

Cloud Storage: Benefits & Challenges

At the Spring 2010 CSG meeting, Shel Waggener, UC Berkeley, led a session about “Cloud Storage: Benefits & Challenges”. By design, this session was primarily a Q&A discussion among the attendees. Here are the summary notes from the session.

- Definition
 - What do we mean when we say cloud storage? General consensus was that we were talking about a storage service offered by companies such as Amazon & Google rather than data stored in a bunker for off-site DR/BC reasons.
 - Consensus was that the HathiTrust storage service is a cloud offering albeit serving a limited user base. *HathiTrust is a repository and storage infrastructure initiated for the CIC Google book project. See: <http://www.hathitrust.org/>*
- Compliance & Security
 - Perception among General Council, legal staff, and some others is that cloud storage is less secure than data stored on campus. Reality is that some cloud storage offerings are more secure (e.g., encrypted data stored in the cloud vs. unencrypted data on campus).
 - Clarification of existing campus policies as they pertain to cloud services is important. Minnesota has done this already, and they agreed to share their work with the group.
 - A security breach in the cloud may make the CIO less vulnerable to criticism than a breach on campus provided campus policies were followed in using cloud services.
- End Users
 - Most users share data based on what they know, path of least resistant, and cost. The cloud often meets end-user needs. Most campuses have not provided comparable offerings. Identity management plays a role here.
 - User education continues to be important.
- Opportunities & Threats
 - Will we be willing to shape our destiny or just be content to be pulled into the cloud?
 - Will we be successful addressing generic storage issues or should we be more focused? For example, HathiTrust began as a shared management infrastructure for storage but found its success focusing on the CIC Google book project.
- Action Items
 - Minnesota will share their policy clarifications with the CSG group.