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## Data Storage

### Data Storage You Can't Refuse

By Pam Baker  
Data Storage Today  
July 16, 2004 2:49PM

Equipping data-storage systems to comply with new financial legislation like Sarbox, to handle disaster-recovery scenarios, and to manage real-time business communications in the Internet economy is becoming one of the most burdensome tasks facing information-technology professionals.

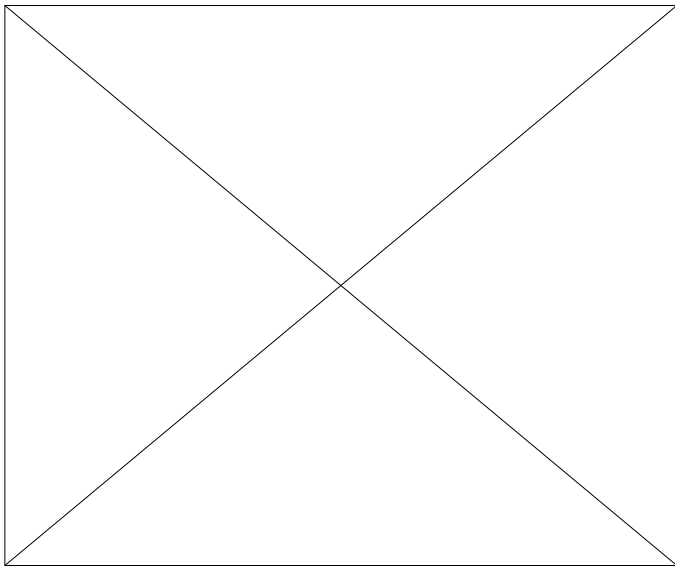
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When Uncle Sam decided plausible deniability would no longer be acceptable as a top-executive excuse for corporate misdeeds, most consumers thought the resulting regulations, like Sarbanes-Oxley section 404, were sensible means of bringing big-business villains to justice.

Corporate America, on the other hand, gave a collective groan, expecting compliance to be an expensive burden on budgets already strained by a bad economy. But even they did not expect the size of the total bill -- or the enormity of the amount of data that must be stored, secured and easily retrieved.

"Originally, more than half of U.S. companies viewed Section 404 requirements as involving only financial processes," said analyst John Hagerty of [AMR Research](#). "Now, 79 percent consider that compliance mandates must include finance, operations and I.T. processes."

With the increased scrutiny, every e-mail is viewed as potential legal evidence, and every scrap of data -- even deleted data -- must be piled into storage, awaiting a possible summons.

"Firms chalk this up to the influence of external advisors -- in most cases, risk-management and internal audit practices of the Big Four audit firms. As the approach broadened, so, naturally, did the scope of the projects," said Hagerty. "Two-thirds of companies now report scope has significantly increased during the time; none said it was any easier than originally thought."

## More To Come

The sheer volume of data to be stored boggles the minds of even the most experienced analysts. According to UC Berkeley researchers, the amount of new information captured on paper, film, optical and magnetic media has doubled in the last three years.

New information produced in those forms in 2002 alone was equal in size to half a million new libraries, each containing a digitized version of the entire contents of the Library of Congress.

Most researchers use the terabyte as the standard digital measurement to compute such tremendous volume. A terabyte is equal to a million megabytes, or roughly about the same amount of text as is contained in a million books.

## Beyond the Terabyte

But even the terabyte is often not large enough to measure the massive amount of information that exists today. Researchers now resort to measuring by exabyte, a unit equal to a million terabytes.

According to a study led by Berkeley researchers Peter Lyman and Hal Varian and supported by Microsoft Research, Intel, [HP](#) and EMC, the amount of new information stored on paper, film, optical and magnetic media reached about 5 exabytes -- or 5 million terabytes -- in 2002.

"All of a sudden, almost every aspect of life around the world is being recorded and stored in some information format," said Lyman. "That's a real change in our human ecology."

## Where It's All Coming From

About 92 percent of new information is stored on magnetic media, primarily hard drives -- but the phone accounts for the largest percentage of information flow, with e-mail placing second, according to Berkeley researchers. While the amount of info put on paper continues to grow, it is in the form of office documents and mail -- not books, newspapers and journals.

Equipping data-storage systems to comply with new financial legislation like Sarbox, to handle disaster-recovery scenarios, and to manage real-time business communications in the Internet economy is becoming one of the most burdensome tasks facing information-technology professionals.

"This shows what an enormous challenge we and the rest of the information-technology industry face in organizing, summarizing and presenting the vast amount of information mankind is accumulating," said



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Jim Gray, a [Microsoft](#) Bay Area Research Group distinguished engineer.

"This calls for technology that can access and manage blocks of data the size of the Library of Congress and from devices ranging from personal computers to PDAs anytime, anywhere, without losing as much as a bit," says Mike Wall, general manager of Intel's storage components division.

### Fast, Furious and Infuriating

Information management long has been an important issue for businesses in matters of daily operation, but the increased pressures of legislation undoubtedly has accelerated the schedule.

"Over the past three to five years, we have seen a 60-percent increase in data storage throughout our customer base. We expect that to jump to 70 percent soon," Michael Gallant, spokesperson for [EMC](#), told Newsfactor. "Generally, our customers track how much storage they use closely and regularly, and do we."

As companies prepare for the first onslaught of auditors under Sarbox rules expected to arrive at year-end, nearly US\$5.5 billion will be spent to reach compliance, with more than half of that -- almost \$3 billion -- spent on hard expenditures, including data storage, according to AMR Research.

"When asked how they plan to pay for expenses related to compliance, company responses ranged from deferral of existing projects to an open-checkbook approach: Spend what you need to spend," said Hagerty.

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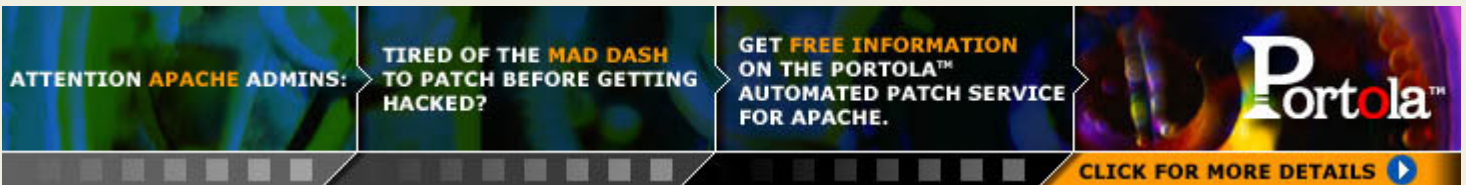
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