The importance of backing up part 1

What does backing up something mean? Backing up is the act of making a copy or copies of a file or files. These backed up files are then stored somewhere other than where the original files are located. You may only need to back up a few files or it might be a much bigger job and your requirements may differ greatly depending on if you're an individual or a business and if you understand how you will use the software that is backing up your data. You might only be `copy & pasting` folders and files to a different drive – but, whatever you are doing, it is better than doing nothing!

The basic idea is that if the original file becomes: damaged, breaks, lost, stolen or suffers any other problem, then the backup/s survive the issue and the backup copy can be either restored or copied back to whether it came from.

In an age of malicious attacks, spyware, virus and other attacks, it's crucial to back up data and essential system files. Malicious attacks have been causing all sorts of problems for both businesses and individuals for years. There are many tales of law enforcement and hospitals locked out of mission critical files and systems, leading to potentially life threatening delays and scheduled operation setbacks. But, this is not just applicable to businesses; any of us could succumb to one of these attacks if we are not careful. It might be your personal data that cannot be replaced; such as pictures and documents.

What does backing up an <u>entire device</u> mean? Backing up an entire device can mean a few things and depending on the device, you may have to be very specific when you map out this process. Sometimes, this can just mean backing up system settings and functions, or options and data settings for a computer – it can also mean a **complete clone** of the entire drive or unit.

Backing up can also mean simply copying everything from a particular device, as opposed to a few files or folders. This is very common for all forms of mobile devices, computers and laptops. Backing up the entirety of a desktop computer is often a bit more involved due to the sheer number of files. With smartphones, the primary concern is often the vast collection of precious photographs they contain. You many also consider cloning a device too.

Where do we put our backups? One of the most important backup stumbling blocks is figuring out where to place the files being copied. This can be done locally, on an external hard drive or local server on your network. The files can also be saved in the cloud. This can cause a few headaches depending on: the security practices of the cloud storage system you're using and whether you encrypt the files and folders before you upload them.
If the files are work related, you should be using the business approved storage / backup solution. Placing files in a randomly selected service of your choice can have disastrous consequences if sensitive files are hacked or leaked.

Do people backup their backups? They do! It's not unheard of to have a computer fail with important files on it, and discover there's a problem with the backup too. This is why you have backups of backups. It's also important to have sensible backups.
If an individual or organisation simply copies hundreds of thousands of files into a big folder and thinks "job done"? That's going to be a problem. If they suffer a malicious attack some time later, it probably won't end well. Part 2 will be next month.

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