
Backup Crash Course

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Why Backup?

Imagine if one day your computer were to explode. Literally explode, while you were a safe distance away. After the explosion you start to remember all of the important data, pictures, e-mail and documents that you had. Gone forever...Would you be comfortable knowing you have a backup or would all of your files be lost?

Backing up your important files is critical because you never know when your computer hard drive could fail, lightening could strike, or a hurricane/flood could occur.

How often should you Backup?

There is no definitive answer to this since you will never know when your computer or hard drive might fail. So realistically, the more often the better; but as a general rule...The more important the files are and the more often they change, the more you should backup. The less important and the less they change, the less you should backup.

Some prefer scheduled backups to make sure backups are done regularly.

What should I Backup to?

Creating backups of important files is becoming a lot easier and more affordable than it once was. You can now backup to any of the following:

- CD/DVD (Burning)
- Thumb Drives
- External Hard Drives
- Internet Backups

The first three in the list above are local backups and the last one is an offsite backup. Here is a basic summary of the pros and cons of each.

CD/DVD Burning is relatively inexpensive but it can require a decent amount of technical knowledge. Also, you have to be very organized to make sure that you



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backup the files that you need. While backing up to CD's and DVD's, you will have to individually select the folders and files that you want to backup. Once you have a CD or DVD backup, you will have to label it. It is best not to write files to a CD or DVD more than once. Use single recordable discs instead of the re-writable discs. Sometimes re-writable discs are not readable in other computers which would defeat the purpose of having a backup. The space on CD's and DVD's is also limited. You could not backup your entire computer onto a CD or DVD.



Thumb Drives are typically a smaller storage device. They are getting bigger and more affordable and they are certainly very portable. Thumb Drives are very easy to use but equally easy to lose. They are small and easily damaged. They are most popular in colleges where students copy their assignment and work on them in a computer lab or at another person's computer.



External Hard Drives are probably the best form of backup right now. The price of hard drives has become increasingly affordable and you can backup your entire computer to an external hard drive. Instead of having to choose which files you think are important. You can just setup the external hard drive to backup all of your files. This is a lot easier for most people and it will also provide you with reliable backup of all of your files.

Internet Backups are considered the future of backing up files. To backup your files to an internet backup service you will need a highspeed internet connection and a reasonable amount of time. The good thing about Internet backups is that they are offsite. If something were to happen to the location where your computer, external hard drive, CD/DVD or thumb drive, your data would be safe on an internet backup.

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