Backup Your Data!

Article written by Kevin Kittredge

When a computer stops working the cause can be attributed to a problem with software or hardware. Software problems, such as viruses, trojans, and spyware tend to hinder a person from using their computer effectively. Hardware problems, on the other hand, often prevent a computer from even turning on. Approximately 90% of the time I encounter a hardware-related computer issue, the cause is either a failed power supply or an unreadable hard drive. Replacing a power supply is normally a trivial matter. A new power supply will cost around $100, and once it has been replaced the computer will run as if it had never broken. An unreadable hard drive is a much more serious situation, and as such it is the topic of this article.

Hard drives fail; it's a fact of life when dealing with computers. So, the question becomes how to deal with a hard drive failure. Your options are: do nothing, attempt to recover the data from a failed drive, or have a backup scheme. If the data on the hard drive is not important to you, or is not worth the cost of recovering it, then the best option is to cut your losses and replace the hard drive. However, if the hard drive contains pictures of your kids, music you bought off of iTunes, or important documents for your business, then you probably want to make certain that you can recover

that information in the event of a hard drive failure. Once you make the decision that your data is important, you then need to decide how to protect it.

If a hard drive fails with important data on it, your options for recovering it are limited. There are tools and services available to attempt to recover the information, but they tend to be cost prohibitive. We offer such services, and the minimum cost for recovering data from a failed hard drive is $300. There is also always the possibility that the data cannot be recovered. This is when having a backup scheme saves the day.

There are many ways to backup data. You could manually copy all of your important information to CDs or DVDs on a periodic basis. Another option is to mirror all of your data across two hard drives. However, the most cost effective and reliable way is to have a hard drive backing up important information on a daily basis. Backing up to CD or DVD is time consuming, easy to forget, and likely you are only going to do it on a weekly or monthly basis. Mirroring hard drives is the most fool-proof way to have a backup of your data. However, in order to setup a mirroring scheme you need to have hardware that supports it, and you need two exactly same hard drives. Mirroring works best when you are purchasing a computer, and is not easily added to a computer in use. The next best solution is to have an external hard drive that is set up to periodically backup important documents on your computer. The benefit of a backup versus mirroring is that the backup drive does not need to be the same size as the hard drive in your computer. It is also very easy to add a backup scheme to a computer in use: just plug the hard drive into a USB port, and configure the backup software. Backing up to an external hard drive is preferable to mirroring due to ease and cost, and it is easier and more reliable **(Continued ➔)**

Backup Your Data! (continued)

than manually backing up to a CD or DVD.

If you truly care about the data on your hard drive, then you need to have a plan in the event that the hard drive fails. As I mentioned before, it's not a matter of _if_ but of _when_ the hard drive is going to fail. You may get lucky and move on to another computer before the hard drive stops operating, but you are playing Russian roulette

with your important information. Whether you need help setting up a backup scheme or attempting to recover data from a failed hard drive 5to9 is there for you. However, the safest and least expensive way to get that data back is to be proactive about backing it up instead of being reactive when your drive fails.

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Browse Smarter and Safer

Browsing the internet these days is more dangerous than ever. It used to be easy to avoid viruses and trojans by not downloading files from disreputable web sites and refraining from opening unknown e-mail attachments. However, there are now websites that take advantage of known exploits in web browsers to install malicious software on your computer. Luckily, there is a way to minimize your risk while improving your browsing experience: Firefox.

Firefox is not integrated into windows like Internet Explorer (IE) is. This means that if for some reason your web browsing does compromise your browser, it is much more difficult for the problem to spread to other parts of the operating system. Firefox also does not support the

two scripting languages that have caused most of the security problems in IE: VBScript and ActiveX. In addition, the company behind Firefox (Mozilla) has been very prompt in resolving any security flaws in Firefox.   Microsoft has let known issues in IE languish for extended periods of time. Firefox was designed to be a more secure browser from the ground up, and it has achieved this goal. However, security is not the only reason to use Firefox.

