



Falcon I.T. Services

Comprehensive Solutions for Small Businesses



Good Tape Backup Strategies

Many small businesses rely on Technology Infrastructure to manage their operations. Small businesses have technology solutions that just a few years ago, were affordable only to enterprise sized businesses. Today, many small businesses have their own Databases, E-Mail servers, CAD plotters and even publish their own catalogs. Along with this added capacity comes the added responsibility of safeguarding their own data. Many small business are aware of the need to back up data and to have a backup strategy. In this article, we will look at common backup procedures and how they can affect your business.

Backing Up To Hard Disk

Many small businesses back up their data either to an internal or external hard disk drive. Backing up to disk is fast and can lead to a quick recovery. This option is also very cost effective but it does have some drawbacks.

Pluses: Hard drives are a cost effective alternative to tapes and can hold large amounts of data. They are easy to procure and no additional software is required other than the NT Backup utility from Microsoft.

Minuses: Hard drives have a limited storage capacity so it is difficult to back up more than a few days or a few weeks worth of data on a single hard disk drive. Hard drives are also susceptible to power surges and a strong enough surge can not only damage your server's hard drive but your backup drive as well. Since hard drives are not removable, fire or theft can leave you without a backup copy. Without off site storage, a natural disaster can wipe out your entire backup. Theft can also wipe out your entire backup. Consider that if your external backup drive is sitting on top of your server, it is likely to get stolen along with the server.

Backing Up To Removable Media

Removable media is any media that can be removed from the device that writes to it. Examples of removable media are Floppies, Zip Drives, CD ROM's, Memory Sticks and Tape Backup Drives. Backing up to removable media and maintaining an off site copy is the quintessential backup of IT professionals.

Pluses: Removable media is the preferred method for the simple reason that it offers off site storage. Off site storage is highly redundant and it is a must if your data is very valuable.

Minuses: Tape Backup Drives and their respective software are expensive. Low cost removable media, such as floppies and Zip drives have very low storage capacity, so backing up an entire network is out of the question (although you can still back up your Quickbooks). The higher capacity tape backup drives are better suited for large jobs but they cost more. In addition, many tape backup devices require special controller cards and software that add to the overall price tag.

Securing Your Data

Backing up your data is only the first step in safeguarding it. Depending on the importance of your data and what its loss entails, safeguarding against natural disasters and theft should be taken into consideration and weighed in against costs. Make sure you always have an off site backup. This is important and will ensure that you retain your data in the event that your are burglarized, have a strong power surge or fall victim to a natural disaster. Sensitive data should also be backed up using password protection and backup tapes should only be handled by trustworthy individuals. Any tapes that are to be discarded should be erased prior to doing so. Having a good strategy is just as important as the data it safeguards.



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