BACKUP PLAN Is Your *Computer* Prepared For a Disaster?

Over the past several modules you have been advised to gather a lot of data as you prepare yourself and your congregation to face any situation or disaster. Much of this data is stored on your computer. Now the next question – Is Your *Computer* Prepared For a Disaster?

What happens if your church is destroyed including the computer that has all your members information on it. Your computer also probably includes your disaster plan as well as all the important phone number and contact numbers that you need. It may also contain all your financial records. Are you prepared to lose all that? All your plans gone to waste – unless your computer is prepared.

When the World Trade Center was attacked on 9-11, several financial institutions located in this facility lost their data because they were not prepared. Many had their information backed up but their backup was in the same building right next to their computer.

Are you prepared? Do you have a backup and is it in a safe place? This module will briefly speak about several ways to create a backup.

Let's begin by asking yourself these questions. Do you back up your office computer regularly? What does "regularly" mean? Anytime you change something in your records (financial, inventory or personnel records) or your disaster plan-a backup should be made. That might mean daily. Many offices do it automatically every evening while the office is closed. And then at least one copy of the backup is taken out of the building.

Even though you might have a large hard drive or a large network drive, everything on that drive does not need to be backed up. On your drive you find System, Program and Data files. You already have the System and Program files on the original disks that you bought or came with the computer. Place those disks in a safe location. The data files are the one you need to backup. .

There are several ways to backup your office computer or network system. This module will speak about some basic ways.

First you will need a **<u>BACKUP PROGRAM.</u>** There are many out on the market. You can also get some freeware ones or write your own. But purchasing one is the easiest way to go. Some backup programs come free with the backup media that you need to purchase.

Second, you will need **<u>BACKUP MEDIA</u>**. The most common ones are: Removable disks, CDs or DVDs, online backup services, USB flash drives, USB external hard drive, a second internal fixed drive, or even another section of your main hard drive.

Your best choices are ones that you can remove from the premises or an online service. This module will briefly speak about a few of these.

REMOVABLE DISKS -There are several removable disks on the market such as tape drives and zip drives. These are cheaper to use but slower. You also need a special drive to operate these backups.
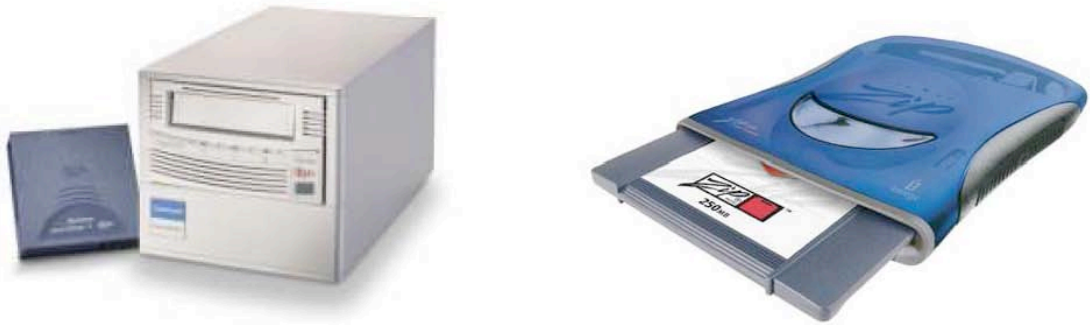
CDs OR DVDs -Most computers today can play a CD or DVD. But you must also have a writeable CD or DVD player to utilize this as a backup. A DVD can hold more data than a CD.

INTERNAL HARD DRIVE – This is probably the cheapest and fastest way to backup your data but it is not wise if you are trying to prepare yourself for a disaster because you can not easily remove an internal drive from the premises.

ONLINE BACKUP SERVICE – This may cost more than other methods and may not be as secured but you can purchase any size to backup and it is backed up off site so you

can be sure it is not damaged if your computer is damaged. You can recover your information anywhere you have web access as long as you have the password.

USB FLASH DRIVE – (Sometimes called Thumb, Jump or Pen drives) This is probably the most economical but flash drives can not contain as much data. Some flash drives have backup programs built in. One advantage is that your backup can fit into your pocket.

USB EXTERNAL HARD DRIVE – These hard drives are getting cheaper and smaller in size but larger in the amount of data that can be stored on it. Many of these also have backup programs built within the drive.

Tri-LERT recommends a backup method which can be done regularly and a which can be removed from the facility to be placed in a secure place. Some of the easier ones are Tape Backup, Online backup, USB flash drive and USB External hard drive.

Just remember any backup is useless unless all data it is backed up regularly and is stored in a safe, secure place *off premises*.

To find more information on this topic you may use a search engine to search for products, prices and places to buy the storage media and software.