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with an IT department who need expertise in some, but not all, areas of hosting data online and would like an outside technical resource to serve as a backup to the in-house IT department.

Strengths:

- At \$29.95 per user, per month (including QuickBooks Pro), Qutera's base offering is the least expensive commercial QuickBooks host reviewed here. Qutera also offers Microsoft Office 365 to customers for hosted Exchange and hosted SharePoint services.
- Qutera offers a wide range of dedicated virtual server cloud hosting options to firms with an IT department who would like the personalized service not available with cloud giants like Rackspace and Amazon.
- The Company offers the free Open Office productivity suite for those who need a simple, inexpensive tool for editing documents, spreadsheets, and presentations, and also refers customers to Microsoft Office 365 for Exchange and SharePoint hosting needs.
- The company is smaller than some of the large hosting providers such as Cloud 9 Real Time, Right Networks, Xcentric, and InsynQ, and is designed to offer a range of higher level hosting services to firms with a front line IT professional. The organization also provides low cost hosting, with hosted QuickBooks Pro at \$29.95/month including a rented product license.

Potential Limitations:

- Qutera has a single data center (in the SouthEast USA, more than 150 miles inland) with significant redundancy within the Tier 2+ facility, but a catastrophic failure in their facility could destroy both the originals and backups of all data and applications.

- The Company's data centers are based in the Southeastern US, and while this may

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firms and organizations with some internal IT support and low cost hosting of QuickBooks and five user instances of Sage 50 US (Peachtree). Qutera also provides contract-based application development and maintenance and support of on-premises servers. The Company does not offer hosting of Microsoft Exchange e-mail or Microsoft SharePoint portals, and recommends that users subscribe to Microsoft Office 365 for these services.

The Company's offerings are segmented into three tiers, QuickBooks and Office centered hosting, SaaS Custom Server Hosting and PaaS Custom Server Hosting.

- The first tier, **Quickbooks and Office Software Hosting**, provides remote data storage and access for any of the last three versions of QuickBooks Pro, Premier, or Enterprise Solutions, as well as Microsoft Office or Open Office productivity software access. The company supports many common QuickBooks add-on applications such as SmartVault, Bill.com, and all Intuit Marketplace applications. Sage 50 hosting is provided on a dedicated custom server with five users, and organizations can host other additional applications such as Microsoft Office or OpenOffice for \$10 per month, per application, per server.
- **SaaS Custom Server** offerings provide the ability to host almost any application on a custom server maintained by Qutera, and are priced based on the processing power and storage required to run the applications. Many common applications used by accounting professionals are supported only in a "Custom Server" configuration, including Adobe Acrobat Standard/Pro, Sage 100 ERP, as well as professional tax and accounting suites from Thomson Reuters, CCH/Wolters Kluwer, Intuit, Drake, and others. In a SaaS custom server, Qutera performs all system administration tasks and installs all updates to applications.
- **PaaS Custom Servers** are servers which are hosted by Qutera, but are administered jointly by Qutera and the client. Organizations obtaining a PaaS

virtual server from Qutera usually have an IT department who is capable of

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desired). Access to client data can also be limited so that users do not automatically have access to all files and data. The company reports that its servers are PCI and HIPAA compliant, although some applications may not themselves be designed to be HIPAA compliant as written by the software publisher.

Data is hosted and stored in a U.S. Tier II+ commercial hosting facility, which is subjected to an annual SOC 2, Type II examination (SSAE 16). I toured Qutera's locked cage at their southeast US data center approximately two years ago, and during my visit, noted that the facility includes cages for some Fortune 500 tenants in addition to locked racks for smaller installation. Qutera's initial configuration of new organizations and new users is currently manual, and has little automation.

The company has multiple levels of redundancy in its hardware (servers, SAN, WAN connections, power, etc.) in the single data center, but does not maintain off-site backups of data for use in the event of a catastrophic failure. Over the past five years, the network has been available 100% of the time, and the services have been available 99.8% of the time, excluding scheduled downtime. The data center is monitored by on-site personnel 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year (including holidays). Data is encrypted in transit as well as when at rest on the company's storage area network (SAN) in the data center.

Technical support is available via telephone or via a web-based support ticket system between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM on weekdays. After hours emergency support tickets are monitored by one of the support engineers on a rotating basis, and are acted upon when required. The company reports that 30% of support tickets are closed within an hour of their creation, another 30% of the tickets are closed within eight hours of creation, and the remaining 40% generally require the company to create and resolve an open support ticket with another vendor (e.g. Intuit, Sage, Microsoft). Support is included with all virtual hosting plans.

Summary and Pricing

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