

Computer Bits by Mark Eggert of Raad One Network Solutions, Inc.

Welcome to the second in a series of articles on computers and network information. This article will cover data security.

Every business generates and collects information about itself, its customers, and its competitors. This information could be quotes, orders, inventory, drawings, employee information, customer information, etc. When it is stored on a computer, it's commonly called data. As touched on in the previous article, this data needs to be backed up incase the computer it's stored on fails. A regular backup system and schedule should be established to protect this data.

Besides backing up the data, it needs to be secure on the computer where it's stored. The data loses its value if it can be modified, copied, or deleted by unauthorized users. If you have one or more standalone computers and they are not accessible while you are not there, then the data is secure. If you have two or more computers that are networked, security is a concern. In these situations it is important that the data be located on a computer that is password protected. This would be the server in a client/server network or the main computer in a peer-to-peer network. In either case access to the data can be limited by using password and setting access rights on those computers. A good password scheme and policy should be established.

Some software applications allow you to setup users and passwords within them. While this is good at protecting the data from regular users, it doesn't stop someone with a little computer knowledge from copying or deleting the data files.