

## Blog Post

# Ensuring insurance; don't make business continuity an afterthought

Ask any security consultant or a CISO who's worked for a blue chip – when it comes to a natural catastrophe, software failure or malware attack taking your systems offline it's not a matter of if, but when.

### Executive summary

As the sector that secures business continuity for every other commercial sector, insurance need to practice what it preaches at all times when it comes to cybersecurity.

### Client:

Zeno Group

### Content type:

Blog post

### Brief:

To ghost write a blog post by a technology executive about how the insurance industry must be particularly prepared to ensure business continuity.

### Deliverable:

A written piece of no fixed word count on the technologies and techniques the insurance industry needs to think about to ensure constant uptime.

**Among the many customers** I'm lucky to talk to every day, many are from the insurance industry, and a lot of them are worried... and with good reason.

Constant uptime and immediate response and satisfaction aren't just value adds nowadays, they're the baseline of what insurance customers expect, which means business continuity should be baked into your business plan. If it isn't, do a disaster recovery (DR) plan now.

In the old mainframe or even co-location days when every company was a digital island, a few hours off air was – while not acceptable – not a crisis. Nowadays, as insurance giant Swiss Re noted in its 2016 Sonar [report](#), 'If a huge data storage provider such as Amazon Web Services is disabled for 24 hours, it is going to cause business interruption for countless sub-providers and their clients', and we're talking about a lot of clients. As the Dyn attack of October last year [showed](#), it makes big waves when large portions of the web go down.

In fact, Swiss Re named cloud computing among the top six emerging risks with high potential impacts, among infectious diseases and the rise of the gig economy.

Insurance research and consulting firm Novarica agreed, deciding that core systems upgrades, IT operations and infrastructure transformation were among the top three IT priorities for insurance companies this year.

Margins in the insurance and brokerage industries are falling, but customers want ever-faster results at their fingertips, meaning the insurance industry has to do more with less.

Cloud computing has been that white knight for a lot of large organisations like insurance companies, but backups and DR are often an afterthought. Many legacy backup solutions don't play nice with cloud systems, and when it might take hours or even days to repopulate data, the damage to your brand – to say nothing of lost income – can be incalculable.

That said, many of us have made big investment in infrastructure and software, and throwing it all out to start from scratch won't be looked favourably on by either your IT manager or the board. Backup and DR needs to plug seamlessly into existing systems like SAP or VMWare, and while it might be short work for an expert, you're probably not in the business of cajoling disparate systems to coexist peacefully.

You need a partner who lives and breathes that stuff, and the solution facing you needs not only to be easy to deploy and use, it needs to show you a consistent face. That can be as simple as familiar behaviours and interfaces, and as complicated (at the backend, at least – it should still be user friendly at the customer end) as plain English reporting.

And if you're in any doubt because there's a cost, learning curve or culture change involved, some brave souls have gone before you and the proof is in the pudding. In some cases maintenance overheads have fallen by as much as 75 percent.



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But it's about more than your bottom line; it can improve your own market position. What can be more reassuring to your customers than being able to promise them guaranteed uptime because that's what you're getting?

The winds of change and uncertainty are everywhere – in our political systems, environment and business culture. There's going to be an even greater need for the insurance industry in the years to come, and your customers are going to look to you for some rare, highly appreciated stability. Don't make plugging bad backup systems into modern delivery systems just another element of risk. ■