

Backing up data is a necessary business practice and in most industries it is an operational requirement. With 90 percent of companies going out of business within two years of failing to recover lost data from a major data loss*, backing up important files and information using a secure and reliable method has never been so critical. When instituting a backup strategy, there are several factors to consider before choosing a method. These factors can help businesses determine whether an online backup solution such as Expert Backup Now Online Backup would be more secure, cost-effective and reliable than portable media backup, such as tape, for their organization.

Reliability

One major factor to consider when choosing a backup method is reliability. Is the method prone to failure? Will the data be accessible in the event files need to be restored? With portable media such as tapes, CD's floppy disks, and pen drives, you run several risks. Firstly, tapes and disks are infamously failure-prone and are susceptible to damage by the environment and improper handling. They can also be ruined by electromagnetic fields that are, ironically enough, emitted by electronic devices that create the data. Secondly, when there is a need to recover files, many times portable media fails. Storage Magazine reports that over 34% of companies do not test their backups and of those tested 77% found that tape backups failed to restore. According to Microsoft, 42% of attempted recoveries from tape backups in the past year have failed. In addition, Ben Matheson, group product manager for Microsoft Data Protection Manager, said, "More than 50 percent of customers we've surveyed said their current backup solutions do not fill their needs."

With an online backup service, the data is encrypted and stored on mirrored remote servers located thousands of miles apart. Expert Backup Now Online Backup solution protects the data using a 256 bit encryption method and stores everything in military-grade, SAS 70 certified, secure facilities. Thus, there is virtually no risk of files being corrupted or lost while data is in transfer or storage. There is also no threat of losing the data as a result of natural disasters such as fire or floods or malicious acts such as theft. With mirrored data centers there is an additional level of protection, the data is backed up a second time to another tier 4 secure storage facility. The data is available anytime, anywhere. Moreover, if there is a need to restore files, the recovery rate is far greater than using portable media. Expert Backup Now reports a recovery rate of over 99%. With these factors considered, online backup is surely a much more reliable method than portable media backup.

Cost

Another factor to consider is the economics of each method. Generally, tape drives cost between \$350 up to thousands of dollars. Most tapes range from \$25 to \$50 each and most businesses will back up to several tapes each week. With traditional tape backups, the tapes have to be physically transferred to a secure vault. The cost of transporting and housing the tapes can escalate the expenses of most IT budgets.

Another cost associated with portable media is employee training and support. Training is typically necessary in order for employees to operate the hardware, software or both depending on the media. If customer support is needed, additional costs may apply. Training and support can be both expensive and time-consuming. Expert Backup Now Online Backup eliminates the cost for tapes, disks and drives, employee training, transportation to and from facilities, and customer support. Expert Backup Now charges a set price per month for our service, depending upon the amount of storage space your organization needs. The service also includes free 24/7 customer support.

Companies must also consider potential financial loss in the event they experience a data loss. Downtime can wreak financial havoc on a business. Since recovery rates for online backup are significantly higher in terms of file restoration success and time spent to restore those files, this method could save an organization a considerable amount of money when disaster strikes. Hurricane Katrina and the flooding that followed afterward is a good example of businesses losing revenue due to the recovery time in rebuilding their data structure. With online backup, a business can recover their data in a matter of a few minutes and have their business operational within a day or two after the disaster.

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Ease Of Use

Reliability and cost are important, but ease-of-use can also be a deciding factor when choosing a backup solution. With Expert Backup Now Online Backup, setting up the solution involves the simple process of signing up online and installing a small client on the computer or server. Within minutes, you can begin backing up files. Portable media backup can be more labor-intensive as hardware and/or software must be manually configured. This setup process can take several hours or even days to complete and test depending upon the size of the organization.

Backing up to a portable drive can become time-consuming and impractical. The data will have to get uploaded every day manually and then moved offsite to a secure location. With an online backup solution, the backup is performed via an internet connection and no daily maintenance is required. Expert Backup Now Online Backup is completely automated and the service includes all the necessary software as well as free technical support. One small disadvantage to online backup is the time it will take to upload the first full backup, however, once the software is properly configured, backups will occur automatically on the schedule you set up. Fortunately, with today's advancement in Internet connection speed and inexpensive bandwidth, the time it takes to initially back up has improved greatly. Subsequent to the first full backup it will only upload any new or modified files. With portable media backup, full manual backups are necessary each night if any new files were added or changed during the day. Moreover, as your company grows, your data will grow. You may have to catalog endless CDs or change tapes in the middle of a data backup if you run out of space. With Expert Now Online Backup, you never run out of storage space. Your online storage account can grow with it automatically.

If it becomes necessary to restore files, the process greatly differs between online backup and portable media backup. Firstly, online backup allows users to recover their files at any time from any location. No special hardware or labor is required. The recovery procedure is not only easy and efficient, but it is also much faster than portable media backup. This has become a major reason that organizations are making the switch. Most portable media solutions require trained professionals to perform the file restoration. If the tapes or disks are stored off-site, the company must also wait for them to be delivered. Once returned, the trained professionals may have to spend a significant amount of time, days to weeks, restoring the files. This downtime can suspend business operations and cause major financial quandaries. Expert Backup Now Online Backup can restore files and have the business up and running again within a few hours.

Data Security

How important is your data to your business? Do you worry about others gaining access to this data? All companies should ensure that their critical business data is protected and not accessible to others. With portable media, the tapes or disks themselves can be secure, however, their security greatly depends on whether or not they are taken off-site. If not, your data will still be susceptible to natural disasters and theft. If the media is moved to a secure facility, there still remains a risk of damage during transport. Expert Support Now Online Backup provides a virtually risk-free method for protecting important business data. Expert Backup Now Online Backup safeguards data by packaging files using an advanced technology.

Next, each data file is encrypted using a unique 256 bit encryption key that you choose to ensure that files cannot be accessed by others. For added security, each encrypted file is sent over the Internet via a secure channel using Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) technology which is the same Internet transmission technology that is used for online banking and credit card applications. The data resides in two military-grade data centers located thousands of miles apart from each other. Each data center has 24/7 monitoring, advanced security technology such as biometric access controls, backup generators and redundant connections to the Internet.

Assessment

When you compare factors such as reliability, cost, ease-of-use and data security, it becomes clear to see that the benefits of online data backup are far superior to portable media backup. Businesses today can protect themselves by protecting their critical data. Expert Backup Now Online Backup offers an industry-leading online backup solution, which can safeguard organizations of any size.

*Small Business Administration