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Cloud over shared computing

At Least 10 Cases Emerged In The City Alone In The Past Few Months In Which Critical Data Of Companies Was Compromised

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Hyderabad: If you thought your crucial data stored in the 'cloud' is safe, think again. Cyber crooks have been increasingly invading the cloud space in recent months triggering panic among companies that once thought of it as a safe bet.

At least 10 cases emerged in the city alone over the past few months in which critical data of start-ups and mid-sized companies was compromised with 'the cloud getting infected'. In light of the danger, many companies have been heading to cyber security decoders for help.

Among the most potent weapon in the hands of hackers is 'ransomware', a malware that is used to lock out users from accessing their data which is later released on receipt of payment.

"Although cloud is still one of the safest storage options, there can be vulnerabilities even in the cloud. In one case, a data centre hosting hundreds of servers of a big company hosted on the cloud was compromised," said Zaki Qureshey, CEO, E2 labs Information Security Private Limited, a cyber security company which has investigated several data breaches.

Not choosing the right cloud service provider has cost a handful of



A BREACH CAN CAUSE

- ▶ Loss of control
- ▶ Lack of trust
- ▶ Multi-tenancy problems

Is cloud safe?

Cloud storage is a service model in which data is maintained and backed up remotely, and is available to people over a network. Cloud providers have multiple layers of security and have been conventionally thought of as a safe option. But while the cloud can be hosted anywhere, security measures taken by the service provider are crucial. Security layers exist at each point, be it routers, firewalls, other intrusion detection systems and web servers. However, hackers have been entering the cloud using malware and then lock user access.

TYPES OF CLOUD THAT CAN BE CHOSEN

- ▶ Private cloud is a dedicated cloud for a particular company
- ▶ Public cloud can be shared by several companies and individuals
- ▶ Hybrid cloud is a combination of both public and private clouds

businesses a fortune, say insiders.

Elaborating in the scale of threat a breach poses, Prashant Gupta, South Asia head, Verizon Enterprise Solutions, a cloud and cyber security service provider, said, "Once a cloud breach happens several companies are affected. There are a number of companies, including e-commerce companies in Hyderabad, which had to scale down their businesses after their data hosted on the cloud was breached." He added, "One of the biggest challenges is that people do not know the geography where the cloud is being hosted. Therefore, businesses need to choose providers who have secured controls in place."

There are thousands of cloud service providers, but only the top 10 are most secure because they have multiple

security layers, say experts. "There are some other medium and small-scale service cloud services whose security is sparse. From a security perspective, a number of uncharted risks and challenges have been introduced because of the relocation to clouds, deteriorating much of the effectiveness of traditional protection mechanisms," said Qureshey.

Speaking about companies that are more vulnerable, Ramesh Loganathan, centre head, Progress Software India, said, "Cloud services are largely used by small companies as it makes sense for them." As they cannot afford big IT teams, they often fall back on cloud services, and without proper security measures, are left in the lurch when there is any breach.