



Backing Up Your Business Critical Data

by Ravi Dighe, Limephusion - November 2008

The amount of data being created, used and stored by individuals and companies is growing at an exponential rate year on year.

Industry analysts IDC's 2008 research * shows that the "digital universe" is bigger and growing more rapidly than ever before. The digital universe in 2007 was equal to almost 45 gigabytes (GB) of digital information for every person on earth – or the equivalent of over 17 billion 8 GB iPhones. By 2011, the digital universe is projected to be nearly 1.8 zettabytes, a 10-fold increase over the next five years!

With so much information being created by each of us, it is important to manage your data properly. One important aspect of this is the protection of your critical company data.

Stop and think for a moment!

Which data is essential to your business? How about your company sales records, customer profiles, tax details and other sensitive information that is critical to your business' continuing success. Can you afford to lose it and what would you do, if your place of business suddenly ceased to exist or if your computers broke down?

What should you do?

In order to make sure that you are protected against the loss of your company information, you need to consider a method of data backup. For adequate data protection, you

need to set up a data backup process that follows these four steps:

1. Identify your business critical data
2. Back up your data regularly
3. Make sure that your backups are on a dependable media
4. Regularly take backups offsite and/or online

Step 1: Take a survey of all your data that you need to keep your business running. This is a critical and time consuming step, but you need identify what is important to your business. Once you have selected the critical data to be archived, it is a simple matter to install and use a backup software program to archive your business data on a regular schedule.

Step 2: Consider the type and frequency of backup that you want to make. Physical data backups are necessary because of the possibility of computer failure or damage. Even a minor accident such as spilling a cup of coffee onto your laptop could destroy all your data, if that is the only place your data resides. You should create physical data backups of your business data at least once a week, or more often if your business generates large amounts of new data daily.

Step 3: Choose your preferred backup media. There are several methods of transferring your backup files to another media, but some data backup systems are

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more reliable than others. You could use a simple external drive, a tape backup system, a DVD burner, or a central backup device. Copying data over the network to an external drive is the most convenient option. By duplicating each PC's data it is possible to backup each device without the expense of tape drives or removable storage. However, by simply copying your data from one place to another can produce adverse affects to your IT infrastructure, as viruses and Trojans can be passed from one device to another. Consequently, a highly recommended solution is to use a centralised backup device known as a NAS (Network Attached Storage) drive to routinely back up all the devices connected to the network.

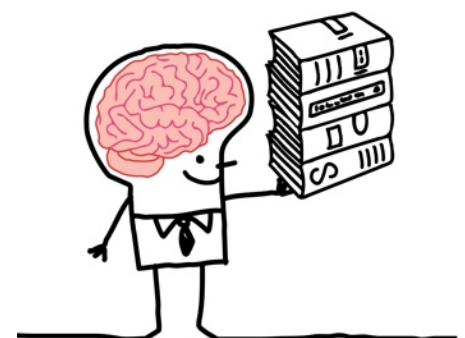
Step 4: Businesses that have fireproof safes usually keep their data backups on-site. However, even if you invest in a tape drive or external hard drive and meticulously adhere to a regular data backup schedule it will not help, if all your data backup copies are in one place and that place is struck by disaster. Therefore, you will want to store copies of your backups off-site, as well, to ensure your business data is truly secure. This would require that you physically take the media off-site on a regular basis.

Finally, in order to avert the possibility of theft or fire damage to your onsite data, it could pay to back up your business critical data remotely. There are numerous providers of online data backup solutions that offer various levels of service. These range from

very simple to that of high security, high availability, resilient data backup solutions. Using an online service is never going to be as fast or convenient as backing up to a local hard disk, but it is worth considering as a complementary solution.

References:

* *IDC Research, sponsored by EMC: http://www.emc.com/digital_universe*





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