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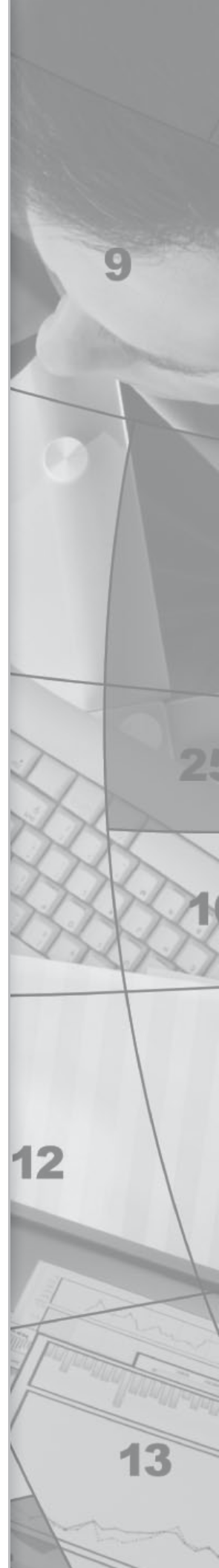
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CHAPTER 10

Disaster Recovery By the Numbers

FOREWORD

Complex, unfamiliar tasks are made easier when one has a rigorous step-by-step map to follow. Any artistically challenged person who has ever used a Paint by Numbers kit is familiar with this concept. And Paint by Numbers is a good analogy for the way to approach Disaster Recovery (DR) planning, preparedness and execution.

In most organizations, DR is the quintessential complex, unfamiliar task. Disasters happen so rarely that recovery operations are the opposite of routine. What's more the myriad, interconnected data, application and other resources that must be recovered after a disaster make recovery an exceptionally difficult and error-prone effort.

Before you ever encounter a disaster—something that everyone devoutly hopes will never happen—careful disaster-preparedness analysis, planning and implementation are required to ensure that recovery will be achievable and as painless as possible should the worst happen. This extensive pre-disaster groundwork is at least as important as the recovery tasks themselves because the last things you want to learn after a disaster occurs is that the backup data and resources necessary to complete a full recovery of the business are unavailable or that you and your IT staff do not know how to perform the recovery processes.

However, today's IT environments are almost unimaginably complex, making DR failure seem almost inevitable. Terabytes of data may be stored in myriad elaborate data stores. The business may depend on millions of lines of computer code, within the hundreds or thousands of modules included within or called by several applications. And a complex web of interconnected hardware—servers, data storage devices, desktop computers, network gear, and more—is required to keep those applications running.

In the face of this enormous complexity, where should you begin and how should you proceed to develop your DR plans and put in place the DR infrastructure required to protect your business against the effects of a disaster? Their intricacy and number make the required tasks appear unfathomable. And the possibility of a business-stopping omission of some critical details seems inevitable.



That's where the Paint by Numbers approach comes in. With detailed instructions concerning where to dab the various colors of DR paint, completing the picture completely, without missing any critical parts of the picture, becomes much easier and more assured.

A thorough "Paint by Numbers" kit for DR planning, preparedness and implementation, complete down to the finest level of detail and broad enough to cover all IT environments, would fill an entire book. Instead, this chapter of Business Continuity Today describes the broad-brush strokes necessary to build and execute your DR plan.

In truth, the "by the numbers" in the title of this chapter does dual duty. The Paint by Numbers analogy is a good one, as far as it goes, but the first question you have to answer before choosing a Paint by Numbers kit is, what picture do you want to paint? There is a wide range of available DR options, each having differing costs and offering differing results.

To use a cliché, the bottom line of business is the bottom line. Even when it comes to something as critical as DR, the financial numbers still matter. Thus, "Disaster Recovery by the Numbers" also refers to the need to run the benefit and cost numbers for each DR option and then choosing the option that delivers the highest return on investment.

Because your selection of a DR solution should be guided by ROI, this other sense of "by the numbers"—being guided by the financial numbers—will also be examined as we walk through the numbers to be painted in your DR planning, preparedness and implementation picture.



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