

GBS Agency Expert Backup

General Overview:

Providing a reliable backup function is one of the more overlooked necessities for your computer system, whether you have a single standalone computer or a large multi-computer LAN connected to a server.

The backup function is normally considered a system-level requirement and not an application feature or capability because backing up all data on your server or standalone computer should be the goal.

There are two general categories of backup software: first is an online system where the backups are maintained in the cloud, and the second are programs that backup on to some other media.

An advantage of the online system is the backups are automatically away from the location they are being backed up from.

The biggest problem with using a program to backup to other media, is *where* the backups actually reside. Any true backup system must have the ability to backup off-site (or at least have the backup media physically removed from the site periodically). This is most often accomplished with tape systems, although it is possible to use some of the new terabyte drives. But, there is definitely a trade-off when this approach is followed because unless multiple drives are used or the drive can hold more than one copy, you only have a single backup of your system. Even if the drive can hold more than one copy, you still have the possibility of a single point failure.

The three requirements to insure adequate backups:

1. The ability to do both full backups and incremental. A full backup is self-explanatory while an incremental backup only backs up those items that have changed since the last backup was performed. The typical scheme would be to do incremental backups weekdays and then a full backup on Fridays. The purpose of the incremental backups is to reduce the amount of space required on whatever media is being used.

2. The ability to schedule the backups so that they run automatically. The need for automatic scheduling of backups is because without a schedule feature, the backup invariably gets overlooked and missed. It's extremely important to backup frequently.
3. The ability to store the backups in a location different from the computer being backed up. You always want to have a minimum of one backup at a location other than the computer being backed up since it's possible that there could be a fire or flood or the computer equipment could be stolen and you would not have the device on which the backup was stored.

The backup utility included with your agency expert:

Many years ago GBS recognized that if the Agency Expert user had no way of easily creating a backup of their database this resulted in many cases of no backups being maintained for a subscriber's data.

Even though, as mentioned earlier, the backup function is a system level function that should be performed for all of a subscriber's data the overriding importance was for a GBS user to have some way of performing at least a minimal backup function of the GBS data..

The decision was therefore made to provide a bare-bones backup capability which would at least provide the software user with a way to easily backup the Agency Expert data.

GBS Agency Expert V7x Cloud Hosted Subscribers:

One of the advantages of being hosted by GBS on Microsoft Azure is that all backups are scheduled and monitored by the GBS staff. Multiple daily, monthly and yearly backups are automatically created and stored away from the hosting machine and are available to be restored within minutes.

In addition the GBS staff performs all software updates and your system is always running on high performance server hardware.

The provided V6x backup utility:

In the 6x version of the Agency Expert, this is indeed a bare-bones capability. There is no scheduling capability, only standard media can be used (i.e. it's not possible to use this backup function with tape) and the only thing that can be backed up is the actual database.

This means that if you want to have a backup of your file attachments such as scanned images, letters, file attachments to emails, and other types of file attachments, you'll have to use some other method of backing these files up and maintaining these backup copies.

Additionally, to backup the V6x Agency Expert MS Access database (the database that is included in version 6x) all users have to be logged out. There is an exception if the SQL or SQL Express database option has been purchased, as it does allow backing up while users are still working in the database.

The provided V7.Net backup utility:

When the backup feature was designed for the V7.Net product, the goal was to remove some of the shortcomings in the 6x version. The primary enhancement was to give it the ability to backup all of the attached files in addition to the database, and because the SQL database (which V7.Net uses instead of MS Access) allows backing up of the database while the users are still logged in, this makes it possible to easily create a complete backup of all data. However, there are still the limitations of no automatic scheduling feature and the fact that only regular media can be used (i.e. it does not work with tape drives).

Conclusions:

Full-featured backup programs are typically not found in application software, because creating a full-featured backup program typically exceeds the resources of most application developers.

Although GBS has provided a bare-bones backup capability, this should be taken for what it is. It is strongly suggested that a full-featured backup program; either online, or one of the many available standalone packages, be purchased to provide a backup

capability for all of your software, not just the Agency Expert data.

If you still have questions about how you should be backing up your data, we will be happy to answer them with the understanding that GBS has not done a comprehensive evaluation of the many various products that are available and is not in a position to recommend a specific product.

REMEMBER: YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR BACKING UP YOUR DATA (Unless you are a GBS V7.Net Cloud Hosted Subscriber)

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