

Re: Backup best practices...

Source:

<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/Windows/microsoft.public.windows.server.sbs/2008-02/msg00351.html>

- *From:* Duncan McC <hard@xxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Mon, 4 Feb 2008 14:28:03 +1300
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In article <D8F85088-FE18-414C-8DB9-809BB1740A08@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>, rosewood@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx says...

It was a rant and I didn't expect it from an MVP.

Not a single one of my customers would be oob if there server was down for a week. First off, the hardware they have wouldn't allow that to happen w/o a total catastrophe and I've yet to have that happen b/c I do things like RAID to keep that from happening. Worst case scenario for each of my customers if the server were to sit off for a week: They would use their offline files on their workstations, outlook would be in an offline mode and start pulling from the backup remote pop3 accounts (that we keep for when COX or SBC decides to kill internet for awhile), internet would continue to work as every one of my customers is setup with a router that handles the connection/firewall. Printing is all direct to the printers and each office still has an old fax machine plugged in for outgoing faxes that would then be used for incoming faxes. About a year and a half ago, a COX tech spilled his latte on one of my customer's servers while I was in Dallas. The customer of mine didn't call b/c he knew he was in Dallas but also because he knew we had systems in place to keep everything going.

The point of my question was to make sure I'm on the right track, not that I don't even have a train to ride on. Maybe you have enough time to break stuff just to see how you can fix it, but I stay a bit busier than that (which is why I build stuff not to break, 12 years I've been working with PCs and quality and care do go a long way. Yes, freak things happen but come on now).

I've read many a horror story from techs who have used NTbackup "the right way" and still find that IIS didn't restore properly, or there is some goofy mailbox issue with exchange. This is the type of stuff I'm trying to learn about now before I do anything on my server, which is basically exactly what you want me to do.

Kerry, you are one of the most helpful MVPs here and quite frankly SBS2003 wouldn't be the product it is if it weren't for the help of MVPs like you and the others.

Re: Backup best practices...

Thanks for your reply. Even if it was a rant, it showed you care.

"Kerry Brown" <kerry@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx*a*m> wrote in message
news:0D678ADF-9875-437E-BE53-8B395D27555F@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Let's skip your personal server and concentrate on the production servers for your customers. Like myself it sounds like you are a one person shop. What will happen to your customers if you are on holiday in Hawaii and one of their servers has a meltdown? You have done them a great disservice by not having a tested, documented plan to restore their backup. They should be able to do this without you present if possible. If you are like me most of your customers are small business' who count on you to keep their computers running. Some of them would suffer a serious financial blow if their computers were unavailable for a week. How would you feel if one of them went out of business because of you?

Now to get back to your system. Implement a backup system as close to your customer's as is possible. Try several different bare metal restores until you know how to do it without thinking. Try restoring to a new hard drive. Try restoring to a new server. Try restoring from an old backup then recovering current data from a newer backup. Once you can do this document the process for your server. Now spend some time at your customer's sites documenting how they would do it and give them the documentation.

I'm sorry if this sounds like a rant. Selling your customers a solution without a tested, documented plan to restore their data is irresponsible. It will come back to haunt you. Here is a link on using supported procedures to backup and restore a SBS server.

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?familyid=487736f8-f6f5-436d-a82d-0c8d66e2a6>

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Kerry Brown
Microsoft MVP – Shell/User
<http://www.vistahelp.ca/phpBB2/>

"Rosewood" <rosewood@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
news:AE3F2BC8-4AD8-48E3-AC02-0F5D0518629C@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

On my personal server, I received a SMART alert telling me that the primary drive is failing. Because this server is my personal one, used only by me for me, I never invested in really sexy hardware for it. If the (sole) primary drive failed tomorrow, outlook would still have all of my emails. My documents would still be available offline.

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So my question is: What is the best practice for backup for SBS2003? For me, a perfect backup would be one that is easy to restore and restores everything. All settings for IIS, Exchange, the AD, etc. All the mailboxes would come back, etc. and all w/ minimal effort (or at least very well documented effort).

Like many folk here, I have adopted drive imaging as a second solution. I have also tested backups using MS (full) backup, and in SBS 2003, it actually works! (I think like many, we've been dissapointed with prior MS Backup (restoring from ntbackup)).

That said, restoring from an MS Backup is still a very slow task, compared with a drive imaging solution. It's great, I think anyway, to have two backup strategies. And of course, restoring from an image, is incredibly easy and more importantly *fast* (40 minutes on my last Server install (Jan '08) compared to four hours (I think it was) restoring the 'MS' way).

The most important bit as others have suggested, is to ensure you actually do do the test restores, which I do as soon as the first disc is installed (Windows 2003 Server is in). And I continue to do more test restores as I get SBS 2003 fully installed (admittedly just using Paragon Drive Backup (what I use for imaging)). I then do an MS restore at the end of it all. OK... I might stuff something up along the way during the setup, and end up starting again (4 to 5 hours down the drain! :) – but it's definately well worth the effort at the end of the day, and lot of peace of mind for me.

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Duncan

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