GovSense

Stay Calm! Cloud Software Strengthens Your Business Continuity Plan —
The Cloud does the work for you so you don't have to feel like you're in a Hollywood disaster film

Every government organization needs a Business Continuity Plan that includes the steps needed to recover from a disaster that significantly impedes your ability to continue the work of your jurisdiction. We often think of this need as a modern extension of the digital world, but when you think about it, jurisdictions have always required such a plan, even before computers were invented and we entered the Information Age. Storms have always occurred, floods, fires, wars, transportation disruptions, economic collapses, the list can go on and on.

It's just that today, when a laptop "crashes" we feel as though the world has come to an end if our data was not properly backed up. Multiply this panic one hundred-fold if an entire community's network goes down, with no adequate process in place to get up and running fast without loss of critical information. It truly can be a disaster because your constituents' livelihoods are at stake and the damage to the community may be irreparable. But let's look at these situations a bit differently.

What's Really Important?

It seems that almost every article, blog or white paper written about the issue of maintaining business continuity in the aftermath of a catastrophic event reads like the latest summer blockbuster disaster movie script. Prepare now for the asteroid hitting the Earth! Get ready for the tsunami that sweeps over the entire North American continent! And don't forget to protect your jurisdiction from the zombie apocalypse! Not that these movies aren't entertaining, but we want to take a less dramatic approach.

A disaster serious enough to halt your day-to-day operations is not to be taken lightly and can be anything from a devasting tornado to a twelve-hour power outage to a cyber-attack to even losing a key employee with unique knowledge. We all need to plan for these worst-case scenarios, but **the best Business Continuity Plans we've seen all include reliance on cloud computing to take care of the worries about your critical data.**

This cloud approach is powerful and effective because what we believe is that, during a disaster, people should be able to focus on the most important things . . . their families, pets, homes, communities and fellow citizens. If an operational worry can be eliminated, then that is a great asset to have.

Calm Heads Will Prevail

If you haven't already developed a Business Continuity Plan for your jurisdiction, there are some helpful tips at www.ready.gov/business, the official website of the Department of Homeland Security. Having a documented plan, that includes the steps your IT team needs to take to recover data, will ensure a more calm, organized and level-headed approach to getting your jurisdiction functioning again quickly. You want to make sure you are able to continue servicing your constituents with as little interruption as possible.

Invest in people, not infrastructure.

While there are many areas that need attention during adverse conditions – such as building accessibility, electricity availability, potable water and the like - cloud computing presents opportunities for systems resiliency safeguards that few local government jurisdictions can afford.

Cloud-based software systems that run every aspect of your organization remove a great deal of the drama from disaster scenarios and afford your IT team the precious time and resources they need to focus on making sure you have internet access. Along with a back-up electrical source, like a generator, to keep devices charged, that's really all you need. If you have internet access, even through any mobile device, then you can access your cloud-based systems to keep your services going for your citizens and to provide employees with needed services, like payroll processing and emergency communications. And you can do that from anywhere, so if you're able to safely travel to an unaffected location, you can keep functioning and avoid interfering with internet and utility services needed by emergency personnel and facilities in devastated areas.

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This is a primary reason that local governments need to ditch old, out-dated on-premise systems that require all the back-ups, redundancies and recovery actions to be managed by your in-house IT team. And, while internet access is also at risk during disasters, it is usually addressed as rapidly as possible since so many early responders and citizens are dependent on it. This is an important question to ask your internet service provider: What is your disaster recovery plan and how does it help ensure minimal disruption to my jurisdiction?

Ask important questions like these NOW and include the process in your continuity plan because being prepared is what it's all about. When the need strikes, your teams will be able to use that plan proactively to everyone's advantage.

How The Cloud Does the Work For You

Cloud-based computing gives you best-in-class, data center security systems at a level no local jurisdiction alone can afford. All production data is stored immediately to redundant locations. "Hot backups" can restore your data rapidly and reliably. Extensive disaster recovery documents ensure crisis management is handled promptly and without fanfare.

Let's look at a few of the specifics of how the GovSense software solution provides enterprise-class data management, security and availability that helps ensure your jurisdiction is resilient to disasters. GovSense provides the cloud infrastructure to ensure you can run all your necessary applications in the cloud with complete confidence.

Application Security – Advanced functionality secures the application including role-based access, strong encryption, robust password policies and more.

Operational Security – Stringent round-the-clock monitoring tools, controls and policies and a dedicated tenured security team ensure the strongest security for customers.

Data Management – Data management policies and infrastructure provide you with the peace of mind of knowing that your data is completely replicated, backed up and available whenever you need it. You enjoy reduced risk with enterprise-class data management processes and policies. Multiple levels of redundancy ensure you get continuous access to your data, and replication and synchronization across data centers provide you with the utmost disaster recovery confidence.

Availability – GovSense's redundant infrastructure enables it to provide world-class uptime, including during upgrades, averaging 99.96%.

Once Is One Time Too Many

It takes just one time of not being prepared for a disaster to wipe out most of what your jurisdiction has worked so hard to achieve. Your critical services will be impacted, your constituents will suffer and you'll have a ton of extra expenses for which you did not budget. Don't let that scenario play out once, much less make a repeat appearance.

Along with developing a thorough Business Continuity Plan that helps you quickly get back to normal, make sure your software systems are all running in the Cloud. You literally can not afford to be caught without a plan and systems that enable you to be resilient through any type of catastrophe because your lack of preparation will be noticed and felt by your constituents.