The Elephant in the Room

Why Many Cloud Communications Providers Don't Like to Talk About Security, Compliance and Reliability.

Plus: 10 Tough Questions to Ask

WHITE PAPER

8x8

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Why Many Cloud Communications Providers Don't Like to Talk About Security, Compliance and Reliability

There is a lot of talk these days about the consequences of inadequate security, compliance and reliability in business communications systems. Data leaks affect millions and embarrass the businesses associated with them. Privacy violations put companies' assets and reputations at risk. Downtime results in huge hits to the bottom line. The results? Lost customers and missed business opportunities.

New Requirements and Greater Enforcement Pose Increasing Business Risks

You may have read about requirements imposed on an unprecedented number of companies, such as stricter Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations that cover even companies only tangentially involved in handling protected information. Companies that don't comply risk heavy fines that could amount to millions. And failure to comply with these and other standards could jeopardize their ability to do business with government or government contractors, or with security-conscious financial companies.

Security, Compliance and Reliability are the Elephants in the Room

But have you noticed that it can be extremely hard to get information on these topics out of many business communications providers—those whose systems and services handle all kinds of sensitive information conveyed by phone, video, fax, chat and web communications? They appear to prefer not to discuss these topics at all, or do so only in vague terms, without ever explaining specifically what commitments they are willing to make to their customers.

Perhaps companies don't like to talk about their security, compliance and reliability because they know that they can't always meet important requirements in these areas. For example, some of 8x8's competitors do not meet key US federal government standards such as the HIPAA, a privacy law pertaining to companies that handle healthcare information. Or with some providers that do claim HIPAA compliance, certain features are limited and sometimes critical information is deleted and customers lose access to it.

Straight-talk from 8x8

8x8 is happy to discuss security and compliance. We can talk about it because we can provide compliant services. Here are just a few of the ways that we help companies in their security and compliance efforts.

We Take Security Seriously

8x8's information security and compliance team has more than 20 years of information security experience in financial services, healthcare and other industry verticals at companies such as Visa and HP Professional Services. They play a pivotal role in making sure that 8x8 conforms to the latest security standards and procedures, including these well-known specifications for securing financial information, customer privacy and computer networks:

- **CPNI**—8x8 complies with FCC CPNI regulations for protecting customer proprietary network information.
- **Secure Coding**—8x8 follows secure coding practices including scanning for common vulnerabilities such as OWASP, BSIMM and CWE-based vulnerabilities.
- **Fraud Detection**—8x8's proprietary fraud detection tools and 24-hour network operations center provide significant protection for our customers.
- **Secure Endpoint Provisioning**—All 8x8 endpoints are provisioned and activated securely over an encrypted channel, a practice that's not commonly followed by other providers.

Compliance Is Critical

Many compliance directives are specific to regulated industries, but some are more broadly applicable to large swaths of businesses. For example, HIPAA originally affected primarily healthcare providers and insurance companies, but has now been expanded to affect many other companies that touch information protected by HIPAA.

Also, many companies that do business with US government agencies—or who want to be eligible for government contracts—must comply with the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) and the Federal Information Processing Standard-2 (FIPS-2).

8x8 not only meets these standards, but has engineered its Virtual Office and Virtual Contact Center services to assist 8x8 customers with achieving their own compliance requirements.

> "We needed a true enterprise communications partner that offered the highest levels of uptime and security to successfully run our global business. 8x8 offers the critical efficiencies we need from a full-featured desktop and mobile solution that will help us drive a new level of service as we scale our worldwide presence."
>
> – Doug Brown, NetSuite CIO

HIPAA

8x8 is third-party certified as being a HIPAA-compliant business associate, and is one of the only major cloud communications providers that openly offers business associate agreements (BAAs) to help customers comply with HIPAA requirements. 8x8 services can be configured to be HIPAA-compliant and can be set up with administrative controls and restrictions to protect stored faxes, recordings and voice mails.

FISMA

8x8 services are third-party verified to comply with FISMA—one of the most rigorous security standards found anywhere in the world.

Privacy Shield Framework

8x8 is US/EU Privacy Shield-certified so you can rest assured that your communications meet the rigorous Privacy Shield data protection requirements.

ISO 27001 and 9001

8x8 is ISO 27001- and ISO 9001-certified. ISO/IEC 27001 is an internationally recognized best practice framework for an information security management system.

ISO 9001 sets out the criteria for a quality management system.

Cloud Security Alliance

8x8 has been rated as Enterprise-Ready by the prestigious Skyhigh Networks CloudTrust program. Services with this designation must, at a minimum, satisfy the most stringent Cloud Security Alliance (CSA) requirements for data protection, identity verification, service security, business practices and regulatory protection.

SIP over TLS and Secure Real-time Transport Protocol (SRTP)

Data-in-motion encryption with SIP over TLS and SRTP are also available from 8x8, which enables full end-to-end encryption of both voice signaling and media streams to and through the 8x8 cloud. This capability thwarts eavesdropping attempts on your conversations or "man-in-the-middle" attacks on the IP data traversing the 8x8 cloud.

UK Government Authority to Operate

8x8 UK has been granted an Authority to Operate (ATO) with Her Majesty's government and is approved to supply systems to Her Majesty's secure government agencies.

UK Government G-Cloud

UK Government G-Cloud is an initiative to ease public sector procurement of cloud technology. 8x8 UK has been accepted for inclusion in G-Cloud 7, the UK Government's online digital marketplace for the public sector.

Cyber Essentials Plus

8x8 UK has achieved the UK's Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation and been accepted into the UK's Network Services framework agreement for unified communications. The accreditation demonstrates the robustness of 8x8's IT infrastructure and validates our ongoing commitment to data integrity and security. 8x8's network has comprehensive measures in place to deter cyber crime and is highly secure for clients in both the private and public sectors.

