

Information Technology Develops Disaster Recovery Plan

In 1997, the Board of Commissioners approved and Information Technology (IT) retained the services of Strategia Corporation to assist in the development of a Disaster Recovery Program for Information Technology functions. To date the company has submitted their findings and related recommendations related to their risk assessment and business impact study.

The purpose of establishing a Disaster Recovery Program is to ensure the continued operation of an organization during an interruption of critical business functions or a loss of information processing resources. The first step of such a program is to assess the organization's exposure to threats or vulnerabilities and to implement policies, procedures and corrective actions that mitigate the risks associated with those exposures. Second, a thorough analysis of the organization's operations is performed to identify critical business functions and to measure the impact that the loss of those functions would have on the organization. Utilizing the results of these analysis an alternate processing strategy is designed to ensure that the organization's recovery requirements are fulfilled. Finally, the tasks and procedures necessary to sustain the organization's recovery are formally documented and tested.

Strategia Corporation also submitted a Business Impact Analysis (BIA), the purpose of which is to assess and quantify, to the extent possible, the effects that a technology-based disruption would have on the business functions of an organization. With this information, well-informed decisions can be made to determine the level of resources necessary for disaster preparedness, assign priorities to the recovery of the various business functions and determine recovery alternatives.

Questionnaires and interviews were conducted with IT and customer management within Oakland County Government. Department heads and managers were asked to complete the Business Impact Analysis questionnaire prior to an individual interview. Respondents were asked to list and describe their department's critical functions, name any internal or external dependencies, estimate a financial impact to the loss of their function, and decide on a time frame of recovery for the department. Of these topic areas, recovery time frame and estimated financial impacts are the most indicative of the scope and intensity of the required planning effort to come. Departments interviewed included Probate Court, County Clerk, Sheriff's Department, Animal Control, Library, Veterans Services, Medical Examiner, Health Division, CMH, Medical Care Facility, Drain Commission, Facilities Management, County Treasurer, Register of Deeds, Community Development, Development & Planning, Equalization, Reimbursement, Purchasing, Personnel, Employee Benefits, Prosecutor's Office, Community Corrections, Parks Department, Oakland International Airport, Circuit Court, Friend of the Court, Children's Village, District Court, and Accounting.

Look for more news/updates on the Disaster Recovery Project in future issues of the Information Technology Quarterly.

Information Technology Training Center Quarter Update

Introduction to Windows 95 and Upgrade Windows 95 classes are now being offered to all County employees. These classes have previously been offered to only those individuals who are involved in the HRFIS (Human Resource and Financial Information System) project. It has come to our attention that other County employees have moved to the Microsoft Windows 95 operating system due to specialized computer applications they must use. Also new laptops which are being placed in the field have the Windows 95 operating system. Therefore, at this time, it is felt that this training should be available to all County employees who are currently using Windows 95 or will be using it in the near future. We have offered a limited number of Windows 95 classes during the third quarter (July through September 1998). Should the demand for the classes be greater, additional classes will be added to the schedule.

As always, the 1998 third quarter training schedule is available on the County-Wide Publish Drive "O", specifically "**o:\infotech\training\schedule.doc**". If you cannot find a class listed on the schedule which you need to take, or the dates and times are not convenient for you, please contact the receptionist (858-0810) at Information Technology. Your name can be placed on a waiting list. When any class has a waiting list of six or more individuals, Information Technology will attempt to open an additional class.

Solution for Using Windows 95 Back-Up

In the last newsletter Tomi Hunt from Risk Management asked for your help. Tomi had indicated that it is bothersome and annoying to be prompted on every diskette whether or not she wants to erase the disks. Information Technology recommended that she unmark the option "Always erase on floppy disk backups" through Settings...Options...Backup...Advanced Options. This didn't work for her. Caryn Zerba from Children's Village recommended that the above option be marked and then the backup set saved. This information was passed along to Tomi; however, Tomi indicated that this solution did not resolve the problem. With the second solution, she is not prompted to erase the diskette on the first disk but is prompted to erase on each subsequent disk. To date, this problem is still unresolved. If you or someone you work with has solved this mystery or know of a way around this feature, we are still looking for a solution. Please contact Tina Ramey at 858-4082 and she will pass the information along to Tomi. Tomi is also in the process of looking for a solution through Microsoft's Internet page.

