

Title:

Avoid A Data Disaster On The Road: 5 Tips

Word Count:

556

Summary:

<p>Reliable information can make or break your next trip - whether it's the ability to cultivate a business contact, ensure accurate company records or keep you safe.</p>

Keywords:

Small Business Software, Small Business Ideas, Small Business Startup

Article Body:

<p>Information is what powers business trips. It's one of your most precious assets and you should take every step to keep it safe. </p>

<p>Take it from someone who has left his office without synchronising his laptop and PC, who has wiped out days worth of work because he neglected to install a backup system and who even has lost clients because he ignored the importance of good, reliable information. </p>

<p>Don't make the same mistakes I have. Here's what a career on the road has taught me about computer data: </p>

5 Tips for Travels

- Start every trip with a synch

<p>Making sure your PDA and PC are both up-to-date is pretty easy. Generally, you just slip the handheld into its cradle and the computer does the rest. Synchronising one PC with another isn't as straightforward. I've tested every conceivable tool, including the one that came with my computer operating system, and they can be tricky. But it's definitely worth learning, because once you leave the office, I guarantee you'll be glad you updated your laptop. </p>

- Don't trust your computer

<p>Memory sticks that plug into your laptop are essential to the integrity of your data. And with some units now carrying up to 5 gigabytes of data (which equates to an awful lot of documents), you can fit all your essential files onto one small stick. Andrew Steele, a media consultant to charities and non-profits in Great Britain, routinely does a double backup. It recently saved his trip. "I had a laptop power supply fail," Steele recalls. "So even when the battery was finally exhausted, I could carry on without embarrassment on borrowed

computers." </p>

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Stay in touch with the office

<p>There are several useful applications that let you connect to your computer or network from afar, including Microsoft's own Remote Desktop Connection. I like these options because you can catch up on any information that you may have forgotten to synch up before you left. My biggest gripe with these programs is that they tend to be slow – particularly with a dial-up connection – making large data downloads impractical. But if you couldn't synch up before your trip, they can be a real lifesaver. </p>

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Collect information – and back it up

<p>Normally, small business travellers are good at collecting business cards, sales leads and receipts. But this valuable information doesn't always make it back to the office. My record keeping was so inadequate when I started travelling on business that I missed numerous charge-card payments. I ended up losing money because I couldn't get reimbursed. </p>

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When in doubt, switch to paper

<p>This is obvious advice, but it's so obvious that we sometimes forget it's an option. We've become so dependent on our technology that we don't remember that we could just write the information down. My partner used to make fun of me when I printed out the names and addresses of people before leaving on a business trip. Why do that when everything was on the computer? Well, there are still some things paper can do that a PC can't. Like operate without batteries. So when my laptop ran out of juice and I switched to paper, I didn't look like a fool. </p>