

7 Ways To Dodge A Data Disaster



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You stride into the office early one Monday morning. You grab a cup of coffee, flip on your computer and start checking e-mail...

A note pops up that rivets your attention:

“Your files have been encrypted. Send \$5,000 within five days or they will all be destroyed.”

You start sweating as your throat constricts and your chest tightens. Sure enough, every time you try to open a document, the same message appears. Your phone rings. It’s Bob in accounting, and he’s having the same problem. All files across your entire network have been encrypted. You contact the local police. They suggest you call the FBI. The FBI says they can’t help you. What do you do next?

- a) You pay the five grand, desperately hoping you’ll get your data back, or...
- b) You calmly call your IT pro, who says, “No problem, your backups are all current. No files were lost. Everything will be restored by noon, if not sooner.”

If your answer is “b,” you breathe a sigh of relief and get back to work as your backup plan kicks in...

Ransomware attacks are more common than ever, especially at smaller companies. That’s because small companies make easy marks for hackers. The average small business

is much easier to hack than high-value, heavily fortified targets like banks and big corporations. According to Time magazine, cybersecurity experts estimate that several million attacks occur in the US alone every year. And that figure is climbing.

So how can you make sure you never have to sweat a ransomware attack or other data disaster? One sure solution is having a solid backup plan in place. When all your data and applications can be duplicated, you have plenty of options in the event of an attack. Here then are seven ways to make sure you’re in good shape, no matter what happens to your current data:

Insist on regular, remote and redundant processes. A good rule of thumb is 3-2-1. That means three copies of your data is stored in two off-site locations and backed up at least once per day.

Don’t cheap out on disk drives. Less expensive arrays that save money can leave your data at risk. Get features like a redundant power supply and hot spare disks.

Guard against human error. Make sure people doing backups know exactly what to do. Take people out of the loop and automate wherever possible. And watch for situations where backups aren’t a part of someone’s regular duties.

Check backup software settings routinely. When new software or updates are put into service, a change in the way the settings are configured can cause incomplete backups, or backups that fail. Do the people who maintain your backups include this on their regular to-do list?

Make sure critical files aren’t getting left out. As resources are added and priorities shift, documents and folders can get misplaced or accidentally left off the backup list. Insist on a quarterly or annual meeting with your backup management team to make sure all mission-critical files are included in your organization’s data recovery systems.

Address network issues immediately. Any component in your network that isn’t working properly can introduce another point of failure in your backup process. Every juncture in your network, from a misconfigured switch to a flaky host bus adapter, can hurt your backups.

Ask for help with your data backup and recovery system. You cannot be expected to be an expert in all things. Yet data is the backbone of your business – its protection and recovery should not be left to chance. Leverage the knowledge, skill and experience of an expert who stays current with all the latest IT issues. For a FREE Data Recovery Review, call us today at (765) 742-3440.

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IT Security Tip #15: Set up bank alerts - NOW!

Here's a tip that just might save your bacon: set up withdrawal alerts on your bank accounts. Many banks will send you an e-mail alert whenever money is withdrawn from your account via check, debit card or transfer. Setting up those alerts will allow you to spot and report fraudulent activity BEFORE the money has already been siphoned into a cybercriminal's hands.

Concerns Over SmartHome Eavesdropping Have People Worried

With all its potential, the Internet of Things has problems.

The single biggest one of these relates to privacy. This came into sharp focus last year when a smart TV producer revealed that their products were always on and could easily record private conversations. If the servers housing those recordings were hacked, it could put a variety of sensitive information into the hands of extremely unsavory people.

Late last year, recordings made by an Amazon Echo were requested to help in a murder investigation, which marks the start of a disturbing trend. This trend has consumers increasingly rejecting smart devices.

In theory, smart devices are fantastic, especially when several are chained together. Your thermostat can track your comings and goings, only activating when people are home. Your blinds can be tied into the system, opening and closing based on your patterns of movement inside your home. Lights can learn to turn on and off automatically via the same principles, and cumulatively, these things working seamlessly, in tandem, can save you a tremendous

amount of money.

The problem, though, is that the data required to make all that function has to be stored somewhere, which means it is at risk. Further, device manufacturers cannot survive simply by selling their smart products. They need to charge subscription fees to make up the difference, and customers have, so far, not expressed much interest in paying to expose their data to risk of theft.

Given that the industry is still in its infancy, this reluctance poses an existential threat. Until and unless smart device manufacturers can come up with some way to offer their products at attractive prices, guarantee the security of the data they collect to make those products function, and charge subscription-based fees low enough that they don't push their small customer base away, the future of the smarthome is very much in doubt.

This, of course, represents an enormous opportunity for the right company. Perhaps for your company.

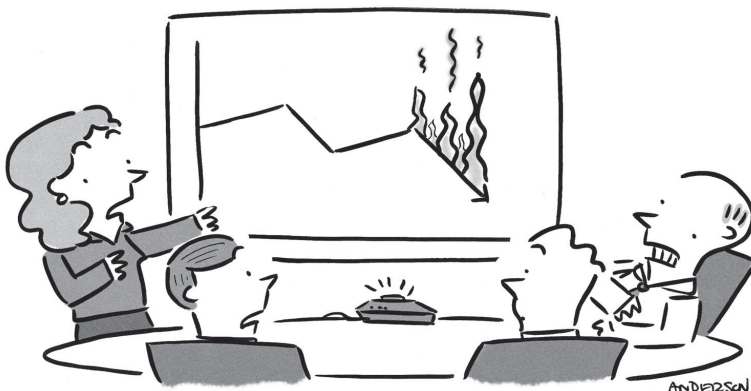
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FACT FILE

DID YOU KNOW?

