

Back it up...or pay the price

Solutions for Pro/INTRALINK and Pro/PDM

By Stan Balish

Most of the time you just assume it is being done and don't really worry about it. However, it might surprise you to know that there are companies and individuals who are not properly backing up their Pro/E data, a surprisingly simple procedure. This Pro/Clues article will review some different techniques that administrators can use to assure that their Pro/E data is secure. Most companies today have either some sort of IT (information technologies) or IS (information systems) department. If not, then someone is usually handling these tasks in addition to their normal duties. Whatever the situation, the IT/IS department is to the place to start when developing your Pro/E backup plan.

One big misconception that can lead to problems is to assume that the IS/IT department is backing up the CAD data. This is an extremely dangerous assumption to make. For instance, it is possible that the IT/IS department staffers are not including the CAD data in their normal backup procedure because they assume that the Pro/E and Pro/INTRALINK administrator is responsible for backing up all the CAD data. In fact, it is common for the IT/IS department to back up only certain folders or partitions on a specific machine. Unless they are aware of exactly what items you need to have backed up, it is possible that they are not included in the IT/IS backup plan.

You also should know that there are different approaches to backups. Some companies will back up data every night; others will back up twice or even once a week. Pro/E data, on the other hand, almost always needs to be backed up every day, especially when there is concurrent engineering going on.

The first step to creating a successful backup plan for your Pro/E data is to meet with the IT/IS department to make sure its members understand your backup needs. Sending them a written document with this information might be a good idea as well. Depending on

your company's situation, the IT/IS department might have high employee turnover, and having your requirements documented will assure that new IT/IS employees will have a heads-up on what you need done and when. The next step in creating a successful backup plan is to understand what is required to back up your data. If you are not using Pro/INTRALINK (that is, simply storing your files on your hard drive) there really is not much that you need to understand. If you are using Pro/PDM or Pro/INTRALINK as your database management system, you need to be familiar with how the backup procedure works for the specific product that you are using. We will focus our attention on Pro/INTRALINK for this article.

Pro/INTRALINK

Your Pro/INTRALINK data can be backed up in a number of different ways. Some are more complicated than others but in the end they all fill the same purpose. As always, the first thing that you should do is visit the PTC website and review the documentation that covers backing up Pro/INTRALINK data, which can be found in the Suggested Techniques area. Next, it is time to give the PTC customer support line a call and speak with one of the technical support engineers and discuss with him or her how to best back up your Pro/INTRALINK data. By now you should have a pretty good idea of what you need to do. If you still feel that you are unclear, you can always contact one of your local PTC application engineers or a third-party company to give you a hand.

Next, you need to set up a test Pro/INTRALINK server with a test database. *Never test your newfound skill on your production database*, unless you want to risk losing your data before you get it backed up. Whether you use the DSMU (dataserver management utility) to back up your data or do a manual backup, the

two most critical items are the INTRALINK dump file that you generate from Pro/INTRALINK and the file vault where the actual Pro/E files are stored. (Remember to create your dump file first, then copy your vault files second.) The INTRALINK dump file can be created using an executable file that is located in the following folder location in the INTRALINK loadpoint: <dataserver loadpoint>/dataserver/intralink/export/ilink_export.bat. You can run this batch file by opening a MS-DOS window and navigating (changing directories) to the above location. Once there you can type the following command: **ilink_export <"dataserver password">** (default is "manager") > <file path and name of dump file.dmp>. An example of the syntax:

```
ilink_export manager
```

```
D:/ilink_dump_files/dump_12_30_01.dmp
```

This will create a dump file called dump_12_30_01.dmp in the folder called ilink_dump_files on the D drive. A *.lst file (a log file) will also be created along with the *.dmp file but is not necessary to have in order to rebuild your dataserver. Now that you have your dump file, all you need to do is copy the files from your vaults.

Note that you can copy your file vaults to a temporary folder or have your IT/IS department back up all the files directly from the vault folder. If you choose the latter course, make sure to shut down the dataserver before the backup begins.

Now you are ready to sit down with your IT/IS department and go over what you have just learned, making sure that they understand the entire procedure. Even though they will not be responsible for creating the dump files—the Pro/INTRALINK administrator should do that—they should be aware of how it is done. The IT/IS department should be fully aware of the files that you need backed up, how often you need them backed up, where they are located and how they were created.

The last step is to automate the entire process described above so that you do not have to create dump files and copy vaults every day. Most tape or optical-drive backup systems today have software that allows the process to be fully automated. To help you automate the dump file creation and file vault copying process you can create your own executable files (see *Figure 1* and *Figure 2*) that can perform these tasks.

Once created, these files can work in combination with the IT/IS department backup procedure if you add them into your Scheduled Tasks folder and then assign run time properties to each of them. (Make sure that your dump files and copied files from your vaults are being created before the IT/IS department's backup procedure starts.) It is always a good idea to perform these activities at a time when no one else is using Pro/INTRALINK. Creating a dump file or copying a file from your vault while someone is using Pro/INTRALINK could corrupt the data.

You now should have enough information to make sure that your data is being backed up correctly. This will not only give you confidence that you can recover from a disaster but it will give your engineers and managers peace of mind, knowing their work is safe when they go home at night.

Stan Balish is the president and CEO of FroTime Inc. in San Diego, Calif. He can be reached at lee@frotime.com. 

For comments on this article, e-mail editorial@proe.com.

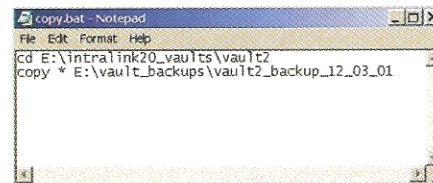


Figure 1.

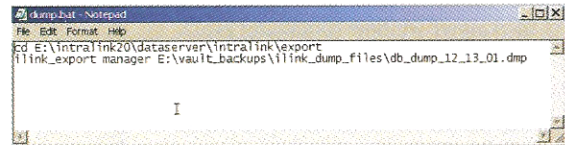


Figure 2.

NEED
Rapid Prototypes?.....

GET
Instant Quotes

Usually when you quote your outsourced **Rapid Prototypes** and build-to-order parts, you send out your CAD data and wait... and wait...for your quotes to come back.

You have lost control. It can be days before you see a quote, days of delay to your product release, costing you time, costing you money.

At Quickparts.com, you upload your 3D CAD models, select an RP process, and then your custom, binding quotation is **INSTANTLY** presented to you.

You can make the decision to order your build-to-order parts right now, without waiting, or change your specs and see the quote change, **INSTANTLY**.

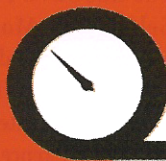
SLAprototypes

SLSprototypes

FDMprototypes

POLYcastings

QuickTurn Injection
Molded Parts



quickparts.com

Putting *Instant* In Custom Manufactured Parts

Instant Quotes For Quick Parts

1-877-521-8683

Register Now At
www.Quickparts.com