



Confidence in a connected world.

Protect Your Business with Online Backup

Ten Reasons to Protect Your Data
with an Online Backup Service

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Protect Your Business with Online Backup: Ten Reasons to Protect Your Data with an Online Backup Service

The inconvenient truth about data backups

Backups are not a glamorous, high-profile task in any business. In a small or mid-sized business, where money and staff time are at a premium, there is always something more pressing to do than to work on backups. Hence, many businesses operate with backup processes that are incomplete or inadequate:

- Critical data is not backed up or is backed up infrequently, putting recovery at risk
- Backup processes rely on one individual with the right expertise, who may not be immediately available if a recovery is needed
- Backups are stored only locally, near the primary servers, putting the business at serious risk if the local site is compromised
- Backups do not meet regulatory requirements or industry standards for data protection and retention

More than 50 percent of small and mid-sized businesses have experienced data loss, according to a 2008 study by Rubicon Consulting¹. Many different factors can result in lost data. Some of the most common causes are hardware failure, human error, software failure, and viruses. No business is immune to these problems—and that makes backup an essential requirement for today's organizations.

Although the majority of small or mid-sized businesses have some form of backup solution in place, these solutions are often time-consuming to operate, are inconsistently used, or offer insufficient protection from disasters such as fires and floods. Many businesses lack the staff time and expertise to commit to managing a comprehensive backup strategy. Still others have had a solution in place for years, but that solution is costly, out of date, or both.

If you are not completely confident in your current approach—if you are not sure that it provides the right combination of protection, cost, and efficiency to meet the needs of your business—it is time to consider your alternatives.

¹ Rubicon Consulting: 2008 study of 318 US-based businesses with fewer than 250 employees.

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Backup as an online service

Happily, there is a new way of doing backup—a state-of-the-art solution that helps you get started quickly and easily. Online backup (also sometimes called “remote backup”) presents a new opportunity for small and mid-sized businesses by offering all the benefits of enterprise-class data protection without the associated management complexity and cost.

An online backup service sends data securely over the Internet to a highly available data center managed by data protection experts. The administration console is typically accessed on-demand through a Web browser, eliminating the need to purchase hardware, manage a complicated installation process, or manage software upgrades. New features are added seamlessly over time and delivered automatically to all customers at once. Perhaps most importantly, online backup services constitute a simple, reliable strategy for maintaining a copy of current backups off-site in case disaster strikes.

Online backup services offer automated, “always-on” protection. Backups are triggered by file changes or run according to a set schedule, eliminating the need for staff to spend time performing manual backups or managing storage media, such as tapes or DVDs. Once the initial backup is performed, only block-level changes are sent over the Internet, ensuring bandwidth is used efficiently.

Online backup services use a pay-as-you-go model based on storage usage. Typically, 24x7 support is also included in a monthly or annual subscription fee. Costs are predictable, and most providers enable customers to adjust usage up or down without penalty.

Is online backup right for your business? This paper outlines 10 advantages of online backup services to help you decide.

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Ten reasons to protect your data with an online backup service

Reason 1. Get started quickly and easily

Online backup services can typically be purchased in a few minutes online or over the phone. Once an account is created, a small software agent can be downloaded and deployed quickly and easily on a target system. Then, you can select the files and folders that need to be backed up and trigger the first backup job. Because online backup solutions work automatically in the background, there is no need to set a backup schedule, although this option is typically available.

The entire process can take less than an hour for a small number of systems. Compare this with a typical software installation, which requires hardware purchase and delivery; operating system purchase and installation; and software purchase, installation, and configuration—often over the course of several days.

Reason 2. Reduce costs and complexity

The costs associated with traditional backup approaches can add up quickly. Upfront costs can include hardware, software, software add-ons for different applications and data types, and installation services. Ongoing costs include maintenance agreements, storage devices, storage media, power, hardware replacements, labor costs, and off-site tape vaulting services.

One of the great benefits of subscribing to an online backup service is that someone else builds and maintains the infrastructure for you. With an online backup service, you can avoid the need to build and maintain costly environments of your own and benefit from the simplicity of a single monthly or annual fee that includes 24x7 support.

Reason 3. Maintain flexibility to adjust as your business needs change

With online backup services, you pay only for the storage you need. Costs are steady and predictable over time, based on the amount of data that is protected and the length of time it is stored. This frees up funds in the short term that can be applied to other projects.

Online backup services can easily scale as your business grows and as data volumes increase. Many online backup services can be canceled at any time or scaled back by reducing the volume of data to be protected, which allows users to control how much—and when—they spend.

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Reason 4: Protect data from disasters

Not every office is located in a hurricane belt, in a flood zones, or near an earthquake fault line. Still, every business needs a good disaster recovery plan. Disaster can be caused by something as simple as an electrical short that sparks a fire. Unfortunately, planning for a disaster tends to be neglected until a crisis occurs—at which point it is often too late.

Protecting business data is a critical component to any disaster recovery plan. When systems and backups are in one physical location, the business becomes vulnerable. However, typical strategies to store data off-site often depend on costly tape vaulting services or rely on an employee to back up information onto tapes or DVDs manually and take them home at the end of the day.

Online backup solutions automate the process of storing data off-site. And leading providers replicate customer data across multiple redundant, secure data center facilities for an added layer of protection.