- On eBay, there is an average of over \$680 worth of transactions every second.
- 91% of all adults have their mobile phone within arm's reach every hour of every day.
- Over 300 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute.
- Nearly 5 billion videos are viewed on YouTube every single day.
- Google now processes over 40,000 search queries every second on average, which translates to over 3.5 billion searches per day and 1.2 trillion searches per year worldwide.
- Snapchat has 158 million daily active users and an average of 2.5 billion snaps per day.
- In 2015 an average of 205 billion emails were sent daily with 90% being spam and viruses.
- Worldwide, there are over 1.86 billion monthly active Facebook users.
- There are over 83 million fake profiles on Facebook.
- On average, people check their phones 150 times per day and spend 177 minutes using them.
- On average, around 6,000 tweets are tweeted on twitter every second.

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"So now sales aren't just bad, they're also on fire."

Client Bill of Rights

You have the right to expect us to lead the way in fostering and implementing innovation and creativity in our service offerings through an unyielding commitment to providing the best technology and services possible.

We pledge to provide exceptional technology for your business and will provide the best technical talent to manage that technology and surpass your service expectations.

Amazon Cloud Goes Down, Causes Outages Across The Internet



In recent years, an increasing number of companies have migrated to the Cloud for cost-saving reasons, but today, we got a painful reminder of the limitations and risks associated with doing that.

Amazon's cloud-based service, AWS, suffered an outage that is impacting a number of people who rely on the service, including, but not limited to:

- Trello
- Quora
- IFTTT
- Wix
- Alexa
- GroupMe
- Nest (Google's thermostat control app)
- And others

In a bitter irony, the website isitdownrightnow.com relies on the service, and was unavailable.

As of the writing of this article, Trello users report having spotty success with getting the page to load, although even when successful, not all assets on the page load. So, users are not recommended to try to perform any critical work using the system.

Amazon has not released any information on what caused the outage. They have just made it clear that they are aware of the problem and actively working to resolve it.

That brings us back to the topic of risk.

Back in the old days, before the cloud, if a company's server went down, it impacted that company and slowed down their immediate suppliers, but the ripple effect stopped there.

These days, with so many companies using cloud-based services, if one of the providers goes down, it can cause an outage that shuts down significant segments of the internet.

This is not a reason to rethink reliance on cloud-based services, but rather, an acknowledgement that a proper risk assessment needs to be performed. Reliable backup plans must be in place to deal with the eventuality that a critical cloud-based service may go down unexpectedly.

In the modern business world, speed is life, and few things are worse than to go from warp speed to a standstill in the blink of an eye, and be powerless to do anything about it.

Take steps to make sure you never find yourself in that situation. If you're not sure how to proceed, call us today and speak with one of our knowledgeable team members. We'll assess your current situation and the risks associated with it, and work with you to draft a backup plan for greater peace of mind.

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Last month's question was: **Which Indiana city was once known as the "Circus Capital of America"?** The correct answer was D) Peru.

Debby Parisi was drawn as the winner. Congratulations!

TECH TALK

Cassette audio tapes (remember those?) are making a comeback.

Compact disk sales are declining, yet vinyl records have enjoyed a resurgence over the past several years. And last year, cassette sales rose to 129,000 units, an increase of 74% over 2015. So what's up with cassettes – why so popular all of a sudden? Actually, the numbers are still miniscule compared to the 105 million CDs sold in 2016. Yet the bump in cassette sales reflects a growing appetite for tangible items that fans can cherish. Also, it doesn't hurt that artists like Justin Bieber, Eminem and Prince brought tape reissues to market. Or that online retailer Urban Outfitters has exclusive deals to sell their cassettes, as well as vintage gear to play them on.

TheVerge.com, 01.23.17

As of January 31, "outsiders" can now Skype into the White House Press Room.

This enables journalists outside the Washington, DC, area to ask questions during White House press briefings. It's part of the Trump administration's strategy to keep in touch with people outside the beltway. Journalists attending via Skype must be at least 50 miles from the DC area.

All political questions aside, it's just another example of business (or, in this case, government) taking advantage of available technologies. Or, in this case, finally catching up... Skype, the world's largest video calling service, is nothing new – it's been around since 2003.

Sometimes it just takes a while for users to figure out how to make tech work to their advantage. *Yahoo.com, 01.31.17*

Contest Corner

Who Wants To Win A Gift Card?

This month we are giving away a \$10 Panera Gift Card. The winners will be chosen at random from all correct entries received by the 16th.

What was the original state capital of Indiana?

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| A) Avilla | B) Corydon |
| C) Galveston | D) Pendleton |

E-mail Jeff@bssconsulting.com with your answers!



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Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise. Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails. Proverbs 19:20-21 NIV

Visit Us At The Greater Lafayette Business Expo

Visit us at booth #22 at the Greater Lafayette Commerce Business Expo on Wednesday April 19th. The expo runs from 11:00am-5:00pm with a Business After Hours from 5:00pm-7:00pm.

Find out how BSS can eliminate the risk of getting ransomware and protect you from the bad guys getting into your network. See the tools and processes BSS uses to support and protect our clients critical business information.



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**-Ken Thompson,
Administrator,
St. Anthony Healthcare**

"We're in the business of taking care of people. We let the professionals take care of the software and hardware. BSS does that without hesitation, hiccups, problems, or delays. So much of our industry is dependent upon technology and BSS and their staff provide us with the support that we need.

They're great to work with. They're nice, polite, and know what they're talking about. They're always looking to the future and I think that's great. I don't have to worry about any of that stuff. I can focus on taking care of patients and running a business.

They make us more efficient in our time so that we can take care of our patients in a better, quicker manner, with the real time information that we need. We couldn't work without Business System Solutions."

What Our Clients Are Saying