

Reliable Practices for Protecting and Backing Up Data

Backing up – we all know we should do it, and we all know it’s important. But when that computer with invaluable data unexpectedly dies, all we can do is kick ourselves and wish we could have just a few more moments with our lost data. Of course, we remain hopeful during these trying times, taking the fried hard drive from Geek Squad to the IT Help Desk to Tom’s Computer Depot, but the conversations all sound the same:

“Did you back up your content?”

“I mean, I have some of it backed up...” We don’t want to sound irresponsible. “But I definitely would like to be able to get some of it back.”

“Well, there *are* data recovery services. Trouble is, it’ll run you a few hundred, maybe even a few thousand.”

So reasonable options become limited – and saving that content would have been free had we taken the time to secure it. But there are ways to back up and protect data that are more convenient than ever before.

1.) Storage Drives

For those who find themselves not only needing to back up their files but also transfer them quickly from computer to computer, there is no greater a tool than a Storage Drive.

The small, keychain drives are also known as **flash drives**, **jump drives**, or **USB Drives** – a \$20.00 flash drive typically holds 1 gigabyte of data, which can hold hundreds of Microsoft Word documents. They serve the same function as the now obsolete floppy disks, except they hold thousands of times more data, do not crash nearly as often, and simply need a USB port, which virtually all computers support.



NOTE: The use of floppy disks is NOT a reliable backing up method. If you have important data saved to floppy disks, transfer it to your computer right now, and if you need your content in a portable medium, please only save to flash drives.

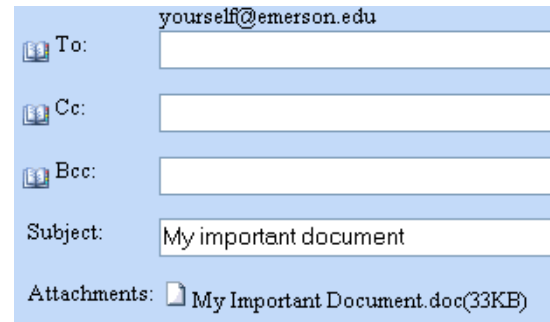


External Storage Drives, the most common made by Western Digital or LaCie, are simply portable hard drives. It is not unusual for these drives to hold 200 to 600 gigabytes of space (a 320 gigabyte external drive from Best Buy is \$125.00). This type of device is most commonly used for transporting large files, such as video source, but it’s a perfectly viable method of storing any data – just make

sure that all files saved to the external hard drive are also saved elsewhere, as external hard drives are just as liable to crash as internal hard drives.

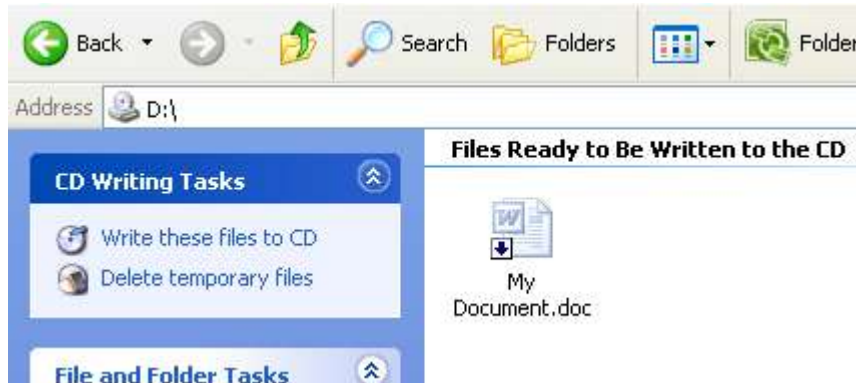
2.) E-mail it to Yourself!

Web access e-mail accounts (including ECmail) have expanded in size over the last few years and typically hold at least a gigabyte of storage. G-mail (www.gmail.com) currently holds over six gigabytes of space! If you have no other web space to place files, e-mailing important documents to yourself is a perfectly reasonable method of backing up files.



3.) Burn Content to a Disc

An old but trusty method, it's important to remember that you can burn more than just music and video to CD/DVDs. Built into Windows XP/Vista and Mac OSX, burning your documents and files to a disc is as easy as dragging them into the file directory and clicking burn! On average, CD-Rs hold about 700 megabytes and DVD-Rs hold about 4 gigabytes. Keep the discs in a safe place, as to not scratch them or damage them, and your content will be as safe as ever.



4.) Use Internet Resources

There are a number of sites that provide backing up services for a fee. A highly rated and popular one is <http://mozy.com/>. The benefit is, there's probably no safer way to shelter your files. These sites have large servers that back up constantly (hey, that's what they're there for). This is a good option if you have content that's bigger than a standard flash drive or data DVD. Certainly check this option out – it's worth exploring!

5.) Use Your Emerson Pages Folder

(Applicable to All Students, Faculty, and Staff)

Remember under the "E-mail it to Yourself" section where it said "if you have no other web space to place files?" Well, all Emerson students, faculty, and staff DO have web space! The space is referred to as "Pages," and everyone has their own Pages folder. Its primary use is for

uploading files to the web, but it can be used simply as a web directory for storing up to 250 megabytes of content and can be accessed from any computer with an Internet connection. To learn how to access this easy-to-use and free space, visit:

<http://www.emerson.edu/helpdesk/services/ECNet/Connecting-to-PAGES.cfm>.

6.) Save to Cabinet (Applicable Only to Staff and Faculty)



Like Pages, Cabinet is a 250 megabyte web space for members of the Emerson community (staff and faculty only), but there are some key differences. It is a local server, available only on Emerson's network, and backs itself up nightly. So if you are a staff or faculty member who saved a document to Cabinet and then accidentally deleted it, Information Technology could find its last saved state and recover it for you. Or if your hard drive crashed and you saved all your files to Cabinet, they would all be perfectly secure.

Outside of the campus, Cabinet can only be accessed when connected to Emerson's VPN (www.emerson.edu/vpn for more details). We strongly urge every member of our staff and faculty to save all important or valuable content directly to Cabinet. To set up your personal Cabinet folder on your Emerson-owned computer, visit:

<http://www.emerson.edu/helpdesk/services/guides/Cabinet-Folder-Setup.cfm>