Direction of Oakland County's Technological Future

Five years ago, the County Executive issued a technological directive, supported and approved by the Board of Commissioners, which moved Oakland County into the 20th century. During the last five years approximately 2,800 personal computers (PCs) have been placed throughout Oakland County. When these PCs were installed, they were the most sophisticated PCs available. The first PCs had 486SX (33 MHZ) processors, 8 MB of RAM, and 212 MB Hard Disk Drives. They had the newest operating system (Windows 3.1) and the current software applications (Lotus 4.0, WordPerfect 5.2, Access 1.0).

As technology improved so did the types of PCs that were purchased for Oakland County. Information Technology has made it a priority to always purchase the newest/fastest PCs available. Today we are purchasing 333 MHZ processors with 64 MB of RAM. Quite a difference from five years ago!

Throughout the last five years we have seen operating systems change from Windows 3.1 to Windows for Workgroups 3.1 to Windows 95. Software applications have also evolved (i.e., WordPerfect 4.0 for DOS to WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows 3.1 to the latest, greatest WordPerfect 8.0 for Windows 95). While the technology world rapidly changed, Oakland County has attempted to maintain its standard PC - Windows 3.1x operating environment. We have upgraded several applications as needed (our standard applications now consist of WordPerfect 6.1, Lotus 5.0, Access 2.0 and GroupWise 4.1).

However, as technology changes, Oakland County is finding that more and more applications purchased and used at the County will not work on the County's standard PC (operating environment and software). Some of the applications/programs include the HRFIS system (including PeopleSoft), Data Warehousing, GIS, etc. which must use higher speed PCs with Windows 95 or Windows NT operating environments. Information Technology is well aware that many of the older PCs which were first placed throughout Oakland County are still in use. Out of approximately 2,800 PCs, there is an estimated 1,200 which cannot be used with these new applications/programs and must be replaced. There are another 800 plus PCs which may require upgrading. Many of the older PCs with Windows 3.1x operating environments and applications used are not compliant with the Year 2000 requirements. Information Technology is currently in the process of researching and testing the compliancy of these PCs. That's two-thirds of the PCs which do not or may not have the capability to move into the 21st century. As part of this technological growth, Oakland County must keep an eye to the future and decide what we must do, as a whole, to move towards it. Oakland County is currently evaluating all this information, and more, in an attempt to come up with a solution to address these issues.

Look for more news/updates on this topic in the next several issues of the Information Technology Quarterly.

Importance of Backing Up Your Data

In April 1995 the Department of Information Technology distributed backup procedures to each County department/division. The documentation explained that Information Technology does conduct tape backups of network directories and subdirectories (those directories in N:\ drive). Each PC user is responsible for backing up all of their non-network computer data (data stored on A:\, B:\, and C:\). An article, "Backup - Should You or Shouldn't You", was also published in the March 1996 issue of the Information Technology Quarterly Newsletter. All information discussed in each of the above documents holds true for today.

Information Technology is once again asking you to ensure that all your data is protected. Regardless of the location of your information, it is important that ALL data be backed up on a regular basis. In addition to regular backups, the PC user is responsible for backing up their data prior to any Hardware/Software upgrades or repairs. If it is necessary for a technician to work on your PC please be aware that there are approximately 2,800 PCs located throughout the County and approximately 2,800 users who form their own file management system. Whenever possible the technician will attempt to recover data files; however, it is not Information Technology's responsibility to safeguard these files from loss. When a hardware upgrade is necessary, the technician will attempt to move known data files from one PC to another. A technician has no way of knowing where all data files are stored - this varies from one PC to another according to a users individual file management system.

"Regular" backups can vary among individual users. Each user must decide how much data they want to recreate should there be a system failure. If "regular" is once a month and you backed up your data files on June 30th and there was a system failure on July 23rd you would need to recreate any files created between July 1st and July 23rd. If this is agreeable to you, monthly backups would be appropriate. However, the majority of users should backup at least biweekly or weekly.

