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Some of the biggest disasters are the ones that happen every day. A lost file here, a crashed hard drive there, a virus infection that should have been caught, an accidental deletion of an entire folder, a corruption of a database or a myriad of other small issues. Prior to mega events like hurricane Katrina, the losses from day-to-day issues were more than all natural disasters combined. This month's column is going to cover software, hardware appliances and other services that can make you more secure and allow you to recover your firm faster.

Fundamental protection should be in place such as firewalls and anti-virus software. You should have a routine where you update your software frequently and where daily backups are being made. Server technologies such as RAID drives or other technologies such as virtualization should be considered if they are not already in use. Once you have the fundamentals right, the categories below can give you extra protection. The goal of listing the products below is to give you ideas on how to protect your firm in the event of a failure. These tools should either prevent a failure, or make it easier and faster to recover.

Let's consider the first category of tools that are designed to protect your individual computers as well as your network. Security software can help protect your existing machines and network. PGP encryption is the protection most widely recommended to encrypt local hard drives, and provide a level of e-mail encryption, as well. Many states do not require reporting if the lost machine has hard disk encryption installed. PGP takes several hours to encrypt your computer's hard drive, but once it is in place, there is no noticeable difference in performance.

Preventing bad things from getting to your computers is the focus of the next

has the ability to eliminate unneeded files through single-click Cleaning, and has a Real-Time Security Monitor.

For larger networks, New Boundary's Policy Commander does automated enforcement of policies, and its suite of products includes automation of most desktop tasks. BOUNCER by CoreTrace takes a different approach, which could eliminate the need for any anti-virus or protection software of any kind, including the need to do software updates. This product locks down an image and prevents software from being changed by any outside source. This provides version control and completely eliminates the need for routine updates, a very interesting concept.

What happens if a machine turns up missing? Thirty-seven states currently require reporting of lost personal data, and more will follow suit. If you have the computer's hard drive encrypted, you may eliminate the need for reporting, but wouldn't it be nice to know where the machine is, and wipe the data clean? Tools like Computrace LoJack can do exactly this. In fact, many of these products can trace through Internet connection, trace through Wi-Fi connection, trace through telephone connection, gather forensics on the thief, use the computer's GPS to locate itself, take a picture of the crook with built-in camera, and wipe out all the data on the hard drive when the machine is identified as stolen. Some products are specifically designed to control and wipe out the data on a machine, such as Beachhead's Lost Data Solution.

The appliances that can protect you do several things. First, we think it is important you have spam protection in place since many bad things come via e-mail. The next thing we worry about is lost productivity in the office from losing files or from losing the entire office. Appliances that provide Continuous Data Protection (CDP) are becoming popular quickly because they backup all changed files on the servers as well as the desktops, and copy the data off-site to

Internet backup facilities. Our approach, called Net Rescue, is an appliance

and/or all data can be restored to an appliance to be shipped to the recovery site. Other appliances protect your identity, passwords or other critical information on USB keys such as IronKey or Yoggie.

Backup is critical, and there are many notable players in the market place. Look for a provider that has multiple locations, can restore individual files, encrypts all backup traffic, and will provide your data to you on hard drive appliances for a major recovery.

If you'd prefer to just be rid of all servers, applications and backup headaches, perhaps a hosting solution is in your future. The cost of hosting, the quality of service and the availability of support is making the hosted option more attractive all the time. We have listed some leading providers of hosting services to tax and accounting firms.

The bottom line to security and recovery is preparation and testing. You should consider the impact of using the technologies listed here in your firm. The websites of these vendors are friendly, explain the technology, and often provide a free trial of their product. You'll be glad you took the effort if you ever lose an important file or a whole system. If you've ever recreated a document from scratch that should have been on a backup, these technologies can really help. The day is coming where we will lose minimal data or time in the event of a failure of any kind. ¦

Security Software Worth Considering:

- **PGP Desktop Professional** — www.pgp.com/products/packages/desktop_pro/index.html
- **Code Red AirStop** — www.code-red.biz/html/products_AirStop.htm

- **Trustware BufferZone Enterprise** —

- **XTool Laptop Tracker** — www.xtool.com/xtooltracker.aspx
- **CyberAngel** — www.thecyberangel.com
- **Lost Data Destruction by Beachhead Solutions** — www.beachheadsolutions.com/lost_data.php

Appliances that can Protect You:

- **DoubleCheck** — www.doublecheckemail.com

  Highly Reliable Systems — www.tapesucks.com
  Net Rescue — www.nmgi.com/netcare
  SonicWALL CDP — www.sonicwall.com/us/products/backup_and_recovery.html

  IronKey — www.ironkey.com
  Yoggie — www.yoggie.com

Backup Somewhere Else:

- **eFolder** — www.efolderbackup.com
  Global DataVault — www.globaldatavault.com
  IronMountain LiveVault — www.ironmountain.com/digital/server
- **Seagate EVault** — www.evault.com/services
  Compunite CompuVault — www.compunite.com/oth/cvault.asp

Run Somewhere Else:

- **InsynQ** — www.cpa-asp.com/index.htm

  Real Time Data Services — www.myrealdata.com

Right Networks — www.rightnetworks.com

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