

SafeServ Rapid Recovery System™



DISASTER RECOVERY Press Coverage



Plan for disasters, firms urged

Businesses are being urged to improve their plans for coping with an emergency such as a terrorist attack or natural disaster.

Employers' organisation the CBI said safeguarding staff and assets should be at the top of every company's list of New Year's resolutions.

It said proper planning for a disaster could save lives and businesses.

The warning follows the Buncefield oil depot blaze, in Hertfordshire, which devastated a number of neighbouring businesses.

A series of explosions and fires ripped through the depot, in Hemel Hempstead, and neighbouring properties on 11 December.

CBI Director General Sir Digby Jones said "everyone in business" should be "re-assessing their business risk".

The CBI, with the help of security and defence specialists QinetiQ and drawing on MI5 advice, has produced a number of tips on continuity and security planning.

They focus on protecting workplaces, staff and intellectual property, such as through ensuring entry and exits points to premises are controlled.

'Vital self-help'

Sir Digby said: "In a year that has seen mainland terrorism, a major incident at the UK's fifth largest oil and petrol distribution depot and natural disasters too numerous to mention across the globe, everyone in business needs to spend some time this January re-assessing their business risk.

"In the immediate aftermath of any form of incident, continuity planning becomes something of a buzz word but it is increasingly clear that many firms still don't have the necessary plans in place."

Sir Digby, who said it was a "miracle" that the Buncefield blaze did not claim any lives, went on: "Please - take a long, hard look at how you safeguard your workplace and employees.

"Having the right plan and the right people in the right places can ensure that your business survives no matter what.

"It is a vital self-help insurance policy that everyone in business must have."



The CBI's warning follows the Buncefield fire in December

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Data-Recovery Technology Arrives For SMBs

Appliance provides disk-based backup capabilities and data restoration software

Business continuity has largely been the domain of big companies, but data-protection appliances were unveiled this week that provide system-recovery technology at a price point that should help small and mid-size companies recover operational data as quickly as their larger counterparts should a system outage result from natural, man-made, or electronic disasters.

The components of the Rapid Recovery System offering include an appliance that combines disk-based backup capabilities, data-restoration software, and, if needed, a data vault for off-site backup. This offering is a welcome development for smaller companies who've been poorly served by bigger vendors.



DPU Solution Provides Fast BackUp

Data Protection Unit 2000 is a complete disk-based backup solution that should be a good fit in most small and mid sized businesses

The Linux-based DPU 2000, which bundles backup hardware and software in one package, is an attractive option for smaller enterprises that need high-speed backup capabilities and haven't already made a substantial investment in another backup platform.

The 2U (3.5-inch) DPU 2000, which is available now, can store as much as 2TB of data in a single appliance. One of the reasons the DPU 2000 will be appealing for SMBs is because no additional client license fees must be tacked on to the price of the unit. This should make the DPU 2000 an especially welcome addition for companies that have many clients but do not produce a lot of data. eWEEK applauds this simplified pricing scheme because we believe it's unfair for backup vendors to charge SMBs by the client when the vendor is already making a profit on the hardware side. We hope more vendors follow this example in the future.

The appliance provides a very wide range of client support, which includes Microsoft Corp.'s Windows, Linux, BSD (Berkeley Software Distribution), The SCO Group Inc.'s UnixWare, Novell Inc.'s NetWare, Sun Microsystems Inc.'s Solaris and other varieties of Unix. This level of interoperability is something often not seen in the low-end-to-midrange backup space.

In addition, the DPU 2000 comes with application backup agents for Microsoft's Exchange and SQL Server—also without demanding additional license fees.

Once a client-side software component is installed, backup and restore jobs can be scheduled using either the client interface or the DPU 2000 management console. The solution can back up both client data and operating systems using bare-metal backup capabilities. The DPU 2000's snapshot functions allow it to back up open files as well.

Built-in RAID and redundant power supplies help keep the DPU 2000 up and running with few interruptions.

