The "Cloud" in Review 2014: Outages, Price wars, Renewable energy? And yes…Legal concerns.

Outages: Last year's cloud outages have certainly left users all around the world in a hazy situation, validating the fact that the enterprise cloud is not bulletproof. Issues related to BGP (Border Gateway Protocol) led to numerous service outages across many websites. Major cloud vendors saw unplanned, protracted downtime as well, with Microsoft Azure services stopping worldwide and coming back up much later in Australia and Asia than the rest of the world. Also, users of Rackspace and Amazon faced serious downtime from a reboot needed to patch a bug, which led to thousands of user complaints.

Renewable energy: With a renewed focus on renewable energy across the globe - in an attempt to make cloud computing more ecologically friendly - huge advancements have been made! For example, in November of 2014, Amazon announced it will embark on a "long-term commitment to achieve 100% renewable energy usage" for their global infrastructure footprint. Additionally, the German based company Cloud & Heat introduced a specially-designed cabinet to heat the homes of customers by placing cloud servers into private residences and then harvesting the same heat that is generated to warm the air and water!

The "Cloud" Cont...

Legal concerns: The big names in the industry are primarily headquartered in the U.S. but these companies also have extensive facilities around the world. An ongoing case against Microsoft for refusing to turn over emails stored on a data center in Ireland had wide implications in 2014 for the cloud industry. Following disclosures indicating Microsoft's cooperation in transmitting private data of American and international users to Federal authorities, competitors like Apple and Cisco filed briefs in support of Microsoft's position in the case.

Price wars: Without question, the big story of 2014 was the massive extent to which cloud prices fell. In March of 2014, Google slashed the prices of all of its cloud offerings. Six months later, Microsoft followed suit announcing a price cut to its Azure cloud offering. And during the last quarter of the year, more creative price reductions were introduced in the market place with Amazon introducing upfront billing for cloud services (with saving up to 75% off the on-demand prices for three-year agreements).

There is still a lot more trust to gain from cloud vendors (see Agility's November Newsletter edition). The ongoing discord in litigation battles regarding the privacy and security of our data will continue to be a topic of conversation for many months to come.

Trending in 2015

Sony, Target, Sears, Chase, Staples, Home Depot to name a few were victims of recent data hacks and the cat and mouse game of data security will only get more intense in 2015. New laws are being proposed in the United States and governments have been hit with sanctions because of their involvement in cyber crimes. So, what's in store for Information Security in the coming year?

CISO is an acronym we'll be getting familiar with this year. Chief Information Security Officer is moving into the C-suite as companies consider the potential fall out of any security breach. A quick search on Monster.com yielded four thousand available positions in Information Security.

Collectively, we are tending towards data loss prevention now more than ever. Until recently, businesses were reacting to security breaches after they realized it could happen to them. More commonplace this year will be a focus on staying ahead of data loss by going beyond perimeter security and finding new ways to combat malware.

The companies mentioned above are big companies with global internal networks, but the SMB market isn't any safer if some common sense tactics aren't employed. Talk to your Agility Consultant about what is being done to ensure your data is being protected.