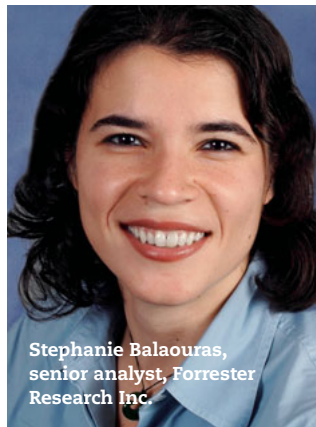


You can't run your business if you don't have data

A conversation about risk, bandwidth, and defining your company's RPO and RTO.

Stephanie Balaouras specializes in researching business continuity and disaster recovery at Forrester Research. She spoke with F5 World's editorial director, Bill Laberis.



Q The volume of data being replicated continues to grow by leaps and bounds. How is that affecting the use of bandwidth for backup?

A The key issue is this: The more data you have, the more bandwidth is required to replicate or copy that data between sites. A majority of enterprises we surveyed agree that insufficient bandwidth is a major impact on their ability to improve their recovery capabilities and limit data loss; for many, it's already a problem. As the amount of data continues to grow considerably, you'll need to either get more bandwidth to support replication and remote backup, or incorporate technologies such as WAN optimization to use your existing bandwidth more efficiently.

Q Almost half of surveyed companies are able to recover from a primary data center site failure within five hours, but they want to improve on that. What are they doing toward that goal?

A Enterprises are selective

about the application data they protect with advanced techniques such as replication. Typically, only the most mission-critical applications are protected with replication. To improve their overall recoverability, enterprises are extending replication to more applications. In addition, for those applications that are already protected with replication, there's an opportunity to improve the performance of these solutions by upgrading from batch replication to asynchronous replication or from asynchronous to synchronous replication.

Q How much of a constraint is the cost of bandwidth on meeting business goals for faster recovery?

A It's already a significant cost. According to the survey, the cost of bandwidth rep-

resents, on average, 26% of the cost of a remote replication solution. A majority of those surveyed also agreed that improving recovery time without increasing bandwidth is important to them.

Q Data at remote sites seems to be a weak link in enterprise disaster recovery plans. How critical an issue is this, and what can and should businesses be doing to bolster their capabilities in this area?

A Close to 99% of those surveyed have at least one remote site they need to protect. In many cases, a number of sites are wholly unprotected. This is a huge risk exposure for [potential] data loss, but it is also a major risk exposure from a compliance perspective and possibly losing the ability to comply with an audit.

Q What impact has the availability of Ethernet WAN technology had on long-term data recovery strategies?

A It has definitely brought the cost down. Ethernet services have enabled small-to-medium businesses and small enterprises to more easily implement replication. This has enabled a whole segment of the market to deploy replication when it couldn't afford to do so in the past. These

services have allowed larger enterprises to go further distances, and it is also extending replication to remote offices more cost-effectively.

Q What recommendations do you have for enterprises to improve the management of backup and recovery capabilities?

A I talk to a lot of companies that haven't undergone collaboration between IT and line-of-business leaders. They need to do a business impact analysis to define recovery point objective [RPO] and recovery time objective [RTO] in a business process context rather than narrowly, by single application. This will help them understand which applications should be protected with advanced replication. In addition, they should understand the impact of the WAN and bandwidth on their replication and remote backup solutions, and they should investigate technologies such as WAN optimization. WAN optimization may represent a better approach than just throwing more bandwidth at their current solutions. ✱

Read the Forrester Research WAN Disaster Recovery report at www.f5.com/reports/Forrester_Consulting.pdf