

Top 5 best backup practices

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Give yourself peace of mind by implementing a new backup strategy with our tips. You know that feeling you get in the pit of your stomach when a digital file goes missing? You immediately think: “Did I back that up? I must have. Did I?” Well, let’s go over the top five best backup practices so we can avoid that feeling forever. A quick word of warning — make sure whatever backup methods you’re using are approved by your IT admin.

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The 3-2-1 rule

We’ll start with the 3-2-1 rule. It states you should have three total copies of your data that are stored on at least two different media with at least one of the copies stored offsite.

Let’s break that down a little bit. Whatever files you want backed up should be on two different devices: That could be two hard drives, flash drives or even optical discs. Those two devices can be physically located in the same place. So if you’ve got an original on your desktop, that’s one copy. If you make a copy on a flash drive, that’s two copies both at your desk.

One copy should reside somewhere else. That could mean sending a flash drive to an approved location or using cloud storage. This may seem like overkill, but I don’t think I’ve ever heard anyone say: “I wish I didn’t back that file up.”

Automatic backups

Backing up your data manually is fine, but automating the process can give you more peace of mind. If you’re running macOS, you can automate backups by using an external drive and Apple’s own Time Machine. Time Machine handles hourly backups for the past 24 hours, daily backups for the past month and more.

What about Windows? It’s a [little less straightforward](#), but there is an option. You should head to the Control Panel and search for File History. You’ll have to turn that on, and then you can select a drive to back up to.

Save to the cloud

Getting your data offsite may not be the easiest thing to do. Are you supposed to mail out copies of your files to your friends using snail mail? That’s silly.

These days, you’ve got a lot of options when it comes to cloud storage. You can use Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive, Box, Dropbox, Apple iCloud and others. Those all work similarly. You have a local folder on your PC or Mac. Whatever you put in there is synced to a cloud storage service.

But what if you want a full computer backup in the cloud? Then things change a little. For that, you can head to services like Carbonite.

Disconnected storage

For files that are not constantly changing but are important, consider backing up to a device that you then disconnect from your machine. Sure, it's nice to have a hard drive that's constantly backing up your stuff or a cloud service uploading all the time. However, for extra security, placing a file on a device and then storing that device safely guarantees that the external medium won't get messed up due to computer or user error.

Autosave settings

Make sure your apps are auto saving regularly. That's right, I said apps. Let's say you're working in Adobe Premiere Pro — the video editing software. Did you know that Premiere Pro has a default autosave interval of 15 minutes? That means if you're working and making changes, they could be lost if the app crashes. You can go into Premiere's settings and change that Auto Save interval to as little as one minute if you want.