BACKING-UP YOUR DATA FILES

Any DATA file that you create, edit and save onto your computer's hard drive becomes your responsibility. You must make backup copies yourself if you need these files.

The following rules will help give you some insight on why backing up your files are important.

RULE 1) Expect accidents to happen. Be prepared.

RULE 2) Expect your computer's hard drive to fail. If you expect this to happen, you can prepare in advance.

RULE 3) Don't rule out loss or theft of your PC or someone else accessing your computer.

RULE 4) Nothing works correctly 100% of the time.

RULE 5) Don't depend on others to do things you should be doing yourself.

What does backing-up mean?

Backing up your files is simply making a copy of them or moving them to a different place, preferably an external drive connected to your PC or onto another device that is maintained for the purpose of preserving people's files. Another device could be an account on a server, a Zip drive, Jazz drive, Compact Disk (CD), Digital Versatile Disk (DVD), a tape drive or floppy disks. **You want to use whatever is easy for you since you are the one that has to do it.**

What files should I be backing up?

The files you need to be backing up are the data files that you yourself create or adopt. (Basically, if you need a file for future use, keep at least one copy of it somewhere where it can be accessed in case you lose your computer or it becomes non-functional). In general, we are talking about data files. Data files are the files you create from scratch. You would not back up your programs or computer's operating system.

Where do I copy these data files for backing up?

Each user here is provided with space on a server for the purpose of backing up data files. This space is known as your "home directory". The servers are themselves backed up by the server administrators and therefore, any files in your home directory on the server are restorable. But, only if they are on the server. All files on your computer itself are not guaranteed to be restorable in the event of a hardware crash or software failure. The only person responsible for the data files on your computer is YOU. No one is backing up the files on your computer for you.

How much space is allotted for each user's home directory on the server?

There is no set amount of space allotted to each individual user. Whenever a disk becomes full on the server, all space for everyone on that server is used up and no one can save any more files to the server until someone frees up more space. This means that you only want to keep important current information here. You should not be trying to save all your files from past years here, especially if you have more than 100 or 200 MB's of files to store.

Where can I store archives?

Archives (data files that are not current but you want to keep them) can be stored on external drives or storage media such as Compact Disk (CD), Digital Versatile Disk (DVD), SyQuest drives, Zip drives, Jazz drives, tape drives or even external hard drives. It is up to you and whatever resources you have or can get. There is no set policy on this.