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Worry-Free Disaster Recovery

By Michael Einbinder-Schatz

Who out there remembers the name Drew Alan Kaplan?

I'm guessing some of you know the name well, while others are shaking their heads.

If you reduced his name to its initials, DAK, would that jog any memory cells?

Well for me, as a teenager growing up in New York City with a passion for audio technology, those initials always meant the arrival of my favorite catalog. Drew Kaplan started selling audio equipment from his dorm room in college in the mid-60's and by the late seventies, had built up a multi-million dollar mail-order technology business. Marketing was done exclusively through direct-mail catalogs, with every product personally reviewed and hawked in writing by the company president, Drew Alan Kaplan himself. It wasn't unusual for him to go on about a product in detail for an entire page, and given that this wasn't a small catalog, the amount of writing required for publishing was fairly remarkable.

Now while I loved audio technology, I can look back years later and realize that one of the things about the catalog that appealed to me in a subconscious way was the style of writing. It was first-person, filled with a kind of folksy familiarity, bundled with more deals than you could imagine. It was almost like the circus busker, in written format..."step right up, ladies and gentlemen, and see the amazing bearded turntable" - well, you get the idea. Frankly, I found it to be really enticing, which only made sense as the products appealed to the technology geek in me. What Kaplan did in his writing was to make the technology sound exciting and cutting edge...something you just had to have.

While I bought a few things from the DAK catalog over the years, the one that I remember the most was a portable cassette player. This one appeared in the catalog probably sometime in late 1982 or early 1983, or just a couple of years

after [Sony's revolutionary Walkman](#) hit the market in this country. I couldn't tell you the manufacturer of this device, although the link above to the Walkman history page indicates that it was probably an Akai. What I can tell you is that it was extremely compact in size and it incorporated a cassette shaped device that was actually an FM tuner. How cool was that? I just marveled at this technology, and I can remember wearing this all during the summer of 1983, after my sophomore year of college as I walked a mile-and-a-half each way, back and forth every day to work. My job was scooping ice cream at the Big Bad Wolf on Commercial Street in Provincetown, on Cape Cod. Let me tell you: being able to listen to my favorite tapes *or* tune in to WBCN in Boston was a big element of a summer of great living for this nineteen year old.

I think, above all, what appealed to me most about Kaplan's writing style was that he was a master of highlighting technology in a way combines the pitch with the story. He talked about his experiences trying out equipment. What he loved, what he didn't, what he experienced and how he invariably bought a whole warehouse of whatever it was at less than cost (but don't worry about the supplier, they'll be fine, he would offer). Of course, he tied it into the compelling "why" for his customers. What would we love; how would it save us time; what would it mean to us...and man oh man, I ate it up.

So why go on and on about a company that closed in 1994, you ask? (DAK has returned by the way and can be found on line...[here](#).)

I am thrilled to introduce a new technology that I'm really passionate about that really is revolutionary and will make a tremendous difference for our clients. I may not write exactly like Drew Kaplan, and I certainly don't market like him, but I do share his passion. So let me give you a little background on this new technology:

We've been a Managed Service Provider for about two years. In that time, we have learned a lot about how to deliver significantly improved services to our clients. Where we used to visit all client servers and workstations, either in person or remotely and manually provide a suite of services and collect essential information, we now use the latest in technology to automatically perform much of what we deem essential maintenance services while automatically collecting far more essential information far more regularly than we ever could manually. The results are compelling, as they reduce our clients' trips to the "emergency room" and focus more on "wellness care". As a result of this change, our clients experience far fewer problems than before and client satisfaction is higher than ever.

About a year ago one of our MSP partners started talking about a new technology that they had invested close to \$10 million for research and development. They were close to bringing to the market and were ready to share it with us. Simply put, it was a technology that promised to turn the whole backup and disaster recovery market on its head. I heard what was in development and my jaw hit the

floor. I understood what I was seeing and hearing *instantly* and I knew that once this was ready, our clients would get it too.

What is this technology you might ask, and why are you just talking about it now?

The technology is called *Jobecca Protect* and what it does is straightforward and essential for any business concerned with the ramifications of losing their computer data or dealing with a disaster where there is partial or total destruction of their hardware (everything from a significant server failure to a total loss due to something like a fire or flood). I'll answer the "why now" question after explaining what it does. Essentially, *Jobecca Protect* combines four core functions surrounding data protection and disaster recovery. These are:

1. A live, on-site backup device which is updated every 15 minutes. This is opposed to the current tape solutions that provide for a nightly backup. Say goodbye to expensive tape drives, tapes, software and cumbersome and fallible rotation techniques (or expensive contracted techniques).
2. Dual off-site storage locations (East and West Coasts). Combined with the onsite backup, this creates a triple-redundancy to the organization's data. Unless a client site gets destroyed at the same time as a data center in Maryland and Arizona, there isn't much to worry about. And let's face it: if they were to all be destroyed at the same time, we'd probably have bigger things to worry about.
3. Virtualization?!? What's that, you may ask. It's simple: if a server fails, we can turn the backup device into the server. There is no difference to the end user as they continue to get their work done after a brief cutover. Say goodbye to the terrifying prospect of significant downtime, which is far more expensive than the cost of fixing a system. Once the original system is fixed, we do the cutover in reverse and the original server is back to serving and the backup device is back to just being a backup device...its moment in the sun completed.
4. Next day replacement in case of disaster. OK, a business is backing up its servers to this *Jobecca Protect* thing-a-ma-gig. Now what happens if true disaster strikes? I mean the thing...the box is on-site, right? So what happens in the event of a fire?

Great question! I couldn't have asked a better one myself.

If this happens, our Network Operations Center (NOC) simply copies your server backup from one of the off-site storage facilities onto a new *Jobecca Protect* device and ships it out overnight. The device is then virtualized and the business can be up and working again (in some temporary location, of course).

Now, no one likes to envision these scenarios, but what would most businesses prefer: a disaster that destroys everything, including all of their company data, or a disaster that destroys everything, but they can have a virtualized server up and running in as little as one day while they start the process of re-building?

I know I sleep better at night knowing I have this protection for my business.

It does all this while eliminating end user administration hassles, addressing compliance concerns and providing critical server monitoring capabilities.

Listen: I've recommended tape-based backup since I started in business 12 years ago. All along, I've recognized the warts of the technology, and there are many. So now we've found something better...much better. But you're probably wondering why we waited so long to introduce this ourselves?

On matters of new technology, I'm intentionally conservative. While the initial discussion about the device was compelling, I wanted to make sure the product worked as promised. Once released, we undertook an exhaustive and extensive testing process. The results of our tests indicated that, while close, it wasn't at the point where we would offer it to our clients. Now, after some improvements (hardware, software, data encryption and procedural) we are able to give it our seal of approval.

Jobecca Protect is available in three "flavors": Basic, Plus and Premium. The differences being the number of servers supported (1-8), differing amounts of on and off-site data storage and repair options.

The technology is cool...to geeks like me. I'm sure most of you will find it boring. However, the peace of mind it offers is compelling. To learn more, give me a call or drop me an e-mail.

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