

An Introduction to Business Disaster Recovery



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What is Disaster Recovery?

Sounds scary right? When the words “disaster” and “recovery” are mentioned our primal survival instincts kick in.

Business Disaster Recovery or BDR for short is both the processes and the systems to ensure that in the event of a disaster your business is able to continue to operate, even in a reduced capacity.

Is My Traditional Backup Good Enough?

Many will confuse BDR with their backups. Having a backup of your data is part of the solution but does not enable you to continue to operate very quickly.

For example: In the event of a fire at your business premises you may have a copy of your latest backup safe and away from the fire (because you don't keep your backups in the same place as the server right?) however, what do you do with it now?

You would need to buy a new server and have it installed and then hope to recover the data from your backup (because you test your backups regularly right?). This could take days if not weeks to get set up and many phone calls to your insurance provider.

Could your business survive that amount of time without the ability to access your business data and systems?

What is Business Disaster Recovery?

How BDR is different

BDR is so much more than a backup. Business Disaster recovery (BDR) makes multiple copies of your data both locally and cloud-based not just the data but also your entire systems. The result is the final copy of your data is included with a ready to run a complete duplicate of your system that we can turn on and run from the cloud.

So, in the event of a fire in the scenario above, one call to BCS and we can turn on your server in the cloud and enable you to access it from any laptop or PC. This means you can continue to serve your clients in some capacity and at least have access to all of your data and systems in under an hour.

Once your new server is then built and ready we can easily transfer the data and system state to the new server and you can continue as before.

Can you afford not to have BDR?

BDR from BCS is a monthly cost and depends on how many servers you have and how much data you have. The question really should be can you afford not to have BDR?

BDR includes your file level backup so if you are paying a monthly fee for backup then this is a replacement for that cost.

Why do I need Business Disaster Recovery?

Your most valuable investment

Business Disaster Recovery or BDR for short could be the best investment you ever make although we hope that you never need to take advantage of what it provides. Confused? Let me explain.

BDR stores snapshots of your entire system files and all in such a way that they can be used to run in the cloud at a moment's notice.

What does "run in the cloud" mean?

What this means is we can run an exact copy of your server from the cloud and enable you to connect to it and access your company data and systems in a very short amount of time.

Why should you care?

Think of BDR like an insurance policy that pays out very quickly. For example; god forbid something happens to your server and it is out of action for whatever reason, you will be able to get access to an exact copy of it in the cloud and continue to keep working with minimal disruption. Examples could be but not limited to:

- Fire or flood
- Failure of the server
- Theft or damage

As unlikely as these scenarios may be they do happen and businesses often fail to recover as a result.

It does not matter if it is fire ripping through the offices burning it to the ground or flooding that makes the office temporarily unavailable, you are ready to hit the big red button (metaphorical) and invoke your BDR plan and your backup server will whizz into life enabling you to access your data and systems.

Why do I need Business Disaster Recovery?

This all forms part of your Disaster Recovery Plan or Business Continuity Plan (you have one of those right?) The plan of action of what and who does what and when in the event of a disaster.

This is more often than not a requirement for business insurance and in some cases a regulatory requirement.

BDR will cover the data element of these plans and ensure whatever happens, your data is safe and accessible at all times.

How does it work?

There are three copies of your data and snapshots of your server in three different physical locations:

- On a NAS drive on your premises
- On our servers in a secure location
- In a purpose built data centre

All copies are up to date and only data changes are transferred which means it all happens very quickly. The system is constantly building a virtual server in the cloud using the snapshots and files and if it were ever needed could be turned on and accessed via the internet in a matter of minutes.

Do I need a separate solution to retrieve files?

No, BDR replaces your existing backup solution which in most cases only backs up the files and does not provide the functionality of a BDR solution. So, that Excel file you lost last week – yes, we can get it back for you!

Why do I need Business Disaster Recovery?

Sounds amazing, does it cost the earth?

If you are paying a monthly fee for your backup, then in many cases upgrading to a full BDR solution is only a relatively low increase in monthly fees. BDR is a monthly service and the cost is dependent on how much data you have.

Prices start from £190 a month + VAT

Will my existing backup not suffice?

Backups are better than nothing that's for sure. In the event of any of the previous disaster examples you would indeed have your files but you would need to wait for a new server to be provided and built before you have access to everything again. This could be a week or two. Can you afford to be without your key data and systems for a week or two?

If BDR is something you think your company needs, then feel free to contact any of our team to discuss further. Everybody knows why it's important to have a backup. Nobody truly appreciates a backup until they need to recover some documents.

Why backup is no longer enough

Various levels of backup

For some, backup is a copy of the main drive onto a USB drive or stick and pop it in the drawer. Others still use the old tape format with a tape for each day and another for the end of the month.

Then came the online backup and the ability to backup all of your critical business files offsite so even in the event of a disaster your files were all safe and sound and in "the cloud".

This was the best solution at the time and there is nothing fundamentally wrong with this solution today either.

So, what's changed?

As with everything these days, technology has moved on and backup has become backup and recovery.

You see with backup although your files are safe you cannot do much with them until you have a new server in place and then download them and then voila, you're back in business. But how long would that take? Do you have anywhere to house the new server? Do you have the funds to purchase a new server? Can your business survive a week or more to access your files and applications?

For most the answer is no which is why backup is no longer and probably never was enough.

Why backup is no longer enough

Backup and Recovery

What you need in an ideal world is the ability to access your server exactly as it was the moment before things went wrong. You connect to the internet on your laptop and there it is with your apps running and files all ready to enable you to serve your clients or at least communicate with them.

This is called Business Disaster Recovery or BDR for short. So, what is BDR and how does it work?

BDR is everything your backup is but more! It backs up all of your files but critically, it takes a complete copy of your working server. These files are then kept in 3 locations:

- On a NAS drive on your site
- In our Data Centre at BCS
- Another Data Centre

There are lots of reasons why three locations but for the purposes of this whitepaper three copies are much better than one or two.

There is more...

This is where it gets good. The copy of your server is really important as in the second data centre we have a live working version of your server being built all the time. As you make changes to files in the office the same files are added to the virtual server in the data centre. Therefore, in the event of any kind of disaster you have a working and running up to date version of your server ready for you to connect too. Not bad right?

So, although backup was the right thing to do before as it was without a doubt better than not having one you need to ask yourself the question "is backup enough?".

Why backup is no longer enough

Sounds amazing, I bet it costs a fortune?

If you are paying a monthly fee for an online backup you will probably find it is not that much more expensive. As with all online services, the cost depends on how much data you have. But you can find out all about our BDR service and how much it costs by [visiting here](#).

Thank you for taking the time to learn about the basics of Business Disaster Recovery. Should you have any questions at all or would like to understand how BDR can work in your business please do not hesitate to contact me at martin.hynes@bcs365.co.uk or calling me on 01843 572600