

Anywhere Computing Opens Endless Possibilities ... Possibilities to Data Loss

The same open spirit that started the original Internet more than 10 years ago is rapidly building out the nation's Wi-Fi network. User groups, companies, retailers (theaters, coffee shops, restaurants, malls) as well as governmental and educational agencies are adding nodes in stores, parks, public buildings.

The fact that the gratis sites are as open to you as to anyone else means it can be relatively easy for less than scrupulous individuals to "borrow" your passwords, credit card information and other vital data. For the majority of your work or activity, this is of little concern. When it is, tap into one of the subscription services that deliver some level of security (it is getting better). New virtual private network (VPN) software encrypts your communications, making it difficult to hack as it mixes with the other traffic on the Web.

The problem is that with higher-performance CPUs and larger storage capacities, laptop and notebook computers are rapidly becoming users' primary computer, rather than just their on-the-road supplement. This means users can have instant access to the most current information, regardless of their location – in the office, in the conference room, at home, in the airport, in their hotel room or in a client's office.

The problem – and the operative words are, "current information."

Added Care, Protection

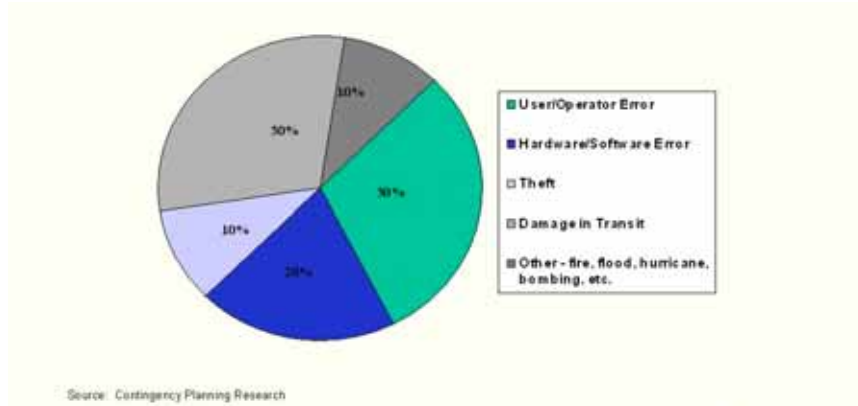
Users need to understand that these mobile systems aren't invisible, nor are they invincible. While it is impossible, we would almost recommend that anyone who receives a portable computer also receives an orientation on how and why they need to protect the corporate data they will be carrying with them around the country and the globe. Any portable PC can be configured to require a password before the user can access any data on the system. This ensures at least some data protection.

While these steps do protect the systems from outside theft or attack, they do not protect the individual's and the organization's most valuable asset – the data. There's simply no substitute for an economical and reliable backup and disaster recovery solution that will protect the individual's and organization's most valuable asset and is easy to use!

Tailor Protection

Only full, incremental and differential backup scheduling can protect vital information from the top mobile PC disasters.

Top Mobile PC Disasters



New automated backup solutions such as NTI's Backup NOW! are available that provide both drive image and file backup. With convenient features such as the ability to exclude and include files, users can bypass or select specific file types from multiple folders for backup.

The advanced solutions also incorporate the ability to produce a bootable disc for fast, reliable disaster recovery.

Since CD writers are generic to almost every notebook and laptop computer (internal or external), and the media is almost as economical as paper, CDs provide an excellent backup and recovery medium for mobile users.

For best protection, incremental or differential backups backup should be carried out on a daily basis and full backups should be made at least every other week.

Once you have made your latest CD full backup, put these discs in your suitcase when you travel (obviously, the backup in the bag with your portable PC is of little assistance if the bag is stolen). Data recovery specialists often recommend that you keep 2-3 sets of your backups with you. The newest in the suitcase with your clothes, the next older in another safe travel location and the oldest with your computer.

Rapid Mobile Growth

Wi-Fi usage is becoming increasingly popular (Gartner Group estimates that usage will grow to more than 1.9 million in 2003, up from 700,000 in 2002) as hot spots triple across the country. Today, there are about 3,300 nodes in the U.S. Individual and corporate users will find it even more attractive as next-generation 54G versions (54 Mbps, 5X faster than current Wi-Fi speeds) become more widely available and the set up for each new location becomes faster and easier.

As people increasingly extend their working environment to parks, coffee shops and airport lounges; IT management will have to focus more of their attention on helping people understand that they are carrying the company's most valuable resource with

them. Mobile users need provide the same level of protection to the notebook-stored data that they would give a company-private file folders they would lock in their desk drawer.

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Sidebar

Areas of Concern

Contingency Planning Research points out the obvious:

- There has been a dramatic increase in the volume of data stored on PCs (even in the corporate office environment). Because of the extremely low cost, storage capacity has increased 80 percent over the past 12 months and will increase more than 50 percent in the coming 12 months.
- Corporate users have traditionally resisted hierarchical storage management (HSM), preferring to retain “their” data on their systems. Forty percent of corporate users resist or circumvent centralized storage.
- Less than 30 percent of all PC users backup their data
- The Internet has opened systems to the world, meaning that any and all data is available to others.
- Thirty-one percent of users are susceptible to virus attacks and 56 percent are vulnerable to exposing private data online.
- Even users that utilize virus protection software are only protected from existing viruses. There is no protection for new viruses which usually require 2-3 days for antivirus firms to research and block.

If you feel this is discouraging, consider the notebook or laptop computer user:

- Notebook and laptop computers are five times more likely to be stolen than desktop systems. The IRS lost or misplaced more than 2300 laptop computers over the last three years.
- Fifteen percent of all laptops are stolen every year.
- Because of heightened airport security, the number of laptop and notebook computers lost, misplaced, stolen or forgotten at airports has increased more than 80 percent in the past 12 months.
- Notebook hard drives are 10 times more likely to crash than desktop systems.
- Today, an organization’s most current customer data is in the field – not in the office – the cost of manual recovery is prohibitive.