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Sales on the Internet – Backup, Backup, Backup **By Dennis McDonough**

An Internet website can be a great extension of your business. It can be available to customers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To do this effectively you need an up to date inventory, a reliable host, a well-organized site and a great backup.

It still amazes me when I am out looking at websites that I can come across a site whose default page says "We are temporarily offline, due to a server crash" or "The Red Menace virus got us and we will be back online soon." It does not take a major catastrophe in the world to shut down your website; just losing or corrupting a few files can stop most websites from working.

It is a fact of life that equipment will fail, and also a known fact that viruses are present in the Internet that disrupt computer systems. People may accidentally overwrite or delete a file. We all know this, but still most of us don't take the time to protect ourselves from these problems.

The best protection is an automatic backup system. An automatic backup system will, at predetermined timed intervals, backup important files for you. One backup should be stored off site, just in case the worst happens.

There are a lot of choices in automatic backups systems. The choices come down to these groups: Online, Nearline, and Offline backup. With each of these groups there are too many options to go into detail. I will only go into detail on the most popular.

Online Backup: Most of these services use the Internet, to store your data offsite. You select the files you need protected and they are backed up nightly. BIT Concepts (www.bit-concepts.com) provides a variety of Online Backup services to meet any need.

BIT Concepts will provide you with software that will be installed on your computer. Using that software, you select the files to be backed up and the schedule for backup. This same software will allow you to see the backups that you have stored online. From that selection you can restore an individual file or group of files, when you need to.

Nearline Backup: This takes special equipment, a jukebox type system that uses high capacity Tape, CDR or DVDR media to store your backups. This is usually only purchased for companies that have a lot of data that needs to be backed up and available, anytime. This is usually the most expensive backup option, due to the capability of it.

Offline Backup: Offline backup is what most people with personal computers have used. You store your data on a floppy disk or series of diskettes and hope you have them all when you need to restore a file. This has progressed to today's Tape drives like the Seagate Travan that will use the built in backup application from most operating systems. The Travan tape drive can store up to 40 GB of data (compressed) on each tape. You will need multiple tapes to store your data at your office and off site.

With the growth of CD-RW and DVD-RW drives, there is backup software that will allow you to backup to these rewriteable media. CD-RW is a CD disk that is Rewriteable, it can store up to 700 MB of data. DVD-RW is a DVD disk that is Rewriteable, it can store up to 9.7 GB of data. To use either media you will be required to have a drive that can support a rewriteable format.

The CD-RW and DVD-RW drives offer a multiuse drive for your backup on an inexpensive media. They are especially good for companies that have very small amounts of data to backup and the nightly backup can be completed with just one disk.

Whichever backup method and products you choose, be sure to test it after setting it up. Each system, no matter how automatic, needs to be monitored. The worst time to find out you did not get everything backed up, is when you need your data.

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