

# Networking: Storage blues

March 13 2006

---

Computer companies once constantly extolled the "paper saving" virtues of e-mail. But now, with government regulators compelling the retention of many new records, storage requirements are increasing once again. All of the storage devices -- from EMC, IBM, Hewlett-Packard and others -- needed to store those records are taking up more office space than old paper-based files ever did, experts are telling United Press International's Networking. It's an Information Age irony.

A 2004 survey by Horison Information Strategies found that the amount of corporate data is increasing, on average, at a rate of 50 percent to 70 percent every year. Gartner Group, meantime, said that 40 percent of companies that have experienced data loss have gone out of business within five years.

Corporate demand for storage software, consequently, continues to soar, indicating that this trend is not likely to end anytime soon: During the fourth quarter of 2005 sales of storage software increased by 11.2 percent to \$2.4 billion.

"This demand is in response to the growth of information and the impact of the requirements to have more information online with greater protection throughout the entire business cycle," said Rhoda Phillips, research manager for IDC, an IT and research consultancy based in Framingham, Mass. "The storage-software market continues to exhibit steady growth, particularly in the replication and backup and archive segments, driven by customer requirements of trying to protect and secure information in an increasingly complex IT environment."

Research from IDC shows that EMC was the market leader with a 29.2-percent of the share of total revenue during the quarter, followed by Symantec with 19.7 percent. IBM had 11.5 percent of industry revenue.

Some companies are trying to solve the problem by storing data online with third-party storage providers. "The cost of the hardware that supports online storage has fallen dramatically the past few years," said Bob Parmelee, systems administrator with the Rochester Institute of Technology's College of Computing and Information Sciences. "We received a quote about six years ago for a storage area network (SAN) of about a half a million dollars, which we declined. Just last week we had a quote from Apple for its SAN that was under \$40,000."

Some experts say that the spread of these storage technologies throughout a company is roughly analogous to suburban sprawl. New areas keep popping up all the time, without a grand design. That is one reason why there has been a lot of data loss at credit-card companies and banks and such -- \$150 billion in losses each year. It is hard to secure sprawling networks of computers.

Storage demands are increasing for consumers, too. Digital files like MP3s are accumulating, causing consumers to have digital libraries of data. Companies like Lake Forest, Calif.-based Western Digital Corp. are shipping external hard drives for storage like the MyBook product, which is designed to be as easy to use as common household appliances for mainstream consumers, with 160 to 500 GB in storage space. "Consumers of digital media are today a much broader set of the population than in the past," said Jim Welsh, general manager of Western Digital's branded products group. "They want an external storage that is easy to use."

This is not cheap, Parmelee said, to be sure. But it is "inexpensive for

companies such as Google or Yahoo! who offer the consumer large amounts of storage on their e-mail servers or to Kodak and its photo Web site, where users can upload digital pictures," said Parmelee. The cost reduction coincides with the proliferation of high-speed digital networks, he added.

*Copyright 2006 by United Press International*

Citation: Networking: Storage blues (2006, March 13) retrieved 18 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-03-networking-storage-blues.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.