

How to help secure and manage your information infrastructure

Speakers: Tim Willeford, Media Relations Lead – GTS Service Product Lines and Communications; Brian Reagan, Director, Global Strategy and Portfolio Management – BCRS/Information Protection Services

Tim Willeford:

Welcome to this IBM podcast series focused on how to optimize your technology infrastructure; I'm Tim Willeford from IBM. Through this series, we'll cover topics that help lower IT complexity and improve operating efficiency along with tips and advice on using technology and services to help you and your company succeed. Today I'm joined by Brian Reagan on our Business Continuity and Resiliency Services (BCRS) team to talk about ways to better secure and manage the information and data that many companies are currently wrestling with.

Brian we're hearing a lot about the explosion of information and how companies are accumulating and using more and more data and information to their competitive advantage. And the flip side of this, we also hear about highly publicized data breaches or data losses regarding sensitive information at some companies. So how can a CIO or IT manager address these issues; how can they effectively protect or ensure the resilience of data that is vital to their success and loyal to their clients?

Brian Reagan:

That's a great question Tim and I think perhaps the most important thing to do is make sure that they understand and have aligned the levels of protections to the business value of the data that they're trying to protect. Not all data is created equal and not all data has the same impact on a business if it's lost. So understanding and aligning protection is certainly a first step; and by alignment I mean determining the number and frequency of copies of that data that need to be made and also the distance requirements of those copies, should the data be made locally available or should there also be a remote replica made. And security whether the data is local or remote from an encryption standpoint, is absolutely paramount; making sure that that data is encrypted both in-flight, for instance from point A to point B as well as at rest.

Tim:

So how can a company that is wrestling with this issue get started; what would you recommend that they do first?

Brian:

Well first they have to know their data, they need to know what it is, where it is and that's actually becoming even more critical these days, the location of data. They need to know how many copies of it exist today, how many copies of it they need; back to that alignment issue, if they know that something is mission critical perhaps their policy recommends having 3 or 4 or even 5 copies of that data in different places and they want to make sure that they also have determined the business value of losing any elements of data. So that way they can come up with the corresponding economic model for protecting it. And BCRS and other parts of IBM

Global Services, we would certainly recommend the discovery or an assessment service to really provide a non-disruptive means of understanding both the location criticality and also the protection dimensions of their data.

Tim:

Are the solutions the same for mid-size company in a large enterprise or do they need to think differently about this topic?

Brian:

Well it's a yes and no answer Tim; certainly the scale of the environment is going to differ in a small or mid-size company versus an extremely large enterprise; the number of locations or data centers, the number of devices or servers or PCs, and even the number of people that are supporting that environment is probably going to be very different. And IBM has certainly developed Express offerings that are purpose-built to really serve those mid-market customers who might have a less complex or a smaller environment from a number of device standpoints.

But ultimately the criticality of data to business, back to your first point and the importance of holistic protections and resiliency is the same regardless of the size of the company. In BCRS, basically our service levels around availability of data, the recoverability and performance are going to be very similar regardless of whether it's a 500 person company or a global Fortune 10 company. And in general, the larger and more diverse the environment, the more tailored a solution might be, but certainly in BCRS and IBM in general is going to treat the criticality of data the same regardless of the size of the customer.

Tim:

So how is IBM different from its competitors in that space, can other companies provide what IBM has as well?

Brian:

Well it's important to remember that IBM has been delivering business continuity solutions for over 40 years now, in fact we are the only provider with 154 security-rich resiliency centers around the globe. Last year alone, we managed over 24 petabytes of our customer's data; and over those years, we have 100% success rate in client recoveries. So though there are companies who offer point services that might be competitive with one element or several elements inside of our portfolio, none can match the scale, the geographic scope, the offering breadth and certainly the history that IBM business continuity resilience in-service brings to the market.

Tim:

Can you help us understand what we mean by "information infrastructure" and IBM's new initiative around that?

Brian:

Well it does come back to your first point which is that information is absolutely exploding inside the enterprise today. Every customer that we talk to will quote numbers anywhere from 70% year over year growth to well over 200% year over year growth of information inside their business; and information just becomes more and more critical to fueling business innovation

and growth. Companies today live on information and certainly in a 24 X 7 X 365 world of global commerce that we all live within; information availability has become the table stakes to how they're doing business. And unfortunately in many companies, siloed infrastructures, the physical and compute infrastructures that support all of this information has been a gate to enabling sort of next generation innovations and the ability to extend your value chain outside of your four walls. I think with IBM's new initiative around the topic is all about is breaking down those silos and not having the infrastructures that support the information and the ultimate growth for your business be a limiting factor but instead be enabler to business growth, business innovation around information.

Tim:

So Brian, where can our listeners go for more information?

Brian:

Tim I would encourage our listeners to visit ibm.com/services/continuity where we have a wealth of information and also information tools to help our clients assess where they are and also what services might be right for them.

Tim:

Okay, Brian Reagan thank you; for IBM this is Tim Willeford.