

The Silver Lining

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Recovery is Everything®



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JULY 2013

The Silver

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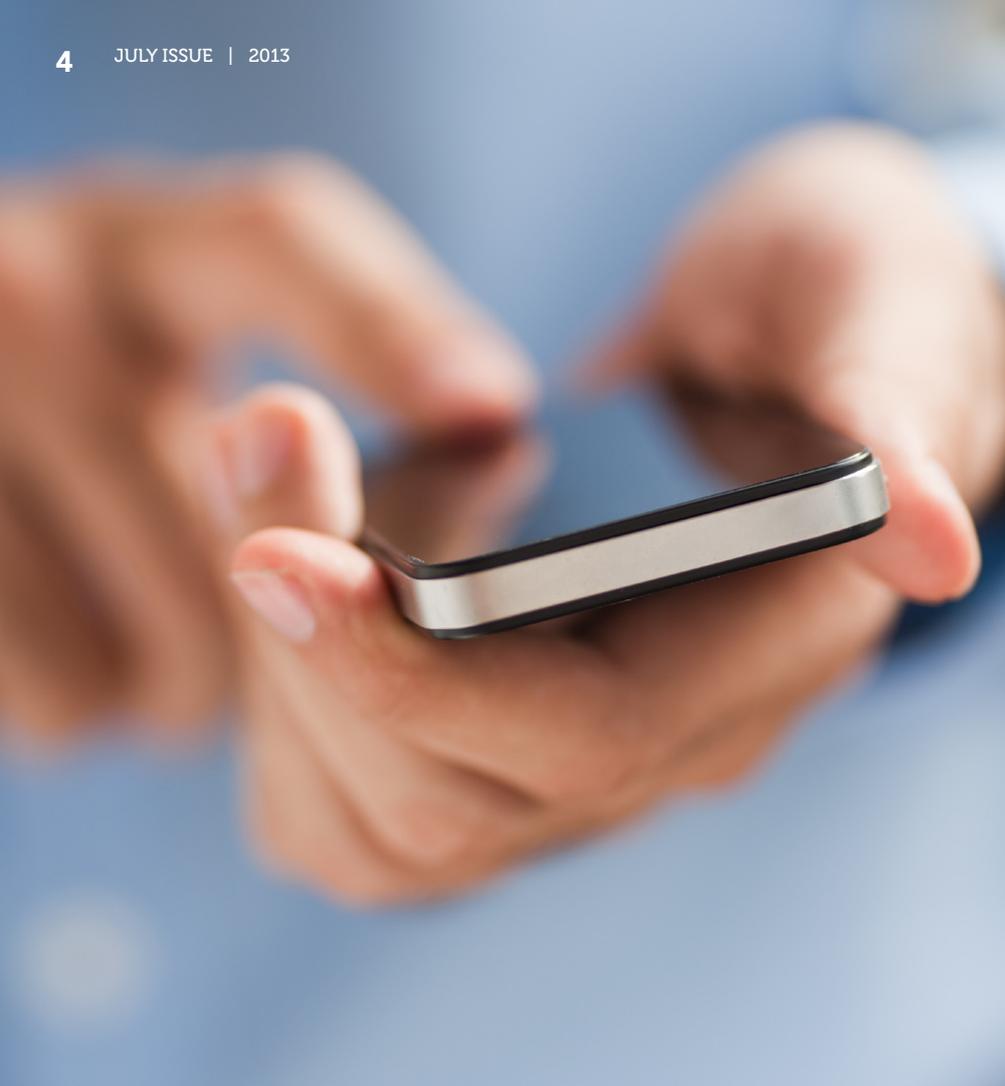
Recovery is Everything[®]



Linixing

Written by Dave Côté

For a business, keeping critical systems such as databases up and running is of key importance. Without access to data, functioning is nearly impossible and global organizations simply can't afford any downtime...



Having a backup solution must include a rapid and reliable method of both recovering and restoring data.

A cloud backup and recovery system can instantly restore data regardless of one's location.

Toronto based Asigra has been hard at work for the past twenty-seven years making it possible to protect customers' data. It all began when the company founder, David Farajun, was working on a programmable logical controller language in 1985. His hard drive died and all his work up to that point was lost. As Eran Farajun, son of the founder and the current Executive Vice President of Asigra, explains, "Then he went around to ask other tinkerers and programmers and asked them what they do when they lose their data, if their hard drive goes ka-put. At that time, the consensus was that they would remake the data."

