



# BACK IT UP

It won't happen to me!!!! Whatever the degree of loss, the effect is always the same, to disrupt business, cause unnecessary work and cost business more money. Both professionally and personally we are ever more dependant upon our PC and most of us probably don't have a good back up plan! We show you how to cash in whilst helping them back up!

BY JANE SMITH

Whether we're talking about the smallest of businesses through to the giant corporations the effects of lost data are the same; to disrupt business, cause unnecessary work and cost business money. If only 1 megabyte of data is lost you can say goodbye to 500 sheets of A4 paper, lose 2 gigabytes of memory and you lose the equivalent of 1 million sheets of A4 paper!

Data loss can occur through human-error when a document isn't saved properly or an operator presses the delete key by mistake. A hard disk crash, software error, virus, power surge or power failure will also cause a computer to lose data. Computer hardware is fairly robust but even the sturdiest unit may succumb to spilt coffee or the crumbs from a hastily eaten sandwich, a dirty environ-

ment or the close proximity of desktop magnets. Other dangers such as sabotage or theft add to the list of reasons for backing up data as regularly as possible.

Small organisations with limited IT resources are likely to be the most vulnerable, but it also applies these days to home users and mobile workers using their laptops extensively outside of their company networks.

In a recent survey of small businesses, Imation learned that 30% lack formal data backup and recovery processes, or do not follow them consistently. Barbara Anderton, marketing manager Imation UK told us 'In the face of such data threats including the rise in email viruses, business and personal data is at risk. Getting started with a backup plan doesn't have to be difficult.

**A SUCCESSFUL BACKUP PLAN IS EASY WHEN YOU FOLLOW THREE KEY PRINCIPLES:**

■ **Back up every day and perform a full back up at least once a week**

■ **Test your backup process (and your ability to restore) at least monthly or quarterly**

■ **Store one copy of your full back up off site for security.**

If you are in a small company or working remotely, there's also no need to worry about the complexity of setting up the back up cycles. These days the computer has easy to use wizards to make life so much easier.

But keeping your information safe is not just about following principles, it's also about the best products to use based upon the

accessibility, availability and protection of information. We spoke to Nigel Williams, VP of strategy and solutions EMEA. They are experts in information lifecycle management and lowering the cost of ownership of information.

Williams explained that the choice of hardware and software used should be based upon where the data is in its lifecycle and its importance to the organisation ie how quickly do I need access and how critical would it be if things went wrong. Kevin Jeffcote at Verbatim and Susie Harmsworth at Maxell, representing two brand leaders of media storage products, agreed. Jeffcote added that right across the spectrum, from high end requirements through to the home user the choice of media storage solutions now available meant there was the opportunity to match the right product to the need rather than being forced down a particular route.

He also went on to explain that DVD technology was proving popular for backing up due to its universal compatibility and capacity when used in a juke box environment. There aren't many PCs or laptops that cannot read this type of media any more so it's really useful for distribution of information too.

**Requirements for data storage are growing at about 50% each year.**

In terms of the overall market Harmsworth was able to confirm that the requirements for data storage are growing at about 50% each year. In addition to this she explained that there is a growing burden of legislative and regulatory demands, which are starting to dominate the business of looking after an organisation's information assets. As a result the need to protect data has never been more critical.

Media storage really is an

interesting area and one few of your customers will be able to avoid. Bring attention to it by producing a factsheet about the importance of backing up and offer customers a free 'health check' to find out what they are doing currently. You could also think about running a special product promotion. As we

constantly remind our readers – If you don't ask, you don't get. So, at the very least make sure you ask your customer about their back up routine next time you visit.

And, if by chance you feel this is an area that you need more help to understand, then all of our contributors would be happy to help. Here at USP we will revisit this important and interesting sector again, so watch this space. ■

