



**ATTIX<sup>5</sup>**  
**BACKUP** PROFESSIONAL

THE ADVANTAGES OF A MANAGED DATA BACKUP SERVICE

## Why is it important to review your data backup procedures?

According to research from BT and the Institute of Directors (IoD), fewer than 20 per cent of UK small businesses backup their data remotely, even though 82 per cent admit they could not function without it.

Yet, despite the vital importance of data, only 11 per cent of 394 companies polled by the IoD, include data backup as one of their biggest IT priorities.

Until recently using tape and CD have been the most traditional way to backup data, but this method has many disadvantages. Firstly, because backup is on site, companies are rendered vulnerable to disasters such as flood or fire - backup tapes kept on site are easily corrupted. Secondly they must rely on staff to initiate the process - a chore that many people overlook. Finally, BT's study also found that although 40 per cent of small business owners have limited technological knowledge, they still carry the full weight of responsibility for their IT systems. In other words they don't always employ the best solution for their particular needs.

Professor Jim Norton, Senior Policy Adviser at the IoD, said: *"For smaller businesses in particular, the owner/manager is in charge of IT. As a result, things like backing up data are way down the list of priorities and are often seen as chores. This is because traditional backup methods, like tape or CD are often time consuming. But times have changed, and backup now requires little or no input from users."*

## Inherent risks of using tape for day-to-day backup and recovery

<b>Poor reliability</b>	Tape drive and tape media are delicate- Tapes fail to fully restore as much as 50% of the time and begin to wear out after 7 read/writes.
<b>Time consuming</b>	Backup operations may also require a verification process as well. This doubles the required backup window, as the verification cycle sequentially re-reads the tape
<b>Difficult to access</b>	Recovering an entire system, or even single files, can involve loading more than one tape
<b>High maintenance</b>	For file recoveries, an administrator is often required to queue up the appropriate tape(s) and monitor recovery progress
<b>System failure</b>	Tape backup and restore is prone to mechanical failure and usually must be attended to ensure proper operation
<b>Management problems</b>	IT administrators rely on non IT people to backup data physically located at remote sites sometimes resulting in no backup taking place for months

## Advantages of disk over tape for day-to-day backup and recovery

<b>Faster backup/restore</b>	Disk supports concurrent backups and restores to and from separate volumes - meaning there's no waiting for tapes to be mounted and spun, thereby shortening backup and restore times
<b>Reliability</b>	Disks are not exposed to environments that cause tapes to become damaged
<b>Easier to manage</b>	Visible and immediate online access to backups

## Advantages of a managed backup service

Performing daily backups is a necessary evil. Every business knows it needs to do it but the person who is nominated to do it generally sees it as time consuming and a chore. Basically it's the last thing that has to be done before going home.

An alternative solution to a self managed tape-based backup process and one that takes advantages of a disk-based system is to look at a third party managed service. With a managed service a company still controls the data backup policy i.e., what can be backed up and when, but doesn't need to have a member of staff standing around waiting.

The latest backup services run over broadband and allow users to automate their processes and store copies of their data easily and remotely. This means that the backup is never forgotten and that data can be retrieved from any location should a problem occur.

In order to appreciate its advantages, ease of application and use, we've outlined the main features of remote online backup below:

<b>Automated</b>	Backups can be scheduled to run unattended at a particular time or frequency
<b>Secure</b>	Data is encrypted before leaving the device and remains so until recovered. SSL is used for network encryption and 448 bit Blowfish for storage
<b>Networked</b>	Data is transferred via any TCP-IP-enabled network connection. This removes the cost and effort of daily physical data shipment
<b>Online</b>	A full copy of the most recent data and up to 60 days of historical changes is kept available for immediate recovery, eliminating the response times associated tape systems
<b>Disk-to-disk</b>	Backups are held on disk for designated periods, enabling faster recovery, before being archived to tape for long-term storage (optional extra). Writing to disk also improves backup speed and data integrity verification
<b>Incremental</b>	Only files that have been modified or added since the last backup will be identified for backup by the system
<b>Sub-file</b>	Changes to a file can be extracted at the binary level. If a Word document is edited only the changed bytes of that document will be extracted and sent through to the backup server
<b>Progressive</b>	The backup server is able to update files using the daily incrementals. This means every recovery is a full, updated file

The two primary advantages of a managed data backup service are:

1. Set and Forget Backup – daily backups of your data are sent off-site automatically
2. Anytime Data Recovery – you can recover your data at the click of a button

## Advantages of a service-based approach

Few companies are in the market to buy more software. The emphasis is rather on resolving problems or cutting costs. However, growth in data complexity and storage requirements, along with the recent focus on corporate governance requirements, has forced many organisations to re-evaluate their data protection strategies. For many, the answer has been to outsource data protection altogether.

For these companies the top reasons for such an approach are:

- Cost reduction
- Maintaining focus on running the business
- Gaining access to special expertise
- Relieving resource constraints
- Diminishing risk
- Improving stability

What is clear is that a company's decision to outsource data protection to a specialist service provider is not based on their current ability to provide the service themselves but on the benefits (as listed above) of focusing internal IT on core business functions and harnessing external expertise for the rest. It provides you the peace of mind to know that:

- Your data is being backed up successfully every day
- You have two copies of your data stored off-site for extra security
- You can show your auditors/insurers that your data is backed up and can be recovered
- You can recover a single file in seconds, even if the network is down
- You can recover all of your data in hours not days

## What makes a good service?

Attix5 Backup Professional has been developed from the ground up to be provided as a managed service. This separates it from competing offerings based on data protection products. The distinguishing elements of a true service are:

- Trust
- Security
- Scalability
- Centralised Management
- Ease of use

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