

Backups and Data Resiliency Made Easy

A SANS First Look

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Introduction

Data resiliency is a critical but often challenging aspect for organizations. One of the most significant pain points is ensuring that data remains intact, accessible, and recoverable during a cyberattack, natural disaster, or another system failure. The complexity of managing large volumes of data across multiple systems can also lead to issues with fragmentation and data silos.

These issues, and more, make it challenging to maintain a comprehensive and consistent view of the data environment. To help organizations combat these issues, we introduce CrashPlan. CrashPlan helps solve these issues with an easy-to-use data resiliency platform. CrashPlan has robust enterprise-wide deployment and management capabilities, plus data encryption in motion and at rest. Complex data management issues fade away as users are provided granular control over their data and restoration options. Data can be quickly restored, while robust administration options allow the organization to maintain control.

In this SANS First Look, we'll review how the platform boasts a strong end-user focus while maintaining powerful administrative capabilities.

A Look at CrashPlan

CrashPlan is a continuous, automated backup solution that helps organizations scale and find efficiencies in their data resiliency programs. Our First Look begins with an introduction to some of the key concepts within CrashPlan's platform:

- CrashPlan operates on its own cloud, removing the reliance on a third party for uptime or availability. Given the importance of data restoration, this is a critical feature.
- Data is encrypted at rest and in motion, providing a complete security solution.
- Seamless integrations with other enterprise tools allow for holistic enterprise management.
- CrashPlan places control of the data with the users. Although there are robust administrative capabilities, user-centricity is crucial for keeping work frictionless.

Data resiliency and backups are often associated with ransomware attacks in today's threat landscape. Although CrashPlan's capabilities can assist with ransomware recovery, we focused on the power it can offer organizations regardless of an impending cyber threat. However, data backups and preservation can be critical to getting "back to business" in the aftermath of a cyberattack.

In this First Look, we explored both user and administrative features. Both offer unique value points, allowing for a customized data resiliency program deployment.

User Features

CrashPlan establishes itself as a user-centric platform, recognizing that users need control and autonomy over their backup and data restoration capabilities. This removes a significant tech burden from administrators and allows users to take advantage of CrashPlan's granular restoration capabilities—for example, to restore a single file they accidentally deleted. This is accomplished with an intuitive and easy-to-use interface, shown in Figure 1.

