Crisis:

Four Ways to Protect Your Data From Disasters

Including theft, accidents, and forces of nature.

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COMPUTER CONSULTING

Crisis:

Your office is on fire

Your people are all safe but now what?

What important preparation do you wish you had "gotten around to doing?"

It's the phone call no business owner or manager ever wants to receive.

A call, from the police, late at night – there's been a fire at your premises.

Luckily it was empty at the time, and no one's been hurt. That's a huge relief.

You barely sleep. And at first light, you go in to examine the damage so that you can issue instructions to your staff.

The fire wasn't too big, and the fire department arrived quickly. But your premises have been utterly devastated.

The fire itself destroyed a room. Smoke has damaged the rest of the building. And it's flooded too, as a result of the firefighting.

Good thing you're well covered on insurance.

As you're surveying the damage, you see your server, located near where the fire originated. It's bent and twisted – clearly, it's going to need replacing.

Good thing you have a backup… no… wait… the backup…

You feel your skin go cold as you remember a conversation you had with a member of your team a few weeks ago.

They'd noticed the automated backup had stopped working. In fact, it hadn't worked for some time.

You agreed a new backup needed to be put in place at some point. Until then, you asked your colleague to make a manual backup a couple of times a week on an external hard disc drive.

That seemed an appropriate thing to do.

Where did he keep that disc?

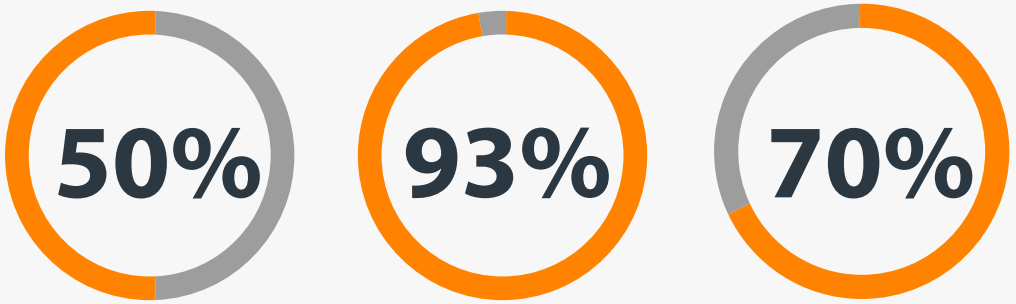
Your eyes flick to his desk - it's black, charred, and dripping with water. The contents of his drawers on the floor. Including the battered remains of the drive.

With startling clarity, you suddenly realize all your data is gone.

Here's the reality:

Businesses that lose their data in this way have a greater chance of going under than surviving

If you think that sentence alone is scary, here are some specific stats:



50% of businesses that lose data due to disaster go bankrupt

93% of businesses that lose their data for 10 days or more go bust within a year

70% of businesses that suffer a severe fire go bankrupt within five years (30% of them do it after just one year)

The stats aren't looking good, are they?

Before you start to hyperventilate, let's go back to the real world. Your office is not on fire, and your data – plus your favorite coffee mug – is safe.

Phew.

But with that in mind, what are the overdue jobs that you keep putting off that – ***if the worst happened*** – you'd be kicking yourself about? What would you wish you'd have done this week?

Here are a few to consider.

A reliable, robust, and verified data backup

Let's start with this one since it's the most obvious and easy to get right.

Regardless of the size of your business, having a proper data backup that keeps your data safe all the time is a basic requirement these days.

And it's not just the prospect of your office burning down that makes your backup a good idea. There are many other reasons that you might need to access it.

These can be as simple as spilling a cup of coffee over your laptop and accidentally destroying it, dropping your laptop, or leaving it on a train.

Other reasons are scarier. Let's take ransomware for example. You've heard of this, right?

It's a type of malware that holds all of your data hostage until you pay a ransom to get it back. If you pay the fine, you're still not guaranteed to have your files returned. If you don't pay, your files are deleted forever.

The criminals behind ransomware do a lot of advance work to make it hard for IT partners to stop and fix attacks once they've started.