Backups should include all data files which you create. This would include any WordPerfect macros or templates which were developed by you or for you. Often these files are saved to a default subdirectory automatically in WordPerfect. Macros you create are stored, by default, in the c:\office\wpwin\macros subdirectory. Templates you create are stored, by default, in the c:\office\wpwin\template subdirectory. Please make sure that these files are included in your backup process.

Please keep in mind that should you receive a hardware upgrade or an application needs to be reinstalled you will need to reset all customized preferences. When a PC is placed in the field or when an application has been reinstalled all preferences are default preferences. An example would be WordPerfect toolbars. If you had customized the WordPerfect toolbar to include the features you used frequently and the application needed to be reinstalled, the toolbar would revert back to the default toolbar. There is no known way the toolbar preferences can be saved and restored.

Please call the Help Desk at 858-8812 if you have any questions on backup, or review a copy of the Backup Procedures found in the County-Wide Publish Drive "O". Procedures for using Backup, Restore and Copy Disk for Windows 95 can be found in "o:\infotech\training\win95bu.pro". Backup procedures for Windows 3.1 can be found in "o:\infotech\training\win31bu.pro". Copies of the procedures can also be found in the training rooms at Information Technology, or you can contact Tina Ramey (858-4082) and a copy will be sent to you.

Be Cautious With Your Network Access/Security

Having network access is a privilege just like having access to a secured location or sensitive material. In April of this year, Information Technology distributed the revised "Procedure for Requesting NetWare Login IDs, GroupWise Mailboxes, and Network Drive Access" to all County departments and divisions. Requests are now submitted to the designated network contact in each Department/Division. These requests are then forwarded, by this contact, to the Network Administration Team at Information Technology. Without proper authorization no changes can be made to Network/GroupWise access. Information Technology would like to recommend the following guidelines for keeping your network access secure:

- Never write down your network password – don't leave it on your desk, on your calendar, or stuck to the side of your PC where it would be accessible by others.
- Never share your network password with anyone; if someone needs access to the network please follow the "Procedure for Requesting NetWare Login IDs, GroupWise Mailboxes, and Network Drive Access".
- Never leave GroupWise opened (someone could send GroupWise messages in your name).
- Never share your Internet E-mail password or allow anyone to send mail in your name.
- Never share your specialty application sign-ons and passwords with others (i.e., Performance Purchasing, Performance Accounting, etc.).
- Never leave your PC logged onto the network while you are away from your desk (you are compromising your security access).

If you believe that your network password/access has been compromised, immediately call the Software Help Desk (858-8812) at Information Technology and request to have your password changed.

Year 2000 Planning Continues throughout Oakland County

In April 1998, John Mahoney, Director of Information Technology (IT), sent a memo to all Elected Officials, Directors, and Managers throughout Oakland County. This memo addressed potential Year 2000 failure points which each department and/or division should begin to investigate. While Information Technology is responsible for all hardware and software that has been developed, purchased and supported by IT, the Year 2000 initiative goes far beyond these items. Many of the date-dependent computer chips at work within most machinery and equipment may not be Year 2000 compliant. This equipment can be anything from computerized heating/cooling systems, phone systems, and medical equipment working on a timer.

In a recent article written by Dave Bettinger, entitled "*Embedded Chips - Dispelling Some Myths*" in the Year/2000 Journal, May/June 1998, several types of electronic devices were discussed. The article discussed six steps which can be taken to identify problem computer chips for stand-alone (non-computer) electronic devices. Step number one is the lowest level - does it operate with electricity? The steps build from that point. Step number six is the critical determining factor - does the device use a calendar to schedule events? If the answer is no, it's a low-risk device. Digital clocks or calendars that don't schedule anything, cameras, watches, etc. are examples of low-risk devices because operation of the device is not dependent upon an accurate calendar. The device doesn't care what date is shown; it simply shows a date. Examples of high-risk devices are phone systems, fax machines, irrigation systems, energy management systems that control lights, heat, etc., based on time and date. It is these devices that must be investigated further for Year 2000 compliance. You will want to have skilled engineers/technicians review these devices to ensure that they will operate accordingly in the Year 2000.

Please keep this in mind as you begin thinking about the Year 2000. If you have any thoughts or concerns on equipment which you use, you will want to address these issues with your supervisor. Together, we can ensure that the County is ready to face the turn of the century. Please look for more articles on the Year 2000 in future newsletters.

