

## What is a Backup?

To copy files to a second medium (a disk or tape) as a precaution in case the first medium fails or the site where the computer resides is destroyed. One of the cardinal rules in using computers is back up your files regularly.

Even the most reliable computer is apt to break down eventually. Many professionals recommend that you make two, or even three, backups of all your files. To be especially safe, you should keep one backup in a different location from the others. Doing this is referred to keeping a copy off site.

### A normal Backup Schedule

Every backup schedule should be defined by how often you modify your data and how critical the information is that is found within those files. How long can you go without having the information or how easy is it for you to reproduce the information that you may have lost. Many times we setup a schedule to backup data at a regular time every day or every other day which is running on the computer all the time and knows what days and times it is to run at.

## *What if I don't have a backup*

All is NOT lost if your computer fails and you do not have a backup. Companies like Better.Business.Solutions are often able to recover your data for you, or at least a portion of the data. The most important thing for you to remember is that the less you try to get the data back or "recover it" yourself the better the possibility is that we will be able to get at your lost data. You ask why is this true? Every time you start up the computer it will create a file used for swapping its memory and every time you copy a file and paste it back onto the hard drive, it writes into what the drive believes to be open space. If your computer is having trouble what it believes is to be open space may be free or it may be space which has data in it that the hard drive no longer recognizes. Even when you have deleted the file from the recycle bin as long as nothing has been written over the space where the file was originally stored we may be able to recover it.

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## Why Do I need a Backup and Archive Strategy?



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*A breakdown of the benefits and costs of backing up your data.*

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## Why Do I need to Backup?

We all have information we are hanging on to such as digital audio and photo files, videos, documents, presentations, PDFs, spreadsheets, old email, mailing lists, and favorite website links. In addition, there can be application data such as newsletter or greeting card files, special fonts, clipart and animations, check book, accounting or general ledger data, or programming source code. For some of us the list includes all this and much more. The challenge is selecting the most effective backup method for each of these data types. Fortunately, there are several types from which you can choose.

### What media choices do I have?

For those home users that do not generate a large amount of data, you may be able to use your computer's CD-RW (read-write) player to back up your data. This media is handy to use but the discs are easily scratched if you're not careful. Make sure you test the CDs after you create them to make sure they are readable. And handle them with care - immediately put them into their protective case with good informational labeling so you can find your data when you need it.

**CD-RW media** is a good choice for email, word-processing documents, PDFs, presentation files, music, and small spreadsheets or accounting files. You may wish to group your files by project, year or file type. The choice is yours as long as you know how to find your data later. CD-RW will work for digital photos, but a recordable DVD-RW is better for high-pixel digital pictures that take up much more space.

**Flash drives** are convenient thumb-sized portable storage devices that are handy for a quick backup of data files and folders. Flash drives are perfect for checkbook accounting file backups or transferring files between PCs and laptops, or when you need to have files with you when you travel. Even though some flash drives hold a significant amount of data, they are small in size, making them easy to lose, hard to adhere a label onto, and most don't hold enough data for a full hard drive backup.

**An external hard drive or removable hard drive** may be your ultimate backup strategy. Prices have dropped, making these devices attractive for the home user. External hard drives are self-contained hard drives that connect to your computer using your USB port. Most external hard drives have a large capacity and are fast and flexible. These drives can be as small as a deck of cards, which is convenient enough to allow off-site storage, a good idea for small businesses. You can purchase an external hard drive with enough capacity to copy and back up multiple home computers or a small business. This is a strategy that

can be ideal for individuals, businesses and families who create large amounts of data.

**Tape drives** are the old standby when it comes to backups. They provide a low cost media which is easily taken off site between backup runs and can backup larger amounts of data. Most tape drives come with some type of backup software allowing the scheduling of after hours backups when you can be away from the system, but restoring the backup data maybe a tedious process.

**Online remote websites** are the newest form of backup. The positives are that it is off site which means you are covered in case of fire or other destructive accident. The negative is that it is off site. Being off site means that it may be a slower media for the backing up of your data if you modify large amounts of data on a regular basis. Other possible disadvantages inherent in this method include data security and monthly or annual costs associated with the amount of space you use on the remote site.

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