

How Often Should You Back-Up Your Data

By Bob Brolhorst

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A computer is just a tool. It's a piece of equipment. A lot of my customers forget that until disaster strikes and they've lost or deleted an important file or lost a disk or, worse yet, didn't realize that putting one of those cute advertising magnets on the side of their CPU would cause data loss and corruption.

We have a very strict policy about data backup. In summary, the following are some of the steps we require to safeguard company and client data so here is what we do:

- 1) Before closing up for the day, all new data on the computers must be backed up on two types of media; e.g., a floppy and a Zip disk, a floppy and a CD, a CD and a Zip, etc.
- 2) When a customers project has been completed, an electronic copy of the entire project is made on disk and stored in the customers file. Two copies are also made as described in step 1 above. One copy is given to me and the other is stored onsite. I have a fire-resistant safe on- and off-site in which I store these backups so I never have to worry about losing important data. This is something that you will want to convey to your customers.
- 3) A full system backup is performed monthly on all computers. These backups are done on CDs (rewritables) and the CDs stored in the fire-resistant safe. Keep executable backups of all your software, upgraded monthly, so that personal preferences are maintained. In addition, the Norton Emergency Rescue disks are updated for rebooting the system in case of a system failure.
- 4) A database of all files stored on the various media is kept on my computer, in the Resource computer for all staff to access and, of course, backed up on two types of media and stored as are all the other data files.
- 5) During the weekly computer maintenance, all e-mails sent and received are backed up.

6) The history of internet use is wiped clean at the end of the day the list can be printed or saved, but not on the computer as a means of maintaining the confidentiality of client work and our research. This is another added feature that your customers will appreciate.

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