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Business Continuity for Small Businesses

Business continuity is relatively easy for large enterprises. They have the IT staff and the deep pockets to be able to spend millions of pounds implementing redundant data centres, instantaneous mirroring of all information and a host of other disaster recovery (DR) technologies.

On September 11th, for example, several financial services firms situated in and around the World Trade Centre didn't lose a single transaction. Why? Many had expensive servers running the OpenVMS operating system with identical gear available at a remote data centre. As soon as the systems went down, their powerful networks switched to the alternate sites.

The smaller players, however, generally try to make do with tape or online backups. But in the event of a disaster, this rarely proves to be enough protection. Why? Whenever servers or sites crash, you need to rapidly recover "the three legs of the stool:" the application data, the applications themselves and the operating system.

If you've taken precautions, chances are you can restore the data from the last backup. But if the entire system has crashed or the servers have been destroyed, the applications have to be loaded from scratch. And so begins a mad scramble to find the CDs, contact the vendors and attempt to reassemble. But it also takes more than the applications. They sit on top of an operating system (OS). Whether it is Windows, Linux, UNIX or something else, the OS also has to be installed, complete with the passwords, permissions and settings that individualise every company's system.

Restoring one of three or two of three, is just not enough, and often recovery has to be done within minutes. Companies no longer have the luxury of waiting while someone retrieves tapes from an offsite location and then mounts and scans them.

The rapid recovery approach that the *Rapid Recovery System™* offers small businesses involves backing up multiple servers to an onsite Data Protection Unit (DPU), an integrated hardware and software appliance that provides disk-to-disk business continuity, data protection and disaster recovery.

The DPU arrives pre-configured with the company's proprietary Bare Metal Plus software that provides file-level backup and recovery, which also restores a full operating system along with passwords and permissions. System backups, in the form of snapshots, can be performed as often as desired. If you lose the database, you can recover it from the DPU. If a server crashes, it can be fully restored in about 30 minutes. And if there's a site failure (flood, fire, etc.), the appliance recovers the data that's needed to be up and running in several hours instead of days or weeks.

Data Vaulting

Like the DPU, the Data Protection Vault (DPV) is an integrated hardware and software appliance that can be included in the system to provide online data vaulting. It includes proprietary Secure Data Sync™ technology for backup and full system recovery. The DPV 3000, for example, has a capacity of 4.4TB. This is expandable to 88TB with a storage expansion unit. Furthermore, the DPV eliminates the manual process of keeping critical data and systems off-site.

During backup, the DPU saves only the changed blocks of data since the last backup and automatically compresses and sends the data off-site to the DPV, where the changes are included in a full running master copy of the data. No more manual tape rotation, delays in gaining access to data or having tapes picked up and delivered.

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THE CHANNEL INSIDER

If You Build It, They Will Come

There's no doubt that manufacturers of the *Rapid Recovery System*™ line of products, related to business continuity and disaster recovery that includes electronic data vaulting, seems to have tapped into a burgeoning market at the right time, as organisations of all types—large and small, public and private—increasingly are realising that they need easy and reliable ways to ensure that their data is full protected.

The increased demand for all-inclusive disaster recovery solutions, combined with a solution set that integrates disaster recovery-related services with products in a way that makes it easy for systems integrators and managed service providers to create comprehensive offerings for their customers, has translated into more partners—and more sales for the channel.

Typically, many integrators implement the solution in single-site companies that need to back up 30GB to 80GB. They first install a Data Protection Unit (DPU) at the customer's site that gathers data from the company's servers. At scheduled times, the unit synchronises only block-level changes to the customer's data through a secure VPN with a Data Protection Vault (DPV), located offsite in a secure location.

For minor losses, customers can access the unit on their own premises, while for more major losses, they can access the unit safely housed at the remote site.

