

The Bulletin

Technical Tips

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Online Backups: The foundation for a cost-effective disaster recovery planning

As a result of Hurricane Katrina, many organizations are thinking about disaster recovery planning. Last edition, I described how to create a comprehensive information technology (IT) disaster recovery plan. For organizations with fewer resources, online back ups are a cost-effective way to handle the basics of such a plan.

As long as you have a reliable, high-speed internet connection; select a reputable online backup service and are backing up key information; online backups provide:

Instant offsite electronic data protection: Data is automatically moved offsite to a hardened storage facility (i.e. the facility has redundant internet connections, servers, and power and is constructed to withstand natural disasters as well as provide the best in physical and data security) every fifteen minutes.

Electronic data retrieval from anywhere: Data retrieval can be initiated using a web browser from anywhere in the world.

Guaranteed electronic data recovery: Most reputable online data back up services guarantee almost 100% data recoverability.

Fast electronic data retrieval: Retrieving data typically takes about a day. The most time consuming system restoration activities are sourcing and arrival of key equipment in a new facility as well as server set up. These activities take at least 5 days.

Cost effective electronic data recovery: Currently, online backups cost about the same as other data backup methods for small organizations. Under certain circumstances, the benefits of online backups outweigh the costs for larger organizations as well.

To take the next step in IT disaster recovery planning, you need to ensure you

can restore critical systems such as your time keeping and billing application to full operation from data backups within in a specified time frame on a yearly basis.

To complete your IT disaster recovery plan, you also need to decide, document and practice how to manage key people, paper documents, facilities, equipment and third party data and systems in the event of a disaster.

===== If you have questions or concerns about your particular situation, please e-mail me at tpsnyder@xantrion.com. I will use your input to direct future columns. =====