



Do I need a backup?

Do you have anything that is critical to your business? / Do you have photos that are precious to you? / Do you have documents that you need to keep? / Do you have paperwork that would be hard to reproduce?

If you answer yes to any of these then the answer to your question 'Do I need a backup?' is **YES!**

What is a backup?

A backup is quite simply, a copy of your data, but it is not quite as simple as that.

Let's expand on this a bit. In your computer, you have two hard drives, and you use the second hard drive as a backup for all your documents and photos – so you have a backup? Actually, no! What you have is a copy of your documents and photos "hang on, a backup is a copy of your data isn't it?" Yes, I did say that earlier on, but think on this: If your computer failed because of a power surge, or was knocked over or something like that, are both hard drives going to survive?

A backup needs to be onto a device that can be taken off-site to be safe. This can be an external hard drive (or SSD type drive), if the size of your data isn't too large, then a USB stick or pen drive may be suitable. But remember these types of devices can also fail like the hard drive in your computer.

Ideally what you need to do is to have an external device that you can attach to your computer to put a copy of your data on AND an off-site based system that will give you better security of your data and if you ever need it, gives you a better chance of restoring your data.

Who is responsible for my backup?

That is a simple one – YOU ARE!

Even if you have someone help you set up your backups, or you use an external data backup computer or even if you use an external company to deal with this, you are still responsible for your backups. It is your company, it is your data, so it is down to you to make sure that you have a backup in place.

So, you have now decided that you need a backup of your data. What software do I use?

It is quite simple to find software online that will do the backups for you, and some of these are even free!

FBackup8 is a free piece of software that will allow backup destinations including Google Drive, Dropbox, CD/DVD, external drives, local drives, or network drives – They offer a paid version of the software (Backup4all Pro) that gives more options for backup destinations but also allows you to backup from Network Drives which the free one doesn't.

EaseUS Todo Backup is another program that you can use to do backups with. Again, they offer a free version as well as Home and Business versions which are both paid for versions. All versions allow backup destinations including local and network drives, external drives and cloud accounts including Google Drive, Dropbox, and Microsoft OneDrive. It also allows you to backup from network drives which is good if you store data on a NAS drive or another computer via a network. Once the software has done the first backup to the destination you chose, you get the option of setting a schedule of daily, weekly, or monthly.

Where do I store the backup data?

As to where do you store the data, that really depends on what you want. If you use an external drive then that's fine, but remember that for the security of your data, you need to take that off-site (i.e., take it home with you, but don't leave it in the car). If you use a cloud account (like Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive, etc.) then that is automatically off-site and hopefully the cloud account is mirrored across more than one datacentre. Ideally you want to do both, do a local backup to an external drive or similar AND also one to off-site storage.

Should I backup my data to a friends computer?

That is a difficult one to answer. You can, but just remember that you may schedule your backup to happen overnight, will your friends computer be on at that time, or what happens if they have a power cut – your backup will not happen. Ask yourself this, do you trust your friend with your data? Whilst the backup software may compress or encrypt the data, your data is still sitting on your friends computer. Something else to ask yourself is, what happens if their computer fails – your backup has now vanished.

If you have used a piece of software called BuddyBackup, then please stop using it, and change your backups NOW! It seems that the computer that authenticates users and allows you to backup and restore your data from your buddies is no longer working, so this means that if you need to restore your data, you are going to have issues.

What about companies that offer backups as a service for you.

There are a few companies out there that offer this service, but obviously it costs. It all comes down to what you want in your backups. But remember, it is still down to you to make sure that the backups are being done.