PROTECTING YOUR
DIGITAL LIFE

Table of Contents

What is a "Digital Life"?

Decades ago, the phrase "digital life" sounded like science fiction. Today, everyone who uses a computer has a digital life that is very real — and very vulnerable.

From laptops and e-mail to BlackBerries and iPods, technology has changed our daily lives. We're always connected, no matter where we are. Our phones snap pictures, our laptops play music and our work follows us home. The lines become more blurred every day.

Think about it: When is the last time you wrote a friend's phone number in an address book? If you're like most people, you're more likely to save it in a cell phone or e-mail account. Instead of dropping off film to be developed, we download memory cards onto hard drives. Instead of buying CDs, we download songs. Instead of filing bank statements and business records, we archive them under "My Documents."

All of this data forms our digital lives—a complex mix of our work, interests, finances, memories, relationships and identity. Our digital lives are uniquely created, conveniently stored and easily accessible.

And they can be stolen, erased or lost at any time.

Fast Facts:

- Nearly 90 percent of Internet users would be "greatly inconvenienced" if they lost files on their computers—but only 6 percent protect them with daily backup.

- Conservative estimates show that every day, 126,000 people in the U.S. and UK lose files stored on their PCs. That's the equivalent of the entire city of Hartford, Connecticut.

- Two out of five PC users (43 percent) have lost digital files or data at some point in their lives.

- One in five have lost files in the last two years alone.

- Lost photos are the number-one concern, followed by financial information, text documents and work projects.

Missing: Five Years of Photos

Good news: 98 percent of PC users have antivirus protection on their primary computers, and 95 percent have firewall security. That means we're safe, right? Wrong.

Security against online threats is crucial, yet it leaves a gaping hole in our protective shields. What about all of the files stored on your computer? For most of us, our worlds are on our PCs, and we assume it's all safe simply because we clicked "save."

The statistics show us we're wrong.

In 2007 alone, approximately **46 million people** in the U.S. and UK lost personal files stored on their PCs. That's nearly 90 people per minute. And those files aren't just data; they represent years of memories, hundreds of dollars and hours of hard work. If your computer crashed, what would you lose?

What Do You Store on Your PC?	
Description	**Total**
Photographs	92.9%
Text documents	88.1%
E-mails	84.1%
Contacts	77.7%
Work projects or documents	71.0%
Music	69.3%
Financial information	52.7%
Personal or work calendar	42.3%
Home videos	34.8%
	(N=1,095)

- More than 90 percent of people keep photos on their computers, with an average of 1,788 pictures stored. That's nearly five years worth of photos if you took a picture every single day.

- Almost 70 percent store music, with an average of 2,410 songs. That's over $2,400 worth of music at $1 per song, or about 125 hours of time spent downloading CDs.

- Nearly three-quarters store work projects or documents.

- Over half store personal financial information.

Are Your Files Safe?

Although 67 percent of people say they worry about losing irreplaceable files stored on their PCs, the overwhelming majority are not taking the appropriate steps to prevent loss.

As one survey respondent said: "I'm aware that I need to back up info, but still don't do anything about it."

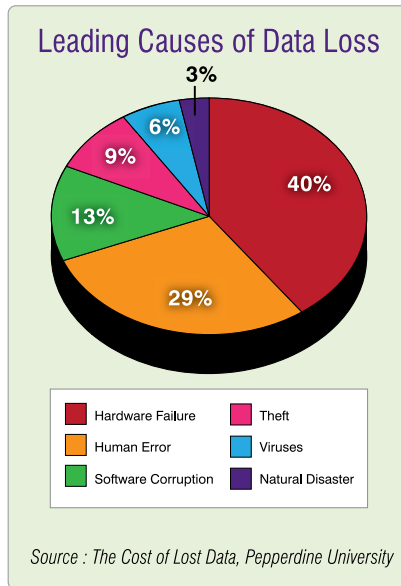| How Often Do You Back Up?	
Description	**Total**
Never	20.2%
Less than once a year	11.7%
About once a year	14.0%
Every three months	17.1%
Monthly	16.1%
Weekly	11.6%
Once a day	5.2%
Several times a day	1.0%
Don't know	3.2%
	(N=1,095)

- Twenty percent of PC users have never backed up the data on their personal computers.
- Just 6 percent back up daily.
- Nearly half (46 percent) back up once a year or less—leaving 364 days of photos and files susceptible to loss or damage.

