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Vetech View

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Backup 101

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Happy
New
Year!

The importance of backups and your data can not be stressed enough. We have been seeing an increasing number of clinics that either think they have valid backups of their database and don't, or for one reason or another do not take the time necessary to backup their database. This is a very dangerous practice in both instances. Below is an outline of a few different methods of backing up your Advantage database. This article is intended to inform users of different backup options. Next month we will discuss the backup process, and checking if you are making backups properly.

Backing up is a simple process and typically takes less than 5 minutes to complete.

USB Flash Based Storage Device

The easiest and safest method at this time is to backup your database to a flash based memory device. Usually this means a USB flashed based storage device that you plug into your computer system. Windows will automatically install this device when you plug it in and assign the flash drive a "drive letter". The drive letter is important to note as this is where you will be backing up your database. Flash based storage devices are an inexpensive and extremely reliable way to backup your important data as they have no moving parts to fail on you at the worst possible time. We would recommend you buy several of these, and "swap" them out on a daily basis.

External USB Hard Drive

USB based external hard drives are used in the exact same manner as the USB based flash storage device mentioned above. This is another way to safely and reliably store your important data. Once you plug the drive into the USB port on your computer, Windows installs the drive as an additional drive letter. Advantage would then be backed up to this new drive letter. This method while being very reliable, is arguably less reliable than a flash based storage device. USB flash based storage type drives will most likely always be with you whereas external USB hard drives are big and bulky making it much easier for users to leave the device at work.

Quote of the Month: [The hardest thing in the world to understand is the income tax.](#) [Albert Einstein](#) (1879 - 1955)



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Backup To Your Server Hard Drive

This is definitely a good start as a solution for backing up your database, but should be supplemented with one of the two above options as opposed to using this method exclusively. Backing up your data to your server computer needs to be supplemented with another option mainly because if the hard drive decided to fail on your server, it takes your backup with it. In most instances this data loss is permanent and can't be easily fixed. Data recovery services do exist and can usually save data from failed / damaged hard drives. These services are more catered to enterprise level companies as the charges for data recovery from these companies put the service out of reach for most SOHO type businesses. This is not the recommended way to backup your system but you can backup to your hard drive as an additional method of saving your data.

Backing Up Across The Network To A Shared Windows Directory.

This is another option we recommend to supplement the flash based USB, or the external hard drive backup option. You can backup Advantage onto another computer's hard drive in your Windows network. We would recommend you create a shared directory on a computer other than the server, then map a network drive to this shared folder. On your server computer the drive will appear and behave just like a local storage device, but actually be on another computers hard drive. Advantage can then be backed up to the mapped network drive just like a local storage device. It is very unlikely two machines will have hard drives that fail at the same time, making this a viable backup solution. I would caution clinics to always have a removable storage drive backup in conjunction with this backup method.

Automatic Backup Scheduler

Vetech Software has now created an automatic backup scheduling utility. This is to be used as an additional backup method, and not a primary backup method. This software application runs as a background service on your Windows machine and makes backups at user defined intervals throughout the day. If you would like further information about this feature or help setting it up please call our office and speak with us.

Next month we will discuss the backup process in detail, as well as verifying database backup integrity.



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