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advice from our **Technology, Privacy and Data Management Group**



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LISA R. LIFSHITZ

Lisa R. Lifshitz has been helping Asigra develop their legal agreements, negotiate critical channel partner arrangements and protect/commercialize the Company's intellectual property since 2001. "With a proven track record of more than 20 years in the back-up restore and recovery (BURR) business, Asigra remains an incredibly innovative company that can anticipate the needs of the market", says Lifshitz. "Having accessible, understandable but effective legal documentation makes for an easier contracting process". Lifshitz will be speaking at Asigra's upcoming partner conference in July on what keeps prospective BURR clients considering the cloud up at night and how Asigra can meet their needs.

As Eran says, “The entrepreneurial light bulb went on over his head at that moment, and the data loss that was responsible for ending his previous company would be the reason for the birth of Asigra.” David then developed technology to back up data over telephone lines to a secure location and established Asigra to meet this need in the market. The company name comes from the Spanish word ‘asegurar’, suitably meaning ‘assure’.

This new company delivered a service that would make it possible for others to recover their data if their systems crashed. By the late eighties, after some time hosting the files himself, David realised that for the business to grow past thirty customers, he would need to work alongside larger companies with known and reputable names as very few companies wanted to trust their data to his then-unknown startup.

David then sold Asigra’s software to other computer service providers that had existing relationships with the companies needing to back up data. “It turns out that those guys were called the systems integrators, or service bureaus,” Eran explains. “These were the guys that put the plumbing of the local area networks together – even before TCP IP ended up ruling the world.”

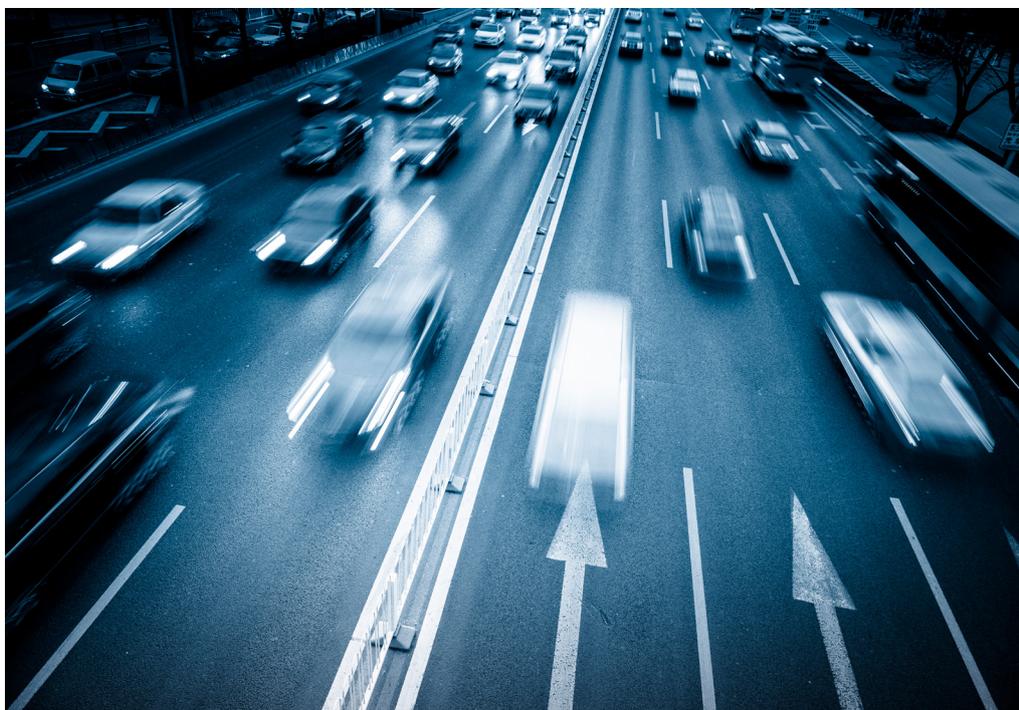
David formed partnerships with the systems integrators to distribute the software. His task at this point was simple: he would have to get people to buy a system backup as a service. Back then, tape media was the default method of data backup, which was fine because the data was small, a few tapes would be fine for any customer. As the data grew, however, that type of media became more than a little impractical. “Tape moved from being the solution to becoming a problem, there were too many tapes.”

