

# Visibility for Effective IT Business Continuity Planning (BCP)

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# BCP is the theme as an unexpected disaster strikes

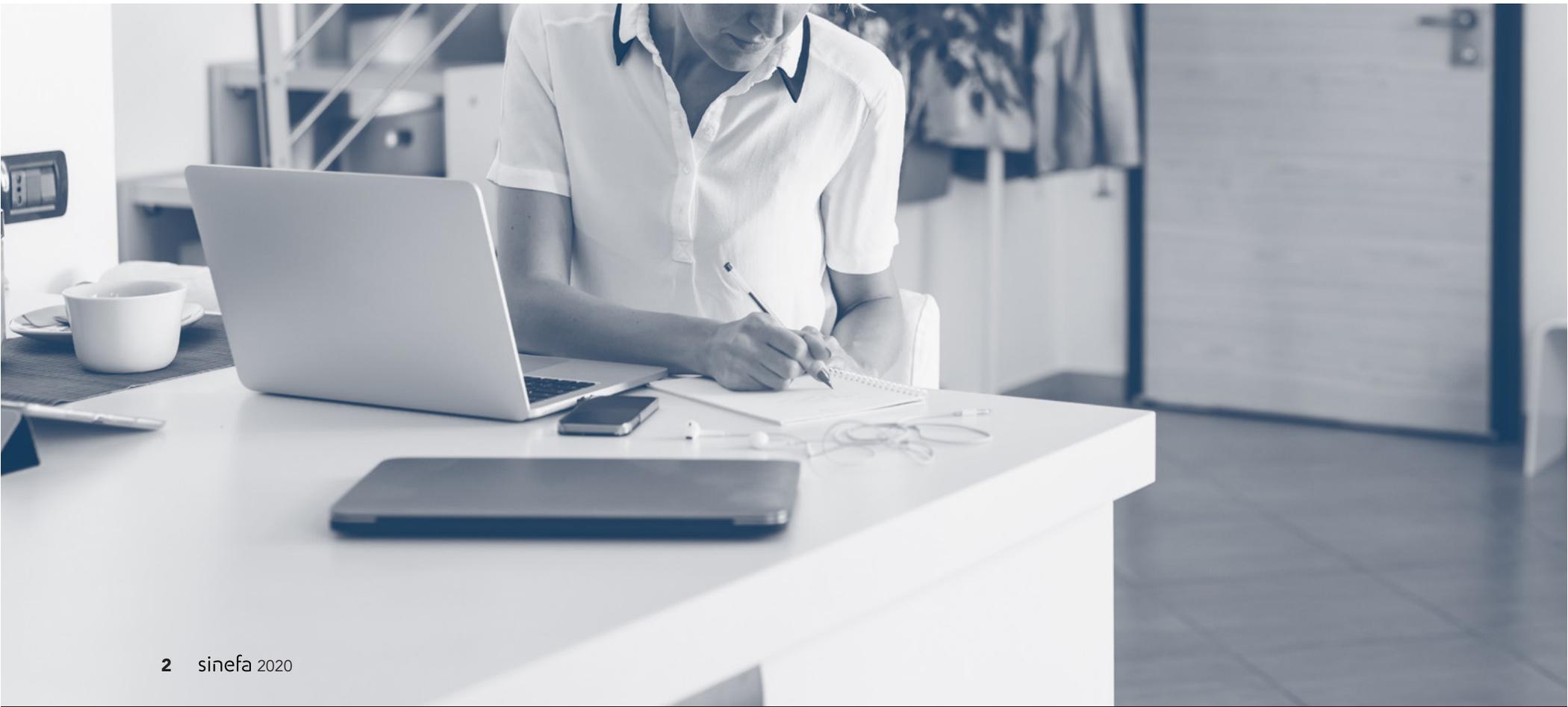
The novel nature of the Covid-19 pandemic has been deeply disorienting. The societal and economic implications have unfolded with head-spinning rapidity. Disaster recovery plans made for typical natural disasters like hurricanes, or cyberattack events, are being adjusted in real-time. Businesses are racing to perform business impact analysis and implement recovery strategies to cope with the sudden shifts in customer behavior, supply chains and team members working offsite.

From an IT point of view, this has meant increasing Internet bandwidth to data centers, provisioning additional VPN gateways and supporting a huge upswing in the use of cloud-based IT services like Zoom and Webex. Disruption to business operations is hard to avoid in such an unprecedented time. For example, organizations closing traditional office spaces for the first time are seeing huge spikes in trouble tickets as employees struggle with information technology issues. Downtime and outages that would have been annoying are now existential as they affect critical business processes.

