

Back up Solutions

Lessons Learned

After being in the computer business for 15 years we have seen too many business's come to a halt because their computer system became unusable, this because they no longer have access to their critical data. There is not one sure fire solution for data loss and the protection of your data, so we decided to put together a menu of solutions to insure our customers the best possible protection for never having to worry about :

“Am I Backed UP ?”

How many times in your career have you had to rely on a backup to save you ? Did this put you a day or two behind ? Or did you have to spend after hours and weekends inputting information from months ago ? In most cases these customers thought they were backing up, they would religiously change tapes every morning, but when their hard drive “Crashed” and it was time to restore, the tapes were blank or did not contain the files most often used. How can this happen? Well.. easier than you think. This is why we thought as your hardware vendor we should make you aware of these pitfalls and what you can do to prepare and protect yourself from them.

Often, when a tape drive fails it doesn't give you any indication. Maybe the backup program you are using surprises the errors, maybe you leave your server monitor off, or the screen that you leave it on overrides the error reporting. Sometimes the tape drive thinks it's backing up, indicating no error report, however when checked, the tapes are blank.

When a user leaves for the evening, they usually bring their screen back to the main menu. As with most software programs, the main menu still has files that it keeps open. Many times these are important files, like your customer master file, now when the backup program tries to backup this file at 2:00 in the morning, it sees that this file is open and skips over it, often without any notification.

Be Prepared

If the above has not yet made you concerned, maybe this will catch your attention, do you have a backup of your operating system, interpreter (BBx) software, backup, fax, E-Mail, EDI, Software? Over the years we have gone in and replaced many hard drives and subsequently ask for their last backup tape, operating system, and any other programs that may have resided on the system prior to it's failure. In most cases we receive a single tape and the operator saying "It should all be on here". Well guess what, it's not, and we spend countless hours trying to find and recover these important items.

The bottom line is being prepared. You should know what you have and where you have it. This is an important part of your business and even the most diligent controller should review their backup procedures, the tapes contents and the location of their software products.

With the cost of hardware products coming down, more specifically hard drives; it is now cost effective to add a hard drive to your server. Adding a hard drive acts like a mirror to your existing data drive. In many cases, the software to do this is already on your system. Peak Computer would simply install a matching hard drive, configure and test. Now, in the event of a failure, all the information is available by just a matter of re mapping. Which can be the difference between being down minutes rather than hours or even days.

Consider Yourself Warned !

Often we have been asked "Why hasn't anyone ever told me this before" in most cases they have. Maybe their predecessor or supervisor were told, but because of the impending problem they are more apt to listen. We at Peak Computer, would like to express the importance of back ups and would like to offer our services to insure your piece of mind in regards to the safeguard of your data.

Peak's Solutions

On Site Backup Evaluation	Off Site data Verification
Identification of Software Products	Disaster Recovery
Consultation with Software Vendor	Periodic Data Testing
Insure all Critical Files are being Copied	Back up Verification via Modem
Mirrored Drive Installation	Off Site Tape Storage / Testing
Improved Software Backup Solution	Weekly Tape Pick up / Delivery

On Site Backup Evaluation

A knowledgeable Peak Computer representative will come to your location and evaluate your current back up situation. Peak Computer will then provide your business with a written description of the pro's and con's of your current solution and what improvements should or can be made to safe guard your data.

Identification of Software Products

Peak Computer will evaluate, at your location what software products you should have available in case of a system failure, these are software items you have previously purchased. Item such as your operating system, Basis BBx Interpreter software, (98% of all our customers have this product and less than half know it), VSI fax, Word, etc .All this items should be readily available in case of emergency along with any license keys needed to do a reinstall them.

Consultation with Software Vendor

This may be the single most important part of back up preparedness, you don't know what the name of your vendor master file is and nor do we, so we must supply a list of file names to your software vendor who can help us evaluate which files should be included in your daily/weekly/monthly back up routine.

Mirrored Drive Installation

This is fast becoming the back up solution of choice by several of our customers. This involves installing an additional hard drive in your system so all the information being written is duplicated by "mirroring" the data. Although this does not and should not replace a tape back up drive, it is a great solution for insuring data duplication as well as limiting down time in case of a drive crash.

Improved Software Back up Solutions

As technology advances, so does the software products that drive our hardware. Back up software solutions now allow users to back up and verify data more quickly and thoroughly. Solution may vary depending on your Operating System, but we have tested all applications and we are ready to recommend which software will safeguard your system. One major improvement is the ability to back up open files, this will insure complete backups even when users don't log off properly.

Off Site Data Verification

The best place to verify your data is on our system. We can evaluate which files are being backed up and if the files contain any information. This procedure can be done on a monthly, quarterly, or semi annual basis. Remember, you never know if your data is really being backed up until you restore it. Peak Computer we can restore your full backup and have you actual test your data at our location.

Disaster Recovery

Peak Computer has purchased a data safe to keep our customers back up's in case of a disaster at their location, in this event, Peak Computer can install your last backup into a new system and have you up in running in very little time. We will also make sure we have copies of all your important software and operating system information. You can use our office or we can set this up at a temporary facility.

Modem Back Up Verification

Not sure how, or don't have the time to deal with checking your back up's ? Peak Computer can dial into your modem (depending on your operating system & software installed) and check your back ups on a regular basis, this to insure that there they are be done properly.

Data Tape Storage Pick up & Delivery

This is the newest of our services. We send a driver by on a routine schedule to pick up your last back up and we will store it in our data safe. This would be a good alternative to having back up tapes carried around in the back seat of your employees car. On the next trip, we would than delivery these tapes and pick up a fresh set of recent back ups. While we have your tapes, we can also test them for data integrity.

Final Solution

The final solution is up to you, which option or options fit your business.. We at Peak Computer are only interested in keeping your business going strong by keeping your data protected from loss by insuring your back ups are good and safe.

If you would like to further discuss or pursue any of the listed data protection plans,

Please call, ask for Bob.

