



Some things to consider when looking at Online Backup

Online backup allows anyone to backup their systems automatically using the internet to pass the information securely to offsite data centres, managed by data specialists.

Until recently, businesses backed up their sensitive and distributed corporate data in a variety of ways and would put a good portion of the burden and cost on the user's shoulders. The organisation may have deployed shared network information stores (shared folders) in which employees back up data periodically by uploading to these resources. Or they may synchronise user folders contained on a central server. Perhaps they rolled out USB flash drives for users to keep in their offices for backup purposes. These methods had the potential to work well, provided the users were vigilant and committed. If they erred, corporate security and data integrity would be at risk.

Online backup removes the human component in these outdated means. Computer users and many experts often consider lost data permanently destroyed. Information about data loss can be complex, inconsistent or inaccurate, it's not surprising that data loss and data recovery are some of the most confusing and misunderstood concepts of today. Computer data is one of your company's most valuable and vulnerable assets.

The primary threats to your information include:

- Hardware or system malfunction
- Human error
- Software corruption or program instability
- Computer viruses
- Natural disasters.

These five major threats to your business share two things in common, they are unpredictable and, in many cases, uncontrollable. Therefore, the precautions taken by IT professionals to safeguard company data cannot always prevent data loss. Online backup as a service aims to improve on any existing backup infrastructure available.

Online backup incorporates many services, some of which include:

- Scheduled automatic continuous data protection (CDP)
- Secure offsite storage
- Data encryption for reliable secure backup disaster recovery.

Online backup service providers have unparalleled protection against data loss typically including an automatic, intervention free process which quickly defines schedules for times of backup over the internet. These schedules can be configured to run once, three times or consistently throughout the day depending on a user's data protection needs. Continuous data protection (CDP), offers up to the minute changes and is also called continuous backup or real-time backup, which refers to an automatic backup of data by saving a copy of every change made to that data, essentially capturing every version that the user saves. This allows the user or administrator to restore data to any point in time. This type of solution is becoming more and more feasible as internet providers in South Africa work to reduce the cost of bandwidth.

Online backup software also allows the user to choose whether whole files are uploaded (differential), or whether just the changes (incremental) are uploaded. After a backup completion the user or business will receive a backup data report, confirming success or failure of the transaction, keeping the user/business and the backup service provider up-to-date on the integrity of the current backup.

