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**Planning your business survival**

If your technology stopped working, would your business stop functioning too? Is your business totally reliant on the information stored on your computer systems or could you continue to deliver 95% of your products and services and catch up on the computer work later? No matter which end of this scale your business is at, you will fare much better during a major technology outage if you plan in advance, before it happens. This month we take some of the mystery out of Business Continuity Planning.

Business Continuity Planning (BCP) is the process of working out how your business will continue to function during a disaster. These threats to your business could include:

- Fire
- Burst water pipes
- Burglary
- Flooding (severe rainfall)
- Earthquake
- Influenza outbreak
- Hardware failure
- Software Failure
- Internet outage
- Tornado/Hurricane/Cyclone
- Severed phone cabling
- Security breach
- Damage by disgruntled employee
- Employee error
- ... And many more!

BCP begins with identifying the possible risks and the impact they would have on your business. What functions would be affected if your main administration PC crashed? How long could you be without internet access? It's important to evaluate the probability of these incidents occurring and the severity of their impact. This will help you to determine which incidents are the highest priorities to be addressed.

Next, you look at how these risks can be prevented, or the impact of them lessened. This could include copying data to a different site or having a laptop that has the same business-critical software applications as your administration PC.

Finally, you plan the actions that would be needed to help you respond when this incident occurs. Do you need to go to another site to get a copy of your data or bring the laptop in from home? Do you need to temporarily relocate to another site that does have internet access? Can you run a paper-based system until you can access your computers again? Think about who will be responsible for doing what and what resources they will need. This also needs to include any third-party suppliers of your business, like your local Computer Troubleshooter.

Your Business Continuity Plan should be examined, tested and maintained on a regular basis. This is to ensure it still reflects the changing needs of your business and also to make sure that the key parties within your business understand their roles in the process.

Whilst it may seem a little daunting, some forethought and planning will save you a lot of time, stress and money when things do go wrong. Talk to your local Computer Troubleshooters about the best way to keep your business running smoothly if you're suddenly without your technology.

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**Contact your local Computer Troubleshooters**

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