

## Is a Data Disaster Just Around The Corner?



Joe Paterno famously once said, "The minute you think you've got it made, disaster is just around the corner." The truth is, no matter how safe you think your vital business data is, it's probably not.

A disaster that threatens the life of your business can come in many forms: human error, fire, flood, virus, hacker. You may not be able to prevent disasters, but you can recover from one and even thrive.

The key, my friends, is preparedness. **The only way to survive a disaster is to have a working copy of your current critical data.** That's it. A simple fix to a potentially costly disaster.

But some methods of backup are more reliable and cost-effective than others. Below are some of the most popular practices:

**Tape Backup:** This method is an oldie and a goody, but error-prone from the start. Tape backup relies on a human to insert the tape, change the tape, and remove the tape from the premises to a place of safety, all of which open the door for human error. Additionally, the tapes, much like your favorite high school cassettes, will eventually wear out and often look like they are working when, in reality, they are not.

**Network Area Storage (NAS):** As the equipment becomes increasingly affordable, many companies are using hard drives as their primary backup. NAS devices can easily store large amounts of data and be set up to run automatically, but they are still an on-site solution and susceptible to water, fire, and electrical issues.

**Online Backup:** One of the newest and best methods of storing your files is to do so online. Companies are now able to upload their data to a reliable server located in a secure, *off-site* environment. Some advantages of storing files online are that users can access these files from any location, files can be backed up incrementally, prior versions can be maintained indefinitely, and data integrity is maintained no matter what disaster hits your office.

**Belt and Suspenders:** A combination of **NAS** and **online backup** will provide the ultimate in data security. Critical data can be sent off site via the Internet and backed up every day while less critical data can be maintained on local hard drives. Such a plan will result in a clean, working copy of your data that can be recovered at any time.

The fact of the matter is that when you work with computers, disaster is inevitable, but it doesn't have to be disastrous. With a little careful planning, your company can rise from a disaster like a phoenix from the flames or Joe Paterno from the 2005 football season.

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