

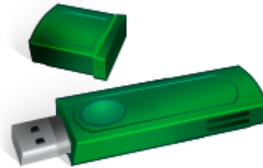


**Small Business Development Center
at Volunteer State Community College**

A public service program of the Division of Continuing Education & Economic Development

March's Newsletter:

Database Backup for Small Businesses



It's been a little over two years since the February 5th "Super Tuesday" tornado that hit Sumner, Macon, Trousdale, and surrounding counties. I remember venturing out with Volunteer State Community College staff and students to assist in the cleanup effort in Castalian Springs. Our first stop was the post office. We initially drove right by the location, not realizing that the post office was no longer there. There were only piles of rubble, with mail scattered throughout the area. We spent most of the morning trying to identify mail, important documents, and personal items. One of the first things I picked up was a smashed piece of metal with wires hanging out of it. As I examined it, I realized that it was a computer. As a business counselor my first thought was, I hope they backed up their database. They did. The question is, have you? You don't need a natural disaster to take place for your very valuable data to be lost. All you need is time. Eventually every computer crashes and takes your data with it. Data files such

as, QuickBooks®, Microsoft® files (Outlook, Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint), pictures, industry specific software databases, or anything else could be lost forever. This can be detrimental to any size business.

Consider these statistics:

- 70% of companies go out of business after a major data loss (Source, DTI)
- 32% of data loss is due to user error (Source, Gartner Group)
- 10% of laptops are stolen annually (Source, Gartner Group)
- 15% of laptops suffer hardware failure annually (Source, Gartner Group)

It is critical that you take the time to backup your data, at least nightly, to some form of external media (somewhere other than your computer). There are a variety of ways to backup your data.

Optical Disc (CD's/DVD's):

One of the more popular ways to backup data is to use your CD or DVD burner. The effort is minimal and so is the cost, especially if you use a re-writable (RW) disc. However most I.T. professionals would recommend that you use something that is less likely to have data loss due to a scratch or that can't be used as a coaster.

USB flash drives:

Flash drives are now large enough to serve as computer-backup devices. You can backup all of your data and carry it with you wherever you go, although that's also a not always a good thing. If you are like me, and would lose your head if it were not attached, then you may need to look for a better option.

External hard drives:

Although more expensive than and not as convenient to use as a flash drive or an optical disc, an external backup is still economical and easy to use. Backup only takes a few minutes and you can also schedule automatic backups at preset times, such as when your computer is idle.

Online storage services:

These services store your data on someone else's hard drive over the internet. There's nothing to break or lose, you can add or subtract storage space as needed (sometimes at extra cost), and your backups are available anywhere over the internet. But you must be comfortable trusting your data to a third party.

The key to any of these options is that they are **backups**. You *should always save data to your computer first* and then backup your data to an external media.

I've always said that the best option is the one that you will personally remember to use. If you feel you need additional assistance, it is always a good idea to consult an I.T. professional.