



DATA BACK UPS

Data backup should be an essential part of every professional firm's activities. Hardware failure, theft, accidental deletion or a disaster (such as a flood or fire) could see vital files on your computer lost beyond recovery and, as a result, your business could be severely disrupted.

What are the options?

There are many backup options available for professional firms and you may want to consider choosing multiple methods that will ensure you are covered in the event of one failing.

Deciding on the right solutions can be a daunting task, so below are three examples of the most popular backup options available.

Local backup

Although online and off-site backup have many benefits (storage on professionally-maintained servers and safety from local disasters amongst them), some firms rely solely on local backup solutions due to the increased speed, control and near-certain privacy that can be gained from it.

Some popular 'offline' solutions include:

- Backup and Restore - Window's built-in backup utility allows you to backup all of your hard drive, or just certain folders.
- Time Machine for Mac - popular with designers and creative professionals, backs up all files on a Mac and checks hourly for changes.
- External Hard drive of Office Server equipment – provided these are physically separate from your network, these are ideal 'offline' but may be labour intensive to keep timely back-ups. There are also physical security considerations, eg locked room or cabinet.
- 'Cold back-up' software 3rd party software can be set up to store data across different mediums into a database that can be accessed offline

Online backup

Storing files in the cloud not only means flexible storage that can be accessed from any computer, but also less upfront investment. There is a huge number of online cloud backup solutions sold directly or via IT service providers.

Examples include:

- unique encryption key allows user to selectively store

across. Usually a 2GB account, with a 'pro' version providing additional GB available for a fee.

- charges on a 'per computer' basis
- continuous backup which protects selected data over time duration and allows user to 'roll back' if system is corrupted or suffers from hacking incident.

Hybrid backup

Many firms do not have the time or resources to use both backup options, but if your firm is sizeable, you may want to consider a "hybrid" solution comprising both local and online services in one package.

A final consideration is segregation if you are storing large amounts, or data processing as a professional service. To mitigate against a large scale loss the back-ups options should consider reorganising large individual back-ups.

Key question – do you check and regularly inspect the quality of your back-ups?

Summary

With a solid backup strategy in place, firms can mitigate the problems that an unexpected loss of data can present. Every firm is different, so it is important to invest time in conducting a thorough assessment of your backup needs.

Businesses are increasingly looking for 'bespoke' arrangements that can adapt and be monitored and maintained by an IT expert.

Benefits from an Insurance Perspective

- Data security is becoming a more common underwriting factor
- Good risk management will be rewarded with discounted premiums or a quicker underwriting decision
- Larger companies are passing responsibilities down the supply chain through insurance verification

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