



# BRINGING NEW TECHNOLOGY TO YOUR BUSINESS

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## Data Backup Options

### The Background

Data backup is the saving of files and data in a place other than, and in addition to, your hard drive. The most obvious reason for backing up your computer's data is to protect your data in case your computer is compromised. This can happen as a result of a virus, mechanical failure of a hard drive, natural disaster such as a fire or flood, or human intervention such as the theft or destruction of a computer. By backing up your computer's data, you can quickly recover files and content that otherwise would have been lost for good.

### The Details

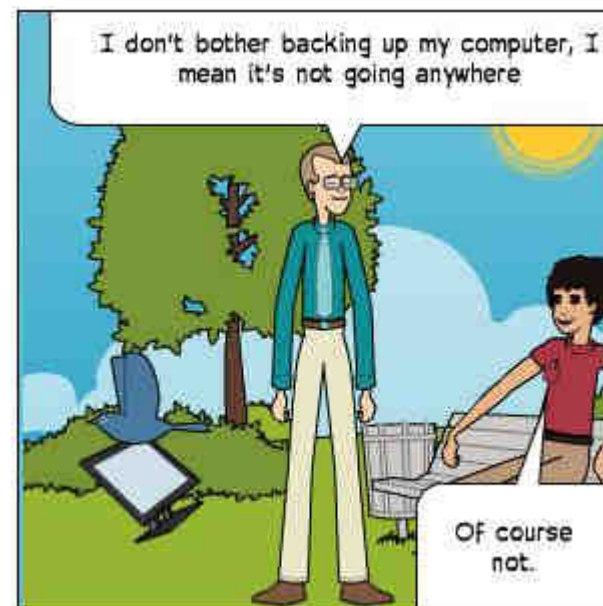
When you save a file to your computer, it is usually saved to one place - your hard drive. If something happens to that hard drive, and its contents are lost, you are out of luck, unless that data exists in a second place. Enter the backup system. The simplest backup systems are similar to hard drives. These would include secondary hard drives that contain part or all of your primary drive, DVD backups of drive contents, and flash drive backups of select folders and files. These options are easy to set up on your own, require little initial investment, no ongoing investment, and are simple to understand and carry out. The downside to these backup options is that while they help in the event of a virus or hard drive failure, a second hard drive or DVD likely won't hold up any better than your first hard drive in the event of a flood

or fire. That situation is why people are increasingly turning to backup services located outside of the home or office. These "off-site," "on-line," or "cloud" backup solutions both protect your data, and keep it in a second place away from your primary data. Although they generally come with a monthly cost, off-site options are very safe. The important thing to remember is to match the value of your data to the quality of your backup system. If in the event of a hard drive failure, you would need to try to recover that data, it's worth backing up in the first place. Some information such as accounting or customer information may be irreplaceable if lost, so time and money spent on backing up that data is always a good investment.

**Is your data being protected by a backup system? What would you do if your hard drive failed?**

### Data Backup

The amount of data stored on a computer has grown every year. With that in mind, more and more backup options have come along to keep that data safe in the event of a virus, hard drive failure or theft.



## Real World Application

To get started with a backup system, you don't need very much. Many computers come with two hard drives. These computers generally have an option to back the primary drive onto the secondary drive. Additionally almost all computers sold in the last several years have a DVD writer and USB ports. If you have one of these computers, all you need to do is copy your important files and folders to a DVD or USB flash drive periodically. These systems provide a modicum of data security with almost no work. An off-site backup option takes a bit more work, but should be considered if your data has a great deal of importance to you or your business. Uploading data yourself to an existing server or repository is one option that can avoid monthly costs, however it requires you to have access to space on an existing off-site server. A more approachable solution for consumers and small businesses is the use of an on-line data backup site. We've looked into four of the companies in this field: Carbonite ([www.carbonite.com](http://www.carbonite.com)), Mozy ([www.mozy.com](http://www.mozy.com)), iDrive ([www.idrive.com](http://www.idrive.com)) and Dropbox ([www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com)). These companies all offer fairly general back up options, and they all have some draw backs: such as poor user interfaces or the inability to back up removable drives. They offer free small size backups, and then charge from \$10 to \$20 a month. A per GB storage fee is also assessed in many cases. When coupled with upload times, this can limit the ability of a user to back up an entire two or three hundred GB hard drive. They are, however, safer and more secure

for your data than on-site back up, an importance that can't be overstated. The ideal backup system would employ a combination of options, such as a full computer back up to a secondary hard drive, with select critical files or folders backed up nightly to an on-line source, but any system is better than none. While all of these options work fairly well on a single computer, things get much more complex when dealing with data on a network, or when backing up several machines. If you have a situation like that, you may be better off contacting a professional to devise a backup option specifically tailored to you or your company.

The important thing to remember is to match the value of your data to the quality of your backup system.

## Controversy

What little controversy there is about backup systems comes from how best to back up data. If you are doing it yourself, make sure you are doing it right. Be sure to exercise revision control by keeping multiple backups. For example, back up on Monday, then Tuesday while saving Monday's file, then Wednesday while saving the first two files. This way, if a backup fails you still have a slightly older version. Also make sure to test your backup. This can be done manually by spot checking a few files, but can only be done fully by a computer. There are a number of free and inexpensive backup testing programs that can be very useful if you are backing up a large amount of data. These testing programs can be an integral part of a backup system, since one mistake or stroke of bad luck can wipe out months of work and cost you a lot of customer information.



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What are the Real World Applications for backup systems?

Is there any controversy around these systems?

# By backing up your computers data, you can quickly recover files and content that otherwise may have been lost for good.

A few online backup companies mentioned earlier:

Company	Monthly Base Cost	Size Allowance	Free Trial?
Carbonite	\$5.00	Unlimited	Yes—15 days
Mozy	\$5.99	50 GB	Yes—2 GB limit
IDrive	\$4.95	150 GB	Yes—5 GB limit
Dropbox	\$9.99	50 GB	Yes—2 GB limit

## Conclusion

If it hasn't been stressed enough in this article - back up your data. Given the breadth of backup options available now, there is no excuse to not having some or all of your data backed up. The limited amount of time it takes to keep your files backed up is nothing compared to the lost time, money and content you may have to deal with if you experience a data loss with no contingency plan.

## Next Steps

If you want to get started on a backup system, why not take your most important files and pictures and copy and paste them onto a flash drive today. Put that flash drive somewhere else, and you now have a basic back up of some of your data. For a more thorough solution, try one of the backup sites listed above. Finally, if you need a complete solution for all of your data, or if you are dealing with multiple computers, why not call us at 301-949-2553, or E-mail us ([contact@coretechs.com](mailto:contact@coretechs.com)). We can answer any questions you may have, and put our years of enterprise support experience to work in designing a complete backup solution for you or your company.


“Given the breadth of backup options available now, there is no excuse to not having some or all of your data backed up. “

What conclusions can be drawn about backup systems?

What are the next steps to get a system in place?



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