

California Computer Care

News,
Views,
Tips and
Cool Techniques
for CCC Members

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We
speak
Geek,
so you
don't
have to.

Backup, again

What is the call we fear most at California Computer Care? "Help! Something has happened to my hard drive 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, lost 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 DVD-R, CD-R, Zip disk or tape system. With removable disks or tapes, 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 and DVDs).

Huge drives.

Modern Macs have huge hard drives making it possible for us to store gigabytes and gigabytes of photos, music, videos and other files. If you need to back up more than 5 gigabytes of files, a second, external hard drive may be your best choice.

If you decide to use an external hard drive for back up, choose one that connects using Firewire *and* USB. Also, be sure to get an external drive that has at least the same storage capacity as the hard drive that you are backing up. Get the largest capacity external hard drive that you can afford.

Storing an external hard drive in a safe deposit box may be inconvenient, so you'll still want to back up your most vital files to removable disks, *just in case!*

Be Pro-Active.

There are utilities like *TechTool Pro* that can sometimes recover erased files and modest-

ly 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 comfortable with monthly back ups.

You may have an appointment application and not know it. Mac OS X comes with the free *iCal* application. *iCal* is easy to use and will organize all of your appointments and time critical to-dos and send you nagging reminders to do them.

Back ups can be accomplished by manually 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.). You can automate, simplify and speed back ups by using specialized back up software.

There are dozens of back up applications available for Mac OS X and previous Mac OSes. Here are a few that I have tested:

Retrospect. The king of all back up software <http://www.emcinsignia.com/products/smb/retroformac>. *Retrospect* supports all manner of back ups and is used by a wide range of people and organizations, from individuals to giant corporations.

Retrospect has a flaw that I don't appreciate: back up files created by *Retrospect* can only

be used after passing back through *Retrospect*. In an emergency, you can't take your back up disks to your friend's Mac, school or Kinko's and use your files unless that Mac also has a copy of *Retrospect*. For this reason I use back up software that mirrors the original files as perfect, usable copies.

Synchronize (find it at: www.qdea.com) is small, fast and easy to use. *Synchronize* can back up a single file or a full hard drive. *Synchronize* also makes incremental back ups, so that after the first back up, *Synchronize* will only copy new and changed files, making these back ups happen quickly. *Synchronize* is available for Mac OS 7–9 and Mac OS X.

Déjà Vu (find it at: www.propagandaprod.com) is for Mac OS X 10.2 and newer. *Déjà Vu* integrates extremely well with the operating system, appearing in *System Preferences*. As such, *Déjà Vu* can be fully automated and works well across networks.

ProSoft Data Backup (find it on the web at: www.prosofteng.com) does all of the usual back up functions and adds compression, security and restore capabilities. *ProSoft Data Backup* is for Mac OS X 10.2–10.4.

Carbon Copy Cloner (find it on the web at: www.bombich.com/software/cccl.html) is Mac OS X only. The Mac OS X system cannot be copied onto another hard drive and have that hard drive be capable of starting

your Mac. *Carbon Copy Cloner* can copy your Mac OS X system and turn the copy into one that can start up (boot) your Mac. This is must have software for anyone using Mac OS X with multiple hard disk drives.

A note on cloning. Making back up copies of your data will save you if you lose files or have a hardware failure. But, wouldn't it be even better to be able to instantly recover from a disaster with everything intact?

Cloning is the term used to describe the process of making an absolutely perfect copy of your hard disk drive on another hard disk drive. If the clone is perfect, it will be possible to use the second hard drive in place of the failed hard drive. In the time it takes to restart your Mac, you will be operational again without having to laboriously rebuild your applications and files.

To clone you will need a second hard disk drive (preferably externally connected) and back up software that can clone like *Carbon Copy Cloner* or *Déjà Vu*. Remember, that even though you make a clone, you must make a second copy of your most important files for off-site storage.

Back ups are a pain! Losing files is even more painful. *California Computer Care* offers a back up service to make sure that back ups get properly made and stored off-site. See www.calcompcare.com/backup.html for more information.

April Tip—

What do *iPhoto* albums, *iTunes* playlists and *Address Book* groups have in common? All three will seduce you into losing your files!

When you create albums, playlists and groups, you add photos, songs or address book entries from the Library to them. Once you have done this, it appears that you have duplicate copies. The same photo, for example, now appears in the *iPhoto* album and the Library. So, naturally, you want to eliminate the “extra” copies and as soon as you do, POOF!, they disappear from the album, playlist or group.

Don't be fooled. The real photo, song or address book entry exists *only* in the Library. What appears to be a copy in the album is only a reference to the real thing.

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