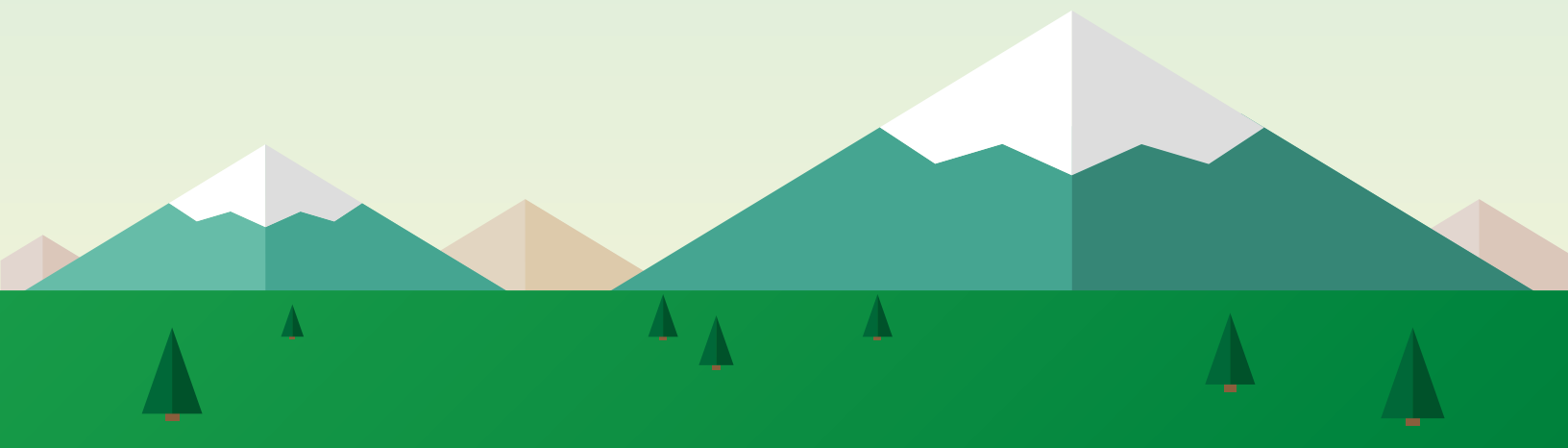# 9 ESSENTIALS FOR A COMPLETE CLOUD-TO-CLOUD BACKUP SOLUTION

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9 Essentials for a Complete Cloud-to-Cloud Backup Solution

Due to the countless benefits, many companies are moving their business-critical operations to cloud computing platforms like Google Apps. But while the benefits of cloud computing are well-known, it's less clear how organizations can provide data security and integrity in a cloud world. We've previously discussed the risks to your cloud-based data, and in this paper, we'll explore how organizations can protect that data by making sure they're using a complete backup solution.

Cloud data protection issues

There's a common misconception about the cloud that once your data is there, it's safe forever. But there are a few things that can threaten your data, even in the cloud:

- **User error**. It's all too easy to overwrite an original version of a document instead of a copy or to lose your revision history when collaborating with other users.

- **Sync errors**. If data doesn't sync properly over the network, data loss or file corruption can occur.

- **Hackers & malcontents**. A disgruntled employee or bit of code can reduce all of your data to a distant memory with just a few keystrokes.

- **Not being able to use built-in recovery**. Once you've emptied your Trash, there's no way to get that data back.

Smart cloud users understand these risks and plan ahead for potential disasters, and the best way to do this is by backing up your data. But what should you look for in a backup solution?

Key requirements for a backup solution

The following is a comprehensive list of things you should be on the lookout for in a backup solution.
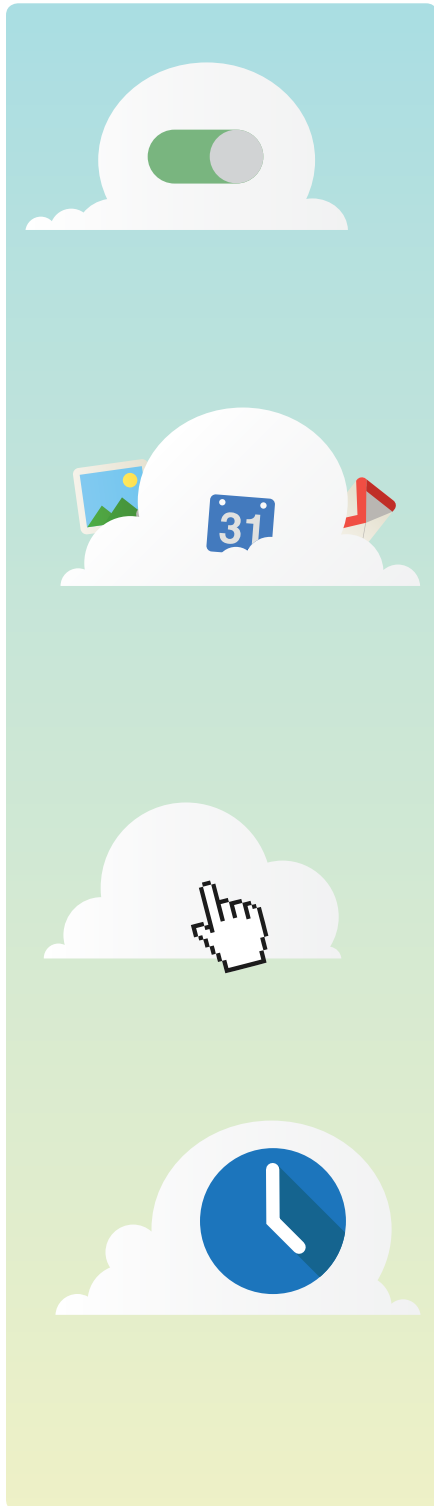
1. Data recovery options

Without the ability to easily restore the files you're backing up, backup byitself is useless. The ideal backup solution would allow you to restore a single document, an entire folder, or everything you've got. And older file versions should never overwrite new ones during the restore process. You deserve to have full control over what gets restored and how.