Businesses that Value Compliance Turn to 8x8

8x8's compliance with these important standards means that 8x8's Virtual Office and Virtual Contact Center services can offer a level of security and compliance that no other major cloud communications provider advertises. Maybe that's why so many businesses that must meet stringent requirements for their own products and services choose 8x8.

For instance, when ICANotes, a provider of a web-based electronic healthcare records solution for psychiatrists and other behavioral health professionals, needed a unified communications solution, the company chose 8x8 in part because of the priority that the company places on HIPAA compliance.

"We rely on 8x8's communications services to help us run our business efficiently and securely," says Jamie Morganstern, operations director at ICANotes. "With 8x8, we have safeguards in place to pledge the confidentiality and integrity of the health information of our own customers."

Availability and Reliability

Minimizing the risk of downtime—and ensuring business continuity—are key concerns for businesses with global or critical operations. With redundant data centers located thousands of miles apart, 8x8 is known for providing highly reliable hosted communications.

"One of the primary reasons we chose 8x8's Virtual Office solution was the built-in disaster recovery capabilities it offered," says Ron Godine, director of IT for TMW, a leading transportation firm. "There is no longer one single point of failure in our phone system, because the 8x8 service architecture offers multiple redundancy and rerouting capabilities. Plus, if there is a power failure or Internet outage, our employees can simply unplug their phones, plug them into their home networks and continue interacting with customers as if they were still in the office."

8x8's cloud-based SaaS business communications solutions are delivered from mirrored, top-tier, secure, fully redundant, and geographically diverse state-of-the-art SSAE 16-audited data centers.

The nature of 8x8 communications—hosted, in the cloud—also provides some protection against having extended communications outages caused by local disasters and disruptions. Maybe that's why so many insurance companies rely on 8x8 when they kick into high gear to respond to tornadoes, floods, blizzards, hurricanes and Nor'easters.

"Before I had cloud-based phone service, my insurance agency was damaged by Hurricane Ike, and the day after the storm, customers who called in to set up their claims heard a recording that said 'This number is no longer in service' for 45 days after the storm!" said then-VP at Allstate Insurance Sean O'Donohoe.

"If I'd had cloud-based service before the storm, everyone could have taken the phones with them, and we could have been in constant contact with our customers." O'Donohoe has since moved to 8x8 cloud communications.

10 Tough Security, Compliance and Reliability Questions to Ask Your Communications Provider

How can you separate the real deal from the pretenders when it comes to security, compliance and reliability? While every company has different needs, here are some good conversation starters.

1. **Can you recommend particular configurations of our system to help us comply?** Providers that make compliance a priority can often supply you with expertise or suggestions to help you comply, and they're more likely to have a representative who can explain how their services are set up to facilitate compliance.

2. **Are you a HIPAA-compliant business associate? If so, can you put it in writing?** Many companies aren't, and doing business with them could jeopardize your compliance if you use their services.

3. **What has your communications company done to ensure its own compliance?** For communications providers, compliance is an extensive, ongoing process. First, they must make sure their company complies. And in many cases, they need to verify that their own chain of third parties is also compliant with pertinent regulatory requirements.

4. **Do you have a dedicated security and compliance officer?** Having a dedicated compliance officer on staff is a strong signal that the provider you are doing business with prioritizes security and compliance. For example, 8x8 has a security and compliance officer with more than 20 years of experience.

5. **Which security and compliance regulations and standards do you support?** Depending at least in part on your needs, providers may have to meet a medley of standards and regulations, including HIPAA, FISMA, Privacy Shield Framework, and ISO 27001 and ISO 9001 standards.

6. **Has your compliance been assessed by independent experts? If so, who did the assessment?** Look for third party verification by respected experts so that you don't jeopardize your own company's compliance.

7. **What reliability level can you support?** Ask for at least “four nines”.

8. **What kind of failover capabilities does your service provide?** It is a good practice to have failover between multiple data centers. 8x8 offers seamless failover capability for 8x8 phones. In the event of an issue with the data center, communications automatically and seamlessly fail over to the next-closest data center.

9. **What methods do you offer for business continuity?** When natural disasters or outages strike, you want to be able to keep going, so look for service providers who offer multiple ways to stay connected. Because 8x8 Virtual Office and Virtual Contact Center are available by computer with any browser, calls can be forwarded to cell phones or other sites, and can be moved by transporting your IP phone to any other site with an Internet connection. In addition, your 8x8 phone service can run on employees’ personal smartphones using the 8x8 mobile app.

10. **Do you offer automatic geo-routing capabilities to improve the voice quality of users traveling abroad?** Many providers have a limited number of data centers so they are forced to route calls through remote data centers and back. This can degrade call quality as sometimes these data centers are halfway around the world. 8x8 has 15 data centers strategically located across the globe and uses automatic geo-routing capabilities to enable users’ devices to register to the closest data center. This translates into a high-quality user experience, in particular for thosetraveling abroad.

Ready for the next step?

Contact a Solutions Expert to learn more about how 8x8 can help enhance security and lower costs at your business through one system of engagement that integrates voice, video, chat and contact center capabilities. Call 1.866.879.8647 or visit 8x8.com.

LEARN MORE

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8x8, Inc. (NYSE:EGHT) is a leading provider of cloud phone, meeting, collaboration and contact center solutions with over a million business users worldwide. 8x8 helps enterprises engage at the speed of employee and customer expectations by putting the collective intelligence of the organization in the hands of every employee. For additional information, visit www.8x8.com, or follow 8x8 on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook.

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