A guide to data security

Holding data and information on a computer is becoming more and more necessary, therefore causing us to have to think about how we are looking after it. Whether it is a small or large network the issue remains the same, we are responsible. Any information held on a computer creates a security risk and systems should be designed with this in mind. With the growth of broadband and the internet bringing many benefits we now have added security risks from the outside world.

Remember the points below are a simple guide, however vigilance and planning play an important role in security strategy. It is important to have a plan in place for an occasion when something may go wrong thereby allowing as little downtime and inconvenience as possible.

If you find the following helpful and would like some further advice just give us a call on 028 2563 8888. At the end of the day peace of mind goes a long way.

Securities

Firewalls – If a computer doesn't need to access the Internet isolate it. However if Internet is required a firewall can be used to keep unauthorised users out. The firewall automatically locks out intruders and protects identity and data while on the internet.

Antivirus – Antivirus software detects and removes viruses when surfing, emailing or file transferring.

AntiSpyware – Although Antivirus software can detect Spyware or Adware, which are becoming more of a nuisance, in your computer it however does not protect you against them coming into your system and can't remove them.

Benefits:

- If these securities are kept up to date and monitored regularly then the user can work away without having their fingers crossed.
- Pressure and stress is reduced for both management and employees who just want to get on with the job and make the most out of the Internet world.
- In the long term less money is wasted repairing problems whereas maintenance is always more cost effective, especially since a single computer can affect a complete network.

Central Data Location

It is always helpful to have all necessary data going to or being created at a central point such as a server or designated computer. Even though it is possible to save files at each computer it should be encouraged to send the important stuff to the central location.

Benefits:

- Backups at the central location become more effective as all the important information is getting backed up there.
- The need for each computer to be backed up individually can be removed which helps reduce points of failure.
- Time spent on monitoring what has and hasn't been done is reduced.
- If a computer fails it can simply be removed from the network and another put in place without time and money wasted in trying to restore data.

Backups

This is probably one of the most important procedures in any business regardless of size. Always keep in mind what we are not prepared to lose. Backups should encompass whatever you need to be able to pick up and get running again in the worst-case scenario. Create a robust system that is cyclical and allows for complete and partial back-ups as well as offsite storage. Remember as well as the X-factor it is possible for the individual to make an innocent mistake such as an incorrect deletion or file replacement!

Benefits:

- If virus, hacking or any form of corruption harms important information it can be restored again.
- Downtime will be limited ensuring business can be up and running more quickly.
- Management can have less worry as backups help with peace of mind.
- Employees can work away not having to carry the extra burden of data responsibility.

Access Levels

Passwords should be set-up on computers and across networks placing restrictions on levels of access. Especially consider confidential information and financial records.

Benefits

- Confidential information is only available to those who need it.
- If one computer becomes a security risk, access to other areas can be denied.
- Viruses and such find it more difficult to spread across networks with pass worded levels of access
- Management can keep information private that is sensitive.

If you have any queries please give us a call on 028 2563 8888