

## **Help Net Security: Key security developments for 2012**

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Kroll Ontrack, the leading provider of data recovery, electronic discovery, and information management products and services, today announced the most important technology trends for the coming year include virtualization, cloud computing, social networking and energy efficiency.

However, businesses that want to benefit from these trends need to look at adopting iron clad information management and security strategies to ensure data security and data loss avoidance.

“Technologies like virtualization, cloud computing, social networking and energy efficiency present companies with major opportunities to develop their businesses – even in difficult economic times,” said Todd Johnson, vice president of data recovery operations, Kroll Ontrack. “However, despite all the enthusiasm for these developments, it is important to keep one eye firmly fixed on the associated risks. Just as with any other technology, data loss can never be completely prevented, and businesses should be prepared for these incidents before they occur.”

In 2012, virtualization will continue to evolve and spark a variety of other trends, predicts IT analyst firm Gartner. Without a doubt, virtualization provides more flexibility and hardware independence; however, the risk of data loss remains. Even in the virtual world, information is still stored on a hard or tape drive.

Hardware independence does not therefore eliminate the risk of hardware failure, operating errors or insufficient employee training. Rather, companies should make sure they adjust their information management strategies for newly adopted technologies and their associated risks as well as know that expertise and specialized tools can result in a successful data recovery from these complex infrastructures.

Companies will also continue to increase their use of cloud computing in 2012. According to a report recently published by Cisco Systems, cloud-related network traffic is increasing by 66 percent each year. In 2010, there were 130 exabytes of data flowing through cloud networks, and if Cisco’s predictions are correct, by 2015, this will increase to 1.6 zettabytes.

Although cloud computing offers optimized storage that is not connected to a specific infrastructure, this technology still relies on hardware components and is consequently not immune to data loss. Cloud service clients should therefore work with their provider to understand what safeguards are in place in the event of data loss. A sound and tested disaster recovery plan with an experienced data recovery provider denoted is imperative for any cloud service.

Social networking tools such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook are increasingly being used by companies for marketing, recruiting and information sharing. While there is tremendous value in harnessing this collective information, organizations can’t overlook how to protect it.

Higher levels of human interaction equate to increases in storage volume and consequently the probability of data loss and data security vulnerabilities. Organizations therefore need to make decisions regarding if and where this social networking content is physically stored and how this information can be protected.

The growing bring-your-own-device trend also presents businesses with new challenges, as privately

owned mobile phones, tablets and laptops may not be sufficiently secured. Without a concise back-up strategy for personal devices, valuable information may be lost if the personal device is damaged or stolen. Further, proprietary data could remain on the personal laptop or iPad when the employee leaves the company. Companies need services that can retrieve data from damaged devices when necessary as well as professional solutions to securely delete data without damaging the device itself.

Flash storage drives and solid state disks (SSDs) in particular offer greater storage capacities and are falling in price. As flash and SSD technology become more widespread, the amount of critical company data stored on them will also grow. Users therefore need efficient ways of recovering data from flash media and SSDs. Standards have not yet been established, so manufacturers have developed their own versions of the technology.

As new products hit the market quickly, data recovery engineers will have to stay up-to-speed with the necessary tools and technologies to successfully retrieve data from flash and SSDs. For flash and SSD users, this means that regular backups are even more important.

Finally, 2011 data breach stories and countless spot checks have shown time and again that confidential data has been and continues to be easily retrieved using relatively simple methods. As new technology is adopted in 2012 and older corporate and end user technology is discarded or donated to charitable institutions, organizations and consumers alike must develop strategies for securely deleting data before passing them on. This applies to all mobile devices, laptops, virtual infrastructure, USB sticks, archive volumes and memory cards that are discarded, donated or resold on the second-hand market.