

Colocation's Role in Disaster Planning - IO



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An IT continuity strategy is the world's cheapest insurance policy. Having a comprehensive plan that you can turn to in the aftermath of a major calamity—such as a fire, flood or earthquake—is essential to getting your business back on its feet as quickly and painlessly as possible.

Colocation should be at the heart of your IT continuity strategy. Here's why:

Quick, Reliable, Affordable Disaster Recovery

When a widespread disaster strikes, such as a hurricane or earthquake, electricity and carrier connections are usually among the first casualties. Losing both power and communications can knock a data center out of commission for hours, days or even weeks. Since outages often cover a wide geographical area, they can even impact businesses that managed to escape the disaster with their data centers more or less intact.

To keep your business' vital IT operations online regardless of external conditions, it's vital to line up a colocation facility—preferably one in a place that's relatively immune to natural calamities (such as Phoenix)—well in advance of a disaster's arrival. Such a facility, featuring both power redundancy and access to multiple telecommunications carriers, allows organizations to continue their everyday IT activities while surrounding businesses are still struggling to rebuild their data centers and connectivity.

Besides multiple operational benefits, there's also a strong financial incentive to using colocation as a disaster recovery tactic. Positioning critical systems at a leased remote site allows you to avoid the capital costs associated with designing and building your own hardened and service-redundant data center. There's also the added benefit of having seamless space and resources scalability to accommodate inevitable business growth and change.

Multiple Options

Businesses currently using colocation to save money and boost data center performance and reliability already have their IT continuity strategy in place.

On the other hand, businesses that still operate their own on-premises data centers can approach colocation-based continuity in three different ways:

Cold site. This is basically a reserved colocation cage, suite or other type of space that will allow you to move in your equipment and resume operations immediately after a disaster. This bare bones approach is the least expensive option, but provides no remote backup capabilities and may require up to several days of hard installation work before systems can be placed online.

Warm site. This next step up features a colocation space that has basic communications equipment pre-installed for plug-in connectivity. You may also opt to pre-install some additional back-up equipment, such as servers and storage systems, so that your data center can be restarted with a minimum of effort.

Hot site. With a hot site, you're essentially creating a duplicate data center with all of the equipment and connectivity necessary to switch over and go 'live' virtually instantaneously after a disaster has occurred. Although this is the most expensive option, it's also the only one that allows an immediate and complete resumption of data center operations.

Tags: Business Continuity, colocation, Disaster Recovery Planning

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