

Why Data Backups Are Important To Small Business

By Terry Irwin

Backing up your data is as important to your business as the data itself is. Can you imagine starting your day not being able to retrieve any information about your clients? How much would that cost your business? How many clients could you lose?

A data backup is basically a working copy of your data, ready to be restored if the original copy is lost, damaged, or corrupted. It can be on a recordable CD or DVD, magnetic tape, keychain drive, an additional hard drive, or some other form of media.

Data can be lost in a surprising number of ways. The most common causes of data loss are viruses, power fluctuations, system hardware failures, catastrophic events such as flood, fire, theft, or vandalism, and sometimes intentional or unintentional acts by your employees.

A good backup solution should not be difficult to implement, and should not cause you much inconvenience. A decent backup solution doesn't have to cost a fortune, either.

One of the most frequently overlooked issues with backups is the simple ability to restore the data if it ever becomes necessary. While a lot of companies back up their data religiously, very few ever check to see if they are able to restore any of that data.

Even those who are already backing up their data regularly and testing to make sure they can restore their data make the very common mistake of keeping the backup tapes stored right by the server. If the building catches fire overnight, they could lose not only the data, but all the backups as well. Off-site storage is important, and can be as simple as having one individual responsible for taking last night's backup home with them when they leave for the day.

Your IT professional should be able to devise a backup strategy that can back up all your critical data on a regular schedule, verify the integrity of the backups, password-protect the backups, and make it user-friendly enough and keep it within your budget so that you'll actually stick with it. Having a good information technology professional who is knowledgeable and understands your needs is the key to your peace of mind.