

# KEEPING YOUR DATA SECURE

The book is the first of a two-part set, the second of which promises to deal more with the human factors rather than technical issues that 101 Tips concentrates on. It is aimed at people who have had IT responsibility fall on them, rather than it being their main job and tries to help them understand what needs to be done and why.

## What's inside?

Keeping Your Data Secure covers:

- operating systems (mostly Microsoft)
- software
- network security
- backups
- user management

There is the occasional nod to the Apple Mac but barely a mention of Linux. For both, many of the tips given do apply just as much. The continuing rise of Apple "i" devices, as well as smartphones and tablets from other vendors mean even small networks can become "multi-platform" environments without much or any planning.

## How the tips are arranged and rated

The tips aren't presented in any particular order so it's important to go through them all and the arrangement encourages the reader to do so. Although each part is fairly well self contained, the individual tips often aren't and you may need to consider a few together to get the most out of them. For some reason the accompanying resources are all in a separate section so a certain amount of shuffling back and forth may be required when seeking further reading or it comes to actual implementation.

Helpfully, the tips are rated by stars, showing the possible severity of the risk the tip is trying to mitigate and also dollar signs to indicate the relative level of cost associated. This is better than

nothing but tends to be slightly arbitrary given that cost (time and money) will depend heavily on the size and complexity of the organisation's network and whether it will be found necessary to get someone in to do the job. I have seen even quite small organisations which have evolved some amazingly complex networks (stressing the evolved aspect, usually).

## Costs and regulations

The cost of some of the tips post-implementation is not really mentioned. Some are not terribly hard to do but only if you have bought more expensive kit in the first place and there will be a little more administration required every time you add a new computer, printer, etc. all of which soon adds up.

The Tip on Laws and Regulations shows a significant US bias, given that amongst the list it only mentions the Data Protection Act (one of those much maligned bits of legislation often used as much as an excuse, like "Health and Safety"). It ignores UK considerations like the Electronic Commerce (EC Directive) Regulations and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations to pick but two of many which can potentially have a significant impact on UK businesses and charities. Some of the others, like the Computer Misuse Act are mentioned but are filed under other tips so you may need to make notes as you go through.

Near the back there is a handy glossary which does a good job of explaining a lot of terms in ways which the unfortunate IT person can use to easily explain concepts to the non-technical. This may be especially useful where "the person who knows" may be starting to feel a bit out of their depth and has to explain whilst being only just ahead of (but still needs to look confident in front of) whoever is asking them questions.

## In conclusion

As you may be able to tell, the 101 Tips claim is a bit of a flight of fancy since so many of them are so closely related. However, many valuable points are made in a very easily digestible format. No self help book is ever going to completely supplant the need for at least occasional professional advice (well I would say that, wouldn't I!)

Nitpicking aside, for someone who is having to manage a computer system (whether they like it or not) and feels that although they've got the hang of the basics there could be more they need to do, this book does provide a useful, guided, checklist of items to consider in order to make

the system as a whole more secure than it would have been. Combine it with more consideration of the human factors promised to be in the next book, some appropriate policy advice and it could be a helpful companion for the reluctant system administrator.

Source : <http://www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk/keepingdatasecure>