

### **DO YOU HAVE A CRASH PLAN?**

Mentioned briefly in our last newsletter, the program Crash Plan is evolving into an essential component of both business and personal data protection schemes. Everyone that manages either important business data or precious personal files needs to give some thought to their protection and recovery.

Family photos and videos were always stored in a clean dry place in the old days but now most of this data is stored electronically on a hard drive. These drives do not last forever so it is worth taking the time to consider how best to protect them. Unlike paper records it is quite easy to make copies of electronic data and the cost is quite reasonable relative to the consequences if it is permanently lost.

My own data and programs are stored on different media, local hard drives, a portable hard drive and several remote Internet based locations. In the past I always had several backups to choose from but they all had the same major limitation. You can have a backup of a good file which subsequently becomes damaged without your knowledge. If this is not detected then the bad file will ultimately get backed up over your copy of the good file.

To prevent this from happening schemes were developed to permit selective restores from earlier copies of the file. This was most often accomplished by creating Monday thru Friday and January thru December backup media or folders. Some users even went as far as daily backups to CD's or DVD's where a single unique disk was used every day of the year.

This might permit the restore of a copy of a file from a week or a month ago but may not allow the restore of a file from 4 hours ago. A better methodology was required to track any and all versions of the same file. Newer backup products like Crash Plan have addressed this with a feature known as version tracking.

### **CRASH PLAN VERSION TRACKING**

Crash Plan monitors the data folders that you designate to be backed up. After an initial major backup of all of those files it continues to monitor the folders for any changes. In the paid version this occurs every 30 minutes. After 30 days the free version drops this frequency down to once every 24 hours.

To illustrate how important this can be, within a week of the first Crash Plan implementation we performed, an operator worked on a spreadsheet for 4 hours one morning. They wisely saved the spreadsheet before going to lunch. When they returned, in an attempt to rename the spreadsheet, they accidentally deleted it. Since this file was located on a network drive it was not allocated to the recycle bin on either their computer or the server. Fortunately, while they were away at lunch, Crash Plan stepped in and backed up the file. Within 5 minutes of calling us the file was back again and several hours were saved.

Within a short time I was also able to use the program to reverse some programming when a client changed the direction of a project. This saved a trip back to the office to recover an earlier version of the file before the change.

Version tracking should be an essential part of working with any form of complex word, excel or CAD files. It's not always easy to remember what you may have done to a file over the course of a few hours or days work. If you create a problem, save it and then discover the error the easiest approach is to just start over. Version Tracking makes this a possibility.

Should data recovery from an old hard drive ever be necessary, we can analyze the drive and provide you with a free estimate for it's recovery. This applies to any hard drive delivered to our office. Typical recovery charges run from \$50. to \$200. as compared to the \$500. or more other companies charge.