PROTECTING YOUR DATA
WITH OFFSITE BACKUP

DEVELOPED BY U.S. COMPUTER CORPORATION

WHY IS DATA BACKUP IMPORTANT?

Regardless of size or industry, every company generates data critical to maintaining the flow of business. Multiple studies show that the amount of data accumulated over the last two years has surpassed all previous years combined. As a result, companies are faced with two primary challenges: (1) keeping up with the ever-increasing demand for storage, (2) maintaining and ensuring reliable backups in case of data loss or corruption.

Technology companies/manufacturers have come to this realization and have worked diligently to provide many excellent means of protecting your data. However, many companies are still trying to push their backup solutions as "one size fits all". Every business environment is different, and due to the critical nature associated with your data, every situation should be handled on a case-by-case basis.

HOW LONG AND HOW FAR

Every backup solution should be developed based on how you answer the following two questions:

- How long can I be without my data
- How much data can I afford to lose

The first question is typically referred to as RTO (Recovery Time Objective), and it's basically asking how long can you afford to be down. Being "down" is a relative question, however, if you are missing critical data (could be a result of a crashed system, natural disaster, etc.), this could be affecting some, if not all, aspects of your business. Depending on the nature of your business, you may only require a twenty-four hour RTO, or it may be fifteen minutes.

The second question is typically referred to as RPO (Recovery Point Objective), and it's basically asking what's already stated, "how much data can I afford to lose". Just as with RTO, the amount of data loss can greatly impact any business.

However, RPO can be much more critical because you're dealing with actual data loss. With RTO, you'll be getting your data back within the necessary amount of time, but with RPO you're basically agreeing to a certain amount of "acceptable" data loss.

WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE

At this point, you're probably saying "I don't ever want to be without my data, and I don't ever want to lose any data". Please rest assured there are solutions available for you, but as with anything in life, it all boils down to how much you are willing to spend.

Many companies still rely on a nightly backup of data, which is a great solution, and has been for many years. However, if your system crashes or you accidently delete a file at 4:45pm, and your backup doesn't start until 5:00pm, you have potentially lost whatever work you have done since you started that morning. Again, for some companies, this is perfectly acceptable, but we are seeing less tolerance for data loss as more sophisticated backup solutions become more affordable.

WHAT IS THE BEST SOLUTION

There will always be much debate over the best backup solutions available, simply due to the annoying but truthful answer of "it depends".

Most people are ready to jump on "the cloud" bandwagon, and although it's a very good option for some, it's not the only option, or even the best option, for all. There are countless cloud providers out there offering offsite data storage for literally pennies per month, but what is the catch? What is it really costing you in the long run?

There are also those who stick with the tradition tape drive solutions. This is also a very good backup solution for many single-location companies, but once again, not necessarily the best solution for everyone, as it too has many drawbacks or disadvantages.

TRADITIONAL TAPE DRIVES

To be perfectly honest, tape drives have served their purpose, and have done it quite well. Many technology manufacturers have been trying to kill the tape drive for years but haven't been able to do so. For single-location companies who have to maintain full <u>internal</u> control of their data, this is still an excellent solution. It provides a means for easily bringing a copy of your data offsite for safekeeping. Coupled with a reliable backup software, you can verify the integrity of your data. In addition, tapes have a shelf-life of thirty years.

However, tape solutions have their drawbacks. Tape systems are typically slow, and if you're backing up a large amount of data it can be difficult to squeeze every last bit to tape during a normal twelve-hour backup window. They can also be slow and very tedious to restore. If you simply need to restore one file, you may have difficulty tracking down the right tape. Or if you are in need of a large restore, you may have to sit and wait awhile.

One major setback of tape backups is they require a tape system for a restore. In an emergency situation, it may not always be feasible to quickly get your hands on the necessary equipment needed to perform a critical restore.

In addition, tape systems can be fairly expensive, especially if you require a lengthy retention policy. If you need the ability to restore files from a month ago, you may find thirty tapes to be quite pricey.

EXTERNAL USB DRIVES

If you're using standard external USB hard drives for backing up any form of important data, <u>please</u> reconsider. USB hard drives are not meant to handle long, routine backups, and may be corrupting your data without you even knowing about it. There are countless horror stories of companies relying on USB hard drives for their data backup, only to find out the hard way that their data is not usable when they attempt a restore. USB hard drives are great for personal use, but should not be considered in any business environment.

CLOUD STORAGE—PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE

With costs of literally pennies per month, public cloud offerings are very attractive. In addition, it's an easy way to get a copy of your data offsite and spread across to many different locations.

However, "spread across to many different locations" is just as much of a negative as it is a positive. With most public cloud offerings, you have no idea of where your data is actually being stored. If you are dealing with sensitive information, the cloud provider you choose should be taken under serious consideration.

Being at the mercy of an eight hundred number shouldn't be in too many disaster recovery or data backup plans. For this reason, many companies should look to private cloud storage offerings. A private cloud storage solution should include an onsite storage system which allows for quick and easy file restores. It also allows for longer retention policies. Once the data has been sent to your local storage system it is then replicated over to a <u>trusted</u> data storage vendor that maintains full control of where the data is kept.

This service is typically offered as a monthly service, however, it is typically more expensive than a public cloud storage offering. This solution is a very good fit for most companies, but once again, may not be for everyone.

HOW CAN WE HELP

We believe we have or can develop whatever solution necessary to meet every need. We are firm believers in first determining what your needs are before we start presenting you with every possible option. Whatever your need may be, we can implement the best solution available.

We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to sit down with you and discuss your exact business needs. We can't wait to earn your business, so please give us a call!

U.S. Computer Corporation
337-237-2027
info@uscomputers.com
www.uscomputers.com