Protecting your Files and Photos

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Have you ever lost a lot of important data? Or, have you ever felt a moment of panic where you thought you did? Whether its pictures of family, a report from work, or a semester's worth of schoolwork, you probably have data on your computer's hard drive or your mobile device that's not just valuable, it's too valuable to lose.

Data loss can happen to anyone. There are several scenarios in which the information on your computer could be lost:

- Your hard drive could fail
- Your files could become corrupted
- Your laptop may be lost or stolen
- Your data could be deleted by mistake
- A virus or other malicious program could harm your data

A good backup strategy can protect you from accidental or incidental data loss and make sure your files and photos are available when you need them. A few things to consider when creating a backup plan are:

What data should I backup? At the very least, you should back up files that are frequently changed, such as documents and spreadsheets as well as all of your photos. You may also want to consider your web browser bookmarks (favorites), contacts databases, and files and shortcuts stored on your desktop. It's generally not practical to back up programs, but you should always make sure you keep the installation disks or files. That way you can reinstall those programs if necessary.

How frequently should I back up my data? How often you back up your data is up to you. As a general rule, back up your data when you have created enough new files or made enough changes to existing files that it would be difficult to recreate them if lost.

What options do I have for backing up my data? There are plenty of options available to back up your data, from using an external hard drive or flash drives, to backing up files on a remote server over the Internet (cloud storage).

USB flash drives are small, portable, and can be reused many times. But they offer significantly less storage space than other backup options. They are also much easier to lose or misplace. **External hard drives** have much more storage space than a standard flash drive, large enough to back up your computer's entire hard drive. Copying files to an external hard drive or flash drive is as easy as inserting it into a USB port on your computer and dragging and dropping the files you want to copy to it. Check out this short [YouTube video that covers how to copy files from your computer to a USB flash drive or external hard drive.](#)

Cloud Storage is another method of backing up data. This method provides several advantages: for one, it doesn't use a physical device, thus the data stored in the cloud is protected from physical loss. Cloud backup is also automated, which means that as long as the device or computer storing the original data is connected to the internet, it will continuously and automatically sync files to the cloud – saving both time and resources. Some of the more common cloud storage services you may have heard of are Dropbox, iCloud and Microsoft OneDrive. While Dropbox and iCloud are a good option, they generally only offer a few gigabytes of space for free, so this only works if you have a small number of files you want to back up. However, as part of our Office 365 implementation, we can take advantage of Microsoft's OneDrive for Business. With OneDrive for Business, you are given 1 TB of storage space, (which can hold approximately 2 million photos!). For more information on backing up data with Microsoft OneDrive please check out our [Connections article.](#)

Consider using both methods - The most effective way to safeguard your backup is to maintain more than one copy of your data and store those copies in different locations. For example, back up to an external USB drive that you disconnect when it's not in use, and also use a cloud backup service. That way if infection or physical disaster compromises either backup, you'll still have a good copy of the data somewhere else.

The chances of losing all of your data by theft or disaster aren't great, but it's never a bad idea to take precautions should the unthinkable happen. Think of data backup as one of those better-safe-than-sorry precautions. It's relatively inexpensive and it doesn't take much time. The cost of going without could be a lot greater.

For any questions, please reach out to us at 1-800-373-7521, helpdesk@ssndcp.org or visit us online @ https://www.ssndcentralpacific.org/it-resource-center/security-awareness