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**Headline News**

**Web hosting firm finds niche in data storage (06/04)**

KELLY LOUISEIZE

A Thunder Bay IT firm has developed easy-to-use information warehousing software for companies concerned about data safety.

Gone are the days of securing company information by tape recording data, co-owner of BrickHost, Andrew Campbell, CAO says. So too are the high costs of buying into a data storage system, not to mention hiring technology junkies to aid the company in understanding the process.

Campbell and his partner Bryan Lokstet, COO, have developed BrickHost Backup Client. It is an automated piece of software that can take company information and transfer it to an off-site facility.

After 9/11, there were an increasing number of companies storing away days or weeks worth of information, Campbell explains. In addition, incidents of fire, or computer hacking leave company information vulnerable and hard to replace. He knows this from personal experience. Campbell previously worked for a marketing agency, where smoke damage from a fire in the business neighbourhood put the marketing company's computers out of commission.

"It took weeks to input data back into the computers," Campbell says.

Another incident nine weeks ago could have seriously impaled BrickHost's ability to continue doing business uninterrupted. A hacker attacked the company's systems, but because there was a backup system in place, it was business as usual in two to three hours, he says.

"Talk about a difference in timelines; it's kind of like peace of mind. I don't think I would be able to sleep as well as I do if we didn't have the assurances that our data is backed up," Campbell explains.

As a Web hosting and software development company, BrickHost prides itself on affordability and security of their new service, with plenty of infrastructure to support data deposit and retrievals, he says.

Two servers transfer the information. The second server runs in tandem with the first, providing emergency backup. As well, Campbell says they have chosen specific data bunker centres in Orlando, Florida and another in Parsippany, New York. The information warehouses have an alternative energy back up systems and security in case of power outages.

The idea of developing a software package that enables companies to store data through the Internet off-site in another location came one night as the two partners sat talking. Campbell wondered aloud if such a service could exist. The next week Lokstet handed him the basic product.

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- Around the North
- NOBA
- Influential Women

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- Energy & Environment
- Forestry
- Government
- Health & Safety
- Mining
- Technology
- Tourism
- Transportation

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- North Bay & Tri-Towns
- Parry Sound & Muskoka
- The Sault & Superior East
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- Columns
- Letters to the Editor
- Northern Numbers
- Labour Market Stats
- New Incorporations
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BrickHost retains 80 per cent of its clientele internationally with Web hosting and off-site data storing services. Campbell and Lokstet plan to move their business to Thunder Bay's Northwestern Ontario Technology Centre where there is more technological infrastructure to market their new product.

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