

Recommended Hardware and Software for Computer Backup

I use backup to a dvd once a week on my main office computer. I know, not as secure as daily, hourly or continuous, but I am okay with it. My question concerns another computer in the system that has no backup right now. I would like to use an external hard drive to back up periodically, say weekly, the contents of my Outlook email, My Documents and Desktop. What software and drive are easy to use in that context (and of course dependable too).

If it matters the computer this is for runs Windows XP. Thanks.

Not sure exactly what you're looking for in terms of "backing up," but I do it manually. I just have an external Western Digital 50GB hard drive that I connect once a week or so to my office desktop and backup (I also have continuous cloud backup on both my desktop and home laptop). I don't use any special software for it. I typically just copy and paste the entire folder that contains my practice. Basically I just overwrite whatever is on the external hard drive.

Ryan Phillips, South Carolina

Are you really prepared to lose an entire week's worth of work?

And what if your office burns down? Your DVD / external drive will likely be toast.

A weekly local backup is better than nothing, but it's not enough. Especially given the plethora of reliable, affordable cloud backup programs.

I use CrashPlan, and it's been awesome. Set it and forget it. Backs up everything continuously. If a device isn't backed up for a couple days, CrashPlan emails me a warning (usually that's caused by my wife not turning on her laptop for a couple days, or something like that - not a tech failure).

Depending upon your needs, it may be as cheap as \$7.49 per month.

<https://www.crashplanpro.com/business/store.vtl>

Andrew

Andrew Flusche, Virginia

SoloSez Popular Threads, October 2012

We have a lot of clients who do that - though very few use DVDs because you end up with a big stack of outdated DVDs and managing those can wreak havoc on your document retention policy.

Generally they use USB-connected external hard drives. We recommend they buy two and rotate them, keeping one off-site. They do an automatic backup to the connected drive every night. Every Friday we suggest they bring the other drive in and connect it, while taking the drive that was plugged in all week off-site with them at the end of the day.

That way they always have two backups, one local for quick restores and one off-site in case of a disaster. Cost is pretty minimal - 1TB+ external drives can be had for ~\$100. Just have to remember to rotate the drives on a somewhat regular basis.

Disclaimer: Still not a lawyer.

Ben M. Schorr, Arizona

What happens if there's a disaster during the day on Friday at the office?

;))

Andrew Flusche

What about SSD's? Faster than most HD's and *very* stable.

Russ Carmichael

SSD as a backup device does not make sense. SSD gives you speed of retrieval, limited by the connection method. A USB 3.0 or 2.0 or even Thunderbolt connection is a constraint, and you are paying extra dollars for little benefit. A 1 TB external drive can be had for under \$100 on sale, and 2 TB drive is not much more. Purchasing and rotating these makes more sense.

Darrell G. Stewart, Texas
