READY NET GO ... NEWS

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Tip of the Month

Ever lose a laptop?

You're in good company if you have especially if you fly often. While one study reports that nearly 637,000 laptops are lost each year at airports (that's 12,000 per week), other reports state that the number is closer to a few thousand per year. Whatever the case, don't let your laptop become the next one advertised on eBay.

If you fly, keep track of your laptop especially at the screening station – wait until the backlog ahead of you moves away from the belt before sending your laptop through the screener. Put the laptop in the middle bin of your belongings so no one can confuse your laptop from theirs. Also consider putting a **sticker** or **identifying band on your laptop** to make it stand out from others.

Purchase a case that does not look like a traditional laptop bag. Thieves will be more tempted to grab a laptop case, especially if it has a company logo visible, than an atypical satchel.

Consider installing **device tracking software** like LoJack for laptops. Services such as this will put homing software on your laptop so if it is ever stolen, its whereabouts can be tracked down when the laptop connects to the Internet.

Having a **laptop cable lock** or docking station is always a good idea to prevent walk-by thefts or random walk offs while in a conference room or office.

Make sure you **encrypt your sensitive data** so that if someone does steal your laptop, they won't be able to access your information. Contact us for ways to encrypt your data.

And finally, backup your data before you leave on a trip. If the unthinkable happens, at least you'll still be afloat.

Backup Software

While you can manually backup small amounts of data to a flash drive or DVD, any large amount of data (especially network data) should be backed up to a hard drive (internal or external) or tape drive. These hardware devices can store gigabytes of data efficiently. Though hardware devices play an integral role in backing up data, the real convenience and productivity gains occur with the backup software used to process the data.

There are many **software choices** available which will help you **organize, schedule, and maintain your backups** so you can access the data quickly when the need arises. In this newsletter, we'll discuss options such as Windows NT Backup and third party backup software as well as discuss the difference between drive imaging and file backups.

Backup Software Features
When choosing software, consider the following options:

1. Will you backup up a single computer or an entire network? How much data (GB) will you need to backup? Will the software support the ability to use multiple media sources during the same backup?
2. Does the software allow you to verify the data upon completion? It's a good practice to verify that the data is accessible regardless if the software completes this step or not.
3. Does the software enable you to schedule backups at a specific time interval or must you start and stop the process manually?
4. Which hardware devices are compatible with the backup software? Do your current devices support the software you want to use or will you need to purchase additional hardware?
5. Does the software offer disaster recovery as an option?
6. Can you password-protect the backup set? Encrypt it?
7. Can you backup your data remotely? Does the software have an online backup option available?

WWW (Websites Worth Watching)

1. www.bringyourpet.com – Excellent site on traveling with pets. Includes pet friendly accommodations, restaurants, emergency resources, events in your area and much more.

2. www.fixyourownprinter.com – Type in the model of your printer or your problem and get advice on resolving your dilemma. It takes some time to read the responses but be persistent and you'll more than likely find your answer.

Windows NT Backup   *Best Use*: Single workstation or server with limited backup needs

- **Free** backup tool available on all Windows operating systems including servers. Commonly referred to as the Tape Backup Utility, it can be accessed under Programs – Accessories – System Tools – Backup
- Create a copy of the system/boot partition(s) in the event of a system failure
- Backup open files with Volume Shadow Copy Services (available in Windows Server 2003 or higher)
- **Does not provide network backups**. It only allows backups of mapped network drives
- Will not be suitable for an enterprise environment with multiple servers
- Significant disk space will be needed if a tape drive is not employed
- Two of the best features of NT Backup, besides it being free, are the **portability** and **usability aspects** of the program. Because the Backup software is located on every Windows Operating System, you can restore a backup on any PC or server without having to worry about installing software. In a business environment, ease of restoration and time of restoration are critical factors which need to be part of the decision equation.

Third Party Backup Software   *Best Use:* All workstations and server environments

For businesses that require additional components and more robust features, third party software can be a wise investment. As with Windows NT Backup, third party backup software, such as Symantec Backup Exec (formerly Veritas Backup Exec) and EMC Retrospect, can make full, incremental or differential backups, provide log files, enable you to backup and restore local and remote files, schedule automatic backups, verify the backup and allow you to back up Exchange Server databases, SQL servers and File servers.

One of the newer features incorporated into third party software is the **integration of online backups**. In the event of a disaster, it's important to have access to a backup store that is off-site, whether it be tape, external hard drive or accessible online. If a flood or fire occurs and you need new equipment or even a new facility, having an off-site backup will keep your business moving forward despite the catastrophe. An advantage to online backups is the accessibility feature; if your in-house backup becomes corrupted and you need immediate access to a file, logging into your online account and downloading the file can be considerably faster than traveling to your off-site location and returning. One disadvantage is the amount of time it takes to upload files initially or to restore a complete data set. Since you're constrained by bandwidth, it may take **several hours** or **even days to upload and/or restore a full data backup** compared to backups located on external hard drives or tape.

Another benefit to third party backup software is the ability to **customize the software to your needs**. Each business is unique in their hardware and software requirements and the backup should seamlessly integrate with the existing infrastructure and day-to-day activities. If you're currently looking at implementing or upgrading your backup plan, we can offer customized suggestions that will work within your budget and complement your business flow. Give us a call to discuss the options that will work best for you.

Drive Imaging vs. File Backup

Drive imaging is different than file backups. When you create an **image** of your hard drive, you create a **snapshot of all of the files, programs and settings** that you currently have on your computer at a particular point in time. If you need to retrieve a single file, you can use the retrieve function within the drive imaging software. If, however, you have a major catastrophe that renders the computer unusable, you can restore the entire image of your hard drive (including partitions) and get back to work (minus any files you created since the last drive image was completed). **File backups**, on the other hand, **just backup your data**. To do a full restore with a file backup requires you to install the OS and programs and re-create your settings manually.

If you decide to create a drive image, be aware that the process requires ample space to store the image. You can use a secondary internal hard drive, an external hard drive or network drive. External drives are beneficial as they can be removed for security purposes. If your hard drive ever becomes unusable and you need to replace it, you'll need a bootable emergency CD or flash drive to initiate the system on the new hard drive before you can restore your drive image.

If space is no issue, the best part of creating a drive image backup is that you will have all of your files backed up and won't risk missing an inadvertent file in an obscure folder that you simply forgot to select. Peace of mind in an insecure world.