A Few More E-Mail Emoticons

Here is a few more e-mail emoticons which you can use in your e-mail messages. Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words.

- (-: I'm left handed

- %-) I've been staring at the computer screen for 15 hours straight

- (-: I'm left handed
- 8-) I'm wearing sunglasses
- 8:-) I'm wearing sunglasses on my head
- :-@ I'm screaming
- | -O I'm yawning/snoring
- :-D I'm laughing (at you!)
- :-C I'm really bummed

Internet News

Do you like the County's start page and wish you could access it from home? Well, it's now possible. You can now copy the start page from the County-Wide Publish Drive "O", specifically "o:\infotech\training\start.htm" and save it to a diskette. You can then copy the start page on your PC at home, open it, and access the features which you use at the office.

Internet Research Tools

As you have noticed, the Oakland County start page changes from time to time. It now has the **MetaCrawler** search engine added to the top of the page. The Internet Team at Information Technology feels that this search engine is currently one of the easiest search engines to use out there in cyberspace. However, this is subject to your own opinion. If you have surfed the Web you probably have a few favorites of your own.

The **MetaCrawler** search engine is different "in that it does not maintain any local database. Rather, it relies on the databases of various Web-based sources. **MetaCrawler** sends your queries to several Web search engines, including **Lycos**, **Infoseek**, **WebCrawler**, **Excite**, **AltaVista**, and **Yahoo**. **MetaCrawler** queries the other search engines, organizes the results into a uniform format, ranks them by relevance, and returns them to the user. Of course, this means that **MetaCrawler** is slightly slower than other engines, but is more likely to obtain accurate results for your query."

The Internet Team chose **Metacrawler**, in part, because "**MetaCrawler** has many useful features which other services either do not have or are unable to provide". "Because the Web is so large and changes so quickly, no one search engine can keep up. By utilizing many, **MetaCrawler's** potential for finding information is much greater. Using the

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MetaCrawler, you're able to see one page which contains all of the references from each service. This way you won't miss anything!"

"**MetaCrawler** combines and normalizes the confidence scores given to each reference by the services that return it. Thus, when **MetaCrawler** returns a reference, it sums the scores given by each service and presents them in a "voted" ordering, with the score (from 1 to 1000) presented in bold type next to each result."

The quoted information was taken from the **MetaCrawler** FAQ sheet with expressed written permission by **MetaCrawler** and **go2net**.

MetaCrawler is just one of several search engines Information Technology offers on the start page. Please keep in mind that for any search, it is recommended that you try several search engines, examine the results, and pick your primary tool (search engine). Ease of use does not always translate into accuracy of information. There is a tremendous amount of data out there in cyberspace. There have been estimates that there are 150 to 200 million pages in the public Internet and more in private, subscription, or Intranet. Keep in mind that many companies which provide free Web pages (GeoCities) may get only a small number of pages indexed by a search engine. It is also estimated that out of the 150 to 200 million pages out there, only 25 to 30% of all web pages are indexed.

The term "search engine" is often used generically to describe both true search engines and directories. They are not the same. The difference is how listings are compiled. Search engines, such as **HotBot**, create their listings automatically. Search engines crawl the Web, then people search through what they have found. If a Web page is changed, search engines eventually find these changes, and that can affect how it is listed. Page titles, body copy, and other elements all play a role.

A directory, such as **Yahoo**, depends on humans for its listings. A short description is submitted to the directory or editors write one for sites they review. A search looks for matches only in the descriptions submitted. Changing web pages has no effect on its listing. Things that are useful for improving a listing with a search engine have nothing to do with improving a listing in a directory. The only exception is that a good site, with good content, might be more likely to get reviewed than a poor site.

Listed below are several search engines included on Oakland County's start page and a short description of what it can be used for:

<u>AltaVista</u>	Power search engine for the Web. Filled with advance search features. AltaVista claims to have the most pages indexed. AltaVista claims to scan every word on every page during a search.
<u>Deja News</u>	Complete, simple search engine for Newsgroup posts.
<u>HotBot</u>	Provides categories and merchant lists, simple and advanced search (date, continent, description) features including Newsgroups.

