

## ***Luck is for Leprechauns – Not a Good Strategy to Rely on When it Comes to Backing up Your Data***

How would you feel if you lost all your cherished family photos? Or all the work you have done in the past few weeks or months? If you don't backup your computer on a regular basis, you are in danger of losing your irreplaceable data.

Backing up your data is an important part of computer maintenance. Most users don't realize that hard disk failure is not all that unusual. In fact, Google recently conducted a study which found that 1 out of 14 drives 2 years or older will fail within a year. If a virus infects your computer it can destroy vital data or make it inaccessible. Program malfunctions and computer crashes, which are not uncommon, can also cause data loss. If you have photos, videos, music, email or important documents that are irreplaceable, you should do regular backups to ensure you don't lose these files.

### ***Where do you backup your computer?***

The reason for doing a backup is to protect your data from drive failure or some other problem that makes your data inaccessible from your system. Therefore all backups should be on some sort of external media or network. Here are some of the various media used for backups:

**USB Flash Drives** (thumb drives): The capacity of these drives range from 1GB to 128 GB, and the price ranges from \$8 to \$400. They are small, portable, and easy to use. Their main drawback is that they are also easy to misplace or lose.

**CD-R and DVD-R:** The capacity of the CD-R is 650 MB. DVD-R can hold 4.7 GB (single-layer) or 8.5 GB (double-layer). This type of media is OK for small amounts of data. But with the prevalence of storing pictures and music, this may not be enough space.

**External Hard Drives:** Nowadays you can get a good size (100 GB – 1 TB) External USB hard drive for a reasonable price. This makes an external hard drive an easy and affordable choice for backing up your computer.

**Cloud Backup:** For a monthly fee, you can use an online backup provider to store your files remotely. The price of the service is usually based on the amount of data being backed up. One advantage of online backup is that your data is stored offsite. One disadvantage: since you are backing up over the Internet, depending on the amount of data, the backup and recovery speeds can be slow.

## ***Automate your Backups***

If backing up your data depends on a human being doing something, it's flawed. One of the biggest causes of data loss is human error (someone not setting up the back up to run properly or forgetting to run the backup). ALWAYS automate your backups so they run like clockwork and take the possibility of human error out of play.

## ***Test your Backup***

You must periodically test your backup to make sure your data can be read and that all your important files are included. There are many things that can go wrong with a backup. You don't want to find out your backup is unreadable or that important files are missing **after** your hard disk has crashed and files have been lost.

## ***Keep an Offsite Copy of your Backup***

What happens if fire or flood destroys your computer AND the backup drive? What happens if your home or office gets robbed and they take EVERYTHING? Onsite backups are good, but they won't help you if they get stolen, flooded, burned or hacked along with your computer. Having an offsite backup is simply a smart way to make sure you can get your computer back up and running in a relatively short period of time.

If you need assistance in setting up and testing your backups, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will be happy to assist you in choosing, configuring, and testing the best backup solution for your situation.