25 Tips For Optimizing And Protecting Your Retrospect Environment

1. Always back up your critical data to multiple backup sets for maximum safety. This way you can keep a copy on-site for quick recovery, and off site to protect against fire, theft or other disasters.

2. Macintosh users may wish to schedule backups to run at night to reduce the chance of errors caused by open files.

3. Save time on your nightly backups by scheduling your media verifications for a time outside of your typical backup Window. Retrospect writes MD5 checksums to your media, so even if you turn verification off for the nightly backup, you can safely schedule verification to run during the day.

4. You do not need a different script for each backup set; a backup script will allow you to have an unlimited number of destinations. Set up a schedule to use specific destinations on specific days to simplify your media rotation. You can have a Monday backup set that is only used on Mondays, Tuesday only being used on Tuesday, etc.

5. Even a home user can take advantage of the Snapshot Transfer feature in Retrospect. Run scheduled backups every day to your locally attached USB hard disk, and once a week, perform a Snapshot Transfer to a USB disk used for offsite storage. This will copy the most recent backup to your USB disk so that a copy can be taken off site.

6. Retrospect supports different levels of Encryption. It is often a good idea to encrypt any backup media that you plan to take offsite for short or long term storage- that way, if that offsite disk becomes lost or stolen, you do not need to worry about someone graining access to an encrypted backup set.

7. Retrospect includes very powerful options to filter out specific file types from your backup. The All Files Except Cache files selector/rule is an excellent way to prevent the backup of unneeded cache files. Be careful creating custom selectors- what you exclude today may be the item you want to back up or restore tomorrow. Keeping selectors set to All Files or All Files Except cache files is always your safest option.

8. Download the Retrospect iPhone app at no cost to view your scheduled backup, the operations log and check on the backup progress.

9. Retrospect for Windows includes an option to check your selectors to make sure they back up what you expect. Using the check selector option will help you make sure nothing is accidentally excluded from your backup. The option is found under Configure>Selectors. Click the checkmark icon after you edit the selector.

10. For users who back up to disk, Retrospect includes a software compression option that can be used to save disk space. Edit your backup script and click on options to turn on this setting. The operations log will show you how much space you saved during each backup.

11. When it is time to upgrade to a new version of Retrospect, you will need your current license codes. Retrospect has a Window that displays all of your current licenses; to find this information:
    - on a Windows computer go to Configure>Licenses
    - on a Mac, go to Preferences>Licenses

12. You can view what was backed up last night by going to Reports>Session Contents on Windows or Past Backups on the Macintosh. This will allow you to see what files changed recently and therefore were included in the most recent backup session.

13. Proactive Backup is a great way to back up computers that come and go from your network. Typically, it will find a client within 5 minutes of connecting to the network and initiate a backup.

14. Users often ask what the difference is between a catalog rebuild and a catalog repair. The repair of a catalog reads data from the end of your most recent backup member to see if the catalog file is missing your most recent backups. A catalog rebuild is used to rebuild the catalog file in the event of a catalog being lost or damaged.

15. The open file backup add-on for Windows allows Retrospect to back up your open data files including the outlook .pst file. This gives you the greatest level of protection for critical files that are often left open for extended periods of time.

16. Every backup set has a catalog file that is used by Retrospect to track which files have already been backed up. Every time you perform a backup, Retrospect looks at each file on your disk and compares that info with all of the files already listed in the catalog file. This matching process allows Retrospect to identify files that are new or changed and need to be added to your backup media.

17. For the best backup performance, we recommend that all of your catalog files be saved to a local hard disk, instead of on a network share or on your actual backup media. The default location for catalog files is a catalogs folder inside My Documents on a Windows computer or /library/application support/Retrospect/catalogs on the Macintosh.

18. Use the email notification feature in Retrospect to track when your backup is completed successfully, or if an error needs your attention.

19. Clean your tape heads on a regular basis. If you use the tape drive every day, you should perform a head cleaning once a week. Also, don't forget that the tape head cleaner has a limited number of uses- check with the manufacturer for see how often cleaning tapes should be replaced. Retrospect supports tape library bar codes, including the special bar code used by cleaning tapes.

20. Over the years we have heard people say, "I keep my offsite backup in the trunk of my car". This is not an ideal place to store valuable backup data, as backup media cannot withstand the wide temperature shifts that naturally occur within your car's interior. Keep your offsite backup media in a temperature and humidity controlled environment- a bank safe deposit box or professional data storage site is ideal. Also, while humidity is not a serious concern for a hard disk, it is important that tapes be kept out of extreme humidity for long periods of time. Media stored correctly can be used for a restore many years later.

21. Test your restores. Even if you back up every day without a single error, it is important to test the restore of a few randomly selected files on a regular bases. This way you will be familiar with the restore process and a restore during an emergency will not be as stressful. Knowing that the data is backed up is only part of your job- knowing the backup can be restored is just as important.

22. The Retrospect Client software should be installed on each Mac or Windows computer that you need to back up. While Retrospect supports the backup of data over filesharing, the Retrospect client is designed to connect to your computer without filesharing being involved.

23. Always have 2 copies of your backup. If you Recycle Media Set A, you should have a copy of the data on Media Set B. This way you are protected until you complete the next backup onto the recently recycled media set.

24. The restore of an exchange server can be a complex process. Retrospect supports the Exchange Recovery Database, which allows you to restore an exchange database without overwriting the live database on your running server.

25. You can view a list of your pending backup schedules all in one window. Windows users can go to Activity Monitor>Scheduled. Mac users can go to Activities>Scheduled. Retrospect will show you the type of backup operation for each scheduled event and the name of the backup set that will be used.

Questions? Email our sales group at emea.sales@retrospect.com or call +44 117 911 8090.