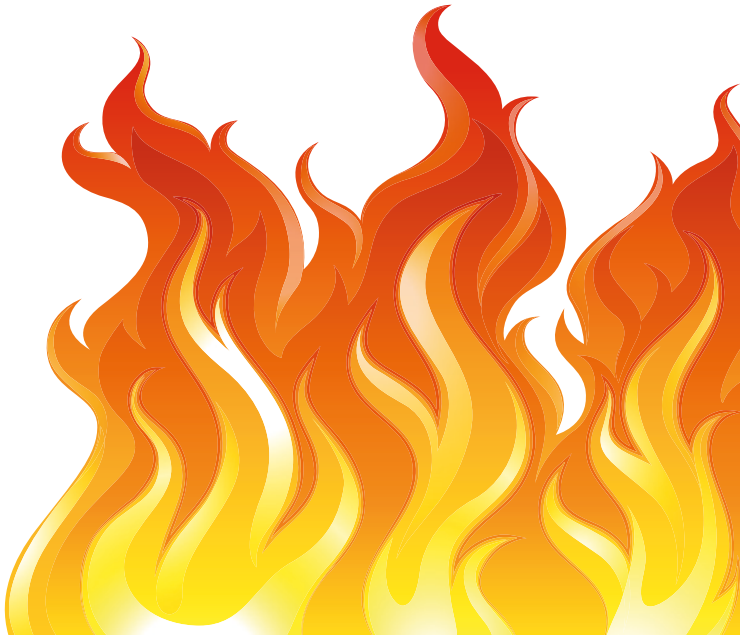
Although it takes a great deal of work to make your network secure again, you can feel relieved that you might not have lost all your data – if you have a protected backup.

It's essential – and often neglected – to regularly check that the backup is working. We've had a number of panicked business owners who needed their backup restored only to find that it stopped working months ago.

There are two aspects to this. There's making sure the backup is happening. And then there's verifying the data to check it is backing up correctly.

What data do you back up? Basically, everything. All data that you've created from all your accounts and projects, including email and website content. If losing a piece of data will have an impact on your business, back it up.

There are loads of different ways to back up your data and many levels of protection. There's no excuse not to do it. If you're unsure where to start, speak to an IT service provider who can get the ball rolling.



Protect your devices

Short of locking them in a fire-proof box overnight, you're not going to be able to protect your devices from being damaged in a fire. However, you can take certain steps to keep them a little safer.

Our devices can be expensive. Especially when you have lots of them within a business – it soon adds up.

One of the first things you can do is make sure they're all insured. Check if they're included in your business insurance or whether they need to have their own insurance. Make sure you're covered for damage from a disaster, but also for theft and accidental damage too.

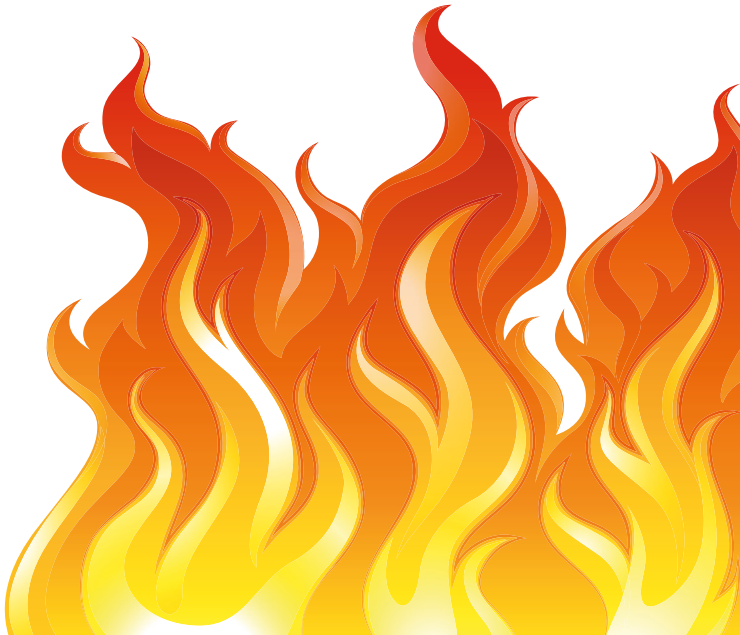
Next, make sure that you've thought through what should happen when a device is lost or stolen. Say someone in the business left a laptop in a coffee shop or had one stolen from their bag on the train. You now know you're insured, but what about the data on that device? How can you make sure it's protected?

Hopefully, you've got your data backed up. But you still want to make sure that the information doesn't end up in the wrong hands. Create a procedure called "What should happen if…"

Ensure that everyone in the business knows who to notify if a device is lost or stolen. This will allow your IT team to quickly take responsibility for remotely wiping the device's data.

It's also really, really important to make sure:

1. All data on all devices is encrypted
2. All devices and software are password-protected
3. You use multi-factor authentication where possible (where you get a code on another device to prove it's really you)



Know what devices you actually have

If your office did burn down, would you honestly know what devices and equipment you've lost?

If the answer to that is no, then I can assure you – you're not alone.

