


TECH

Advancing your data protection & backup strategy is the key to surviving the dynamic data driven economy

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Data is the new oil, a sane soul said. The only difference is that the oil will run out in a few years. On the other hand, data continues to accumulate exponentially. With more than 50% of the world's population using smartphones and digital devices, with new additions daily, data is generated in large volume.

We walk, talk, eat, drink and breathe data. We are constantly leaving our digital footprint behind. More than that, as we interact with online platforms and indulge in digital channels. What most of us don't notice, let alone understand, are the lurking dangers and stealth threats we unwittingly invite. We are mostly unaware of the growing platforms that use AI + data to understand our choices and understand our preferences and use our personal information to push their marketing agenda.

As digital citizens, high time we all woke up to the realities the importance of data protection. It is not just about data backup and restore methods, but it is also about **freeing businesses from digital slavery**. It is the capacity to decide what data should be stored, how it should be used and ensure it does not make us enslaved by hardware and enchained by software. Not just individuals are unaware and unprotected. More than 90% of small and medium size retail and distribution businesses are not aware of the impact of data protection.

According to a global survey by a cybersecurity firm, 57% of organisations suffered unexpected downtime last year because of data loss. The findings also revealed that while 91% of individual's backup data and devices, 68% still lose data because of hardware or software failures, out of date backup, power fluctuations, theft or accidental deletion. The backup methods are not regular and sometimes even a day or weeks are lost because of manual methods.

Religious data protection by businesses is an idea whose time has come. Here are five best practices that businesses, small or big, should adopt for their data protection and privacy:

1. Data protection is about giving power to the data owner. It is empowering businesses with freedom and choice as to what data to be stored and how. There needs an explicit consent and clear privacy policy on how data is consumed or shared.
1. Give 100% ownership of data to the customer. Business critical data has to be protected with multi-factor authentication where only the business owner has access to the database, which is a unique machine generated key. Invest in SaaS based back-up/restore solutions. One of the biggest risks of not securing data is losing credibility and trust from customers.
1. Government to enforce laws and regulations on data protection like the data-protection bill and GDPR and companies have to abide by it 100%. Businesses have to define regulations on data usage. Invest time and effort to educate and train employees and staff.
1. Businesses can identify a data protection officer whose role is to understand vulnerabilities, identify such areas and ensure the data is protected. Their purpose is to protect customer's interests (a customer custodian), educate and create awareness on sharing data.
1. Lastly, learn how to review the data agreement policy. Verify and check with the vendors on how their data is used, understanding the risk. Data sharing is about establishing a level playing field for healthy competition. Invest right.

This World Backup day, businesses need to understand and commit to the importance of data backup and enjoying freedom of sharing data in a secure environment. It is high time the world moves from celebrating backup day to daily backup!

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