

The Hidden Costs of Virtual-Only BDR Solutions





If there's been one major improvement in the backup and disaster recovery space in recent years, it's virtualization. From flexibility to efficiency to speed, the benefits have transformed IT teams on a number of levels like productivity and the cost of downtime.

So is there too much of a good thing when it comes to virtual-only BDR? Not exactly, but there are some hidden pitfalls that leaders don't always spot until it's too late. Often they find the software-only approach a logical one, given the growth of their virtual machines over the growth of their physical servers. Others assume that a fully virtualized system will be the most streamlined BDR ecosystem they can have.

In reality, there are drawbacks to a virtual-only approach that aren't immediately obvious—and teams often find themselves bumping up against system limitations while unexpected costs keep rising. Soon the Total Cost of Ownership becomes much bigger than they bargained for.

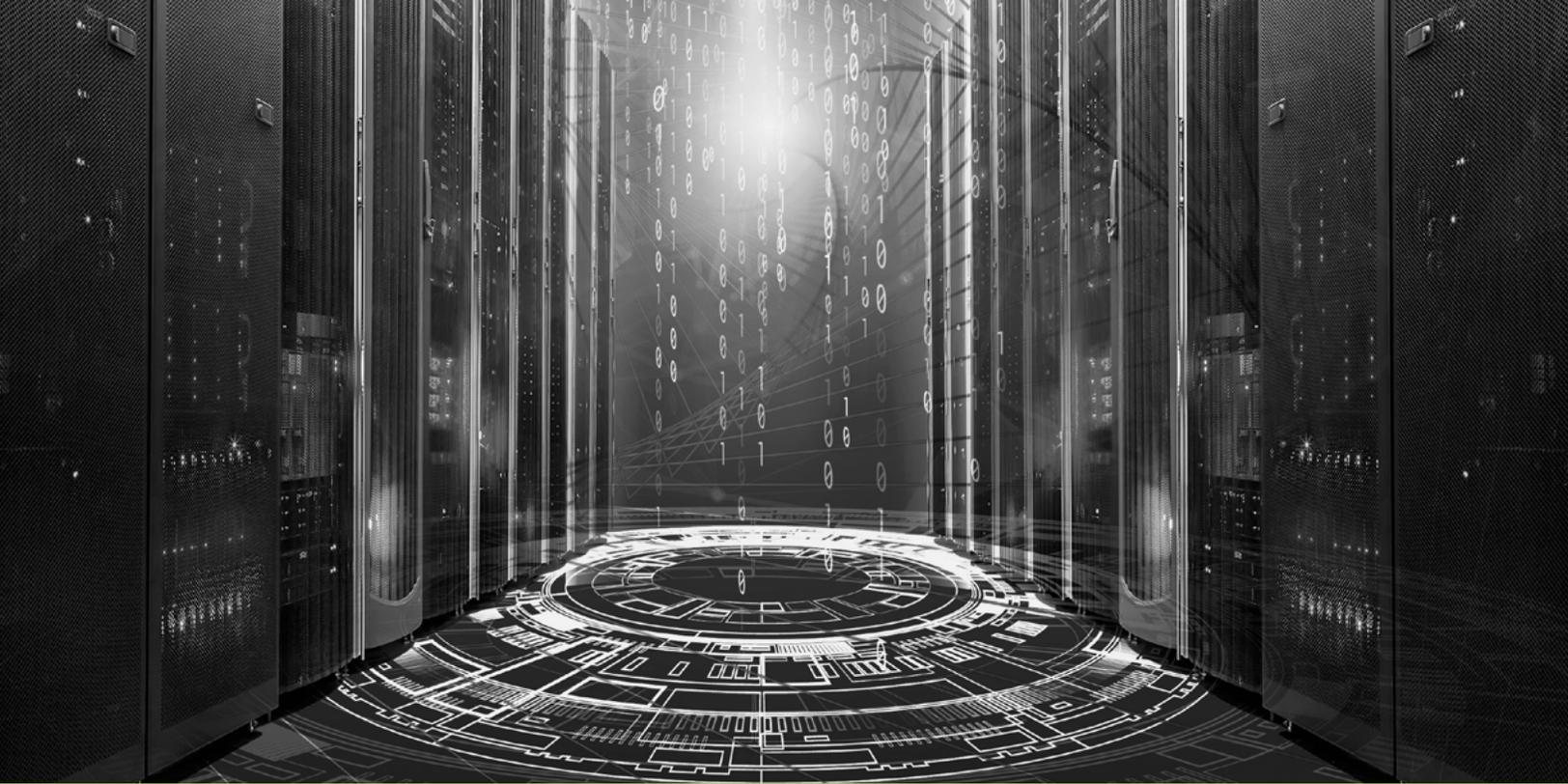
In the beginning, it all seems so appealing. The demo is impressive, promising swift recovery and efficient workflows. Yet often the vendor or the proof-of-concept doesn't cover the entirety of your production environment's requirements. Consider, for instance, if your virtual-only system will be tasked with protecting physical servers. Can it provide that service or will it only function with virtual infrastructures?