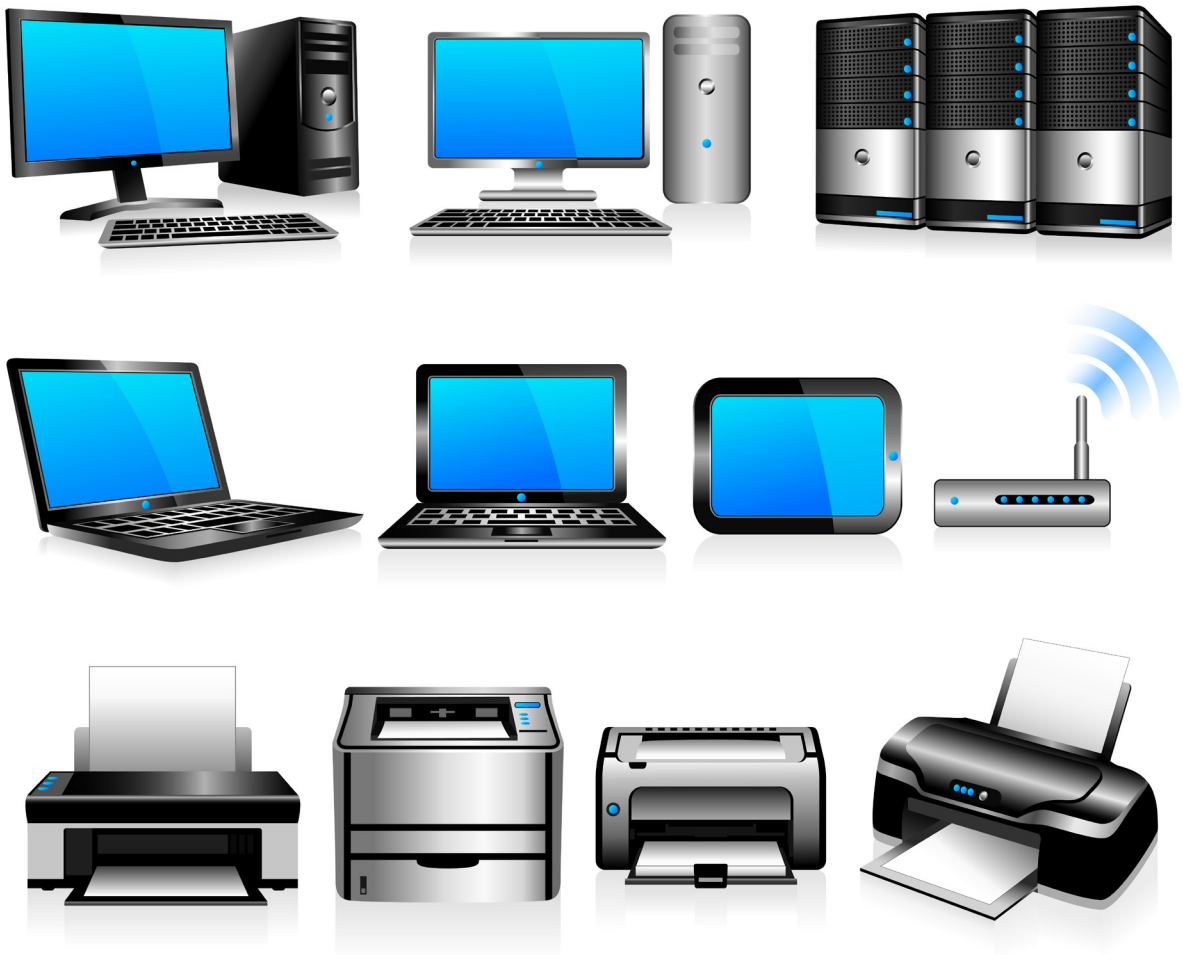
When a business starts to grow, it's easy to lose track of what exactly you have:

- Who uses which device?
- Who uses more than one?
- What happened to those laptops when they were replaced with higher-spec models?