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<u>Infoseek</u>	One of the largest and fastest search engines. Features include dictionary, channels, Desktop, news, maps and more.
<u>Mamma</u>	Search six of the most popular search engines at one time - the Mother of All Search Engines.
<u>Northern Light</u>	One of the newest, fastest search engines with Custom Search Folders to help guide you to a set of focused results.
<u>Open Text</u>	Simple word-phrase text search engine with options to use frames or fewer graphics. Features include columnists, cartoons and Cool Sites.
<u>Yahoo!</u>	The most popular and organized search engine. Fast searches with many features. Many sites are not listed due to the method of adding sites.

Following is a list, and a short description, of search engines which are not included on Oakland County's start page, but worth noting:

<u>Dictionary</u>	Hypertext Webster Gateway (http://www.dictionary.com)
<u>SafeSearch</u>	A fast, family-oriented search engine (http://www.safesearch.com)
<u>Thesaurus</u>	Roget's Internet Thesaurus (http://www.thesaurus.com)
<u>What's New Too!</u>	Simple search engine with 500+ new pages announced daily, search by date and features (http://www.whatsnew.com/whatsnew)

Information Technology is always looking for new search tools, mapping tools, and phone directories to add to the start page. If you find a Web page that you feel would benefit other County employees please send an Internet e-mail to stinsonc@co.oakland.mi.us.

Safeguarding Your Internet Bookmarks, Address Book and Mail

Bookmarks and the Address Book are useful tools in Netscape Navigator. Bookmarks are used to place markers on pages which you find useful. The Address Book allows you to store addresses to which you often send mail. Unfortunately, if you receive a new PC or, on the rare occasion that Netscape must be reloaded, you can lose your bookmarks and address book as well as any mail that is stored on your hard drive. The following steps will allow you to save your bookmark, address book, and mail files so that you can copy them back to the appropriate Netscape directory should the above occur. You will need to verify where your bookmark, address book, and mail directory is located. If you are using Windows 3.1 and the files are stored in the c:\netscape directory, you will need to make a copy of the two files (bookmark.htm and address.htm) and mail subdirectory (all files need to be copied) and store them in a separate directory other than c:\netscape (c:\data would be a choice). If you are using Windows 95 and the

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files and mail subdirectory are stored in the d:\\$data directory you will most likely be fine; however, you can never be too safe. Following is an example of how to save the files/subdirectory (this may differ on your system):

From your File Manager (Windows 3.11),

1. Select **bookmark.htm**, **address.htm**, and the **mail** subdirectory from the Netscape directory (c:\netscape or d:\\$data\Inet).
2. Select **File...Copy**.
3. Type the directory you wish to copy the files to for safe keeping (c:\data or a directory of your choice).
4. Select **OK**.

From your Windows Explorer (Windows 95),

1. Select **bookmark.htm**, **address.htm**, and the **mail** subdirectory from d:\\$data\inet.
2. Select Edit...Copy.
3. Select the directory you wish to copy the files to for safe keeping.
4. Select Edit...Paste.

Now, should you lose your bookmarks, address book, and mail you can copy the files back into the appropriate directory (c:\netscape or d:\\$data\inet).

Get on the Training Track *by Roxanne Hill*

A listing of the courses provided by the Personnel Department Training Unit is available on the o:\ drive under **o:\personnel\training**. Within this directory you will find the Course Descriptions, the Training Schedule, and the Registration Form in the **descript.doc**, **schedule.doc**, and **regist.frm** files. Some of the courses offered are: Focused Selection Interviewing, Grammar Skills, Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, Pre-Retirement Series, Presentation Excellence, Supervisor Skills Series, and Write-On. The training files are located in WordPerfect and are read-only so feel free to open, read, and print the documents you need and send your completed Registration Forms to the Personnel Department Training Unit. If you do not have access to the o:\ drive, contact the Training Unit at 858-7591 for a copy of these materials.

Also, you may not be aware, but the Personnel Department Training Unit has a variety of self-improvement books, videos, and audio cassette tapes that are available on loan to employees at no cost. To see what may be of interest to you, look in the **lend_lib** file. To check out material, or if you have any questions on in-service training, please call Roxanne Hill at 858-1850 or Audrey Venus at 858-0533.