

Backup Basics

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Imagine your life as a vast library, filled with irreplaceable books, photos, and cherished memories. These precious items represent your digital identity, a collection of moments and experiences that you hold dear.

Now, imagine this library facing a sudden catastrophe. There are many ways your precious data can vanish - a spilled coffee on a laptop, a hard drive failure, even a natural disaster. And even with the utmost care, human errors happen - a file deleted by mistake, a folder lost in the digital abyss.

This is the harsh reality of data loss, a threat that looms over every computer user. Whether it's accidental deletion, hardware failure, or a malicious attack, data loss can strike at any time.

WHY BACK UP?

- **Human Error:** The most common culprit. An errant click might erase a file, but a versioned backup lets you rewind the clock and retrieve it.
- **Hardware & Software Failures:** Machines break, software glitches happen. Regular backups ensure your data survives such calamities.
- **Catastrophic Events:** Fires, floods, theft, or even a misplaced coffee cup can wipe out your data. Off-site backups provide a safe haven against such disasters.

Think of data backup as building a second library, a secure haven where duplicates of your digital treasures reside.

- **Local Backups:** External hard drives offer a reliable haven for your data. Consider using different types of drives and storing them in separate locations.
- **Software:** Leverage smart tools like Time Machine, Arq, or Carbon Copy Cloner to automate backups, retain multiple versions, and even create bootable copies for quick recovery.
- **Cloud Backups:** Imagine a secure haven in the digital sky, protecting your data from earthly perils. Cloud services offer an essential layer of redundancy.
- **Versioned Backups:** Picture a time machine for your data, a backup system that preserves multiple versions of your files. It's a guardian against the passage of time, allowing you to recover lost or corrupted data.

A Backup Strategy

A wise backup strategy involves a combination of three things:

1. **Regular Backups:** Schedule regular backups to keep your digital fortress up-to-date, ensuring that your data is always protected against recent changes.
2. **Multiple Copies:** Store backups in different locations, both locally and in the cloud. This redundancy ensures that your data remains safe even if one fortress falls.
3. **Test & Verify:** Test your backups periodically to make sure they are functioning correctly.

Seven Things to Consider

1. Create a Backup Plan and implement it. Avoid procrastination!
2. Backups should be automatic. Use software that allows you to set a schedule and forget about it.
3. Keep external drives plugged in.
4. Backup drives can fail, so you might want to back up to multiple drives you can rotate. One backup is better than nothing, but if that drive fails, and it will fail at some point, you no longer have a backup.
5. Test backups regularly. If your backup drive fails, you won't know until it's too late unless you test it regularly. Boot from your bootable clone occasionally. Check your incremental backup every so often to see if you can view and restore earlier versions of files.
6. Know how to contact your off-site backup services. Phone numbers, email addresses, and login credentials are essential.
7. Keep your backup software updated.

Data backup is not just a chore; it's an investment in your digital well-being. By safeguarding your precious memories and essential documents, you give yourself peace of mind, knowing that your digital library is protected from the storms of life.