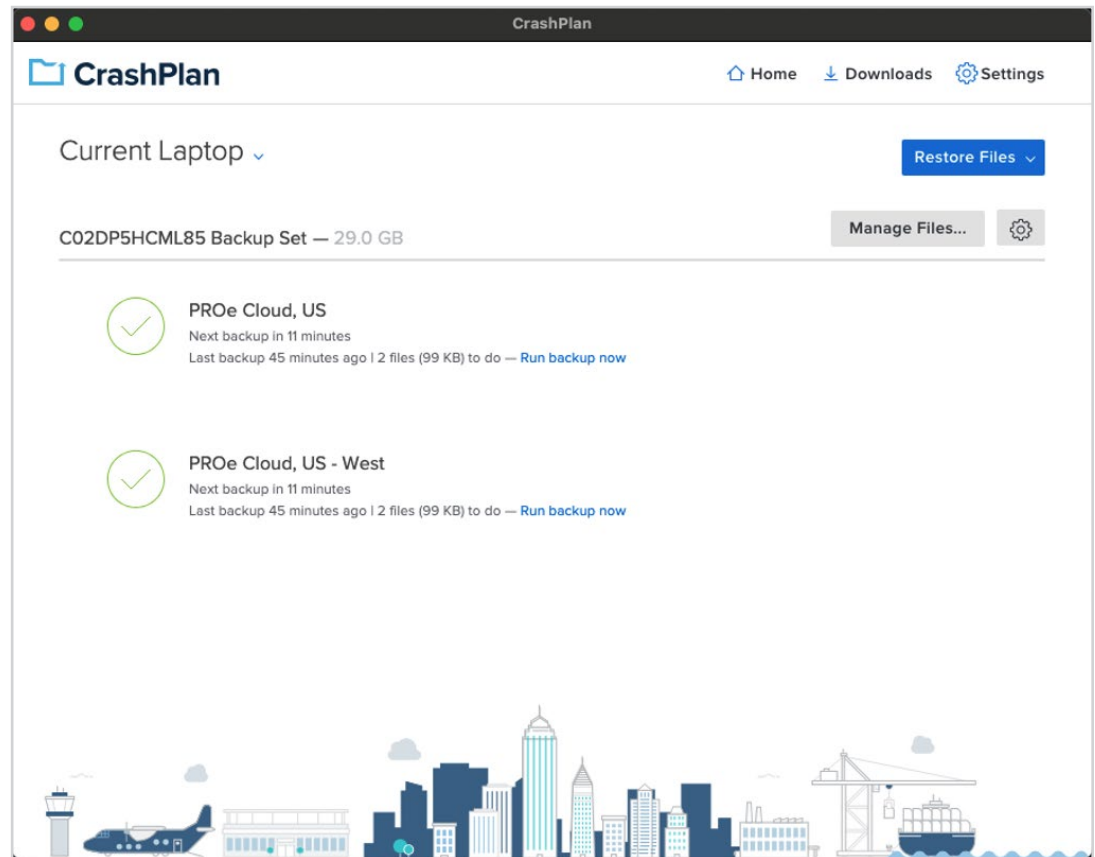


Figure 1. CrashPlan Interface

The technical capabilities of CrashPlan further streamline the user experience. Data backups are often seen as cumbersome, resource-intensive tasks that slow the user experience. Behind the scenes, CrashPlan has developed an efficient resiliency platform that heightens the user experience without compromising security. Data is automatically deduplicated and synchronized every 15 minutes, so data is continuously protected without user interaction.

As seen in Figure 2, users have numerous backup options. With this level of granularity, users can select “points in time” for data restoration and control. Because CrashPlan includes unlimited version retention, users can quickly go back to an early draft of a document. Enabling users is one of CrashPlan’s best features, and this is another powerful example. Users can access and restore backups as needed in a frictionless process.

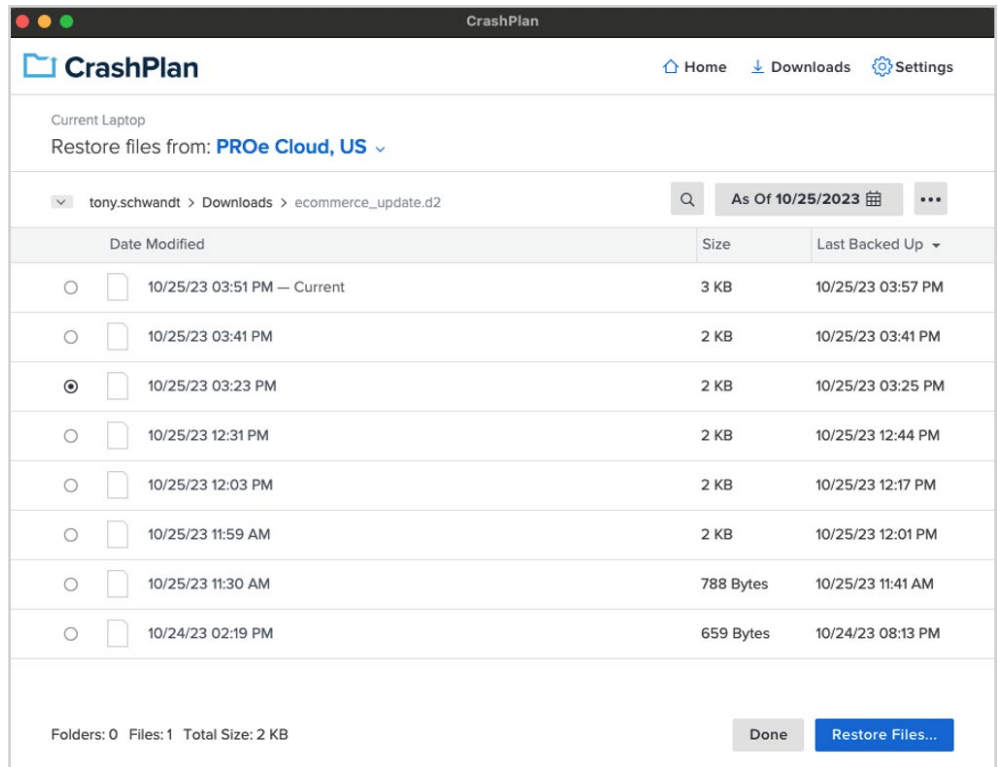


Figure 2. Point-in-Time Backup Options

Admin Features

With its powerful user features, CrashPlan creates a unique data resiliency experience that empowers users as custodians of their data. However, equally powerful admin features position CrashPlan to coordinate and manage data resiliency at the enterprise level. The administrative panel provides robust capabilities for data and compliance administrators (see Figure 3).

