

Backup in the Age of File Sync and Share Services

With the growing popularity of the BYOD trend, many organizations are implementing enterprise file sync and share solutions (EFSS) to provide flexibility, reduce IT costs, and increase employee productivity and collaboration.

While the BYOD trend brings significant benefits for both employees and organizations, IT teams still need to make sure their company's corporate data is fully protected.

TRouBLING TREND: USING EFSS AS BACKUP

Surprisingly, many organizations use EFSS solutions as a replacement for backup services. Some organizations adopt EFSS solutions to replace endpoint device backup. Others use cloud EFSS solutions to replace traditional on-premise file servers and eliminate the associated backup costs.

LIMITATIONS OF EFSS SOLUTIONS

In general, EFSS solutions can be effective for user self-service restores of accidental deletions, based on version history and recycle bins, but they are not secure enough to recover from malicious attacks.

Using EFSS solutions as a replacement for backup offers limited capabilities, especially when it comes to security and immutability. The real-time sync capability of EFSS solutions can easily lead to malware infections and file corruption, and if a given file gets deleted or corrupted, it will be automatically reflected in the secondary copy of the file. In addition, employees may create and store

content outside of the EFSS tool, resulting in data protection gaps.

RECYCLE BIN AND FILE VERSIONS AS BACKUP MECHANISM: SECURITY ISSUES

Another issue with the file sync and share solution is the use of the recycle bin as a backup mechanism to protect data. Since employees can easily access their recycle bins, organizations have little control over permanent file deletion and version history. If an active file is permanently deleted, its older versions will be deleted as well, eliminating all the versions that could have served as recovery points.

Another common perception is that file archives can be used as a substitute for backup. But since archived files are inherently old and likely outdated, they cannot serve as an effective recent recovery point for an active file.

LENGTHY RECOVERY PERIODS

To fight off malicious attacks, some EFSS solution vendors offer assisted recovery, but this process is often extremely slow and involves long recovery periods, since the majority of the solutions do not have a consistent recovery point across diverse folders, users, and devices.

DEDICATED BACKUP IS ESSENTIAL FOR RELIABLE CYBER PROTECTION

Companies relying on cloud EFSS solutions without additional backup need to implement further measures to ensure security and compliance. These include more frequent recovery points of the EFSS database, multi-folder sync, IT control over employees' recycle bins, as well as immutable daily recovery points of all user data.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, EFSS solutions increase employee productivity, facilitate BYOD, and increase collaboration. Backup, on the other hand, is intended to protect data, enable fast restores, and ensure files are always available when needed.

To ensure complete protection of corporate data and stay CyberFit, organizations must invest in additional backup solutions. Using both backup and an EFSS solution will empower employees, while allowing IT teams to maintain complete control over critical business data.

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Reference:

Rinnen, P. and Basso, M. "Debunking the Myth of Using EFSS for Backup." Gartner. June 26, 2019"

