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CommVault offers route to cloud storage

<http://www.computing.co.uk/crn/news/2257715/commvault-offers-route-cloud>

IDC predicts that the storage-as-a-service market will be worth at least \$3bn (£1.92bn) by 2012, and storage vendor CommVault has taken steps to help its VARs break into this burgeoning sector. The vendor has struck up partnerships with several cloud service providers, including Microsoft, Nirvanix and Amazon Web Services, and earlier this month introduced a cloud storage-enabling add-on to its Simpana data management software.

As a result, end users will now have the option of moving their archive and back-up data off-site and into clouds hosted by their preferred CommVault cloud provider.

For partners that have not established what role cloud services will play in their future product offerings, the expansion of Simpana's capabilities will provide "a number of clear benefits", said Simon Gregory, business development director at CommVault.

New revenue

"By updating the product and forming these alliances, we are helping our partners to extend their capabilities and, in doing so, opening up new lines of revenue for them."

Paul Milner, product business group leader for storage at CommVault distribution partner Avnet, predicts the move will also give a leg up to partners wanting to move into managed services.

"It will give CommVault's channel partners the opportunity to host datacentres themselves or alternatively, seek agreements with other organisations," said Milner.

"Either way it will allow partners to enter the service provider market and become synonymous with cloud computing."

This transformation of traditional VARs into managed service providers is something CommVault is keen to support, said Gregory.

"We have seen a number of our more traditional reseller partners express an interest in branching out into managed services, and we are seeing what we can do to help them."

To deploy the solution, explained Gregory, end users will need to have a per-terabyte capacity licence in place from the vendor, as well as an account with their chosen cloud storage provider.

CommVault partners will also need to obtain a "five-minute" technical update from its partner portal to activate the software's cloud capability.

The process of moving the data is also "fairly straightforward", said Gregory, and largely dependent on the amount of data the end user needs to offload.

He added: "How quickly it can be achieved depends on the end user's network capacity and the amount of data they want to move off-site."

The decision to make Simpana cloud compatible follows on from the publication of a customer survey by CommVault last month.

Out of the 10,411 CommVault customers polled, 52 per cent said they were considering cloud storage, and nearly a quarter said they planned to keep their data there for at least six years.

David West, vice president of marketing and business development at CommVault, said: "We know that many of our customers are considering cloud storage to keep pace with rapid data growth and to reduce internal IT costs.

"To that end, CommVault is working diligently to ease their concerns and ensure that customers will be able to reap the benefits of cloud storage strategies."

Reaping the benefits

Aad Dekkers, chief marketing officer at CommVault partner MTI Europe, said the firm's willingness to adapt products to the changing needs of its customers would stand it in good stead.

"It [the add-on] is a nice addition for the customers and a smart move by the vendor because it addresses a market opportunity without partners having to make too many changes to the existing technology."

Clive Longbottom, service director at market watcher Quocirca, said the creation of the add-on "makes sense", but its presence is unlikely to drive sales of Simpana.

"For CommVault, the problem will be in persuading people that this is any different to the zillion other on-line backup storage solutions that are out there, many of which are available for free or at minimal cost.

"As an adjunct to Simpana, it is just fine, but it will not create a reason for buying Simpana. CommVault can really only play it with existing customers, or as a 'tick box' capability for those looking at taking Simpana."

Richard Blandford, managing director of CommVault Platinum partner Fordway, said: "Simpana is a good back-up solution and very popular with our customers, but I am not sure someone would rip out their existing back-up suite on the strength of this new addition."