

## **The importance of backing up part 3 (cloud)**

**Following on from the last couple of months about backing up and where to?** Just to remind you of part of last month's article - 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 – we mainly focussed on the act of backing up.

**Local backups and copies of your data** – this is where we backup data and files to a physical item such as an external hard disk drive or some kind of storage device in your possession.

**Cloud storage, backups and copies of your data** – I have been asked about cloud storage on many occasions and I know that some already understand the concept, while others are slightly confused. Just think about cloud storage as a physical location somewhere with a physical storage device where you connect to it via the internet – this is not unlike how email works. Just to draw a simple comparison – email is normally sent from computer to computer via the internet via email servers, which are also storage devices. Cloud data storage works in a very similar way to how email data is stored – you simply upload your chosen data to a data storage space on a server and then access that data when you need to. Some of the cloud applications can create a virtual space on your existing computer and you can treat it like any other drive. But, also you can access that same data via any computer or device via an internet connection using the login protocols that you selected.

**How does my data get uploaded to a cloud server?** We have various ways to upload our saved data to the cloud (FTP = File Transfer Protocol) and we can use subscription based applications such as: Dropbox, iCloud, Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive, pCloud, Box and the free versions of these and other applications – They all work in pretty much the same way, but with different interfaces, costs and storage sizes.

**Which is better for me?** This article is not going to try and explain which is better or even if the subscription services are better than the free ones. This article is written purely to assist you and to help you make an informed decision. There is plenty of literature on their respective websites to read and even independent sites with various opinions that may help you decide what is best for you. There are pros and cons to both types of backing up. Local backup will cost you more in the short term and subscription cloud services are likely to cost you more in the long term.

**What should I backup to the cloud and is it secure?** This is for you all to decide – but basically, if you want to keep your precious data backed up and safe, cloud storage is a good idea.

**Is it safe and secure?** – Well, it is only as safe and secure as you make it! All of these cloud storage sites offer the normal login security protocols with passwords – they also offer additional security protocols that are linked to things like: email, mobile phone numbers and various types of authenticators. So, if you choose easy passwords and place no additional security on the method for authentication – then of course your data will be much less secure.

**Lastly, if your backup is your only working copy of your data – then it is not a backup!**

If you need any professional advice, please contact us or have a look at the various applications listed and visit their respective websites for more information.

**Information provided by Mark Dibben of Dibtech Computers in Devizes.**

**Web: [www.dibtech.co.uk](http://www.dibtech.co.uk). Email: [computers@dibtech.co.uk](mailto:computers@dibtech.co.uk).**