

How important are your backups?

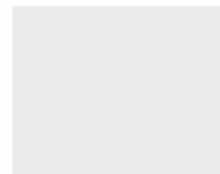
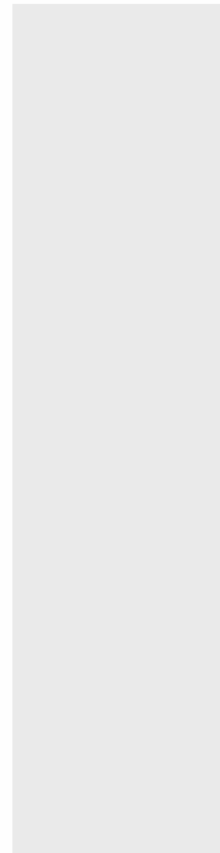
Backing up your data and your server are two of the most overlooked household chores of your IT administrator; unfortunately they are also the most critical. Everyone has heard the administrator recite the phrase, "it's not a question of if but when" when referring to system failure or disaster recovery. Well they were absolutely correct; most people don't appreciate the piece of mind that comes with a backup system until they have gone through a disaster recovery scenario. When and if the time comes to restore your data you can save yourself time, money and even your business if you invest the time and resources to ensure a system is in place. I like to refer to a backup as a system because it consists of many functions working together to produce the desired outcome.

Many of our clients have become our clients because we were able to recover data for them when their system crashed, take my word for it they were lucky! Once data has been recovered our next step is to always put an effective backup system in place. There are two factors to consider when planning a backup strategy, the first is a system failure, the second and most overlooked is a disaster. A disaster has a broad spectrum ranging from natural disaster such as flood or fire to theft or vandalism. To be ready for this two headed threat you must have two tiers of prevention ready. The following is an ideal scenario that any business who values their data should take notice and take action of.

1. RAID is not just for cockroaches. Every server should have a raid configuration set up for redundancy. RAID stands for rapid array of inexpensive disks, basically there are different types of RAID configurations, the long and short of this term is that you have one or more hard drives that are storing your data. An example of this is called a mirror; whatever is written to your primary hard drive is also written to a second hard drive. This method ensures that in the event your hard drive fails (which WILL happen) you can initiate your mirrored hard drive as the main drive and be on your merry way! Ask your IT administrator about this today as it is the front line of any disaster recovery system.
2. Offsite backups. This is where disaster prevention and recovery come in, imagine for just a moment that your building is damaged by fire, flood or even theft and vandalism. You might have a good backup in place but it has now been ruined by an intruder, disgruntled employee or a disaster. To combat this challenge you should have either a tape, external hard drive or an online backup of your data. This scenario will require some hardware and if desired some additional software. Your first decision will be to choose between a tape or hard drive system. Both have their pros and cons and your IT administrator should

go over the pros and cons of each to determine what will meet your needs. If you choose the tape backup you will need a tape drive and at least five tapes for a weekly rotation. If you choose a hard drive solution you will need at least two external hard drives and a protective case for storage. The last need of an offsite system is a destination, your backups must be offsite or you will be wasting time and money. The last option is a nice compliment to your RAID and offsite backup solutions. An online backup is becoming one of the most popular recovery solutions available. It is easy to implement and there is minimal maintenance to keep it going.

Before we get back to our perfect little IT worlds I need to pass along a message to you, your secretary just called and your server was stolen last night, what now?



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