipped the scales in favor of outsourcing Reichhold's SAP-based storage, notes Christophe Petit," Global IT Manager, Reichhold, Dijon, France. "What really drove the decision was a big storm that occurred in North Carolina some years ago, where we were running out of power and in a situation where our entire company could go down because our corporate headquarters wasn't capable of providing the power to supply our SAP servers, which houses critical data," he says. "That factor, combined with other needs like the amount of data we had to keep track of and store, led us to the decision of finding a partner that would be able to provide support and services at any time, in a location that was safe."

### WHERE THE ACTION IS

To ensure fast response time to storage-related emergencies, it's critical for managed-storage service providers to maintain a presence in the countries where their multinational customers have storage infrastructure. In many cases, that means maintaining not only a 24x7 helpdesk, but 24x7 dispatchable technical personnel.

"They expect you to be agile with them as they are merging, consolidating and performing other activities unique to multinational corporations," says Tim Bowers, Storage Product Manager, EDS. "That means if they have a presence in a particular city, for the most part, so do you."

"Although it's impossible for any managed-storage service provider to have a physical presence in every location in which a customer might need data, if the deal is big enough, a company should make sure that personnel are located close enough to be able to respond in an appropriate time frame," says Dave Uhlir, Senior Director, Management Services, Sun Microsystems.

That's definitely true in cases where storage-delivery strategy essentially takes over managing a client's existing storage infrastructure, but the situation isn't as clear-cut when the offering involves centrally managed storage — an offering that involves moving more of the storage management to a centrally located facility run by the managed-storage service provider," notes Mary Ellen Dowd, ITS Global Offering Manager for managed-storage services, IBM Global Services.

"The skills and presence you need in each country is very dependent on what your delivery strategy and architecture is," she says. "If a local service provider's team takes over management of what a company already has in Germany, for example, that demands a much broader global presence in terms of the types of skills you have in each country where you are deployed. But with a centrally managed-services offering, such as one in which [a managed-storage service provider] remotely manages, monitors and reports on storage across the globe, the majority of the work is done from one delivery site."

The centrally managed storage paradigm, however, doesn't mean that the managed-storage service provider shouldn't maintain some presence in the country. "If a [storage] box is sitting in a country, you have to have a mature support infrastructure in place in case that box goes down," says Dowd.

— Karen D. Schwartz

### Not a Slam-dunk

Although there are many compelling reasons for outsourcing, all or part of a multinational corporation's storage infrastructure, there can be mitigating factors.

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