Firefox is an open source web browser. Being open source gives Firefox an

advantage over its competition. Programmers can develop "extensions" for the browser that improves its functionality in specific ways.   For instance, there is an extension called Foxy-Tunes that allows you to play music from your web browser. If you are a web developer, there are extensions that allow you to easily debug code and markup. In addition to extensions, Firefox also has a better user interface than IE. When you want to find something on a webpage, IE give you a pop-up window. Firefox integrates its find feature seamlessly into the browser. Firefox also supports web standards better than IE, so web pages will appear as they were designed, instead of how Microsoft feels they should look.

http://www.getfirefox.com

Can you spell del.icio.us?

As you navigate the internet, you are sure to find pages that you want to remember and visit again. Most people are familiar with "bookmarks" or "favorites" that are built into the web browser, but what if you are away from your home computer? Wouldn't it be great if there was a way to access your bookmarks from any computer? This is what del.icio.us enables you to do. It's a funny name,

but a useful tool. To use it, you start off by creating an account at http://del.icio.us. If you are using Firefox, there is a very useful extension for del.icio.us, but you can use it in Internet Explorer as well. When you are on a web page you want to save, you just click the "tag" button (or bookmarklet if you are using IE) and save the page. You are given the opportunity to write notes about the page as you are saving it, as well as add tags.

The notes help you remember why you are bookmarking the page, and the tags enable you to easily search your bookmarks. You can then see your bookmarks from any computer by visiting your account on del.icio.us. This also enables you to share your bookmarks with friends and family. (If you can't remember the funny spelling, you can also get to the site via http://www.delicious.com)

Protect Your Rights

"When our freedoms in the networked world come under attack, the EFF is the first line of defense."

From the Internet to the iPod, technologies are transforming our society and empowering us as speakers, citizens, creators, and consumers. When our freedoms in the networked world come under attack, the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) is the first line of defense. EFF broke new ground when it

was founded in 1990 and continues to confront cutting-edge issues defending free speech, privacy, innovation, and consumer rights today. From the beginning, EFF has championed the public interest in every critical battle affecting digital rights.

EFF is a donor-funded nonprofit and depends on public support

to continue successfully defending your digital rights. Litigation is particularly expensive; because two-thirds of EFF's budget comes from individual donors, every contribution is critical to helping EFF fight, and win, more cases.
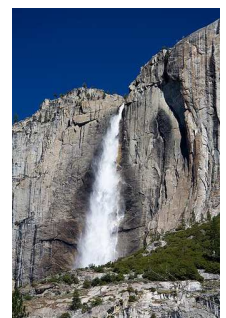
For more information, visit http://www.eff.org

Share your photos online

Do you have a digital camera and want to share your photos with friends and family? Flickr (http://www.flickr.com) is a great tool to do just that. Flickr allows you to upload pictures, organize them into albums and sets, and also to add tags to your photos so that you can easily search through them. Being

able to search your photos is a nice feature. Lets say you have a sister named Laura and you tag all photos with her in them with her name. If you later want to find a specific picture that you know she is in you can search by her name and all photos she is in in will show up. You can also send links to pho-

tos that are on your flickr account to friends and family instead of sending e-mails with attachments. For more information, visit the flickr website.
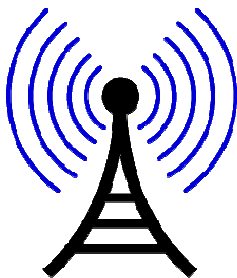
5 to 9 Computer Services

5to9 Computer Services
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Phone: 602-550-5147
Website: http://www.aztechsupport.net

5 to 9 was founded in 2005 with the intent of provide excellent computer support at a reasonable price.

Many technical support companies require you to bring your computer to them. If they happen to provide onsite support, they are only available to service your computer between 9am and 5pm, requiring most customers to take a day off work. 5 to 9 starts working when the customer stops working.

Call 5 to 9 today and get friendly, competent support during hours that work for you.

Listen, Learn, and Get Answers

Starting on April 14th, 2007 at 6pm, listen to Tech Talk with 5 to 9 Computer Services on 1480 KPHX. During this hour-long weekly show three support technicians from 5 to 9 will discuss hot tech news topics, answer listener questions, and provide education on how use your computer better and safer. If you are interested in technology, or just need a burning question answered, this show is for you. All topics concerning technology are open for discussion. What HDTV should you buy? How do you secure your wireless internet? How does copy protection affect you? Tune in for the answers to these and other questions.