

What would happen if . . .

Written by Johann Taylor
Friday, 12 August 2011 12:31



. . . your computer crashed today. How many years of family pictures would you lose forever? How many memories would be gone, never to return? How many years of work would simply vanish? How many hundreds of dollars worth of music would disappear? What if your hard drive couldn't be recovered, or needed to be sent to the lab to be recovered? Would you be willing to spend the \$1800 that it would take to get your data back?

I haven't had a good rant on this blog yet, and now is as good a time as any to start one. I've had 10+ customers in the shop this week with serious hard drive problems, all of them had a high potential for data loss. Lucky for most of them, I was able to recover their data. A few unlucky ones were beyond the ability of the equipment and experience that we have at our disposal. These people had to make the choice between losing that data forever, and paying an absurd amount of money to get it back. One of the customers was a business and had no choice but to pay for laboratory data recovery. How much are 10 years of digital pictures worth to you? What about that big research project or PhD thesis? Do you really want to make that decision?

There are exactly two types of hard drives in this world: those that have already failed, and those that will fail. It is inevitable. Sooner or later, your hard drive will die. Computers are no less mortal than human beings. Either could die at any moment from any number of causes.

Are.

You.

Prepared?

What would happen if . . .

Written by Johann Taylor
Friday, 12 August 2011 12:31

A hard drive consists of platters spinning at between 5400 and 10,000 RPM, much like a cd or record (for those of you who remember such things) with heads (like a record player needle) floating at a distance several times thinner than a strand of your hair away from the platters. The slightest shock, hiccup, or even air pressure change can cause those heads to dig into the platters destroying the drive. For an example, grab your favorite CD and an iron nail. Scratch it once nice and deep from the center to the rim. Now try to play it. The difference is, you can buy a new CD, but you can't turn back time and retake those family pictures that you just lost. Again,

Are.

You.

Prepared?

It will happen.

You can't avoid it.

The only way to be prepared is to back up your data. This is not hard. Carbonite is a great service. For only \$59.99 a year per computer, you can back up as much information as you want, automatically. Later this week, we will offer our own branded service that works in almost the same way, but it will be about \$6 per month per computer. I don't care how you back up your data, JUST DO IT. Burn it to CD. Email it to yourself. Print a few of your pictures out. Your grandma would be thrilled. Mail them to her.

JUST.

What would happen if . . .

Written by Johann Taylor
Friday, 12 August 2011 12:31

BACK.

IT.

UP.

I don't tell people this for my own health. We make very little if any profit selling backup services. In fact often we actually lose money.

Why then do I push backup so hard? I have seen too many people lose precious information because they were too careless to take 15 minutes to set up a system. Computers have become commonplace much faster than the knowledge of how to use them responsibly. We try to inform people the best we can, but we can't force them to listen. I have had customers pay for an \$1800 data recovery job, then when asked if they would like to buy a license for Carbonite (\$60 remember), they say, "No thanks." What do you say in a situation like that? I'm honestly dumbfounded. The information your computer holds is worth INFINITELY more than the hardware it is stored on. You can't prevent it from breaking. It is impossible.

I'll stop ranting now. I had to lose two drives before I learned my lesson, and I guess that most people will be the same way. Just please, please, please, take my advice this once. Trust me, you'll thank me some day.

REMEMBER: Data that you don't have at least two copies of is data that you DON'T CARE ABOUT!

Please leave a comment or send an email to readermailbag@compuclinic.us