



THE RHODENIZER REPORT

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www.rhodenizer.com

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THE TAKE-AWAY POINTS:

- Carbonite and Mozy are my top choices for online backup.
- Verify that you can recover backup files.
- Store backups in a separate location.
- Every business needs the “Wow” factor.

MOST POPULAR ONLINE BACKUP SOLUTIONS

If you have high speed Internet access, you can take advantage of one of the online backup services for just a few dollars a month. I'll explain the pros and cons of the two most popular that I've had experience with.

Carbonite (www.carbonite.com), at \$49.95 annually for unlimited storage, emphasizes **continuous backup** by synchronizing your files to a data center 24/7. They claim this happens entirely in the background and won't slow down your PC but I'm not convinced of that. Continuous synchronization is ideal in a 24/7 operation with a high volume of transactions where losing even one hour of data would be unacceptable. If a system crashed, data backed up just minutes before could be

restored. Unfortunately, if you delete a file, the backup copy will also be deleted soon after. Carbonite actually backs up new or changed files 10 minutes after you save and close them. There is no option to schedule backups for a specific date/time or interval.

Mozy (www.mozy.com), at \$4.95 a month for unlimited storage, or free with a 2GB limit, offers **scheduled backups** in the foreground to backup files quickly. Then, leaves your PC alone while you work. Subsequent jobs only backup files added or changed since the last time. By default, it runs every two hours. But, you can set it to run only at night. Mozy will also backup attached external USB drives and keeps multi-



ple versions of your files for 30 days. Carbonite doesn't. Both companies say they use advanced encryption to keep your files private, but only Mozy offers you the option of providing your own key. Mozy seems to have more-versatility restoring and scheduling backups, and will also send you a DVD of your files, for a fee. Carbonite won't. Overall, I prefer Mozy. -C. R.

BACKUP DRIVE SHOPPING TIPS

Before you buy a backup drive, you need to know what interfaces you have available on your PC to connect it to. All PC's now have USB ports. But, if you choose FireWire, or eSATA, you may need an additional **interface** card installed (that rules out most laptops). More details about interface types and data

transfer speeds on Page 3.

Drive rotation speed is also a factor. Some spin at 5400 RPM. Better drives spin at 7200 RPM. The most expensive spin at 10,000 RPM but those also have the highest failure rates.

Buffer size also makes a difference in performance if the

drive is used for working data, i.e., files being opened and closed repeatedly. These usually come in 4MB, 8MB, and 16MB sizes. More is better, unless the drive is used only for backing up files. In that case, buffer size doesn't really matter since it only needs to touch each file once during the job.

PART 2 OF 4: BACKUP AND RECOVERY

In the last issue, I mentioned that the first step in getting your business ready for the future is to **centralize and organize your critical data in one place**. The second step is to safeguard that information by backing it up.

The best way to back up your data is determined by various factors. Mostly, by how often it needs to be backed up and by how much there is.

Some businesses backup daily, but only rotate those backups offsite weekly because it's too inconvenient to carry disks or tapes home every night. Others backup constantly due to a high volume of transactions and those backups stream to an Internet based service that constantly maintains updated

copies of data. While the latter solution offers the highest possible protection, it often slows down systems and can only synchronize about 100MB of data per hour—depending upon your Internet upload speed. You'll need to determine where your balance between convenience and security lies.

Once you have determined how you want to backup your data, it is very important to **verify the integrity of your backups regularly**. I have personally seen many cases where people thought their data was being backed up automatically and it actually was not. For a few, this realization came too late. Check, verify, and confirm. Restore a file from time to time just to make sure that you can. If

you can't retrieve backed up files, the time to address that problem is now—before the need becomes urgent.

Having your critical files backed up on a regular basis, and verifying those backups, should give most business owners peace-of-mind. But, those backups won't do you any good if they are routinely stored next to the computer and a disaster strikes them both. Replaceable items can be insured against loss by fire, flood, tornado, or theft, but no amount of money can replace lost information.

Store backups in a location separate from your PC. You can deal with the loss of one if you still have the other.

Next time, we explore options for data security.—C. R.



“... no amount of money can replace lost information..”

HOW MUCH SPACE DO YOU NEED?

If you have consolidated your data into one main folder, you can right-click on that folder, choose “Properties”, and the “Size on disk” amount shows how much data you currently have. Now that you know how much space you need. Where can you back it up to?

- Floppy Disk - 1.44MB
- ZIP Disks - 100, 250, 750MB
- CD-ROM - 700MB
- DVD - 4.7GB
- Dual layer DVD - 9.4GB
- Hard Disks - up to 6000GB

Data is measured in “Bytes”.

MegaByte (a million Bytes) is represented as MB, GigaByte (a billion Bytes) is represented as GB, and TeraByte (a trillion Bytes) is represented as TB. So, 160GB means “one hundred sixty gigabytes”.

Capacity is not the only consideration. **Speed is also a factor**. Online backups offer unlimited space, but the time it takes to complete a full backup could be hours, or even days, depending upon your Internet upload speed.

To check your upload speed, go to the **“Cliff's Pick's” page of my website**, then scroll down to “Free DSL Speed Test”. This takes you to a site that measures your download and upload speed in Kb/s (Kilobits per second). Next, just do a little math. For example: If your upload speed measures 240Kb/s, divide this number by 8 to convert it to Bytes (30KB/s). Multiply that by 60 for minutes, then by 60 again for maximum possible amount uploaded per hour (108MB/hr).

