

## MOBILE WORKFORCE INCREASES RISK OF LOSS OF CRITICAL COMPANY DATA

*May 2011:* An increasingly mobile workforce presents a number of risks for organisations regarding the loss or theft of sensitive company information, highlighting the importance for businesses to incorporate effective data protection and storage solutions.

A study conducted by Dell and Ponemon Institute found that 53% of mobile professionals carry confidential company information on their laptops and, of those, 65% don't take steps to protect the data.

According to Bob Eedes, General Manager of Information Solutions at Metrofile, the JSE listed information and records storage management business, businesses owners need to realise that their critical and often sensitive company information is no longer stored in a secure vault but is travelling with their employees where ever they go. "Technical advancements have made it even easier for unauthorised parties to access encrypted data from stolen or lost laptops and mobile devices."

Eedes adds that negligence of employees forgetting to backup their data to the company server or revealing their passwords to unauthorised personnel is also an increasing problem. "In the event of a laptop being lost or stolen employees often forget what sensitive information was stored on the device, resulting in a lack of control of the location of confidential company information."

Businesses face a number of consequences when mobile devices containing company information is lost or stolen, says Eedes. "Not only can the company suffer a loss of corporate reputation and intellectual property but there are the financial costs of replacing the device itself and operational expenses of getting the device functional as well as repopulating and recovering the data."

Eedes advises that some of the most common manners in which critical company data is lost include, among others, the loss or theft of the physical device, power failures, faulty hardware, viruses and natural disasters. "If effective backup systems are not implemented, reconstituting the data can be time consuming and labour intensive, if possible at all."

According to Eedes the best way to mitigate the risk of loss of sensitive company information is to enforce a strict corporate policy to govern access and rules regarding data use. "Enforce a backup strategy that is easy for employees to understand and use."

Eedes says smaller businesses should implement a backup strategy that incorporates automated and intelligent backups that dictate what files to back up when. "Mobility backup systems backup employees' desktop and laptop data to an online data centre which is secure at all times."



“Larger organisations should look at enterprise solutions that backup data directly to the company’s server and mirror the data to a reputable data protection business,” says Eedes.

The growing trend of a mobile workforce coupled with the increase in digital company data has made an effective data protection and backup system critical to organisational survival and should be a part of every businesses’ risk management strategy, concluded Eedes.

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#### **About Metrofile**

Metrofile is Africa’s market leader in information and records storage management and is represented in all of South Africa’s major provinces. Metrofile operates from 23 facilities covering more than 68 000m<sup>2</sup> of warehousing space and manages more than 18 billion records on behalf of its customers.

Services include in and outsourced solutions to help business and government to increase operating efficiency and meet legislative and corporate governance requirements. Metrofile’s services also mitigate business risk by ensuring that company data is secure and protected at all times. These services comprise file plan development, training in all aspects of records management, the supply of files, active file management (on and off-site), archival of records (on and off-site), image processing, data protection, backup management, paper management and confidential records destruction. Metrofile also supplies and maintains a wide range of business equipment including scanners, library security systems, mailing and packaging machines.