With the advent of the internet, tapes soon became more or less obsolete and managed services came along. Asigra

now develops Asigra Cloud Backup™ which is an enterprise cloud backup and recovery software platform.

“Having databases located on a cloud outside the network ensures that valuable data is accessible yet not at risk from loss, disaster or theft.”

But, what is cloud computing? Everyone’s heard the term and it’s tremendously popular as a marketing buzzword. Though it has no specific accepted definition, it has come to mean services or data which are hosted outside a company’s network at a remote location and are accessed via the internet. Cloud computing can permit employees, working from any location, to access their work data or applications. ▶▶





“Laptop portability is convenient, but that very portability presents a challenge in data protection.”

- ▶ Asigra’s cloud backup software is sold to managed service providers and telecommunications companies who then use it to run cloud backup and recovery services for businesses of all sizes. Having databases located on a cloud outside the network also ensures that valuable data is accessible yet not at risk from loss, disaster or theft.

Laptop portability is convenient, but that very portability presents a challenge in data protection. Last autumn, a NASA laptop was stolen containing the personal data of “at least” ten thousand NASA employees and contractors, and sadly this is no isolated incident.

The Ponemon Institute (a group which conducts independent research on data

protection, information security policy and privacy) released a study examining the effects of stolen or lost laptops and found that, of the 329 companies that participated in the study, 86 455 laptops went missing or were stolen within a twelve month period. As more employees are going about with critical data on laptops, tablets and even cell phones, more companies are realizing the potential for data loss so the demand for cloud services grows.

This growth in cloud computing, and particularly the demand for online backup, has spurred demand for Asigra’s software. The company’s products make it easy to backup data to any cloud provider with simple agentless software so a lost or damaged device no longer means lost data.

Traditionally, a backup service would need some sort of agent installed on every part of the system in order to work. Agents are bits of software code that work in conjunction with network management software to collect information from managed devices in the network. The data would then be collected at a specific time and uploaded to a server or cloud.

“More companies are realizing the potential for data loss so the demand for cloud services grows.”

Agents, however, have a number of potential problems. They can cause a loss of both machine performance and security when machines become overloaded with multiple versions and every update creates potential for conflicts among different applications. Installing, configuring and updating vast numbers of agents across desktops and servers also means people in IT departments must physically deal with each machine. Problem diagnosis takes longer, draining resources. Vulnerabilities are created, as a port in the firewall must be opened for every agent.

Agentless architecture eliminates a major security hazard as it does not require an open port. Only having one piece of software to install, manage and diagnose makes Asigra Cloud Backup a less resource-intensive platform. Its DS-Client software is installed on one server at each site to capture data from the machines requiring backup. A backup



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schedule is selected and the captured data is saved automatically. The data is then compressed and decrypted for security before being transmitted to the cloud where the DS-System aggregates and maintains the online storage in a secure offsite hosting facility.

Unlike other systems that copy an entire file that has been updated since the previous backup, Asigra’s software detects the blocks of data within the file that need to be updated and only copies those. This, combined with the compression, reduces the amount of data that must be transmitted.

“We didn’t do it to be flashy, the less touching I have to do at the end customer’s the more profitable I’m going to be,” said Eran Farajun of the agentless software. The software even upgrades itself, resulting in reduced operating and administrative costs as well as freeing up

IT resources.

The encryption used by the company is the first cloud backup and recovery software platform that carries the National Institute of Standards and Technology approved Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) 140-2 cryptography certification. The designation indicates that the encryption meets the stringent compliance requirements essential for government, financial services or health-care data.

Asigra doesn’t provide backup services directly or operate any data storage vaults of its own. The company continues to focus on selling its software to and through service providers and brokers. As a result, companies using the software may not even recognize the Asigra name but that certainly doesn’t mean it has gone unnoticed.

Asigra has won a number of awards,

“Asigra’s software detects the blocks of data within the file that need to be updated and only copies those.”

most recently including the prestigious technology award - Red Herring 2013 Top 100 North America. As well, it has scooped the Storage Magazine Gold “Product of the Year” in the Enterprise backup category and the 2012 North American New Product Innovation Award in Cloud-Based Data Management from business consulting firm Frost&Sullivan among many others.

Asigra Cloud Backup now provides a single, integrated approach to data protection for close to a 1,000,000 sites across the globe and is the first cloud backup platform to protect the entire digital footprint of a company from servers to smartphones. ■



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