

Business Survival Newsletter“

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BUSINESS SURVIVAL:

A BUSINESS CONTINUITY NEWSLETTER FOR DECISION MAKERS
FROM ROTHSTEIN ASSOCIATES INC.

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AMONG OUR FAVORITE QUOTES:

BUDGET: A mathematical confirmation of your suspicions. - A. A. Latimer

... and a timely reprise of a previous favorite quote:

"Suppose you were an idiot," Mark Twain once said, "and suppose you were a member of Congress -- but I repeat myself."

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YEAR 2000 OBSERVATIONS - - SOME TIMELY NOTES

A 400-year-old instrument for charting the position of the sun and moon has been hit by the millennium bug, according to the curator at the Liverpool Museum in the U.K. The Equatorium, a brass instrument built around 1600, is essentially a time line for celestial sightings. But the time line ends with the year 1999, the BBC reports. I find it extraordinary to think of the vision of the maker who made sure this instrument could be used 400 years into the future, the curator says. But now those 400 years are coming to an end.

It s no longer a worry just for governments, vendors and IT managers. The millennium bug has hit the mainstream. For example, Boulder, Colo.-based Paladin Press - which specializes in survivalist and mercenary guidebooks - has added the Y2k Computer Crash Scenario along-

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side *Improvised, Modified Firearms* to its arsenal of books. The 55-page manual is brimming with tips on how to survive a disaster with the potential to be just as catastrophic as God's response in Babel. One example: Have a local police department run your criminal record just prior to the date change, For anyone with computer-savvy enemies, that precaution should protect against a fabricated rap sheet. - - *Computerworld*, Nov. 16, 1998.

And, this unsettling portent from the venerable *New York Times* (January 2, 1999):

STOCKHOLM, Jan 1 (Agence France-Presse) - The police at three Swedish airports got a foretaste of the Year 2000 bug today. Their computers malfunctioned at midnight, causing distress for travelers without passports.

The bugs hit police offices at airports that issue immediate, temporary passports to last-minute or forgetful travelers. The computers refused to acknowledge that 1999 had arrived and refused to authorize the one-month documents.

The fault was apparently caused by the use of "99" in some programs as a code signifying end of run or end of file.

Several would-be travelers were disappointed. The bug meant they could not get a passport - a reason that is probably insufficient to claim a refund on plane tickets. Technicians managed to fix the problem later in the day.

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DATA BACKUP - SOME GOLDEN RULES

It is truly unbelievable to us how many catastrophes or near disasters could have been averted with some attention to basic data backups. Here are our Golden Rules for backing up your essential data:

1. Move it. On-site backups are all but worthless in the event of physical disruptions or loss of access. The quicker the backup is transported off-site, the more usable - and accessible - it is likely to be when most needed.
2. Secure it. Protect the backups at least as well as the primary systems, from loss or disclosure as well as tampering. Store the backups, especially if magnetic media, in a conditioned environment.
3. Test it. There is no way to be certain backups are usable short of testing, by actually attempting to recover data and systems in a test or recovery environment.
4. Segregate it. Enforce separation of access and authority between production and backup data. Ideally, no individual will have access to both.
5. Meet business needs. Instead of mechanically scheduling backup processing, tailor backups to the essential business processes, flows, priorities and timings. Involve end users in backup planning.
6. Be realistic. Match the technology to the organization's capabilities. Don't go overboard on technology you cannot effectively control.
7. Play it safe. It is doubtful anybody ever was fired for being too careful protecting critical company data, although certain types of data may need to be excluded.
8. Leave out data where appropriate. In some cases, too much backup or excessively long retention can increase exposure from litigation - you may need to exclude or limit retention of e-mail, voicemail or other transient data.
9. Trust nobody. Build in controls and accountabilities to protect against sabotage or malfeasance. Ideally, invite internal audit or other non-IT professionals such as records management or risk

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management to review and critique the backup process.

10.Keep it simple. Concentrate on protection, reliability and usability instead of getting caught up in sizzling technology.

11.Use readily available, generic backup software and hardware.

12.Check your backup software and hardware for Y2k compliance.

And, the most important rule:

13.No backup process is going to work if you don t actually use it. The most sophisticated data backup system cannot implement or run itself unless someone takes the lead.

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RECOMMENDED READING - CHECK IT OUT!

These and hundreds of other books and software tools are available from The Rothstein Catalog On Disaster Recovery at www.rothstein.com:

CALL CENTER CONTINUITY PLANNING, by Jim Rowan and Sharon Rowan

"Whether your company is large or small, plans and budgets in millions or hundreds of dollars, operates according to strategic plans generated by committees or by the seat of your pants, Call Center Continuity Planning gives you the no-nonsense, practical, real-world expertise you need to plan for and survive any and all 'events' - from natural disasters to mere unexpected volume - and do so efficiently, economically, and profitably. Call Center Continuity Planning shows you how to plan for continuity through disasters large and small - everything from power outages and hurricanes to unexpected peaks in inbound call volume that might threaten to swamp your call-takers." - - 1999, 421 pages - plus CD-ROM. Order #DR349, \$305.00

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THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO I.T. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS: MATCHING SERVICE QUALITY TO BUSINESS NEEDS, by Andrew Hiles

Covering all aspects of Information Technology Service Level Agreements (SLAs), this essential manual is a step-by-step guide to designing, negotiating and implementing SLA's into your organization. It reviews the disadvantages and advantages, gives clear guidance on what types are appropriate, how to set up SLA's and to control them. An invaluable aid to IT managers, data center managers, computer services, systems and operations managers. (New, expanded 1998 edition, available exclusively from The Rothstein Catalog on Disaster Recovery) - - 1998, 242 pages. Order #DR-413, \$295.00.

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FEATURED WWW SITE

www.TheBCI.org is the site of The Business Continuity Institute, a worldwide organization for Business Continuity Practitioners.

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