

PeerSync™

Three essentials for successful backup in a revision intensive environment.

A revision intensive environment presents some specialised challenges to designing an effective backup environment. For starters, it is critical that any product you use has anticipated the revisioning intensive environment (some don't and use disk gobbling brute force).

Revisioning software can also introduce problems; if you have two or three different tools that have revisioning...and one or two tools that don't have...you have three different mechanisms for doing it, and two that don't participate at all.

1. You'll want to find a tool that handles revisioning from a file system level...not from the application level. And when you can do that...you gain the ability to standardise how you do revisioning. Now revisioning means making sure that the last "n" number saves exist. You also want to make sure that if you arbitrarily or accidentally delete a file...that you can recover at least back to the last save...even outside the recycle bin. Sometimes you do a "file save"...and if you're on a network drive...and if you delete it...it's completely gone. So, you want to employ tools that will ensure that file still resides elsewhere, either for revisions or for accidental deletions.

2. You'll want to be judicious in how you retain versions. As far as revisioning goes, when you have revisions that are no longer desirable...in other words you keep 1 through "N" number of revisions...anything greater than that can be moved to an alternate folder for "N" number of days. In other words, you keep it there temporarily...just in case you need to step back. So you have a two-tiered system...and an automated system that will automatically clean that up and--once the file has been in that directory for 30 days--get rid of it. If you haven't asked for it in 30 days, you're not likely to need it. So, this way, it keeps your resources to a minimum.

3. You'll want to determine your optimum retention time. Now, 30 days is an arbitrary value in actuality, because it will be different for different people. But in a relatively short period of time you are not going to go back to all the way to the beginning. So, there's no reason to keep it because it reduces your resources. If you are using tape backup or anything else intermittently those other pieces will reside on some kind of a recoverable medium for a period of time, until you rotate those out. So, if you do it for 30 days to a live drive...and your rotation scheme covers 90 days...you really can recover for 90 days. But you can recover instantaneously.

Now, the issue is not just about recovery, but the speed of recovery. You don't want to physically have to go back to a tape to get your previous versions of it You want to be able to recover them in a timely manner. Often backup approaches fail due to operator or user error. This can be particularly disastrous in organisations where extensive revisions are made to documents over time. It is important to test possible solutions in your environment before you commit to rolling out a solution.

At Purple Rage we have a fully functioning software product that can help you evaluate your needs and make a more informed choice. If you'd like to get information please visit purplerage.com/peersync or email enquiries@purplerage.com.