



McCeney & Martin CPAs, LLC: Keeping Itself Accountable for Its Data

A LiveVault Customer Case Study

Customer: McCeney & Martin CPAs, LLC

Business: Certified public accountants

Customer Challenge: Protecting its critical tax returns and client account data

To a certified public accountant (CPA), the safety of customer data is paramount. If a CPA firm were to lose customer tax returns and account data, it would likely have to shut its doors and its customers would face severe ramifications from delayed tax returns and missing records.

With the proliferation of electronic data, more and more client records and information are stored on central servers rather than in paper form. This means that business data especially is vulnerable to disasters that destroy servers, such as a server crash, virus, human error, fire or flood.

Because its electronic data is so critical to its business operations, McCeney & Martin Certified Public Accountants, LLC, a small CPA firm based in Franklin, Tenn., realized that it had to protect it diligently, should something happen to its server.

"We used to back up our data to tape each night, but we soon realized that our business was extremely vulnerable to data loss," said Philip Martin, principal of McCeney & Martin. "We never verified that the backups were being done correctly, and we never arranged to get our tapes offsite. If a fire or flood hit our building, all of our electronic data would be gone and our business would have to face the consequences."

In Need of a Data Insurance Policy

McCeney & Martin, like most other businesses, carried insurance to cover all of its business property, should disaster strike. However, Martin noted that there was no similar "data insurance" policy, should something happen to the critical data that runs the business.

"Insurance doesn't cover the one thing that my business needs to stay up and running following a disaster," said Martin. "We can always relocate our place of business, but our data is irreplaceable. Therefore, we need a way to protect it, no matter what."

McCeney & Martin did careful research on forms of data protection out there that provide more reliable data protection than tape backup. The company consulted with American Technology Group, a firm that helps small and medium-sized businesses with their computer and networking needs. Based on American Technology Group's recommendation, McCeney & Martin selected the LiveVault Online Backup and Recovery Service because of its guaranteed data recovery and ease of use. With



LiveVault, McCeney & Martin is able to continuously back up all of its data via an Internet connection. The data is then stored in a secure offsite facility, where it is made available for immediate recovery in the event of a disaster, such as a server crash, virus, human error, fire or flood.

"What we like about LiveVault is that it requires no effort on our part and provides us with a much higher level of protection," said Martin. "With tape backup, we had to manually perform the backup operation each night. However, LiveVault works automatically in the background – and on a continuous basis – meaning that our data is always backed up and recoverable."

Easy and Guaranteed Data Protection

LiveVault is designed for small and medium-sized businesses, such as McCeney & Martin, whose servers reside outside of major data centers. These customers have primarily relied on in-house tape backups to keep their data safe. Industry analysts estimate nearly 50 percent of tape-based backups for these distributed servers fail to fully recover, which exposes these businesses to significant risk. Conversely, LiveVault guarantees recovery of all business-critical data and ensures that companies will return to the state of their business prior to a data-loss event.

LiveVault also guarantees that McCeney & Martin will be able to meet its record retention policies, so that copies of critical customer data are always kept safe and available. With LiveVault, customers are able to set their data retention policies, and can save records of their data for up to seven years in a secure offsite facility.

When McCeney & Martin needs to restore data, one of its employees can access the server directory via a Web interface. The employee then just needs to click on the file or set of files to restore, and the documents start to restore immediately. Previously, it could take the company more than an hour to find a file to begin to restore from tape.

"One time I had to find a tax return file, and it took me an hour and a half to find that one file on the backup tape," said Martin. "With LiveVault, I can easily restore that same file with just a couple of clicks."

LiveVault also allows McCeney & Martin to initiate a restore from any desktop. This means that if the company's server ever goes down over the weekend, an employee can engage in the restore process from home, rather than having to trek into the office.

Most importantly, though, LiveVault provides McCeney & Martin with a peace of mind. "I can't fathom the ramifications if we were to lose our data. We might as well close up shop," said Martin. "With LiveVault, I know I don't have to worry about that. Our data is always backed up and kept secure offsite, meaning even if we were to suffer a hardware failure or physical disaster, we'll still be able to carry on with all of our customer data intact."

###