That's just one consideration. To select the right BDR solution, you'll need to understand all of your requirements and the potential costs you could be facing. Only then can you accurately assess the value of that solution.

BDR Checklist

Your network and hardware requirements. Will you build your own system using existing hardware—and if so, will you have sufficient capacity and compute resources? If not, how much more of the budget will you need for additional equipment?

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Physical servers. If you're like most teams, some of your applications live on physical dedicated servers. Can the new virtualized solution support your physical servers? If not, you'll have a fragmented backup system and all the chaos that comes with it—multiple backup licenses, multiple contracts, at least two management consoles, two sets of appliances, administrators who may not be trained on both systems, different support teams and a giant schism in your DR plan. The whole point of adopting a new BDR solution is to eliminate manual tasks, increase efficiencies and streamline the process from beginning to end. But your team won't be nimble if they're juggling two systems. If you're not careful, more budget will be going to basic administration.

Your storage needs. As multiple copies of identical data are created—let's say a company image that is on every employee's laptop—the storage resources required will keep rising. Deduplication can remove redundant data to reduce those requirements, but you'll need to consider how that deduplication functions. If deduplication functions efficiently only when all data is stored on a single appliance, duplication will start up again as soon as your data grows onto another appliance.

Database weakness. Check out the database that comes with your software-only solution. Can it handle your number of sites, archives or production systems today or a year from now? Of course you can always upgrade to an enterprise-class database for stronger functionality, but that's going to increase your TCO again.

Support and service. Does the cost of that virtual-only solution include support? Outages will happen; so will system failures and other troubleshooting needs. You'll need to integrate new applications and servers. Find out how you're being billed and what you're being billed for, and if you have adequate support built into the package.

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Once you add up the costs—additional hardware, storage, additional database licenses and the staff toll of managing separate BDR systems for physical and virtual environments—you'll have a better idea of how much that new software-only system is really going to cost you.

The Right Virtual BDR

Don't get me wrong, virtualization is still the secret sauce to fast and easy backup and disaster recovery. But to really encompass all of your BDR needs, your solution should partner virtual BDR with other advanced features and protection for your physical assets.

So what does this mature BDR solution look like?

- It helps you protect both physical and virtual servers.
- It can make one copy of your data for all your needs—recovery and archiving.
- The console offers a single, centralized view of your entire system—physical and virtual.
- Advanced deduplication reduces your storage costs.
- One support team supports the entirety of your BDR ecosystem—so they can make strategic suggestions and spot any gaps.
- Transparent pricing lets you know exactly what you're paying for, so you're never surprised as the months go on.

No IT leader updates their BDR solution to spend more budget than expected. To really save time and streamline efficiencies, your solution has to cover all of your backup and disaster recovery needs in one holistic system. When evaluating solutions, listen to what the vendor isn't telling you—and ask the hard questions about what exactly the solution will cover and cost.

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