

# Are You Backing Up Your BIGGEST Asset?

By Alexandria K. Brown

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Have you ever accidentally lost an important file on your computer? Perhaps your computer crashed (again) or your cat sauntered over a dooming sequence of keys. Remember that little pang in your stomach you felt when you realized that file was gone for good?

OK, now imagine losing your entire e-zine subscriber list . Did that pang just get a bit more intense? (Ouch!)

"Master List Builder" Joel Christopher asked several Internet marketing gurus the question, "If your office was burning down and you could save one thing, what would it be?"

The unanimous answer among all of them was, "my list "!

Your list is your goldmine . It's your pool of warm prospects and clients with whom you've taken months to build a level of credibility and trust. They're your ticket to a steady stream of income.

It can take years to build a large collection of opt-in subscribers. But they can disappear in a flash if they're not protected.

So, are YOU backing up your list on a regular basis? (Be honest!) If not, let's get you started today.

If Your List Resides on Your Computer...

If you send out your e-zine or e-mail promotions from your own computer, you MUST make backing-up your list a daily habit. And by "backing-up," I mean saving your list to a disk or location other than your hard drive. For example, you can save your list to:

- 1) a Zip disk (you'll need a Zip drive)
- 2) a CD (you'll need a CD burner)

- 3) a floppy disk (these don't hold much data though)
- 4) an external hard drive (these are less expensive now than they used to be)
- 5) a secure, Web-based file storage service.

I currently use option 5 for my computer files. The service I use is called I-Backup (<http://www.ibackup.com/>) and there are many others out there, starting at as little as \$3 per month. I prefer this option because I have so many large files on my computer that I'd have to backup my files to several separate disks or CDs. And because this method is so EASY, I'm more likely to follow through and back-up my files on a regular basis! I also like I-Backup for traveling, as I can upload files that I'll need to access on the road. This way I don't have to bring disks with me.

If you use a type of list management software that resides on your computer or your own Web server, such as Broadc@st or MailLoop, it can probably schedule automatic backups for you. See the program's help files or contact their support center for assistance.

#### If You Use an Online List Service...

Even if you host your list online with a listserve (such as Topica) or an autoresponder service (such as GetResponse) that should make their own secure backups, you should still make your own backup copy on a regular basis! Just download or "export" a copy of your list each week for safekeeping. It should be pretty easy to do. This procedure varies depending on what program you use, so see its help files or contact their support center for assistance.

#### Consider Purchasing a Battery Backup System

Southern California is known for its frequent power outages, and they were wreaking havoc on my computer. So I purchased a battery backup unit. (I chose APC's 650 model.) It's about the size of a breadbox and keeps my computer going for another hour or so in the event of a power outage. This gives me ample time to back up any files I'm working on and shut down my computer properly. It also functions as a surge-protector to keep my computer safe from electric surges. You can buy units like these at any large office supply store, and they range in price from \$100 to \$500.

#### Don't Put It Off Any Longer!

I know that backing-up your files seems like another irritating addition to your busy schedule. But remember that you've worked hard to build your list ... and your business. So take just a few minutes each week to protect that investment.

TIP: Pick a certain day each week to back up your list. For example, my electronic calendar automatically reminds me to do this every Friday.

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alexandria K. Brown, "The E-zine Queen," is author of the e-book, "Boost Business With Your Own E-zine," available at

<http://www.ezine-queen.com> . For \*hundreds\* more great tips like these, visit her site and sign up for her FREE biweekly newsletter, "Tips from the E-zine Queen." Don't miss the next issue - subscribe today!

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