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Byte = 8 bits

Kilo = 1000

Mega = 1 million

Giga = 1000 million

Tera = 1000 billion

Lowercase b = bits

Uppercase B = bytes

QUESTIONS FROM THE INBOX

Q– “Which should I get to backup my files on, a USB flash drive, or a hard drive?”

A– USB (Universal Serial Bus) Flash drives have the convenience of being small, quiet, and require no power cord, but the highest capacity I’ve seen is only 32GB. For about the same price (\$200), you can get a 750GB (GigaBytes) external hard drive.

While a 3.5” external drive is larger and requires a power cord. You have the option of getting these in **FireWire** or **eSATA** which is much faster than USB.

Theoretically, USB can transfer data at a maximum of 480Mb (megabits) per second. FireWire (also known as IEEE 1394) runs 800Mb per second. Compare those with eSATA which transfers data at a whopping 3000Mb (or 3 gigabits) per second. I use these numbers for comparison purposes only. I’ve never seen theoretical maximum speeds in the real world.

If you only have a few MB of data to backup, it won’t take longer than a few minutes with either USB Flash or USB external drive, so go for the one that fits in your pocket and has no moving parts.

If you have several GB to backup, it will take hours over USB. You may want to go ahead and get a 3Gbps eSATA drive with matching interface card and cable. All

computers now come with multiple USB ports. But, FireWire and eSATA require special ports that you may need an additional interface card for. Expect to pay less than \$20 for FireWire, and around \$50 for an eSATA card. A competent IT pro can install either of these for you in only a few minutes.

Q– “How often should we backup our files? “

A– You can never backup too often. Just remember that human mistakes can go unnoticed for several days or more. **I recommend keeping backups for at least 30 days.** Most businesses I work with run backups five nights a week. Then, rotate the media offsite weekly. If you have 4 sets of tapes/disks to rotate with, that gives you a maximum of 4 weeks to go back and retrieve a file.

Q– “Our company just bought new computers with Windows Vista. Shortly after, we found out that our primary business application won’t work with Vista. What can we do? “

A– You can go in one of three directions:

#1. If your application vendor says they are working on updating their product so it runs on the latest version of Windows, all you need to do is buy some time (*and lean*

on them for taking so long! Jeesh!, we’ve known Vista was coming for over two years now!). In the meantime, you can “downgrade” to Windows XP on new PC’s until the end of June 2008.

#2. If your application vendor has no plans for supporting Vista, you’ll want to find out if they have versions that run on Mac or Linux. If so, it may make sense to begin testing one of these as a new desktop standard.

#3. If your application vendor no longer supports the product at all, you have about seven more years to find a new business application. Microsoft discontinues support for Windows XP in 2014.

Q– “How do you like your Blackberry Curve with GPS? Do you have any tips?

A– Overall, I’m very pleased with it. But, I still don’t understand why they chose to make it use EDGE network technology for data instead of the much faster 3G. The best tip I have was actually given to me by one of my clients: Drop the \$10 a month TeleNav service and download Google Maps software for the GPS. It works great, and it’s free.—C. R.

Send your questions to:
questions@rhodenizer.com



Drive Speed Comparison

USB = 480 Mbps

FireWire = 800 Mbps

eSATA = 3000 Mbps

TIPS FOR GROWING YOUR BUSINESS

I've finally reached a modest level of success in my business so I'm sometimes asked for advice. I don't mind sharing what I've learned so here are a few tips.

1). Observe the Golden Rule.

It's a biblical concept that holds true in both business and personal relationships. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you". With every task I do for a client I'm constantly asking myself, "is this what I would want done if it were my business?" Or, "is this what I would consider fair if I were paying for it?" If I can't put myself in their place

and honestly answer "Yes", I won't go through with it. Making money on a one-time job is not as important as building a relationship of trust, and a reputation of honor.

2). Always try to give a little something extra. What that is depends upon your business. I look for ways I can do something that goes above and beyond what the client was expecting. I call it the "Wow" factor. An extra cable thrown in for free, an extra few minutes off the clock, anything I can think of that will get them to say "Wow". Don't settle for your clients being "satisfied",

go for "impressed"!

3). Word-of-mouth is the best form of advertising.

When I first started out, I wasted thousands of dollars on advertising that yielded nothing in return. The only calls I got were from people trying to sell me something. Since then, I've learned that over 90% of all my business has come from referrals! People don't trust ads, they trust friends who know and can recommend me. Focus on the "Wow" factor and your clients will tell others about you. A good name does more than any paid advertising.



ABOUT RHODENIZER IT

We are a different kind of IT service provider. We don't sell any hardware or software. There are no sales incentives for steering you toward a particular product. We provide IT consulting services that include finding the best deals on what you really need and passing the savings along to you.

Our mission is to do more than fix computer problems.

Our mission is to help small companies save money, increase productivity, and safeguard private information.

We work with clients to prepare disaster recovery plans that ensure their critical data remains safe, yet easily accessible. The benefits of such strategic planning also includes money-saving ideas for managing resources and reducing IT expenses.

We have the training, experience, and know-how to provide the right solutions for your needs, and your budget.

Just call to schedule your **free initial consultation with no risk, and no obligation.**

Tell me about your computer needs or IT issues. I'll recommend a course of action that makes sense for your situation at no cost to you. What have you got to lose?

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