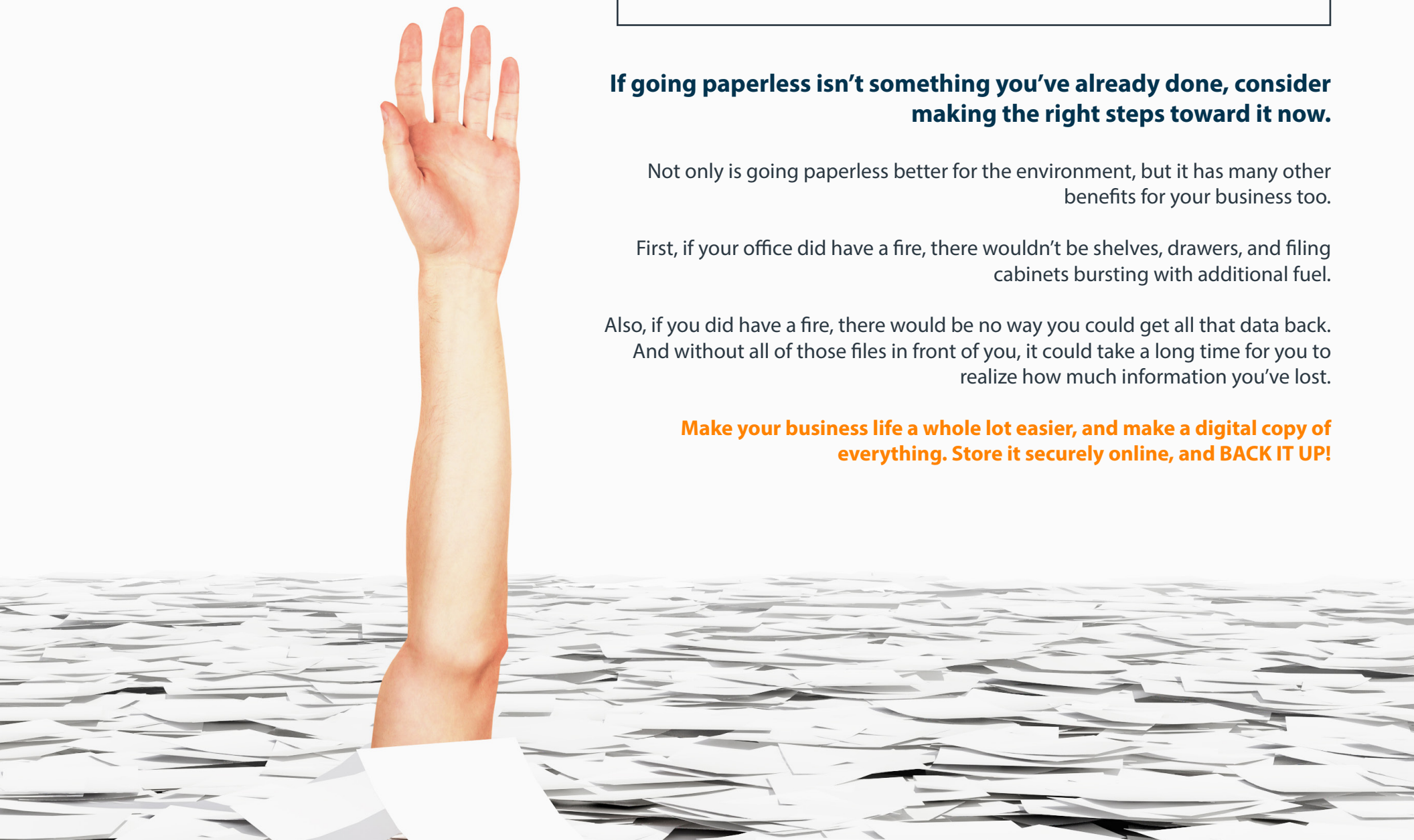
Creating an inventory (and keeping a backed-up copy of it) will help you keep track of everything.

With many people working from home, it's important to keep a device inventory. It's easier to lose track when you don't see devices every day!

Likewise, if someone leaves the company, you'll know what they need to return to you on their exit.



Go completely paperless



If going paperless isn't something you've already done, consider making the right steps toward it now.

Not only is going paperless better for the environment, but it has many other benefits for your business too.

First, if your office did have a fire, there wouldn't be shelves, drawers, and filing cabinets bursting with additional fuel.

Also, if you did have a fire, there would be no way you could get all that data back. And without all of those files in front of you, it could take a long time for you to realize how much information you've lost.

Make your business life a whole lot easier, and make a digital copy of everything. Store it securely online, and BACK IT UP!

ABOUT YEO & YEO COMPUTER CONSULTING

Yeo & Yeo Computer Consulting is a leading IT services provider in Michigan. Our goal is to supply reliable technology solutions that keep Michigan's organizations moving forward. We partner with leading IT vendors – including HP, Fortinet, Ergotron, Lenovo, Microsoft, VMware, Veeam, Xerox, Sage, Barracuda, Acronis, Cisco and Duo – to provide innovative solutions across many industries.

With services including managed IT, cloud solutions, cybersecurity, VoIP, IT consulting, hardware procurement, business management software and more, you experience the strategic advantage of a single-source partner. Using these services, our industry-certified professionals develop customized IT solutions to meet clients' needs. From design and implementation to long-term support and maintenance, Yeo & Yeo Computer Consulting makes your IT systems work for you.

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