



Agrowing number of businesses are using cloud computing to access resources over the Internet, store data and run applications. However, in abandoning traditional on-premise computing and data storage for a cloud-based solution, many companies fear what will happen if the remote data center housing the cloud experiences its own crash.

“As Amazon’s recent outage at its Dublin data center showed, it is possible, though unlikely, that a data center might go down,” says Indu Kodukula, executive vice president, products, and chief technology officer of Sungard Availability Services. “That is a risk that companies are able to mitigate with a managed multisite availability solution.”

Smart Business spoke with Kodukula about how managed multisite availability is changing what’s possible in the cloud, and how your business could benefit.

#### WHAT IS MANAGED MULTISITE IN A CLOUD ENVIRONMENT, AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

If you look at managed multisite availability, each term essentially defines what the service is. ‘Multisite’ is the next logical evolution of our cloud platform. Instead of having one, we now have multiple sites where the cloud is available. That allows the cloud to be geographically redundant.

No matter how unlikely, a cloud infrastructure that is housed in a single data center has the potential to be the victim of either natural or man-made disasters. To provide a better level of availability, a cloud provider needs to be able to keep services and customer environments up and running, even in the event of an entire site disaster.

‘Availability’ fundamentally refers to the fact that most applications can only tolerate a certain amount of downtime that is directly related to the business value of the application. Most cloud developers use the cloud to run development and test environments. To ensure high availability in a production setting, a cloud environment should be built from the ground up to run production applications and customer environments, which have a higher availability threshold than development and test environments. A multiple-site cloud environment provides availability for an application that is commensurate with what’s appropriate.



**INDU KODUKULA**

executive vice president, products chief  
technology officer

SunGard Availability Services

The last aspect is ‘managed.’ In contrast to many cloud service providers that essentially provide DIY service, a business should find a provider that builds the environment for information technology (IT) from day one.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE A CLOUD ENVIRONMENT WITH IT CAPABILITIES?

If you are looking for a cloud environment for production that provides all the capabilities and processes expected with IT — change management, security, operations control, the ability to resolve problems and issues — those are all part of the managed services that should be provided on top of the cloud environment. That means companies can have a tremendous level of comfort and that they can trust the production environment and get the level of availability they need.

That is very different than the DIY model that many cloud developers provide, in which you could be left to fend for yourself.

### IS CLOUD COMPUTING FOR EVERYONE?

There are several points that companies typically walk through when making the decision to use the cloud. The No. 1 reason that companies want to use the cloud for their applications is to align their spending with business value. Increasingly, enterprise IT has become very capital intensive. Companies don't know up front what business return they would receive from a capital investment in enterprise IT, but they would make the investment anyway and hope that it all works out.

Using the cloud is fundamentally different, because you only pay for the data or compute resources that you use or store, you don't have hardware to buy or install and, in a managed environment, you don't need internal resources to manage your IT. Here, the service provider takes responsibility for maintaining the software, servers and applications.

Therefore, companies utilizing the cloud for enterprise IT can make investments that are in line with the business value. Then, they can invest more capital into infrastructure and resources as the application supports it and as the business becomes more successful.

However, there are multiple concerns. The moment something moves outside your firewall, you don't own it anymore. So you have to decide what to keep in house and what to move to the cloud. Others are concerned about performance and availability of data in the cloud. The multisite availability feature is most useful for applications that can tolerate only about four hours of downtime a year, need geographic redundancy, or are responsible for keeping the business up and running if you don't want to have the internal responsibility of running the application yourself.

### HOW CAN BUSINESSES GET STARTED?

The first step is to do a virtualization assessment. Then, there is the option of what processes to virtualize. Next, take the virtualized application and decide what to keep in house and what to move outside your firewall.

Look for a cloud service provider that will guide you through the process, helping you understand and decide what applications should stay in house, either because they are not ready to be virtualized or they are too tied into business, and which applications can be moved safely. The goal is to create a roadmap for moving applications to the data center.

### WHAT APPLICATIONS ARE GOOD FITS FOR THE CLOUD?

If you have an application that supports your business and has such strong growth that it will need 10 times more resources next year than it does today, the elasticity the cloud offers is a great option. If the application also uses modern technology, which is easier to virtualize, that combination makes it compelling to move that application to cloud.

The business argument for moving older technology, like ERP, to the cloud is much less strong.

## About SunGard Availability Services

SunGard Availability Services provides disaster recovery, managed IT, information availability consulting services and business continuity management software to over 9,000 customers globally.

SunGard Availability Services | 680 East Swedesford Road | Wayne, PA 19087 | 800-468-7483 | [www.sungardas.com](http://www.sungardas.com)