

Backing Up Critical Files

Make a list of your most important files. These should be the documents that you absolutely cannot live without, such as an encrypted passwords database, financial data, class assignments, or your thesis research. The number of files and total file-size that fits this description should be fairly small, and you should be able to fit everything into an account on an online file-storage system as well as on a USB key. Using both options is recommended.

The more places you have these files backed up, the better. This page suggests **on-site locations and off-site locations** where you might store these files.

On-Site File Storage Options

- **USB Key:** (multiple locations and this is not the same key that use to move things from class to class)
- **Windows 7 System Protection:** This feature automatically saves previous versions of modified files, allowing you to access old versions of corrupted or accidentally deleted files. If you have Windows 7 System Protection turned on, you can right-click a drive/file/folder, select "Properties," and then select "Previous Versions" to see what saved versions are available. Information detailing how to turn on the System Protection feature itself can be found among other help in the [Windows Previous Versions of Files FAQ](#) under "How are Previous Versions Created: To Turn on System Protection."

Off-Site Storage Options:

There are [a myriad of online backup services](#) available online that are specifically designed to back up files. These services can help you store your files in an even safer and more reliable area. The following sites and applications allow you to back up files online:

- **netFiles:** Every member of the Whitman community *already has an account* set up on netfiles. Just log-in and start using it! Make a special folder in your netFiles space for backups.
- **SyncBack** is free software that allows you to back-up, synchronize, and compress your data, along with several other capabilities. This program is automated, but it doesn't give you a place to store your files; use it with a USB key, external hard drive, or an off-site server.
- **Dropbox** is a file-hosting service that allows you to store and share information via the Internet. It creates a "file repository" that keeps a copy both on any local computer you install their software on, and on Dropbox's server as well.
- **Jungle Disk** (with either [Amazon's S3](#) or [Rackspace](#) storage services) This gives you the option of keeping your files on Amazon's or Rackspace's servers, even when they've been deleted from your computer. However, unlike some other services, you pay according to how much storage space your backups take up.

Note that WCTS does not have a significant amount of experience with many of these services. We do not endorse any of them in particular, and WCTS does not explicitly support any of them. That said, we can still help you weigh your options and help get you pointed in the right direction. We suggest that you encrypt any and all sensitive information before you upload it to netFiles, Dropbox, or any other online storage service.

Related articles

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