

# The 3-2-1 Backup Rule

Information lost due to a computer failure can range from annoying to devastating. Imagine all your photos, financial information, and more, gone forever. Even data that is kept in the “cloud” can be lost. For example, if you store all your photos in the cloud and the cloud service closes down you could lose all your photos.

Both Mac and PC computers come with built-in backup software, and external drives are relatively inexpensive. To be truly protected you should follow this simple rule with regard to your backups.

- 3** Have at least 3 copies of your important information. What's on your computer right now counts as one copy. You should have at least 2 more that are updated frequently.
- 2** Have backups on at least 2 different types of media. For example you might have your photos on CD/DVD and also on an external hard drive. Different media have different fail characteristics. If all your information is on the same type of media all copies can fail at the same time for the same reason. For example, a flood will destroy all hard drives, but CDs and DVDs may be salvageable.
- 1** One of your 3 copies should be offsite. If all of your backups are in one place and that place is destroyed, all is lost. There are many services that back up changed files continuously through the Internet. The initial backup can take quite a long time, depending on how much data you have, but the process is automatic. We use [BackBlaze](#). They offer unlimited backups for a modest price and the data is fully encrypted from the time it leaves your computer. They also provide helpful statistics on the lifetimes of the hard drives they use, so you can choose the most reliable brands when replacing drives or adding externals.

Every computer storage device ever made will fail at some point. Are you ready for the day yours does?