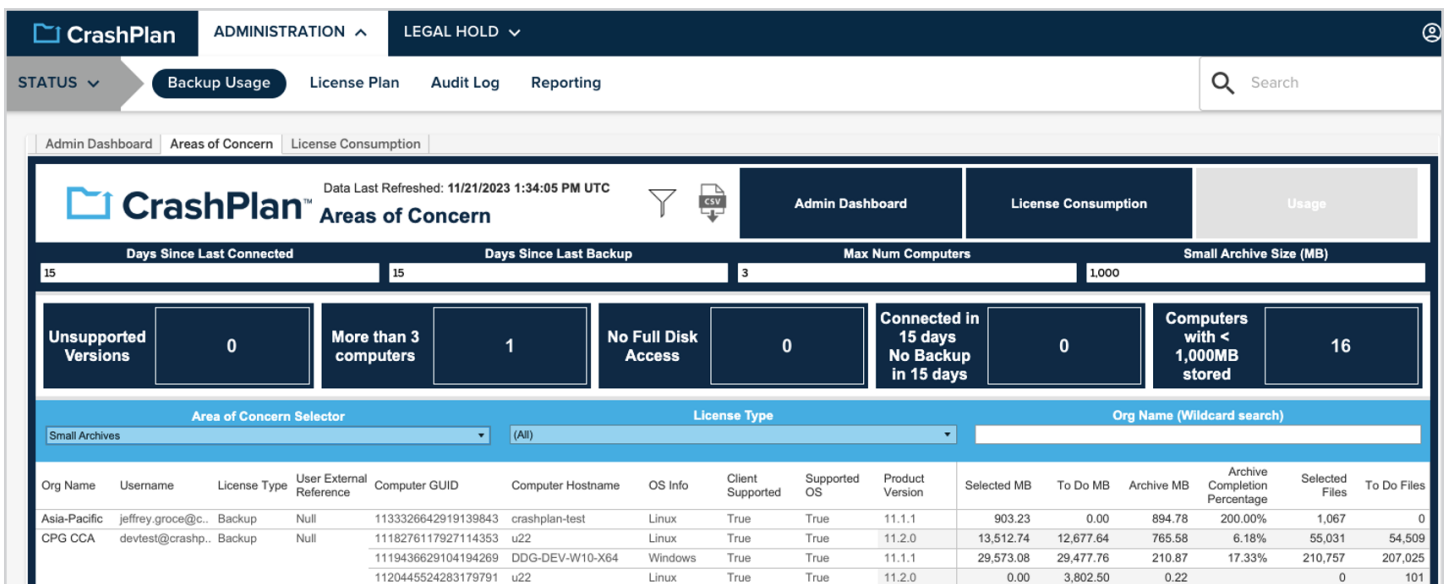


Figure 3. Administrative Panel

When considering data resiliency options at the enterprise level, there are critical features that organizations must consider. The end-user experience is essential; however, administrators often need to be able to create and enforce enterprise-wide policies. CrashPlan makes this an effortless task with powerful administration capabilities. A few notable administrative capabilities include:

- **Enterprise identity management sync**—CrashPlan synchronizes with your enterprise identity management platform, allowing for rapid deployment and permissions adoption.
- **Cross-platform support**—Your environment is multiple platforms, so your backup solution also should be. CrashPlan supports Windows, Linux, and Mac, meaning your users are protected no matter their system.
- **Regex/pattern declarations**—Administrators can build powerful regular expression and pattern declarations, allowing them to enact strong data resiliency policies at the enterprise level.
- **Powerful legal hold capabilities**—Data backups help organizations deliver on legal requirements, and resiliency solutions play a crucial role. CrashPlan includes legal hold capabilities that ensure users don't inadvertently delete data subject to holds. Furthermore, CrashPlan handles legal holds within its cloud, not on the local system. Admins don't have to confiscate computers physically, and employees can go about their work.

Closing Thoughts

Although necessary for business continuity, data resiliency and backups are often a sore spot for many organizations. Backup solutions often conjure memories of buggy, resource-intensive software that bring the user experience to a halt. Furthermore, when users or the organization look to utilize backups, it is a cumbersome process requiring too many people.

CrashPlan provides an alternative. An endpoint backup solution that combines the speed of cloud backups with an optimized user experience, CrashPlan empowers users with control over how they restore their files. CrashPlan runs continuously in the background, deduping and syncing at a frequency that maximizes data resiliency.

Of course, CrashPlan also has powerful administrative features. Helping organizations stay within data retention and compliance requirements is paramount. Administrators can enact organization-wide policies, confident that data is encrypted in motion and at rest. CrashPlan reverses the pain points often associated with backups, making it easier for organizations to realize true data resiliency.

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