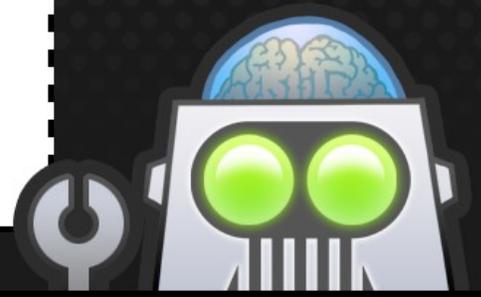




Comp WeHelp



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Backing up Your Computer's Data.

Why should I? – Backing up your data means you'll have a spare copy of your documents, pictures and videos, music files, etc. The backup will be stored in a place other than on your computer so if you get a virus that requires wiping and reinstalling Windows, or if your computer is stolen or dropped then that backup will save the day. If you don't have a backup and any of these maladies befalls your computer then all your precious data could be lost. Don't wait for tragedy to start thinking about data backups!

Is it expensive? - You'll need a place to store the data backup and the cost can range from totally free to modest. One way to back up data is to burn it to DVD's. You'll need DVD-r media (not DVD-rw) and in small quantities (50) these disks can [cost \\$0.25 to \\$0.35](#) each and you use a new disk or disks with each new backup (*each disk holds 4.7GB of data*). They come stacked in a protective container that's suitable for long-term storage. Keep them in a drawer and use a Sharpie or other permanent felt pen to write on the label side. *You'll want to know the date of each backup when you're looking for a particular file.*

Another way is to use an external hard drive. These can cost [\\$50 to \\$100](#) depending on size and connect to your computer via a USB port. This approach can be particularly handy because not all computers have DVD drives these days but all have USB ports. An external hard drive is preferable to using a USB flash drive as the latter wasn't really designed for long-term data storage.

The free way is to back up your data to the “cloud” (*geek-speak for the internet*). There are many cloud-based services such as [DropBox](#), [Microsoft's Sky Drive](#), [Google Drive](#), [Amazon Cloud Drive](#) etc., but [MediaFire](#) and [ADrive](#) each give you up to 50GB for free and that's 10 times as much storage space as most of the others. If your data contains sensitive information such as industrial secrets, personnel files, etc. then you may not feel the “cloud” is secure and private enough but for most of us it should prove just fine. If you need more space than the free accounts provide then just add some money and they'll happily rent you additional space. [Here for example are Google's Drive rates](#), [MediaFire's rates](#), and [ADrive's rates](#).

How often should I do this? - That depends on how often your data changes. For some of us that may need to be done on a weekly basis while for others a monthly backup is sufficient. How long it takes will depend on how much data you are backing up and where you're backing it up to. Speed shouldn't be a major problem though because you can schedule backups when you won't otherwise need your computer.

How do I back up my data? - If you have a Windows PC or a Mac then you already have software suitable for the task. On a [Mac it's called “Time Machine”](#) and for Windows it depends on whether you have [Windows 8](#), [Windows 7](#) versus [XP and Vista](#). [Free third-party software](#) is also available for any version of Windows.

If your data is valuable to you then back it up!