

The Smartest Thing You Can Do With Your Mac

BACKUP!

Yeah, its a pain.

What is the call we fear most at California Computer Care? "Help! Something happened to my hard disk and now all of my files are gone!"

It will happen to you!

It's inevitable. Hard drives break (they only last about five years on average), a file gets thrown away by accident, a file gets renamed and copies itself over another important file, your Mac gets stolen or a power surge fries your machine. Ouch!

Backing up means. . .

making copies of all of your important files. If you would be unhappy to lose a file; back it up! It's best to back up to a removable disk like a floppy, Zip disk or a cartridge or tape system. With removable disks or cartridges, extra sets can be kept off site to protect against theft and fire. A safe deposit box is ideal (mine is full of Zip disks).

Be Pro-Active.

There are utilities like Norton Unerase and Tech-Tool Pro that can usually recover erased files and modestly damaged hard drives, but why wait until you have a problem; that's too risky. Get ahead of trouble by establishing a healthy Back Up Routine.

Back Up Tools.

There are dozens of ways to back up your hard drive. It doesn't matter which you use as long as you keep to a regular schedule.

If you have a calendar or appointment program, set it to remind you to back up. Daily back ups may be necessary if you produce lots of work each day, weekly is sufficient for most home users and light users may be safe with monthly back ups.

If you don't have an appointment program, consider *Nag 3.0*. *Nag* (\$10.00) is easy to use and will take all of your appointments and time critical to-dos and send you nagging reminders to do them.



Back ups can be accomplished by simply copying new or changed files to another disk as you create

them. Unfortunately, few of us are disciplined enough to do this without fail (Murphy's Law says that if you forget to back up a file, that will be the file that will become damaged or go missing.).

Some excellent commercial back up tools exist such as *Retrospect* and *Retrospect Express*. Both are fully featured though *Retrospect* (\$179.95) is best used by large, cross platform offices with very, very heavy back up needs. *Retrospect Express* (\$49.95) is for the small office and home user.

Two solid back up tools are available as shareware. Shareware is software that is distributed directly over the internet or passed from person to person. With shareware you get to try before buying. If you keep the software, you are on your honor to send the author the requested fee. Shareware is often as good or better than commercially distributed titles.

Drag'nBack (\$49.95) is fully featured and works beautifully through Drag-and-Drop. After initially setting up the software (it leads you through the process quite nicely), simply drag the icons that you wish to back up to the *Drag'nBack* icon. The only other thing you need do is insert back up disks as *Drag'nBack* requests them. Its fast and very safe and friendly.



Those on a tight budget will like *Synk 2.5.2* (\$10.00). *Synk* is small, fast and very easy to use. Assign a folder on your hard drive to be the Source folder. Fill the Source folder with all of the files that you want to back up. Next, create a Destination folder on the disk or cartridge that you want to use for back up. Double Click on *Synk*, choose *Go* from the *File* menu and *Synk* does the rest. *Synk* is less customizable than *Drag'nBack* and can't split big back ups over multiple disks, but it is inexpensive, quick and very easy to use.



Available from CCC.

All three shareware titles mentioned here are available on the 'Net or from California Computer Care.

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Coming Soon System 8.5

The latest version of the Macintosh Operating System (MacOS: the basic software that makes your expensive pile of plastic, metal and silicon a computer instead of an inert mass), version 8.5, will be released Saturday, October 17, to great fan-fare. What should you do about it?

For now, nothing.

Never buy a new version of software when it is first released. Really. Leave such stupidity to folks like us. No matter how hard software publishers try (and they sure don't seem to try very hard), there are still lots of nasty bugs in new software waiting to crash your Mac and make your life miserable. See the *October Tip* sidebar for more information. We'll keep issuing bug reports over the next few months. System 8.5 will probably be truly safe and ready for popular consumption by the first of the year.

What's new in 8.5?

Lot's that's visible and more that ain't. This version of System 8 is very nearly all PowerMac native. In the past, MacOS has been a hybrid of pre- and post-PowerMac software. This combination allowed the operating system to work on both kinds of Macs without penalizing either too severely. Unfortunately, because of this the OS didn't take advantage

of the strengths of either platform. Because 8.5 is almost completely PowerMac native, it will not be usable on non-PowerMacs. So, no upgrade for my old PowerBook 190. That's too bad, because there are some new features that would be handy for my old PowerBook. Well, the line had to be drawn somewhere and my PowerMac desktop is going to love the speed boost! Beta testers (the folks who do everything they can think of to break new software and find bugs) report up to a 30% increase in speed over 8.1. Now, that's really great! (Your mileage may vary.) If these speed increases hold up, this will be a good upgrade for all PowerMac users, even those with first generation systems (6100, 7100, 8100, Performa 6115, 6116).

New features you will see include improved *Find* command that searches your Mac and the internet, a greatly improved *Application Menu* that can stay open all the time for folks who change apps frequently, Title Bar Icons that allow you to move a folder easily with its window open, Internet Location Files let you drag a URL or email address to the desktop where it turns into a double-clickable icon (cool!), Re-orderable columns in *Finder List View*, improved *Help* system, greatly improved *Open* and *Save* dialog boxes, *Date and Time* control panel now resets the clock automatically to ensure accuracy and automatically shifts for Daylight Saving Time and lots more. We'll have an update and test information in next month's CCC News.

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If you are a CCC member, please request our free Back Up Tools disk.

Don't forget! Back Up!

Please don't forget. Backing up is the single, most important thing you can do to make sure that using your Mac is productive and fun! Give us a call if you have questions or suggestions about doing back ups.

October Tip—

Software version numbers look random, but they actually have a scheme to them.

Look at Mac's System software. The first commercial system was 1.0. Today we have 8.1.1. Each increase of the whole number means that major features were added, major appearance changes were made and compatibility may be different.

An increase in the tenths digit indicates that while big features have been added and major bugs fixed, basic use, function and appearance are the same.

Increasing the hundredths means that nasty bugs have been fixed, but no new features have been added.

It is always wise to wait until new software gets its first X.X.1 before trying it. That way, you give the more adventurous users a chance to find the serious bugs before they can bug *you*.

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