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eOrganizedWorld
the Online Information Management Newsletter
for Information Professionals
from Charlie Sodano

Media for Records Archiving

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How many of you have floppy disks that contain valuable information? Assuming that you still have a reader for the disk, I would advise you to check them as soon as possible. You may find that the disk is partially or completely unreadable (corrupt).

People used to back up their home PC using a tape cassette. Kind of like the ones we used to use for listening to music. Where did they go? Is anyone still using them?

If you purchased a new PC within the past few years it probably has a hard drive with a 100 to 500 GB capacity. Seems like a lot of space? Not! It's like your attic or garage or basement. Things start to pile up and pretty soon you're down to a few gigabytes. Even after some house cleaning people find that their available space is still pretty small.

If you are keeping all of your valuable information on your hard drive, watch out. These things do crash more often than you think leaving you with lengthy and expensive operations to recover it. You need a place to off-load your valuables where they will be protected.

The stability of floppy disks, tapes, CDs and DVDs have been extensively studied. It has been shown that they all degrade with time especially if stored at a moderately high (85 F) temperatures. Records stored on this media should be refreshed (transferred) every 2-3 years. What a pain in the butt!

Let me tell you how I am handling this issue. I use a laptop that only has a 100 GB disk. I have accumulated about 200 GB of important records, which includes the backup image of my PC (in case my hard drive crashes again). My important records are currently being stored on a portable external drive (1 terabyte). These things get cheaper every day. I was feeling pretty good about this until someone mentioned that if my house burned down, I'd lose everything. Whoops!

I needed to store another copy of my valuables somewhere outside of my house. Where? On the internet of course. I took the cheap way out by using space on the server that my website resides on. Transferring took several days. This is a VERY slow process. For those of you who do not have access to an internet server, there are some available services (IDrive, Mozy, SOS Online, Carbonite) where you can buy space for as little as \$5 a month.

Another approach is to buy a high capacity USB 128 gigabyte thumb drives from Kingston, Patriot or Corsair for about \$400. These solid state devices are small and relatively stable. Or you can buy a terabyte hard drive (Western Digital) for about \$120. More prone to damage because of moving parts, but definitely a great price. You should store a copy of your valuables at some other location,

other than your home or office.

One last thing for those of you who think that the data CDs and DVDs you created will be viable after 5 years or more. The hardware and software needed to read the information on these disks probably will not exist in the future. It's happened in the past for other technology and will happen again for sure.

Please pass on this EZine to those in your network.

To leave list or change email address, scroll to bottom.

A link to the EZine is also found at www-eorganizedworld.com

Contact us (consultants@eorganizedworld.com) for additional information about getting your records management program started. We'll give you more free advice and explain how we can continue to work together.

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What's new?

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Records Management / Archiving

EMC Corp. announced it has signed an agreement to acquire privately held Kazeon Systems Inc., a provider of electronic discovery software. The deal is estimated to be valued at around \$75 million.

You probably know your company shouldn't save every bit of data. Given regulatory requirements and the role that electronic records play in lawsuits, some enterprises save everything just to be safe. Yet, "more companies are sensitive to the fact that we can't just keep throwing storage at the issue," says IDC analyst Rick Villars. Storage is cheap, but it adds up. IDC, a sister company to CIO, found a 27 percent drop in the cost of disk storage between 2007 and 2008. Nevertheless, worldwide spending on storage reached \$80 billion last year. Furthermore, if your company gets sued, or even called as a witness, experts say it can cost millions to identify needed documents--\$250 to \$600 per hour for the work and \$150 to \$1,900 per gigabyte for the software.

A short-term study of Twitter has found that 40% of the messages sent via it are "pointless babble." Carried out by US market research firm Pear Analytics, the study aimed to produce a snapshot of what people do with the service. Almost as prevalent as the babble were "conversational" tweets that used it as a surrogate instant messaging system. The study found that 40.5% could be classified as pointless babble, 37.5% as conversational and 8.7% as having pass-along value. Self promotion and spam stood at 5.85% and 3.75% respectively.

ELN / LIMS

The first public version of LabJournal - a comprehensive solution for record keeping for researchers was just released. It is a hybrid between a word processor, a blog, wiki engine and a file repository, and has certain extra features specific for scientific record keeping. For right now, it's free!

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