Unfortunately, most people don't realize how important backup is until it's too late. And while an infected computer can be replaced, lost photos, records and documents are often unrecoverable.

Everyday Risks

Every day across the world, hard drives fail, laptops are stolen, software malfunctions, busy people spill coffee and kids push the wrong button.

The leading cause of data loss is hardware failure, followed by human error and software corruption. Together, these three risk factors comprise more than 80 percent of all incidents.

Leading Causes of Data Loss

- Hardware Failure — 40%
- Human Error — 29%
- Software Corruption — 13%
- Theft — 9%
- Viruses — 6%
- Natural Disaster — 3%

Source : The Cost of Lost Data, Pepperdine University

Theft is responsible for approximately 9 percent of data loss—and with laptop usage increasing, this threat is escalating fast. For the first time in history, laptops are more commonly used than desktops; a September 2008 MetaFacts study found that 53 percent of computer-using adults use either a notebook or tablet PC.

Natural disasters account for just 3 percent of data loss incidents, but they are a devastating reality for hundreds of thousands of people each year. An estimated 300,000 homes were lost as a result of Hurricane Katrina, and the number of natural disasters between 2000 and 2005 reached historic records.

Real People, Real Loss

It's one thing to hear statistics and risk factors; it's another thing to wake up in the morning and find all your files are gone.

Losing personal files causes everything from minor inconvenience to irreparable damage, as dozens of survey respondents told us.

Quotes:

- *"All my data was gone; I paid a fortune to try and retrieve it, to no avail."*

- *"I lost six months of pictures of our kids."*

- *"I had to reload more than 2,000 songs."*

- *"My hard drive crashed and I lost everything."*

- *"It sets you back to ground zero when you lose your information. I use my laptop for work, so the things I lost were very important. The down time involved when getting my laptop fixed also crippled me when trying to work."*

- *"[It's] just so hard putting the pieces back together again."*

- *"The tragedy of lost data is self-explanatory…one's data is gone forever and cannot be retrieved."*

> **While data loss is devastating for individuals, the effects can be disastrous for small business owners; one study found that 60 percent of companies that lose their data will shut down within six months.**

Forget to Back Up? You're Not Alone

Nearly everyone agrees that backing up data sounds like a good idea, yet a number of barriers prevent most people from doing so.

Forgetfulness tops the list, with other hurdles including time restraints and lack of technical knowledge.Unimportance and cost were at the bottom of the list.

Reasons for Not Backing Up	
Description	**Total**
Forget	52.4%
Doesn't happen automatically	35.6%
Takes too long	27.2%
Requires hardware	17.4%
Don't know how	13.2%
Too complicated	8.7%
Don't think it's important or necessary	6.1%
Too expensive*	3.0%
None of the above	16.7%
Other	1.9%
	(N=1,095)

- More than half (53 percent) forget.

- About two in five (36 percent) want it to happen automatically.

- Over one-quarter (27 percent) say it takes too long.

- Nearly 20 percent don't know how or think it's too complicated.

- Seventeen percent cited the requirement of hardware.

- Only 6 percent said it doesn't seem necessary or important.

- Just 3 percent think it's too expensive.

There is one positive note: Three-quarters of survey respondents said that backing up their files is more important than it used to be. As our digital lives continue to grow, it's likely that more people will realize how essential it is to protect them.

The Automatic Answer

Despite the importance of backup, it's not hard to understand why it hasn't yet become a daily routine. Between making dinner and finishing reports and running errands, the average person simply doesn't have time to stop and figure out which files they need to save that day.

Among those who do back up their data, local backup is by far the most widely adopted method.

Types of Back Up Used

Description	Total
External hard drive	45.2%
CD-ROM	36.0%
USB drive	31.9%
DVD	18.4%
Online service	11.9%
Other	3.8%
	(N=839)

- More than half (54 percent) back up data to a CD or DVD.

- Forty-five percent use an external hard drive.

- More than 30 percent use a USB drive.

- Only 12 percent use an online backup service.

Although local backup is the most popular, it's definitely not the most convenient. People forget. They don't have time. Many don't want to worry about storing an external hard drive or managing stacks of CDs. Just as concerning, local devices carry great potential for damage or loss due to malfunction, theft, natural disaster and human error.

