

BEST PRACTICES WITH BACKUP AND ARCHIVAL TECHNOLOGIES

By Anthony Lihalakha, PMP

In today's world, computer technology is evolving rapidly and our dependence on computers increases with this evolution. It is imperative we realize that electronic data has become an intangible asset. Therefore, protecting this asset is a very good idea. In most cases, preemptive preparation can save you time, money, and the stress of trying to recreate lost work.

The following five tips can help you better prepare for any instance of data loss:

1) Develop a backup plan.

It is important to determine how often you need to back up your data. Select a drive to back up to and choose backup software you can rely on. Before purchasing any hardware or software, do some research by asking your friends, family, or someone you know who is well versed in computer technology. There is also a lot of information on the Internet and most vendors are good resources, too.

2) Back up all your data often.

Make sure to back up frequently. Make sure you assess how long you can wait without backing up your data. Keep in mind that the longer you wait, the more you are susceptible to data loss and all the other unpleasant consequences that may ensue. It's probably a good idea to back up data daily. Invest in software that also makes "images" of your whole hard drive. Imaging technology can help you recover from disaster in just minutes. The key is to keep a good current image of your hard drive, so you can recover as far back as necessary.

3) Make several copies.

Make different sets of your data. If possible, keep one set of data in an off-site location (e.g., a safe deposit box). Invest in an online backup solution, where you can back up data via the Internet. Also, have one set readily available. Multiple backup strategies depend on your current budget; the most important thing is that you have at least one backup set instead of none at all.

4) Make sure your backups are good.

Verify your backups by using the verification feature on your backup software. Be certain that you can also restore data. Test restoration regularly.

5) Do not procrastinate!

Far too many people invest in backup solutions after experiencing data loss. Keep in mind that prevention is better than a cure after the fact. Make sure you are prepared; develop a plan as soon as you can.

Anthony Lihalakha, PMP can be contacted at lihalakha@prel.org.