ByteandSwitch Storage Networking and Beyond

Joining Remote Trend

Several announcements planned for this week highlight a spurt of growth in outsourced data storage services, such as online backup and disaster recovery for small to medium-sized businesses (SMBs).

Remote vaulting back-up and storage, in the form of integral CD burners and software is supplied as a business continuity appliance and integrators who are using it as the basis for services to SMBs are viewing this area of business as particularly attractive in the current climate.

One of the integrators anticipates that new online backup services based on the *Rapid Recovery System*™ disk-to-disk appliances will eventually account for a quarter of its annual revenues, which include systems integration as well as Internet services. Certain integrators, particularly those covering both hardware supply as well as communication services, like the fact that their customers are attracted by the prospect of having hardware and software, vaulting, and bandwidth all from one supplier.

Key players in the SMB sector picked the *Rapid Recovery System*™ because it does block-level backup of multiple sites and can do bare-metal restoration of systems without taking servers down to do it. And the price seems right -- a key feature, since it enables those integrators with this offering to charge less than larger online backup firms.

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Preparing Storage for Disaster Recovery

Though no information professional may ever be fully prepared for a devastating natural disaster, taking some preventive steps can help ensure that data isn't compromised.

The devastation that Hurricane Katrina caused when it hit the US Gulf Coast at the end of August will last at least several years as families, communities, and businesses struggle to recover.

While many companies were expected to struggle for weeks or months while recovering data and business, others were back up and running in as little as 18 hours. The main difference between the companies that recovered quickly and the ones that didn't is that the former had better business continuity planning and disaster recovery plans, according to data recovery and storage experts.

While a business continuity plan to handle business disruptions in the case of a natural disaster seems incredibly obvious for large businesses -- particularly after 9/11 and the Y2K scare -- many SMBs have yet to take serious note. Companies that recovered their data and restarted business quickly had CTOs or risk management personnel who had devised a plan and put it in place before the disaster struck. The elements of a good recovery plan, include identifying a remote location to store important business information; deciding what data, hardware, and software to bring to that location; gathering contact information for employees, managers, and suppliers (and back-up suppliers, in case your main suppliers are affected by the same disaster or outage); and compiling remote housing information.

Remote Operations

If data needs to be stored on portable media, using drives is recommended, which tend to be more reliable than back-up tapes (even though many companies still use tape technology). If tapes are damaged, data recovery is not likely. But there are several firms that can recover data from damaged disks, even from those that have been submerged in water. However, the more damage that is incurred, the less likely it is that full data recovery will be possible. It can take 12 hours to restart systems and recover data from tape if more than just pure data needs to be restored. Additionally, some companies that use tape or another type of backup storage media (such as an additional drive) store the information on-site rather than at a remote location. This means that the backups, along with the original files, can be destroyed if a fire, flood, or other disaster strikes the office. While it's best to store portable media in an area that is several miles away from the office (so it won't be affected by the same weather, power outages, or other threats as the main system), even storing it nearby (in a local bank's safety deposit box, for example) is a better solution than not backing it up at all.

Expecting the Unexpected

Power outages aren't uncommon; they can happen when someone throws the wrong switch or when construction equipment cuts a power line. Those accidents occur without warning, unlike a hurricane that takes several days to form. So company data needs to be backed up on an ongoing basis. The more critical the information, the more often you should back it up. Using automatic backups is highly recommended, rather than those that require human intervention.

Beyond the potential loss of data, some operating systems may also be damaged during an outage, so companies should use backup solutions that enable the restoration of "bare metal." A bare metal restoration is designed to restore the data files as well as all the underlying software, drivers, etc. Without such backup and restoration capabilities, a company might have to reload Windows, Microsoft Office, various drivers, bookkeeping programs, contact managers, database programs, etc., before adding the actual data.

Some experts also recommended "electronic vaulting" (i.e., storing backup data and other software as contracted at an off-site vendor location). This location should be situated far from a client company's headquarters to ensure that it won't be compromised if a disaster affects the company's main system.