

Cloudy near-term, Sunny later.



Don MacVittie, 2008-13-08

The recent outages in clouds, as [pointed out](#) by Peter Bright over at [Ars Technica](#) are somewhat disturbing, but digging into them, at least one is a simple case of mismanagement. "We're sorry, but your data is here, we're just not going to give you access to it" to 20K paying subscribers and who-knows-how-many free subscribers is, IMNSHO, grounds for firing every person with decision-making authority. Since they shut down operations, I guess that qualifies as firing. The [Amazon S3](#) failure and [MobileMe](#) are different stories, and minor, all things considered.

▫ Those of you affected by the Amazon failure are probably going "*minor??*" but before you get all upset with me, let's talk context. Cloud computing may be based on stable technology - load balancing is downright old for technology, and Virtualization is definitely mature, but it's relatively new and utilizing these things in new and different ways. So the occasional hiccup is to be expected, if not welcomed. And it's the nature of the beast that cloud failures will be seen as major catastrophes because they're public and supposed to be stable.

The only thing that gets press like a cloud outage is...

But don't let the teeth-gnashing and press coverage fool you, young technologies always have a bit of a growing up period when large numbers of people hop on. We're not talking Twitter levels of failure here, and they're identifying problem areas and getting them fixed. For some usage, the cloud makes perfect sense, particularly if you don't own/control your own servers anyway. In that scenario, where the data is stored is not so relevant.

The cloud will grow, and other spectacular outages will follow, but read between the lines and think about volume. Just because it gets more press doesn't make it an unsafe technology, one has only to look at safety numbers from planes versus cars to understand how deceptive it can be to just trust what you read. And those statistics are even more glaring than you think. In The United States there were 535 total deaths from accidents in planes in 2007, while 769 million people flew, according to [The Insurance Information Institute](#), while according to [WrongDiagnosis](#) there were 816 fatalities from automobiles on average *per week* in the US during that same period.

So keep that in mind when the press and bloggers act like the world has ended when a cloud goes down (just as the press does when a plane goes down), and hope you're not one of those impacted. It will get better over time as cloud technology matures.

Don.

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