

If Disaster Strikes, How Fast Could Your Company Be Back Up And Running?

You hear it all the time from us - back up your data, keep your virus protection current, and install and maintain a firewall to protect yourself from hackers and other online threats. And we assist many of our clients in these areas. However, while these precautions will certainly help you avoid problems, they CAN'T do anything if you don't have a complete backup and disaster recovery plan in place.

Are You A Sitting Duck?

We all know that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure; yet, disaster recovery planning often takes a distant second to the daily deadlines and pressures of running a business. That means that if you don't have a solid plan in place you may end up offline and without your data after a simple lightning storm. Don't think that could ever happen to you? Consider this: "data-erasing disasters" can also take the form of office fires and broken water pipes, not just earthquakes, floods and tornadoes. If a fire started in your building, the parts that weren't burned beyond recovery would probably be destroyed by the firemen's efforts. But even more common is software corruption, hardware failures and human error!

Disaster Recovery Questions You Need To Answer

A disaster recovery plan doesn't have to be complicated, time-consuming or



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expensive. Start by asking yourself the following questions...

1. Do you back up your company's data daily to both an onsite and offsite location?
2. Are you absolutely certain that your backup copy is valid, complete and not corrupt? How do you know for sure?
3. If disaster strikes, HOW would you get your data back, and how long would it take? In many cases it takes days and often weeks; what would you do during that period of time?
4. Do you have copies of all the software licenses and discs in a safe location that could be accessed in the event of having to rebuild your server?
5. Would you and your employees have a way to access your network remotely if you couldn't get to the office?
6. Do you store important passwords in a secure place that company officers can access if you are unavailable?
7. Do you have a UPS (uninterruptible power supply) device in place to keep your network and other critical data operations running during a power outage?

Now there are things on the list that several of our clients don't have to worry about because we are already providing them with the services to ensure they are not an issue. But not every client takes advantage of all the backup and recovery services we offer and the list also includes tasks that you need to perform. Plus, this is NOT a complete list, but it is a good start to get you thinking in the right direction.

Our FREE Disaster Recovery Audit Helps You Prepare

Because of the scare we had with Hurricane Irene, we've decided to help our clients get their "IT house" in order by giving away a FREE Backup and Disaster Recovery Audit. At no charge or obligation, we'll come to your office, review your current plan (or lack of one!) and provide a simple action plan on what you need to do to make sure your business can always be up and running. But take note! We can only make this available to our clients through the month of November; after that, the fee for this consultation will be \$395. For more information, please contact our office at (302) 656-8324 and ask for Rich Kenney, or e-mail him at RKenney@TechSolutionsInc.com.

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How to Create a Strong Password You'll

Actually Remember

Pop quiz: See if you can guess which password is more secure -- Tr0ub4dor&3 or correcthorsebattery Staple. The first password is a jumble of letters (both uppercase and lowercase), numbers and characters, with a few numbers substituting for letters. The second is a string of four common words -- correct horse battery staple.

So. Which is the better password? Keep in mind that hackers can design programs to run thousands of password guesses per second....

If you picked the second one -- the string of common words -- give yourself a gold star! It's the stronger, more secure password. It's also easier to remember than the first. And it goes against all of the password advice we've been given to date.

"Through 20 years of effort, we've successfully trained everyone to use passwords that are hard for humans to remember, but easy for computers to guess," writes Randall Munroe, mathematician and creator of the brilliant XKCD.com, "a webcomic of romance, sarcasm, math, and language."

According to Munroe's calculations, the jumbled password could be cracked in about three days by a program running 1000 guesses a second -- child's play, in other words. The same program would need 550 years to guess the second password, which has roughly 44 bits of entropy (compared to the other's 28).

What does this mean to you? It means you can stop picking (and forgetting) gobbledygook passwords. Instead, choose a few generic words (avoid proper nouns like your dog's name or your hometown) and commit them to memory. Time required? Less than a minute. Brain cells required? Very few. Now your passwords are stronger AND easier to remember.

[See Munroe's comic here.](#)

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To Workaholics Who Want to Kick the Habit

Do you have trouble balancing work and life? If so, you might be a workaholic. Disclaimer: We can't claim any particular expertise in workaholicism -- personal experience, yes -- so if you think you have a severe case, we suggest consulting your primary care physician for help.

