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Attachments:



Elliot Consulting Services - Business Survival Tips

Data Protection - Backup Strategies

December 2006

Greetings!

Whether it is to protect critical data from cyber attacks, natural disasters, human error, or regulatory compliance, organizations of every size and industry are considering their options to backup and store the critical elements of their IT networks. Protection of a company's IT and network infrastructure and mission-critical systems and servers, applications and data is vital to that organization's overall business survival.

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Why should your organization have such a data protection plan?

- Reduces vulnerability to unexpected events and interruptions including hurricanes, flooding, fire, massive power outages, hardware failures, terrorist activities (including corporate espionage), human error or other unexpected events that can halt normal businesses operation.
- Minimizes downtime and the impact it has on employees, partners, customers and the bottom line.
- Reduces the loss of critical data that can impact employee productivity, customer satisfaction and corporate profitability.
- Ensures compliance with industry or federal laws and regulations.

This month's newsletter features an article on data protection and backup strategies which was written by [Monty Blight](#), Director of Business Development, [Peak 10 Data Center Solutions](#). We thank Monty and the entire team from Peak 10 for their permission to re- post this article for our readers.

Steve Elliot, CBRM

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Data Protection -- What's the Right Backup Strategy?

By: Monty Blight
Director of Business Development
Peak 10 Data Center Solutions

Whenever I speak with executives about data protection, the conversation goes something like this.

I'm now back with the executive and my solution is sweet. It includes redundant hardware platforms, each fully capable of supporting a full load, housed in multiple geographically disbursed data centers with synchronous data replication and global load balancing. The CEO is clearly pleased until arriving at the final page, the one that details the "Investment" required. That's when I'm tasked with designing

Data Protection is a daily battle between business requirements, technology capabilities and budget. Executives want a zero downtime solution because they are being told that data loss means that their business fails. And it could. The IT professional charged with delivering the solution craves realistic expectations, acceptable backup windows, scheduled maintenance, current tools, and sufficient

The good news is that the right solution is available. What that solution is depends on the real answers to those important questions. How much data can you lose and how long can you afford to be without it?

Before we explore the available options, I think it's appropriate to review a few terms that often find their way into a discussion on data protection.

- **Storage:** Storage in all its forms (solid state, disk, tape, etc.) is the physical location of your data. How storage is used is what defines it as production vs. backup. Production is intended for real-time data use and access.
- **Backup:** A secondary batch of data redundant to the primary platform. In the event of a system

Getting Started

The first step in data protection, as with most technical solutions, is to understand what problem you are trying to solve. Start with a business impact analysis. If a short amount of downtime results in significant financial loss, the previously described solution might be appropriate. It makes fiscal sense to spend thousands of dollars to protect millions.

With that determined, review the Data Protection options and then implement the strategy that matches Recovery Time Objective and Recovery Point Objective with the Budget.

Available Options

On-site Tape and disk backup provide the ability to copy the contents of all or a designated amount of data from its usual storage device to a tape or disk-based device.

Tape-Based Backup Benefits Include:

1. Traditional and widely accepted media
2. Required by some compliance standards
3. Easy long-term retention and off-site storage
4. After investment in initial library, additional media expense is minimal

Disk-Based Backup Benefits Include:

1. Backups can be faster depending on the type of network
2. Restores are almost always faster (no physical tapes to find and mount)
3. Network backups provide superior disaster recovery protection

Remote backup is an online, disk-based storage and recovery method in which data is regularly backed-up to a remote device through a network connection. It relies on the company's regular Internet so depending on data size, can be slow and may violate some compliance requirements. Remote backup solutions should include hardware, software, media, implementation,

Remote Backup Benefits Include:

1. Backup from anywhere and restore to any IP- based device
2. Anytime restore availability
3. Hardware can be located in multiple facilities

Companies can also use their hardware/software platform to replicate data between devices. This solution requires duplicate hardware, replication software and (depending on the solution) load balancing equipment. It tends to be more expensive but minimizes/eliminates downtime.

Replication Benefits Include:

1. Synchronous replication eliminates data loss
2. Quickest recovery solution – re-route all traffic to live site instead of data recovery

3. Can eliminate geographic risk
4. Easier maintenance on platforms because can transfer the load

In-House vs. Service Provider

Successful data backup can be accomplished in-house or through a number of service providers including data centers and managed storage companies. Implementing your own backup solution is the right choice if you have access to the necessary capital for the requisite hardware/software purchase, have backup expertise and surplus

Summary

The right data protection strategy is unique to each company based on the business impact (or not) of data loss relative to the budget to protect that data. It can be provided in- house or through a service provider. But no matter what you decide to do, please make me one promise. Make sure that your primary platform is secure and make sure that critical data is backed up

About Peak 10 Data Center Solutions

[Peak 10](#) is the leading independent data center operator and managed services provider in the eastern United States, delivering scalable, economical and reliable solutions for hosting and managing complex information technology infrastructure. The company combines its eight data

Useful Links

- [Dept of Homeland Security / FEMA](#)
- [IBHS - "Open For Business"](#)
- [Florida Division of Emergency Management](#)
- [National Hurricane Center](#)
- [Tampa Bay Hurricane Guide](#)

About Elliot Consulting



Elliot Consulting Services (ECS) is a 4 year old consulting firm based in the Tampa Bay,

Florida area which specializes in business survival solutions. ECS functions as a third party advocate and facilitator to help companies create, develop, and implement business continuity plans which are designed to protect their vital business resources and operational processes. ECS will review, audit, and help modify a company's existing disaster recovery model to ensure that the essential components of the organization will continue to function in the event of an unplanned disruptive incident. The team from Elliot Consulting will also assist with disaster recovery training exercises to test the thoroughness of a company's preparedness model. At the conclusion of a consulting engagement ECS will award a Certificate of Business Resilience for the development of a Business Continuity Plan in accordance with industry-standards best practices established by DRI International, NAFFP 1600, and other firms specializing in business continuity, emergency preparedness, and business resilience standards. The ECS consultants are certified business continuity planners and business resiliency specialists with Fortune 500 experience.

Elliot Consulting is part of the Department of Homeland Security's national vendor list of organizations providing business continuity planning services that have met the DHS/FEMA standards. In addition Elliot Consulting was one of roughly 1200 national, regional, state and local organizations which cross-marketed DHS's National Preparedness Month (NPM) efforts and continues to utilize that information within their educational seminars.

Additional information can be found on the [ECS website](#).

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