

High Availability Prevents Business Losses from Hurricanes



June 1st marked the official beginning of hurricane season. While forecasters project an average season, it takes just one ferocious storm to wreak havoc on coastal businesses. As you test your generators and gather emergency supplies, be sure to also implement a high availability strategy to ensure business continuity when the winds blow, and the waters rise.

Chances are your business has developed a critical online presence. Customers expect 24/7 access to ecommerce and crucial data. Remote access employees depend on the ability to log in to complete essential work and meet deadlines. In many cases, even just a few hours of downtime can result in lost sales and a damaged business reputation.

High Availability vs. Disaster Recovery

It is imperative that you develop a sound disaster recovery plan to restore critical systems in the event of disaster. However, sometimes disaster recovery falls short. Certain business critical operations tolerate a downtime of only seconds, rather than hours or even days.

With all the technology available to us, the market has developed a low tolerance for downtime. While hurricane winds and floodwaters threaten your server room, your customers 2000 miles away in the desert expect to be able to conduct business as usual. In fact, the industry standard is 99.999% availability. That allows for just 26.3 seconds downtime per month.



Automatic Failover for Business Continuity

Automatic failover is a key component of business continuity for businesses with an online presence (just about every business these days). With automatic failover, critical data and processes are continuously replicated to a standby server, ideally located in another region of the country. If the system detects an interruption in service, operations automatically “fail over” to the secondary system with little or no delay.

As you design your business continuity plan, keep in mind a couple of key questions to determine if automatic failover would be good investment:

- 1) How long can your website be down? Consider any service level agreements (SLAs) you have with customers. Also consider the amount of revenue lost with a few minutes or hours of downtime in a highly competitive marketplace.
- 2) How much data can you afford to lose? Can you give up one minute of data, one hour, none? Consider safety concerns and legal requirements.

The answers to those questions will inform your high availability strategy. Real-time data replication takes bandwidth and implementing an automatic failover system can be complex.

Fortunately, competent cloud services providers offer technology to simplify the process. An offsite replication and [automatic failover solution](#) based on Microsoft’s Azure Site Recovery, for example, provides a cost-effective and flexible option. A reputable managed services provider with a strong business continuity practice can guide you through implementing a [cloud failover solution](#) specifically designed to meet your high availability needs.

Web Hosting for Peace of Mind

Alternatively, a [web hosting service](#) can shoulder the burden of insuring web site availability even during a natural disaster. A quality web hosting provider will provide industry-standard security and guaranteed uptime regardless of the weather back at the home office. Keep in mind, however, that back-end business applications that are not hosted will be unavailable when the storm hits.



Don't Let a Hurricane Blow Your Business Away

If you plan carefully, natural disasters should not prove disastrous for your business, particularly in today's cloud-based environment. No system guarantees perfection. However, a high availability strategy ensures that you and your customers can access critical systems with little or no interruption, even in a Category 5 hurricane.

eMazzanti is uniquely poised to provide the assistance you need. Founded in New Jersey less than two weeks before 9/11, the company cut its teeth keeping customers running in the midst of disaster. For the past seventeen years, eMazzanti has continued to provide an array of [customized cloud, IT and network solutions](#) to businesses around the world.

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