2. Backing up to the cloud

Remember the big business advantages to Google Apps? No capital investment in hardware or software, no computer room space or power, no complicated installation or ongoing on-site maintenance? Why would you want to pick a backup solution that negated those advantages?

Moving your data to the cloud raises the certainty that it will be available when needed. Having a backup copy of your data in a second cloud provider means more security. Make use of the vast network of servers and replication that the cloud provides to make sure that your data is always accessible from somewhere.

3. Easy to use

Your backup solution should require minimal training to use. It should be designed so intuitively that on the (hopefully) rare occasions that you need to use it, you don't have to spend time hunting for a training manual and trying to remember what you did the last time.

4. Automatic operation

Running backup software is time-consuming, boring, and isn't the reason most people come to work. An study conducted by backup company Mozy 1 found that 66% of businesses don't have a business continuity plan if data is lost or inaccessible.

Ideally, whenever you add a new user to your domain, their email, documents, contacts, and calendars would be protected automatically, making less work for everyone involved (work that might otherwise end up undone).

5. No storage limits

When you're backing up important data, the last thing you want to worry about is running out of space for your backups. We've all seen how easy it is to hit a storage limit if you're not paying careful attention (and let's face it, almost no one is). Don't let size restrictions keep you from taking full advantage of your backup capabilities.

6. Security certifications

Backup solution security is difficult for an organization to validate on their own and is too important for the organization to rely solely on the word of a vendor. An external security certification is a strong plus, indicating that a neutral third party has conducted a thorough evaluation of appropriate business and coding practices. Look to see whether your backup provider has completed an SSAE 16 Type II audit, which indicates rigorous security standards have been met by that provider in their infrastructure, software, employees, procedures and data handling.

7. Data privacy protection

No business wants to expose confidential data inappropriately. An enterprise-class backup solution retains document security metadata with the document so that restored documents have the same level of protection as the original. The ideal solution will also permit an IT administrator to restore a user's data without gaining access to the data.

8. Configurable data protection policies

Some users need all their data protected, some just portions, and some need no data protection. Backup solutions should be configurable to support different policies for different users.

9. Backup procedures

Documents and other data should be protected individually, so that single errors don't cause an entire backup to be corrupted and lost. Make sure that your backup solution treats files as unique entities and not as part of a large batch file.

Also, if a file hasn't changed from the last time it was backed up, there's no need to waste bandwidth backing it up again; you've already got the latest version. Backing up every single file you have every time puts a heavy load on your bandwidth, which can increase the chances of slowness and network crashes. Choose a backup solution that only backs up files that have changed since the last backup event and leave your network free to conduct business.
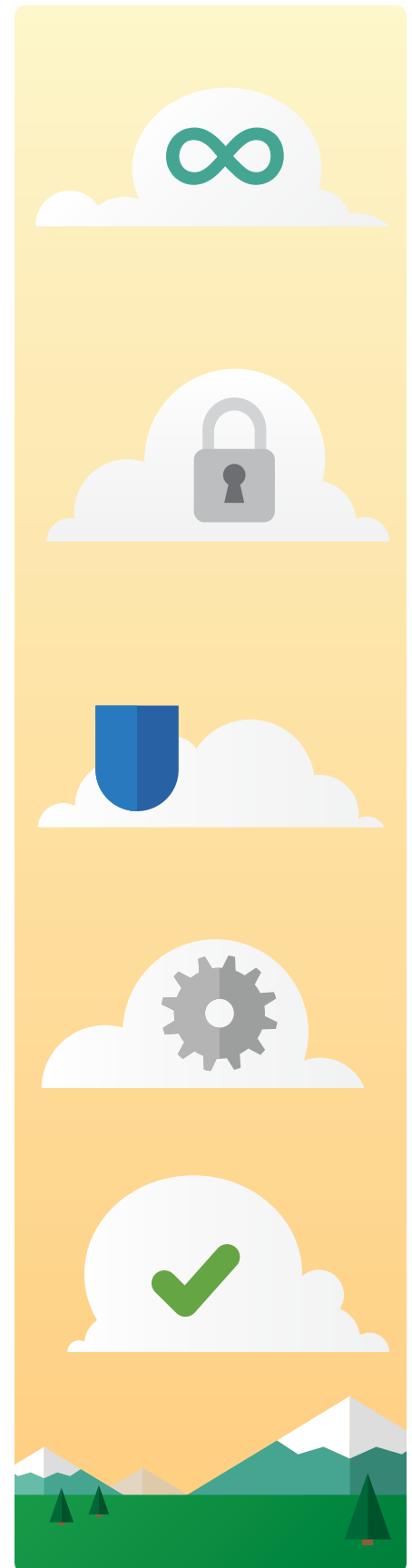
SPANNING

In closing

We hope this paper will help people choose the best backup solution for their needs. Our business at Spanning is ensuring that our customers' data remains safe. And we've built our business in the cloud. Spanning Backup is always on, always secure, and always easy.

We invite you to try us with your Google Apps installation. We're in the Google Apps marketplace, and you can try it free for 14 days. Our company website at spanning.com provides product feature details, hosts a company blog with plenty of updates, and provides links to the Spanning Backup forums.

For more information

To find out more information about Spanning Backup for Google Apps, please contact us at info@spanning.com. You can also find and follow us here:

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