



GeekSpeak

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Savor This!

Backups—we know we've got to do 'em, but we just don't quite know how. I remember way back when I was writing my dissertation, I backed up all my files on a floppy disk every night. About the time I had filled the first floppy and reached the second, I knew I had to be about done—there is only so much you can write for a dissertation, right?

Oh, how the times have changed! When Apple released the first incarnation of the iMac without a floppy drive, people scratched their heads and felt lost. Of course, it is standard now—in fact, I am not sure that my kids would actually know what to do with a floppy disk. And I would venture to say that with the newly released MacBook Air without a CD-ROM drive, another era may also soon be over—we have long sensed that CDs and even DVDs are sort of “yesteryear.”

So what is hip, especially when it comes to backing up your data? There is no doubt that it has got to be online backups. However, the hippest thing does not always have to be the best, so I spent some time last week looking at online backup services.

Before I report on my findings, here are some thoughts on online services in general. It is hard to put a finger on the exact time when it became feasible to trust online services as much or even more than your local computer, but the fact is that it finally happened sometime in the last couple of years. Only three or four (or maybe five) years ago, most people would have argued that the Internet as the primary medium to store data, communicate by telephone and e-mail, manipulate files, and, in our case, translate, edit, and proofread, was just not quite reliable enough. What if my connection fails? What if the server that stores my data crashes?

What if the Internet “goes down?” While all of these things can still happen (probably in the same order of likelihood as mentioned above), today there are plenty of workarounds (such as other means of wired or wireless communication with the Internet) and security mechanisms (redundant servers). More importantly, we have started to accept online solutions as the new norm. Predecessors to many of today's products were already there during the first dot-com boom, but they did not make it because our minds and attitudes were not quite ready for it.

it out. I really like it, as it does exactly what it promises, but I ended up uninstalling it again.

First, let's start by explaining why Carbonite is a cool little program. It really is little—just about 5 MB to download—and it is extremely simple to set up. Once you have it installed, it gives you the option to either choose the default Documents and Settings folder for backup (where your e-mail files and My Documents typically reside), or you can choose folders on your own. If you forget a folder or a file, it takes only a right-click to add (or deselect) a folder for backup. The

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So, let's backup (pun intended). There is a never-ending list of competing products that offer online backup with slightly different features. Some offer file sharing with other users, some even let you work on the files while they reside at the remote location. A few even provide a peer-to-peer service where you do not back up on a server, but on a few “buddies” computers (not surprisingly, one of those products is called BuddyBackup).

Two of the most popular products at the moment are Carbonite (www.carbonite.com) and Mozy (www.mozy.com). Both services charge approximately \$5 a month for unlimited storage, although with Mozy you have the option to get a free account if you only need to store 4 GB (you will need more). Since several of you wrote to me about Carbonite, I signed up for the 15-day trial to check

backup process starts right away. You will see a little notification that the initial backup may take several days—and it does. In my case, it took about five days. I disabled it while it was working during the day because it requires quite a bit of processing power, and continued the backup at night. It all works seamlessly, and once the initial backup is complete, each file that is modified is flagged to be backed up either right away or at a time of your choosing. The restore function is also super-easy: a new virtual drive is created that gives you immediate access to all of your files. The benefits of this are obvious. It is dirt-cheap, you have access to your files from anywhere (provided that you access them from the machine where they were backed up), and it is easy.

There is a reason why I decided to return to my exterior hard drive backup.

Depending on your TEnT (translation environment tool) and whether you choose to work with client-specific translation memories and/or a large all-encompassing translation memory, the size of those files can be enormous. So large, in fact, that the nightly backup may just not be enough to get everything that has been changed written back to the Carbonite server. Add to that your e-mail file(s)—I happen to use Outlook, which stores everything in a large database-like file—and whatever actual documents you have been working on, and you will have to have the backup run constantly, which tends to steal from your processing power. This may not be true for you. You may

not deal with very large files. In that case, Carbonite, Mozy, or some of their competitors may be the right solution for you.

There is one more thing, though. On my external hard drive I can do incremental backups that not only keep the data from yesterday, but also from the day before and before and—you get the picture. Quite often I realize that I need to dig much deeper than just a day or even a week to get something that may have been changed many times since, which is not a problem. Of course, there are limitations, too (at some point the largest external hard drive is full), but these are things I can deal with.

(Of course, if my office burns to the ground and wipes away both my computer and the external hard drive, I may regret what I just wrote—so I do use the good old CD drive to burn CDs with the most important files and store these outside the house.)

The GeekSpeak column has two goals: to inform the community about technological advances and at the same time encourage the use and appreciation of technology among translation professionals. Jost also publishes a free technical newsletter for translators (www.internationalwriters.com/toolkit).

In Memoriam

**Marian Babirecki
Labrum
1943-2008**

The following appeared in the Daily Herald (Provo, Utah) on January 13, 2008.

Marian Babirecki Labrum, 64, died at her home in Orem, Utah, on January 10, 2008, after a courageous battle with Multiple Sclerosis.

Marian was born on November 5, 1943 in Salto, Uruguay, to Alba Guillermina Pazos and Wladyslaw Francieszek Babirecki. From a young age, Marian developed an interest in foreign languages and cultures. At 16, she began teaching English in Uruguay. In 1965, she came to the U.S. to attend Brigham Young University in Idaho, where she earned both a bachelor's and master's degree. She received a Ph.D. in modern languages from Middlebury College in Vermont.

Marian married Bruce Marshall McMaster in 1966, and had two children. She later divorced, and married Joseph Labrum in 1989. Marian was a professor of Spanish and translation at Brigham Young University for 33 years. She was also a visiting professor of Spanish at the Middlebury College Language School during the summer months for 15 years.

Marian is survived by her mother, Alba, her husband, Joseph, her two children, Ian McMaster and Tricia Donaldson, a brother, Ian Babirecki, and 10 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.