

Data storage - the online way

Ten years ago, storing one gigabyte of data on a hard drive cost about £100, five years ago the price had fallen to about £50, and today it stands at £1.

So we have seen a fantastic fall in the cost of storage. As a result, people are now storing vast amounts of data in the form of video, music, sound and other kinds of personally valuable information.

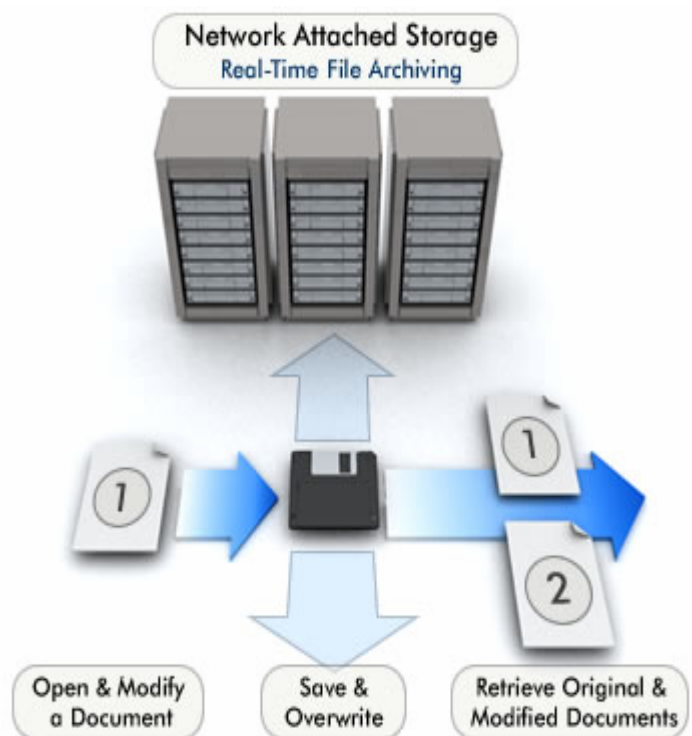
Thus, planning for the day your hard disk fails (and it will), this precious information needs to be archived.

It seems that the solution might be to store our data online. Many companies such as Google have been building up large servers for the running of their day-to-day operations. But they often have an immense amount of spare storage capacity which they now plan to offer to customers for storing their data online.

BT allows customers to store up to two gigabytes of data for free in their "digital vault". For a relatively small fee customers can store much larger amounts of data, for example 20GB would cost £4.99 a month. And some companies are now beginning to focus on the business market, offering 'storage on demand' for larger organisations.

Nick Laurence, enterprise marketing manager for Dell highlighted one of the main benefits: "I would guess that soon we will have virtual storage. So you will store your files virtually on a central storage system, so no matter what PC you are using around the world, you will be able to get to all your files and data."

Another major benefit is that regular backups will be made of your data so that your worries about hard disk failures or corrupted files could become a thing of the past.



Could this herald the end of the hard disk? Probably not as local storage will always be needed, even if just to hold the information and applications to run your computer



List three other storage devices that are not mentioned in the case study which could be used to store or backup data

Briefly explain what has led to the idea behind companies offering online data storage for customers

Discuss the main factors that will influence whether customers are willing to store their data online.