

# 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.

## Easy Backin' up



What stops most people from backing up?  
They think that it is too hard to do.

Less than ten percent of computer users back up their files correctly. Since disaster eventually strikes us all, over ninety percent of all computer users will lose files!

*Don't be in the ninety percent.*

Backing up means making copies. Make copies of your most important files and store them outside of your Mac. If you have these extra copies, when disaster inevitably strikes (and it will), the copies are safe.

Disaster won't strike you, will it? That is what everybody thinks until it happens. Here are some disaster scenarios experienced by *California Computer Care* customers:

- File thrown into the Trash by accident.
- File ruined by over-editing.
- Hard drive broken.
- Mac breaks down, not repairable.
- Email database becomes corrupted.
- Lightning strike.
- Laptop lost at airport.
- Grandchild having fun.
- *Helpful* friend.
- Theft.
- Fire.

So far, no earthquakes (thank goodness!).

Alright. So, you are concerned. But... you are like the ninety percent. You won't actually back up unless it is easy (preferably, automatic). Let's make it easy.

A proper back up is really two back up copies. Copy one stays with your Mac for easy access. So, when you throw away the wrong file, you grab the back up version and copy the missing file back onto your Mac.

Copy two is stored somewhere else. I keep mine in a safe deposit box, but other folks like to store copy two with a friend or at work (or at home if it is work data).

You don't need to copy everything. It is ideal to copy everything in your Mac, but not necessary. Only the really vital stuff like your email, photos, writings, music, web bookmarks, et cetera, that you have created or gathered, *need* to be backed up.

Here are two easy options for backing up:

1) Easy and cheap—

One of the best inventions of the past few years is the USB Flash drive

(also called pen drive and thumb drive).



These tiny, solid state devices can copy and hold up to 64GB of files. Most folks will find that a 4GB or 8GB version will be adequate and reasonably priced. You will find USB Flash drives almost everywhere: *RiteAid*, *Staples*, *BestBuy*, *Amazon.com* and probably *Safeway*. You'll need two exactly alike.

Once you have your USB Flash drives, plug one into any USB port on your Mac. (The USB plug is unique, so if it fits into one of the sockets on your Mac, it is plugged into the right place.) When you have done this, a few seconds later, a new icon will appear on your Desktop that represents the USB Flash drive. You can name it as you like (I like to name any back up disk with the date on which I made the back up).

Now, double-click your hard drive icon and a window will open that shows several folders\*. One of the folders will be named *Users*. Click on and drag the *Users* folder to the USB Flash drive icon and drop it there. Copying will now occur.

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\* You should see these folders: *Applications*, *Library*, *System*, *User Guides And Information*, *Users*. If you see other folders and/or loose files, please contact me. You may be having critical filing problems.

The copy may take several minutes, but when done, eject the USB Flash drive and repeat the process with the other USB Flash drive. When that one is done, put it in your desk drawer and take the other drive to another location.

Done! You now have a proper back up. So, you are set for today. Now, you need to figure out how long you want to wait between back ups. For most of us, a week or a month is good. More than a month between back ups is bad.

The next time that you want to back up, gather your two USB flash drives and repeat the process. Because there are now files on the USB Flash drives, when you go to copy to them, you will be asked if you want the new data to replace the old data, just say yes and continue as before.

## 2) Easy and expensive—

If you are using Mac OS X 10.5 (nick-named *Leopard*), you have the *Time Machine* back up software. *Time Machine* makes back ups happen automatically and backs up everything, so a restore of a destroyed hard drive or Mac is quick, easy and complete. *Time Machine* back ups also make restoring a single file simple and quick.



But, to use *Time Machine* you will need to buy an external hard drive.

External hard drives are available at computer stores, *BestBuy*, *Staples*, *Amazon.com* and other online stores.

They come in two flavors, USB and Firewire. Unless you have one of the rare Macs that cannot use Firewire, get the Firewire version. A 500GB drive will cost about \$150.00.

But, once you have it and plug it in, *Time Machine* will take over and do the job. Well, half of the job.

*Time Machine* cannot get that second back up into a safe deposit box. To do this, you will need to either use the USB Flash drive technique and keep a back up on one USB Flash drive, or use an online back up service.

Online back up services are automatic like *Time Machine*, but are very slow and require a monthly fee, in most cases. Backing up as little as 4GB can take three or four *days* to complete. But, the process happens “behind the scenes” and you will usually not notice that it is happening.

The advantage is that the process is automatic and does not require any thought or action once the setup is

completed. Good online back up services are Carbonite, Mozy and iDrive. <http://www.carbonite.com>  
<http://www.mozy.com>  
<http://www.idrive.com>

Expect to pay about \$4.95 a month for these back up services.

There are your options. Easy and Cheap requires the minimum work from you every month. Or, Easy and Expensive where everything happens automatically.

Well, there is a third easy option. CCC offers a back up service. Please contact me if you'd like to learn about it.

## July Tip —

If you use Sonic.net as your internet service provider, you are in luck. Sonic.net now provides free online back up to it's members. You get up to 50GB of free storage (more for a fee) and one of the best designed back up software applications that I have used.

Contact Sonic.net Tech Support for assistance in set up and use:

(707) 547-3400

6:00am to 11:00pm weekdays,

8:00am to 10:00pm Saturdays

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