



Disaster Recovery. What's Your Plan?

Back in the old days, a disaster-recovery system meant regularly backing up data onto tapes and then sending the tapes to storage. The tapes were kept off-site, of course, and if there was a disaster, the savvy IT professional simply rolled out the backups, and the system was up in a matter of days. Presto: IT superhero!

Five years ago, the standard recovery time was three days. Today, a three-day delay could shut a business down permanently.

How much does downtime cost your company? A recent Gartner Dataquest survey asked respondents to report official or estimated dollars lost per hour in the event of a complete IT infrastructure outage. Although the responses spanned a wide margin (with retail organizations reporting the highest potential per-hour revenue losses), the average hourly of revenue lost for all companies is estimated to be \$42,074. This number does not, however, include all of the internal costs of unplanned downtime, primarily productivity loss.

If your disaster-recovery plan consists of hoping nothing will happen, take a look at what was found were the top reasons companies invoke their business continuity plans:

- **Hardware failures**
- **Software problems**
- **Power outages**
- **Natural disasters**

Backing up on tapes was a sound practice (and continues to be for data protection) but simply can't accommodate fast turnaround. That's where disk recovery systems come in.

Disaster plans must include items such as data recovery but where will you put the data if you don't really know what you had? How do you plan on convincing your Insurance Adjuster or Software Manufacture that all the Software titles were licensed copies? Many shops really don't know how many or what type of Desktops, Laptops and Servers they really have. Disaster recovery planning should also include the following question:

Does your shop have the ability to deliver accurate up-to-date Desktop, Laptop and Server system

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configurations and network equipment to your company's Insurance carrier? Without this information you're going to have a very difficult time re-imaging systems if you are spending most of your time trying to convince your Insurance Adjuster that you really did have all of those PCs and licensed software. There are a lot of great tools that will do the job of inventorying all of your System configurations and you should place one of these tools into your Disaster Recovery Plan. Your documentation is your best asset in the recovery from any type of disaster. Keeping up to date documentation is paramount to a successful recovery, whether it is information to be provided to your insurance carrier or the latest changes to configurations or software there is no substitute for it.

Four hard lessons we've learned about the particulars of disaster recovery.

1. Make sure you know where in your partition and directory structure the original OS was located. Otherwise, your restore could fail before it starts due to Boot.ini conflicts.
2. Make sure you have the appropriate drivers for your new hardware, as holdover drivers from the downed server will likely offer up a Blue Screen of Death on the new system.
3. Have backup copies of your service packs ready to install, as the slight differences between update software and original elements from an install CD can result in often perplexing system incongruities.
4. Test your backup files before you need them. Open files and corrupt applications can create incomplete backups, and you don't want to discover such problems after your server has crashed.

For more information on how to devise a Disaster Recovery Plan for your Organization contact Nautalex at 519-622-8840 or E-mail solutions@nautalex.com. ▢

Web-Based E-Mail

Web-based E-mail lets your travelling or work-at-home employees access their office e-mail from any PC with an Internet connection.

Access to e-mail, even when you're travelling, is becoming essential to carrying on business. Novell and Microsoft both offer a web-based version of their E-mail service. Novell's product is **Groupwise Web Access** and Microsoft's is called **Outlook Web Access**.

The E-mail user simply has to enter the IP address or DNS name of your mail server in any web browser, and log in to the mail system. Users can easily access their E-mail folders, contacts, calendar, tasks, etc., although the interface is somewhat different in appearance from the desktop version of E-mail.

From an administration point of view, web-based mail couldn't be simpler. Users need a local Internet connection and any web browser. There is no need to configure client software, move files, or deal with remote access problems.

If web-based E-mail sounds like the solution to your remote E-mail requirements, contact Nautalex to find out more at 519-622-8840 or E-mail solutions@nautalex.com. ▢

QUIZMASTER'S CONTEST

How many top level domain names were there originally and what are they? E-mail or fax your response to Quizmaster at quizmaster@nautalex.com. ▢

Computers For Rotary

Do you have any working 486/66+ or low-end Pentium machines which are just "too good to throw out"? The *Rotary Literacy Campaign* can make good use of these older PCs. If you are interested, please contact Paul Stewart at Nautalex (519-622-8840 ext. 6251). ▢

HIGH SPEED INTERNET

DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) is a great new thing that allows us (the end users) to have high speed access to the internet at a fraction of the cost of other high speed media. There are several different forms (or flavours) that are available, the most common of which are ADSL and G.lite ADSL.

DSL, as a technology, allows digital information to be transmitted at a high speed across a pair of copper wires. By utilizing the unused bandwidth of the conventional phone system, DSL will theoretically be able to offer itself to anyone with a phone line. However, there are some restrictions. These restrictions arise from the location of the particular subscriber.

The length of wire from the switching office is called the Local Loop. Due to some fancy physics laws, the longer this loop is, the less effectively it can carry a high frequency digital signal. Herein lies the problem. For DSL to be available to a potential subscriber, you must have a Local loop that falls within this limited range, has the proper equipment, and is configured properly.

To find out if your area is supported by a flavor of DSL, you can try the following websites.

<http://www.golden.net/main/AdslLookup/adsl-search.shtml>

<http://adsl.sentex.ca/>

<http://bell.sympatico.ca>

If a form of DSL is available to you, then great. You have, at your disposal, high-speed access, at a fraction of the traditional price. If, however, you fall into the category of the majority, your area is still not supported, and it may be some time until everything is worked out so that you can utilize this technology.