

# Data backup firm offers business owners a safety net

By Jerri Stroud  
Of the Post-Dispatch  
03/07/2004

E-BackUps LLC turns small-business owners' good intentions about backing up data into peace of mind.

The Maryland Heights company markets software that makes backups automatic, economical and secure, says Dave Gambino, president and co-founder of e-BackUps.

The software backs up data automatically at least once a day on a schedule determined by the customer. It encrypts the data before it leaves a client's computer, then sends it to e-BackUps' secured site, where it is stored until the client needs it. The program generates an e-mail reminding the customer that the data has been backed up.

E-BackUps uses a Kansas City data center to back up its data center here. The company uses 448-bit encryption, which Gambino says is more secure than what banks typically use for online banking. Only the client can decode the data.

Clients can retrieve the data easily if their computer eats it or if it gets corrupted by a virus, Gambino said. E-BackUps will transfer the data to a compact disc or other storage device for a fee.

Gillespie, Hetlage & Coughlin has been using e-BackUps for a year and a half, said Laird Hetlage, a partner in the Clayton law firm. "The nice thing is it's kind of hands-off," said Hetlage. Recovery has gone well when the firm has needed backed-up files, and Hetlage is confident about the security of those files.

"It's been really fantastic," said Bill Koulouriotis, technology director for the Webster Groves School District. E-BackUps is an affordable way to have off-site data storage for records the district has to file with state and federal officials as well as financial and student databases, Koulouriotis said.

Tim Johnson, president of Digital Skyway, turned to e-BackUps service after his laptop died three times last year. Each time he had to rebuild it, he lost important data. "I love it," said Johnson. "If it isn't done automatically, I don't back up my hard drive with any regularity. The data you lose is extremely valuable because it's your time and money."

Gambino, 34, said he and his partners decided to develop e-BackUps after several years of selling and designing disaster recovery systems for businesses. In most of those deals, the customer had to buy software and hardware to handle data backup, then pay for off-site storage.

Many of Gambino's customers were struggling to cope with tape backup drives, and few had full-time staff to deal with data backup. And in the long run, there was a concern that tape drives might become obsolete. Gambino and his partners thought they could achieve some economies of scale by designing a generic system that would encrypt the customer's data and transfer it to a secure site using an Internet connection. Customers would pay for storage based on the amount of data they back up.

The partners formed e-BackUps in June 2002 and initially sold the backup service directly to companies in St. Louis and elsewhere. More recently, they have packaged e-BackUps as a service that Internet service providers and other distributors can sell under their own brands.

The service costs \$9.95 for a home user and \$29 a month per gigabyte of storage for a business user. A small business typically needs five to 20 gigabytes of storage, Gambino said. About 500 clients have signed up for the service, Gambino said. The company is getting close to turning a profit, and revenue has grown each quarter since it was founded, Gambino said. E-BackUps has 12 employees.

"My aspiration is to grow with the technology and to continue to grow the base of customers," Gambino said. "We have several complementary products that can be rolled out."

**Reporter Jerri Stroud**  
E-mail: [jerristroud@post-dispatch.com](mailto:jerristroud@post-dispatch.com)  
Phone: 314-340-8384