To be clear, workaholicism is not a recognized addiction (for now). But that doesn't mean it's not a potentially serious condition. According to Dr. Ben Kim and his popular eponymous website, "workaholicism is considered a symptom

of obsessive/compulsive personality disorder which is characterized by perfectionism, inflexibility, and preoccupation with work."

That's not all. People who work too much are also risking their lives: men who take vacations are 32 percent less likely to die from heart attack; women who don't take vacations are up to 8 times more likely to suffer from heart disease.

If you're tipping toward an unhealthy relationship with work, to the extent that you're at risk of compromising your overall health or putting undue strain on your loved ones, we suggest trying these simple but effective strategies for leaving work each day (courtesy of Lifehacker.com):

- Enlist a family member to call you each day when it's time to leave
- Schedule an activity right after work each day (fitness class, social event, etc.)
- Review completed tasks and accomplishments every afternoon
- Learn to say no to new projects and last-minute requests
- Get professional help if necessary

Of course, there are degrees of work addiction. A strong work ethic and a dedication to excellence are, in the right amounts, admirable qualities that you shouldn't try to "cure." But when your career starts to seriously damage other core areas of your life -- i.e. your physical and emotional health, your relationships with your spouse and/or children -- it's time to tackle the issue before your workaholism causes irrevocable damage.

Learn more at Lifehacker.com

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5 Cool Tools for Reading Online

Google Reader

Do you return to certain websites on a regular basis? With Google Reader, you can read them all in one clutter-free place, making keeping up with your favorite blogs and news sites as easy as checking your email. Plus, you can easily share articles and save them for later -- all it takes is a Google account.

Instapaper

Instapaper is "a simple tool to save web pages for reading later." Just start an account, click and drag the bookmarklet to your browser's bookmarks bar, and click it whenever you want to save a web page (i.e. lengthy article or silly video) for later. The nice thing about Instapaper is its accessibility -- since it's web-based, you can access your saved articles from any computer.

[Free] web + mobile

Readability

Like Instapaper, this browser add-on lets you save pages for later as well as "zap online clutter" from web pages to improve your reading experience. Imagine: no more annoying animated ads trying to distract you from the content at hand. The \$5 monthly fee supports writers and publishers, helping them continue to produce great material.

[\$5/mo.] web + mobile

Float

The Float app (there are web and mobile versions) lets you save articles for later, customize your reading view, aggregate your favorite publishers and news sources, and share good articles with friends. You can also follow other users and get suggestions on what to read next. Quite cool.

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Long Reads

Not sure what to read? With Long Reads, you'll never be without great reading material. The volunteer editors at Long Reads take the time to curate the best articles on the web, pulling from great periodicals like the New Yorker, the Atlantic Monthly and Sports Illustrated. Sink your teeth into some great essays, short stories and long-form journalism.

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Character Test: Know Your Slash from Your Dash

Because sometimes a tiny character can make a huge difference!

/ forward slash

Leans forward. Forward slashes are for Internet addresses.

: colon

Also used in Internet addresses. Traditionally this mark informs the reader that what follows the mark proves, explains, or lists elements of what preceded the mark. (Wikipedia)

\ backslash

Leans backward. Backslashes are for Windows folder and file names.

/ Slash

Former lead guitarist for Guns N' Roses. Born Saul Hudson in London, England.

- hyphen

Sometimes called a "dash," but these should be used to hyphenate things. :)

- en dash

Rarely used. Typography sticklers use them to indicate a period of time. January-June; The years 2001-2003.

-- em dash

Indicate(s) added emphasis, an interruption, or an abrupt change of thought. Can be used in place of parentheses or commas in informal writing. Em dashes don't always render correctly in web browsers. A common workaround is to use two hyphens -- with a space on each end.

_ underscore

These are helpful for naming documents that will be uploaded to the web because they separate words and improve readability. (Files on the web cannot have spaces in their names; any spaces are typically replaced with the unsightly % (percentage character).

| pipe, or vertical bar

A lovely character, don't you think? Very handy for title tags on websites.

Smart quotes vs. dumb quotes

Smart (or curly) quotes are usually curved in shape and have different opening and closing versions for use at the beginning and end of quoted material. Dumb (or straight) quotes are usually tapered vertical marks. These are also referred to as "primes" or "hatch marks" and should be used in numerical measurements only. Caution: Curly quotes can sometimes get mangled in web browsers.

Typography nerds and anal-retentive designers will get seriously miffed if they catch you using dumb quotes, so be careful! [More info here.](#)