Reason 5. Store backups in certified, redundant data centers managed by experts

Today's leading online backup service providers have state-of-the-art backup infrastructure in data centers staffed around the clock by IT experts. Look for providers whose facilities and operations have earned independent third-party accreditations, such as:

- ISO/IEC 27002 Code of Practice for Information Security Management—a set of best practices for implementing and maintaining information management security systems
- SAS-70 Type II certification—issued by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA); requires an independent auditing firm to examine the implemented controls in a service organization

It is also a good idea to ensure that the online backup service provider you select stores data in Type IV data centers, which have the highest standards for availability. Large, established vendors have an advantage when it comes to investing in infrastructure and managing it over the long term.

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Reason 6. Recover files faster and more reliably from any location

At the end of the day, backup is about having the ability to recover, and online backup services have several advantages here as well. Consider the alternatives:

- Backup to tape, CD, or DVD—portable media formats such as these are prone to failure due to mishandling, mislabeling, and environmental factors. Locating the right tapes or disks to recover from can be a challenge, and if an off-site vaulting service provider is used, it can be a full day or more before the portable media is shipped. Performing a recovery requires each tape or disk to be mounted, and it might be necessary to restore a full backup and several incremental backups to get all the files needed. Portable media solutions often require specific operating systems and versions of backup software, creating lock-in. Finally, portable media can easily be lost or stolen.
- Backup to disk on-site—backing up to disk addresses many of the issues with portable media, but has several drawbacks as well. Upfront hardware purchase and configuration are required, environments grow more complex as additional storage is needed, and data still must be stored off-site for disaster recovery purposes.

Online backup provides the simplest alternative. There is no need to purchase or manage hardware or portable media of any kind. Data is streamed seamlessly to an off-site facility and can be restored to any location connected to the Internet. Some services even allow individual files to be located easily and restored independent of other data, often in minutes.

Reason 7. Reduce compliance risks

Legal regulations as well as industry best practices require that long-term, off-site storage be provided for essential business data—particularly regulated healthcare or financial information. Yet managing and maintaining off-site storage is a stretch for many small and mid-sized businesses.

Online backup solutions help address requirements such as these simply and cost-effectively. Data is encrypted before it is securely transmitted off-site for disaster recovery needs. If long-term retention is a requirement, some online backup solutions even allow customers to retain up to seven years of historical copies of data. And if an audit occurs, robust reporting capabilities help demonstrate compliance.

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Reason 8. Increase staff productivity

Businesses using online backup services avoid the time-consuming tasks of maintaining an on-premise solution, such as:

- Running backup jobs manually
- Cataloguing, tracking, and managing portable media and off-site storage
- Installing and testing backup hardware and software
- Managing software licenses, support contracts, and upgrades

Once an online backup service has been configured, it runs in the background, providing “always-on” protection. Backups can be performed on a schedule or can be triggered automatically by file changes. Users can “set it and forget it” and free existing staff to perform other, more strategic tasks.

Reason 9. Protect remote offices and mobile employees

Even when businesses have a robust, advanced backup solution in place, some constituencies often go underserved:

- Mobile workers—individuals such as consultants, sales teams, and executives often spend a majority of their time on the road. These workers expose their laptops to significant wear and tear. In addition, they can easily misplace a system entirely or become a victim of theft. Despite these risks, mobile workers often fail to back up, or they back up only during brief stops into the office.
- Remote offices—although small branch offices often have critical business information, they also often lack the IT resources to perform backups.

Online backup services provide a convenient option for addressing these communities. Mobile workers are able to stay protected every time they connect to the Internet. And remote offices can stream data continuously to an off-site location without having to worry about maintaining an onsite IT presence.

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Reason 10. Keep backup data secure

Far too often, the source of a data breach can be traced back to a backup tape or other form of portable media that was not properly encrypted. Online backup services follow advanced security protocols to ensure that customer data is managed safely and securely.

Leading services use algorithms such as AES 256-bit encryption to ensure that data is protected before it is transmitted. This is the same encryption algorithm that the U.S. National Security Administration uses to protect files marked “top secret.” Encryption keys are stored on the local client, ensuring that the online backup service provider cannot view the backup files under any circumstances.

Leading services also transmit data over the Internet using Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) technology—the same standard used to protect online banking services and credit card purchases.

Summary

Online backup services offer a broad range of advantages over other data protection options in the marketplace today. Easy-to-use, feature-rich services are now available from proven leaders in security and data protection, allowing small and mid-sized businesses to enjoy the same data management capabilities as large enterprises, but without the associated cost and complexity.

About Symantec™ Online Backup

Developed by the market leader in backup and recovery, Symantec Online Backup provides small and mid-sized businesses with secure, affordable backup and recovery over the Internet. Symantec Online Backup is part of Symantec™ Protection Network, a common platform for providing Symantec technologies to customers as online services.

For more information on Symantec Online Backup—or to start a free 30-day trial—please visit www.spn.com or call 866-223-5977.

About Symantec

Symantec is a global leader in providing security, storage, and systems management solutions to help businesses and consumers secure and manage their information. Headquartered in Cupertino, Calif., Symantec has operations in more than 40 countries. More information is available at www.symantec.com.

For specific country offices and contact numbers, please visit our Web site. For product information in the U.S., call toll-free 1 (800) 745 6054

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