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Trusting Storage in the Clouds

News item from Reuters, Feb. 22, 2008: "EMC, the world's largest storage infrastructure company, hired a former Microsoft executive, **Paul Maritz**, to start a new Cloud Infrastructure and Services Division. The unit will focus on delivering services accessed over the Web that seem to exist in a cloud of the Internet."*

You read that correctly: **EMC Cloud** Infrastructure and Services. This has nothing to do with the weather.

IT folks have been talking about "the cloud" for a long time, but this is one clear indication that this concept has broken into the mainstream.

Last November, **EMC** added its first online storage service, **Mozy**, by acquiring its little parent company, Berkeley Data Systems, of American Fork, Utah. Mozy, which backs up unlimited data on PCs, laptops and servers automatically for \$4 to \$5 per month plus a small fee per GB, will become one of the first services to be made available through the **EMC** cloud structure.

EMC obviously knows something. After only three years in existence, **Mozy**, which offers home user, SMB and enterprise brands, already has passed the 500,000-customer mark and is adding more every day.

Now, let's talk about the image and viability of "the cloud." We're now trusting people we've never met, and may never meet in person, ever, to hold and protect some of our dearest, most valuable possessions. And most of the time, we don't even know where exactly in the world these valuables are being held.

Why are 500,000 **Mozy** customers and many others at competitors such as **Amazon S3** (with 330,000 customers), **Carbonite**, **IBM Arsenal**, **Iron Mountain LiveVault**, **Seagate eVault** and others doing this? Because it's good business. Is it entirely bulletproof, foolproof and trustworthy? Nothing is perfect. But companies

are getting better at it. Redundant storage disks, flash memory and tape are improving in quality every year, as is the stability and performance of the software that runs them.

As individuals, we're talking about storing, or at least backing up, irreplaceable photos and videos of family and special events, important business and personal documents and e-mail, music, audio transcriptions, computer applications, the kinds of valuables that you might otherwise keep in a safe deposit box.

As businesses, we're talking about storing marketing reports, meeting minutes, e-mail, sales records, HR documents, medical records, the whole gamut of digital paper.

It's interesting to note that smaller businesses, 50 to 100 employees and up to 500 employees, appear to be the ones that are embracing the storage in the cloud model first. Larger enterprises, with much already invested in data centers, storage and management infrastructure, naturally have been slower to adopt the idea, but various analysts predict that they are beginning to look at the backup advantages "the cloud" offers.

[*EMC Web Site](#)