



TECH TALK

WITH ALEX MALLIN

HI-TECH COMPUTER REPAIR

The Importance of Having Backups

This is one of the most important, yet also one of the most neglected areas of computing. Backing up your data should be at the top of your computer maintenance list, right next to virus protection. Without data backup or virus protection, you are running the risk of losing your data. *And it will happen, don't think that you don't have to worry about it. Don't think it can't happen to you.*

Why should you back up?

You have valuable material on your computer. Not only all your business files, you also have pictures and videos, email addresses and phone numbers, bank account information, and other sentimental things. And they all live on your hard drive.

It's convenient, but it also exposes a lot of important things to loss in the same accident. This is why you should back up your hard drive.

How can I lose my data?

This is the age of computers and, due to how common they are, many of us start to think that they are infallible. The truth is, computers can, and often do, fail. When that happens, the person owning the computer is often left up a creek without the proverbial paddle.

- Data loss can happen in many ways. One of the most common causes is physical failure of the media the data is stored on. You probably have everything saved on your PC's hard drive. That hard drive will not live forever. Yes, normally hard drives will live for years without incident. But eventually they will die. It might happen gradually, by more and more bad clusters accumulating until most of the drive is unusable. Or it might happen suddenly, the hard drive just dies without warning.
- Another possible cause for data loss is power failure or spikes. It can result in loss of the document you are currently working on because you did not save it before the power failed and your PC shut down, or in the loss of your entire hard drive because a power surge fried your motherboard and destroyed the file allocation table of your hard drive.
- Also worth mentioning is data loss through virus and malware attacks. There are plenty of nasty computer viruses out there that will delete files on an infected machine.

- Other forms of data loss include fire, flood, other natural disasters or even theft. You would be amazed how many people have their laptop or smart phone stolen.

How often do I need to backup my data?

The answer should be at least weekly, preferably daily. How much time would it take you to recreate from hard copy or memory a week's worth of work?

Why doesn't everyone back-up their data?

The main reason why many people do not back-up their data is either they think "It will never happen to me." Or they are not aware of how to correctly back-up their files and to do a disaster test recovery to see if they are doing it correctly.

What are your backup options?

There are four basic approaches to backing up your data:

- **CD/DVD**
Simply copy your important files onto CDs or DVDs. This is an inexpensive method at first, but if you back up as frequently as you should, you begin to accumulate a lot of old discs with old data. Plus you have to take the time to create and burn these discs, then sort through them to find the file you might be looking for.
- **USB sticks**
Just copy your files onto a series of USB sticks or "flash drives." This is easier than burning CDs and DVDs, plus you can carry your backup with you. But these tiny drives don't have the capacity for a full backup, so you'll have to use a few of them. And they're as easy to lose as they are to use.
- **Online backup**
Pay a backup service, install their software, and let your computer back itself up automatically over the Internet. This is an easy "set it and forget it" backup method and it puts your backup offsite which saves you from having to make a backup of your backup. But there are yearly fees and the backups could slow down other tasks you want to perform over your Internet connection.
- **External hard drive**
Hook up an external hard drive to your computer and set up a comprehensive back-up or drive imaging system.

Don't wait for disaster to strike! Call me today at (707) 888-7676 and I will test your **back-up security plan** or visit us on the web at www.hitechcomputerrepair.com



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