There's a Better Way

So what is the answer? Online backup addresses all five of the top barriers that prevent people from regularly backing up:

- It automatically protects files so you don't forget.

- Backups can be scheduled to occur whenever you want.

- It saves time because you set it and forget it.

- Set-up is easy, even for novice computer users, and can be completed in minutes.

- No hardware is required, but larger files can still be backed up locally.

The only requirements for online backup are an Internet connection and a program installation. However, users should be careful to choose a provider that encrypts files and uses a highly secure transmission to eliminate privacy and security concerns.

Taking the Next Step

It's time for a new standard of security. Complete protection means data security as well as online safety. Yet with research driving home the point that simplicity is key, the next step is to make file protection as easy as possible.

One way to accomplish this is by integrating automatic file backup into security that is already commonly used, such as antivirus technology. This would give computer users one simple, streamlined solution that would keep their entire systems safe.

Tell a Friend

From digital photos to financial records, the information on your computer is valuable and often irreplaceable. Your "digital life" grows year after year, and so do the risks for loss. Protecting your personal files — especially through automatic online backup — is the next step toward complete security.

Tips for Protecting Your Files

1. **Install security software.** Viruses and other online threats can corrupt your files and cause system damage or failure. Make sure you have up-to-date antispyware, antivirus and firewall protection.

2. **Use automatic online backup.** Despite the best of intentions, research shows that most people will forget to back up their data on a regular basis. Look for an online backup program that provides a "set it and forget it" solution by automatically backing up your files every day.

3. **Protect your privacy.** Only use online backup sites that encrypt data and transmit files through a secure connection, especially when you're backing up important financial documents.

4. **Free isn't better.** Don't rely on free sites to archive your digital photos. Some have policies of deleting pictures if you don't access your account within a set time period.

5. **Back up your laptop and mobile devices!** Many people protect data on their primary computers, but forget about laptops and other mobile devices. These carry a greater risk of loss and theft, so take extra care to back them up.

6. **Pick a storage spot for local backups.** You may want to back up larger files onto a CD, DVD or external hard drive. However, be sure to store those devices away from your primary computer to protect against theft and natural disaster.

7. **Avoid actions that put data at risk.** Don't open attachments from strangers, avoid questionable Web sites and only download software from sites you trust.

8. **Consider the value of your files.** What are your photos, music and irreplaceable files worth? It would cost the average person $2,500 to replace lost digital music or 125 hours of time re-ripping CDs. And for most people, photos are priceless. Give them the protection they deserve.

About Webroot

Based in Boulder, Colorado, Webroot provides industry-leading security solutions for computer users worldwide. Webroot products consistently receive top review ratings by respected third parties and have been adopted by millions globally. With the company's wide range of online security offerings, people everywhere can download music, store digital files, bank, shop, surf and search – safely. Webroot's latest software, Webroot Internet Security Essentials, provides complete protection by automatically backing up files online or locally, blocking viruses and spyware, guarding against hackers and protecting privacy—all while optimizing system performance.
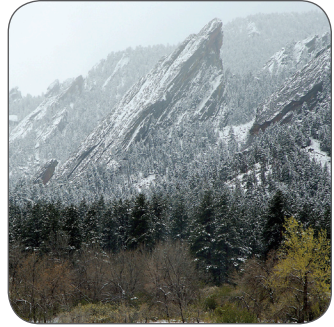
To find out more, please visit www.webroot.com or call 800.772.9383.

About the Study

In September 2008, Webroot conducted its "Protecting Your Digital Life" survey in the U.S. and the UK. All 1,095 respondents have an Internet connection at home and primarily use a PC or laptop that is Windows-based. Respondents were divided evenly between the two countries with an equal number of males and females. Margin of error within each country is ±4.4 percentage points and ±3.0 percentage points when data from both countries is combined.

Additional Resources

Webroot Data Backup Survey, May 2008, N=603

Computer Industry Almanac, 2007

The Cost of Lost Data, Pepperdine University, 2003

MetaFacts Busy Mobiles Profile Report, 2008

Fox Facts: Hurricane Katrina Damage, Fox News, August 29, 2006

Disaster Statistics, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, EM-DAT: The OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database

Data Loss Statistics, Boston Computing Network

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