

UNICOM PRESS RELEASE

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MORE THAN HALF OF SMALL BUSINESSES ARE A CLICK AWAY FROM DISASTER.

The vast majority of small businesses may have binned their paper mountain by going digital, but more than half are failing to back-up their electronic files – and risking a complete loss of data.

Unicom, which specialises in telecoms for the small business sector, asked customers ringing in to its call centre whether their business backed-up vital computer and business data.

Unicom, based in Manchester, has regional headquarters in Birmingham, Ipswich, Leeds, Milton Keynes, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Nottingham, Sheffield and Stoke-on-Trent.

“It’s quite hair-raising to think that 55% of the businesses we surveyed said that they did not back-up their data in any way: all it takes is a power surge, a hardware failure, a software glitch, a break-in or even a wrong click of a mouse and every single piece of information relating to accounts, tax, personnel, sales, customers and stock can be lost for good,” said Chris Earle, Operations Director, Unicom.

“In most cases that could be the accumulation of years’ of data – imagine having to manually recover or replace it.”

Of the 799 businesses questioned, 55% said that they didn’t have any back-up at all. The remaining 45% used various methods for their back-up - some more safe than others.

Five per cent back-up to tape storage, while 6% back-up online, 14% back-up to a different PC and 20% to ‘another method’.

"It's really quite shocking that there are still many small businesses that don't back up their data. Until you lose your data, you don't realise how valuable it is to your organisation," added Chris Earle.

"At worst, data loss can put you out of business, and at the very least, it will cause hours if not weeks and months of costly disruption in service to customers.

"Since we conducted the survey, we have decided that we are going to create an online back up service which will be available to our customers at discounted rates. We hope to launch our new product in the New Year."

About Unicom

Unicom, part of Universal Utilities PLC, is a telecommunications service provider specialising in the small business market. It currently provides telecom, broadband and website services to 70,000 small businesses throughout the UK. Unicom has an annual turnover of over £40m, with 12 regional offices situated around the UK.

Unicom has attracted its small business customers by offering discounts of up to 60% off BT's prices, at the same time as keeping customers on the BT network. Unicom currently supplies in excess of 450 million minutes of call time to its small business customers each year.

Unicom differentiates itself by offering a high standard of personal customer service, with no premium rate 0845 or 0870 numbers, no recorded messages or menus, and no overseas call centres. Unicom boasts one of the highest customer retention rates in the industry.

Unicom was ranked 26th in the Sunday Times Profit Track 100 listings in April 2006, 89th in the Sunday Times Fast Track 100 index in December 2006 and 96th in the Sunday Times Profit Track 100 listings in April 2007. In September 2007 it achieved a ranking of 95th in the Sunday Times Microsoft Tech Track 100 index. The company employs nearly 500 people.

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