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Backup and File Sync: Why You Need Both

The MozyEnterprise® advantage

Simple

Seamlessly manage backup, sync, and mobile access for multi-user and server environments from a single web-based console.

Secure

Your data is safe with military-grade encryption, world-class data centers, and EMC—a company built to last.

Affordable

Keep costs low with no hardware to purchase and minimal overhead required.

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Introduction

Backup and file sync are not the same. Although the two may seem similar, understanding the differences is critical when evaluating and determining how best to protect your organization's data. Backup is essential for safeguarding your data, but equally important is easy-yet-secure access to that data using file sync. Maximizing the benefits of backup and file sync contributes to a more secure, agile, and productive workforce. The purpose of this paper is to discuss how relying on both backup and file sync minimizes risk to your organization's data and simplifies employees' access to their files.

Backup: What is it?

Backup is best described as complete protection for data and files. It is complete because it backs up all of the information that's key to your business. Proper backup protection relies on redundancy strategies to ensure that nothing is lost, regardless of whatever series of unfortunate events may occur. Backup protection is configurable. Organizations set policies to back up data for a set time: every day, every two hours, at other times determined optimal by IT policy, and so on.

Whatever the particulars of backup are, backup is, most importantly, a secondary copy of an original file or set of files, with the primary copy of the file residing on the endpoint. The overall strategy is to minimize risk to all data, regardless of when it was created. It can be today's data, last year's, or even data from the organization's beginnings. All data will always be backed up based on the management-determined schedule. Backup is automatic; that is to say, "you set it and forget it."

Because backup protection safeguards huge quantities of data and is continuous, it's important that it's handled correctly to prevent it from interfering with user productivity. In other words, as data protection runs in the background, users are not even aware that their computers are backing up their data. Data from clients, servers, and other devices is backed up using a WAN-based or Internet-based approach, or, ideally, a hybrid backup architecture. With the hybrid approach, some of the organization's backed-up data resides on premises while other data resides in the cloud, but always within IT's control.

File sync: What is it?

File sync ensures that files are instantly pushed to each synced location as files are created and changed. Those files are retrieved on-demand as they are opened. File sync ensures that users' files are accessible quickly and easily, wherever users are located (corporate headquarters, remote offices, or on the road) and on whichever devices they happen to be using—desktops, laptops, tablets, smartphones, regardless of whether it's corporate provided or BYOD. Unlike backup protection, file sync involves the primary copy of the file and, typically, a specific folder designated by the user as the sync folder. In addition, also unlike backup protection, file protection via a synchronized folder is manual; that is, the user must save or drag and drop the file to the specified folder.

File sync occurs when edits or additions are made to the file, at which point the modified file is saved not only to the computer or device on which the user is working, but simultaneously to the cloud as well. The synced file can then be accessed from another device, such as a smartphone.

Backup: Why you need it

Organizations rely on backup protection to keep their data safe from natural disaster, human error, power outages, hardware malfunction, and security threats that may damage or destroy valuable data. Backup protection ensures that an organization has full data protection across desktops, laptops, remote office workers, and mobile workers. With backup, every file is always backed up and no interaction from users is required. As necessary, IT can recover lost or damaged data with a full data restore.

But in the real world, just how important is backup? Consider that 20,000 hard drives fail in the United States every day, 60 percent of companies would be in serious jeopardy after 48 hours without their data, and more than 12,000 laptops are lost or stolen at U.S. airports every week. Disasters such as 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, and Superstorm Sandy underscore the need for data protection in the event of both unanticipated and anticipated disasters. Even anticipated disasters can be devastating, depending on the severity of the event and unforeseen consequences. Proper backup protection ensures that an organization's data is adequately protected in the event of a disaster and that lost or damaged data can be recovered in a timely manner with the least amount of disruption to the organization.

File sync: Why you need it

File sync protects the files that users are currently working on by replicating them to other locations. Access to the files is available from a variety of devices. For example, let's say a user is working on a document in Microsoft Word. The user saves the file to a folder located on a desktop computer that is set up for syncing. Because the file has been saved and synced to the cloud, the file is also available from the user's tablet, smartphone, and home computer just as easily as it would be from the desktop.

The user must predefine the synced folder on the desktop and then determine which files are going to be placed or synchronized in that folder. After files have been synchronized to the cloud, the user can easily access a file by opening a browser or mobile app, logging in, accessing the folder and then the file, and then downloading the file to whichever device is being used. When the user is finished working on the file, it is saved to the designated folder in the cloud. File sync synchronizes edits or additions to files in real time, thereby increasing personal productivity for mobile workers.

Comparing the two

Because file sync has a different purpose than backup, it is limited with regard to backing up data. For example, sync:

- Handles primary data; it does not protect all data, but only the data that users are currently working on
- Vendors differ in their ability to provide versioning
- Delivers no protection automation and requires a lot of user interactivity
- Offers no protection monitoring and reporting

Syncing is a valuable tool because it replicates data between multiple devices to ensure that they contain the same up-to-date data. Syncing automatically replicates changes (and mistakes, too!) to all locations.

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There are benefits that only backup can offer. For example, backup:

- Creates a secondary copy of data and does not alter the primary data
- Protects all data, not just data currently being used
- Is invisible to users and offers automated protection
- Limits the risk of user errors by minimizing the need for human interaction
- Offers continuous data protection, ensuring all data is always safe
- Provides versioning, so data can be recovered from multiple previous points in time
- Ensures data integrity by regularly checking that data is recoverable
- Offers compliance for legal hold and discovery requirements

Unlike syncing, backup automatically makes a secondary copy of data and ensures it is available for recovery in the event that the primary copy is lost.

It's about all of the data, all of the time

Clearly, both cloud backup and file sync are part of a complete strategy for protecting and accessing an organization's data. Businesses and individuals remain vulnerable to lost data and important files. By employing both backup protection and file sync, organizations minimize exposure to a wide variety of disasters that can cause permanent loss of data and accessibility to files on the variety of devices that users rely on.

Backup and file sync are critical to protecting assets that cannot be easily replaced—if they can be replaced at all— in the event that they end up missing or damaged. Backup protection protects everything; file sync makes accessibility to users' files fast and easy, whether they're on a desktop, laptop, or mobile device. But make no mistake: backup and file sync work hand in hand to ensure complete protection and maximize user productivity for your organization.

Conclusion

Cloud backup and file sync complement each other to provide organizations with complete data protection and anytime, anywhere access to their data. Mozy cloud backup protects files against loss no matter where those files reside on your network. The files you protect with cloud backup are always available, and accessibility increases through the Mozy mobile app or the Mozy website.

With Mozy Sync, each computer that's linked to the user's Sync folder automatically keeps its local Sync folder up to date with the Sync folder in the cloud. Files that users save to their Sync folders are also available through the Mozy app and website; however, those files are automatically updated across all linked devices.

Together, Mozy cloud backup and file sync ensure that all of your files are available to you from anywhere and at any time, allowing you to choose which files you want to synchronize while still keeping the rest of your files available and completely protected from loss. It's complete data protection.

For more information on how you can take advantage of Mozy's set-it-and-forget-it cloud backup protection solutions and file sync for quick and easy access to files, visit Mozy at www.mozy.com.

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