

The importance of backing up part 2

Following on from last month and what and how we backup and to where? Just to remind you of part of last month's article - Backing up is the act of making a copy or copies of a file or files. These backed up files are then stored somewhere other than where the original files are located – but, whatever you are doing, it is better than doing nothing!

Organising backups and where to put them - If the files are still relevant but not organised in a way which makes it clear what to do with them, that is also a bad idea and if you are not careful you'll be back to square one. Try and think about things in a logically - did you back everything up in a logical, regular fashion but then leave the storage device next to the main computer system which, if damaged is likely to result in the backup being damaged too?

The multi backup strategy - The best starting point for most users is the multi backup strategy, in which you keep: multiple copies of your data, in different places. Two copies of your data kept in the property, but on different devices. One remote copy, in case your property become damaged – this is where cloud storage is considered essential in most cases, depending on how much importance you place on your personal data!

Local backups and copies of your data - give you easy and immediate access to your data when you need it and can be located on: external storage devices, flash drives or any storage that you choose.

Remote or cloud backups and copies of your data which will be harder to access, is your insurance policy against fire, flood, and other disasters. To act as a fallback if you are attacked with some kind of malware or your computer storage devices fail at home. The off-site copy of your data should be inaccessible to an attacker and should be password protected and preferably with additional safeguarding; such as, linking the access to your mobile phone number to prevent fraudulent access.

Additional backup considerations - Whatever your strategy is, the most important thing is to start backing up now. Not next week, most definitely not next month and almost certainly not "when I get around to it". There are a lot of people out there who will sadly only realise the value of backups when it's too late to do anything about it. Data recovery can be hugely expensive and if you backup your data correctly, need not be a concern to any of you.

Getting your backups right - Backups are simple in theory, but they often let you down when you need them most. Ideally all backups should be checked and be able to be read – if not, and there are countless backup applications that do not permit this and when it comes to a restoration of a backup, they can either fail or restore junk because the backup was not correctly setup in the first place. Look for a backup application that enables you to actually read what you have backed up – if you are backing up purely data files such as: pictures, documents and other personal files, you must check that your backups actually consist of the data you thought you had backed up.

Cloning a storage device – cloning is another option and although a clone of an operating system with all programs and data is designed for the computer it came from and not for a different computer, this is also worth considering – but the choices are always yours to make. If ever in doubt check your backups or seek the advice of a professional who can guide you with backing up your precious personal data.

Information provided by Mark Dibben of Dibtech Computers in Devizes.

Web: www.dibtech.co.uk. **Email:** computers@dibtech.co.uk.