

Article: [COMPUTERS BEHAVING BADLY](#)

Topic: Backups - Again

Author: Mark Ahearn

This isn't the first time I've talked about the importance of backing up your data. It seems that some, or should that be most, of us are still too busy, too lazy, too scared or too unaware to do anything about the situation.

I can't put this anymore simply – the cold fact of the matter is that one day your hard drive **WILL** die. And by that I mean all your data will be lost. Forget about getting it back – it's gone, Dodo time, even David Copperfield on his best day isn't going to conjure it back.

Think about it, all those snaps of Aunty Betty on her 80th with the great-grandchildren right before her untimely and surprising death, your electronic tax returns for the last 5 years, the list of people to send Christmas cards to, your son's first day at school photos, all your course notes from Uni, that new proposal for the work contract, the invoices for the business.... And the list goes on.

Am I making myself clear here people? This month alone, I have had 3 clients that have had the very subject I describe above happen to them. They can get their head around what they remember they have lost but the devastation is so great they are actually unaware of just what exactly they had in the first place. And sadly they never will.

Data loss may not even be caused by dead hardware. What if the kids accidentally hit the dreaded Delete key, or you take the PC in to get fixed or my personal favourite, your son's 13 year old 'expert' friend comes over to tweak the PC for better performance. How many of us have the entire business files on the same PC used by the kids for games, music and chat rooms.

Backing up could not be simpler and once established can take only minutes to do. One way is to save your data to CD. Using your CD burning software, they all have a 'make a Data CD' option; you then need to 'add' the files and then click 'burn'. When exiting the software, it should prompt you to 'save the Project' which means what you just backed up can be remembered and used next time to save the same files.

Personally, I use a USB memory stick and a command called XCOPY to save only those files that have changed since my last backup. Do yourself a favour and look up Google for how to use the XCOPY command if you think that method would best suit you, or hey, check out my web site for an example. Look on the INFO page.

Basically, I don't care how you do it; just get your data copied to some other location. With tax time looming there will never be a better reason to do it now.

My wife's USB memory stick with all her manuscripts, past and present, is the only thing (apart from the kids) that she would risk going back into the house for if it was on fire.

During my Uni course, back in 1984, it was drummed into us to "Backup now, Backup often". Admittedly it was in the days of floppies and the hard drive hadn't been invented yet (yes, I know, there was such a time), but it is as relevant now as it was then.

PC's come and go, hard drives live and die, but backed up data lives forever !!!.

mark@computersbehavingbadly.com