# Longer-term workforce implications

The crisis management aspect of this disruption is just one aspect of a larger business disruption that is likely underway. Millions of new remote workers sheltering in place for months will undoubtedly lead to some long-term structural changes in corporate life as finance leaders re-evaluate real-estate investments and more employees get a taste of life without

long commutes. The change won't be binary of course, and this won't mean the end of branch offices. After all, despite years of exponential growth, online still accounts for less than 15% of retail sales. But from an IT point of view, current events will act as a catalyst to an even more borderless perimeter, and even more cloud-based and Internet-centric IT systems.





# IT architecture change will accelerate

Not long ago, Gartner published a note about a new architectural model called the Secure Access Service Edge (SASE), where the disparate connectivity, routing, policy, network functions, and security capabilities come together in unified cloud service offerings. SASE is happening because of enterprise digital transformation, and the broad adoption of SaaS and cloud services has caused an inversion of traditional WAN and network security architectures. Current events are only accelerating these trends.

# Four key IT visibility needs for business continuity planning

Given the issues we've covered above, it's important to think through your monitoring approach in an era where IT infrastructure is even less under your control than ever. Following are four key aspects of IT visibility you need to improve your business continuity management (BCM).





# 1 Go way beyond endpoint device management

Most IT teams have some sort of endpoint device management in place to deal with basic configuration and troubleshooting issues occurring on employee computer systems (laptops, mobile devices, etc.). However, in a cloudy and Internet-centric world, you need to see far beyond the device. Emphasis on **far beyond**

because the service delivery chain for critical applications starts at the endpoint device, goes through local (home or branch) wifi, through the upstream ISP or WAN connection, across multiple provider networks in the case of Internet connectivity, and finally to a data center or SaaS provider's network, infrastructure

and application. You need to be able to see and solve problems across as much of that service path as possible. To solve this, you need endpoint visibility that combines on-device, wifi and network path monitoring to remote DC and SaaS targets.

## 2 See all your critical dependencies

Upgrading Internet access links and VPN concentrators in your data centers is a great move, to handle higher volumes of employee and customer transactions with your critical, in-house applications. But just getting users to the front door of the application doesn't mean your job is done. Nearly every in-house application today, whether hosted in your data center or a public cloud VPC/VNET, has many third party provider dependencies. For example, if you have a customer-facing application, then you're critically dependent on your DNS and CDN providers. How are they and your origin servers performing? Are there any intermediate ISP networks causing issues to user experience? You can only know if you measure from the outside-in.

What about third-party API providers like payment processors or SaaS-hosted components of your supply chain ERP suite? If these externally hosted, critical business functions don't work, it doesn't matter if users can get to the application front door. You need to see their performance from the PoV of where the application sits in your DC or cloud and understand quickly if any issues along the network (Internet) path are causing performance problems.

To get insight into these dependencies that are highly external and not under your direct control, you'll need to use synthetic network path monitoring that lets you see end-to-end performance and hop-by-hop issues. You'll need to get that visibility from points out on the Internet that measure your Internet-facing applications and components. You'll also need to deploy that visibility from within your DCs and cloud instances, measuring your critical third party APIs.





### **3** Don't forget to plan for the return to the branch

It's going to happen eventually, so whatever visibility you develop needs to keep that in mind. Think about whether you have app experience and full service path visibility from everywhere that matters to your business.



## 4 Make user experience your focus

Today, digital experience has become front and center today. One of the biggest disconnects in digital employee experience is between IT teams that tend to focus on getting tools and services out fast to employees, and the employees who aren't getting the actual user experience they desire. Do you have a way to see how well you're delivering those user experiences? If not, you need real data. Maybe you're investing in increased Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) capacity in your data center or cloud currently.

That's a great move, but you'll want to see how those sessions are performing. To solve this, you need real user traffic data from your DC and cloud hosting environments that can measure and score app experiences not just against your own history, but against collective benchmarks of your industry peers.

# Visibility is key to any effective business continuity plan

As you perform ongoing risk assessment on the current situation with your continuity team, it's helpful to get key stakeholders to think beyond the time-sensitive manual workarounds that tend to dominate in the early stages. Gaining more IT visibility isn't your first move in the event of a disaster. But in this case, it's wise to think of it soon after you achieve your initial recovery point objectives. Without visibility, you risk getting mired in a cycle of technical debt, productivity impacts, revenue and brand losses as the customer, workforce and IT environment around you shifts.

If you're looking to implement some of the above recommendations, we'd love to talk with you. Visit us at [www.sinefa.com](http://www.sinefa.com), or contact us at [sales@sinefa.com](mailto:sales@sinefa.com)

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## About Sinefa

Sinefa is a digital experience monitoring platform that delivers visibility into the entire service delivery chain from endpoint devices across internal and external networks, through applications and APIs, enabling you to plan smarter, deploy easier, resolve issues faster, and run your business smoother.

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