NCGIT
STRATEGIC TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

With a Backup and Disaster Recovery Plan, Your Business is Safe

With a Backup and Disaster Recovery Plan, Your Business is Safe

Why do I need a backup and disaster recovery plan?

Your company's most valuable asset is its data. Are you protecting it properly? Accidental deletion, intentional deletion, stolen data, corruption, viruses, server crashes – data loss can happen in any number of ways ranging from accidental to malicious. Your business spends all day every day producing data, either directly or indirectly. Accounts receivable, documents, engineering drawings, contracts, product orders, and email are all examples of essential business data. If all of this data was lost, would your business survive? Protecting your data is only half the battle.

> "...we design and implement solutions to make sure that your data and critical business systems are always protected and quickly recoverable."

The other half of the battle is ensuring all of your critical business systems are available. When a disaster strikes, it is obviously critical to have your data protected. However, that data doesn't do you any good if the systems that house that data are down. Can your business afford to be offline for days while your systems are recovered so that your data can be restored and your business operations can finally be brought back online? A disaster is in this context is anything that makes your critical business systems unavailable. It can take many forms such as a server failure, a server room fire, flooding, water damage caused by your building's sprinkler system because of a fire somewhere else in the building, loss of building power, etc. It is critical that your business has a plan and a solution in place to ensure that your data is protected and that all of your critical business systems can be brought back online as quickly as possible.

At NCGIT, we design and implement solutions to make sure that your data and critical business systems are always protected and quickly recoverable.

The 5 critical components of proper Backup and Disaster Recovery (BDR) Plan

There are 5 primary requirements which must be met for a true and fully functional Backup and Disaster Recovery solution. If any of these items are missing or lacking you could be putting your business at risk. Much like the old cliché about a chain only being as strong as

its weakest link, the effectiveness of a BDR plan can be greatly weakened if it doesn't include all of the following:

1. Backups must be automated and require no human intervention
2. Backups must be automatically and securely stored offsite at least once per day
3. The solution must provide centralized monitoring and automated, real-time alerting if any problems arise
4. All critical servers must be included as part of the backup plan
5. The solution must include the ability to recover all production systems both onsite and offsite

Automatic backups – no humans!

The simple fact is that if your backups are not fully automated they are not occurring regularly enough, and surely not on a daily basis. Weekends, holidays, and sick days, not to mention simple forgetfulness, are all reasons why manual backups don't happen regularly. In the new mobile age work is no longer being done between 9am-5pm Monday through Friday. Work is being done at all hours and on all days. This means that data is being created and modified during these times and on these critical business systems that must be available 24x7. It is crucial that your BDR solution must also be protecting your data and systems 24x7.

Automatically and securely stored offsite
Many businesses naïvely assume that taking a USB drive or tape backups offsite once per week provides sufficient offsite backup protection. This thinking is fraught with

> "...access and recover your data instantly in order to continue running your business."

dangers and is setting your business up for heartache. Far too often the person responsible for taking the backup media offsite is out sick, on vacation, or simply forgets. In most instances the backup media is only scheduled to be taken offsite once per week. To make matters worse, it is widely known that USB drives and tapes have a notoriously high failure-to-restore rate. To prevent the possibility of losing multiple days and potentially weeks of data in the event of a disaster, your BDR solution must automatically deliver all backup data to a secure offsite storage location via the Internet a minimum of once per day.

Centralized monitoring and alerting

Have you ever assumed something important was happening regularly and reliably only to find out later that it wasn't? Unfortunately, this is all too often the case with data backups. Don't assume your backups are running properly. Make sure your BDR solution sends daily automated status notifications. It is also important to have a single management console for all of your backups. Managing and maintaining a BDR solution is not always easy work. A proper BDR solution provides a central management console for easy administration, monitoring, and alerting of servers and data backups. It is also important that your BDR management console be accessible from inside and outside your office. Obviously, it isn't helpful if the management console resides on the server which has crashed. It is especially important that the management console be accessible outside of your office for those times when you have experienced a true site disaster and must invoke your BDR plan for an offsite recovery.

Include all critical servers

Simply having the ability to restore your data isn't enough. If you can't also recover your servers, where are you going to restore your data? All of your critical business systems must be backed up as well as all of your data. If a specific system doesn't store data but is necessary for performing critical business functions, it must be fully protected by your BDR solution. If your BDR solution doesn't give you the ability to recover both your systems and your data quickly then it simply isn't a sufficient solution. Ask yourself the simple question – would it be acceptable for your business to be down for up to a week while your critical business systems were being rebuilt from scratch before you could even start restoring your backed up data? When a proper BDR solution is in place, that worry is non-existent.

Full recovery both onsite and offsite

The ability to recover you systems and data onsite effectively is extremely important. The majority of restores will be small data recoveries such as lost emails, files or folders which are all performed onsite. A proper BDR plan also keeps your business prepared for a when disaster strikes by having the ability to quickly and effectively recover not only your data but your full business systems offsite. It is also critical that your offsite DR location not be in close physical proximity to your primary facility. Since owning a dedicated DR facility in a different geographic area is not financially feasible for most small to medium sized businesses, the most effective and affordable location for an offsite DR facility is the cloud. There a

large and growing number of cloud based solutions to allow your business to quickly invoke your BDR plan and "spin up" all of your critical business systems and data. Some of these solutions are built right into the backup solution and others allow your business to customize the solution to your specific needs. The important thing they all provide is the ability to quickly get your business back up and running in the event of a disaster.

You need both a plan and a solution

A true Backup and Disaster Recovery solution consists not only of the solution itself but also a documented and tested plan. Your data and systems may be safely backed up to the cloud or an offsite data center but that doesn't necessarily mean your employees know how to access the data or what to do with it. Having a BDR Plan will make sure your business and your employees know exactly what to do in post-disaster operations and it will ensure your business is back up and operational as quickly as possible. It is critical that your BDR Plan is tested a minimum of once per year and that any necessary modifications be made to the plan. Disasters do not typically strike often so it is important to be properly prepared when they do.

Are you willing to put your business at stake by not having a Backup and Disaster Recovery solution and Plan? If not, let NCGIT prepare you with a custom plan and solution.

2 Canton Street, Suite F100
Stoughton, MA 02072

781-297-7590
NCGIT.com