

Know Which Critical Files to Back-Up!

Every Mac OS X user account has easy-to-locate files you should consider backing-up consistently and frequently!

The very best, easiest way to back-up your documents and other important support files is simply to back-up your entire **HOME** folder. You can either drag-copy it to an external hard disk drive or run the backup program of your choice (I recommend SuperDuper! \$27.95 at Shirt Pocket Software, www.shirt-pocket.com). Your **Home** folder is located on your hard disk inside the **Users** folder. The User folder contains the Home folder for all the user accounts established on your Mac. These are identified by the user names associated with the accounts. *Your* Home folder is the one with your user name and should have an icon of a house.



What if you can't or don't want to backup your entire Home folder?

You can choose sub-folders to back-up if for some reason you can't or don't want to backup the entire Home folder.

All these folders are located inside the Home folder:

DOCUMENTS (USER HOME/Documents) - This is where you should be storing all your data files. Many applications use this as the *default* save-to folder.

PREFERENCES (USER HOME/Library/Preferences) - Important settings for your applications are stored here. You back these up so you don't have to re-set your preferences all over again.

Note: Many programs also save important support files in USER HOME/Library or USER HOME/Library/Application Support and are generally located within folders with the same name as the program. If you can't find settings in those folders, you should consider checking with the author of the program to see where they might be stored.

BOOKMARKS and other browser settings are obviously important as well:

Safari: USER HOME/Library/Safari

Firefox: USER HOME/Library/Application Support/Firefox

CALENDARS, ADDRESS BOOK & KEYCHAIN DATA - A good deal of personal data here:

iCal: USER HOME/Library/Application Support/iCal

Address Book: USER HOME/Library/Application Support/AddressBook

Keychain: USER HOME/Library/Keychains

E-MAIL - Try to periodically throw out unimportant mail, but backup from:

Apple Mail: USER HOME/Library/Mail

Entourage: USER HOME/Documents/Microsoft User Data/Office 2004 Identities/Main Identity

PHOTOS - (USER HOME/Pictures) Many photo organizing and editing applications store your pictures here by default. However, there is one big exception: your *iPhoto* images are stored in USER HOME/Pictures/iPhoto Library.

MOVIES - (USER HOME/Movies) Most applications that edit video store the movie files here.

MUSIC & VIDEO PURCHASED FROM ITUNES - (USER HOME/Music/iTunes Music)

How important is this?!! You've invested in music and videos, Apple doesn't back them up for you, so you must! (Search for files with a .m4p or .m4v extension).

In conclusion ...

Remember what all IT professionals already know: it's not a matter of *if* you will have a data disaster, but *when!* You can sleep better at night if you have taken the time to set up and maintain your backups.

Off-site Data Storage

- **For Ultimate Security** consider storing a set of backups (a hard disk drive or CD/DVD discs) at a remote location should a disaster or theft happen at home.
- **Great Candidates** for off-site storage are the homes of family and friends, or your office (as long as you can secure the storage media). Also, a safety deposit box at your bank.
- **Your .Mac Account** is a great place to store those extra-critical files, but remember that storage space is limited and upload speeds can be slow.

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