HOW MUCH IS YOUR DATA WORTH?

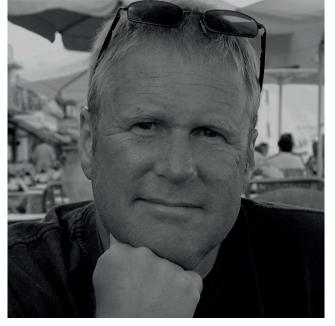*When your hard drive dies, you'll lose everything unless you're well prepared, says Richard Ellis McCallum of A&E IT*

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If you use a computer for anything at all, you will have personal data stored on a hard drive. This can comprise of layers of glass platters which are written to by a mechanical armature. Or you could have a Solid State Drive with no moving parts that stores your data electronically.

The problem is, all hard drives die. It's not 'if', it's 'when'. And when disaster strikes, you will lose everything – even on a Mac. All your precious photos, music, work and accounts will disappear. To recover data from a failed hard drive can cost a fortune, so the question has to be: How much is your data worth, and what can you afford to lose?

External hard drives can be had for as little as £60 but they contain cheap components, plus you need to remember to copy your data manually, or choose what type of automatic backup to run. For Apple users, the obvious choice is Time Machine. The software is included with every Mac and it can run automatically, taking 'snapshots' of any changes every hour. On paper it sounds like the panacea to all recovery problems.

Well, surprisingly, it isn't. If your hard drive dies, you cannot fully recover it with a Time Machine backup. To do that, you need a 'bootable' backup. This is essentially a perfect replica of your hard drive containing a system, every single piece of data, and all the settings and programs required to start up your computer. But you have to maintain and update it daily or you will lose anything added since the last backup run was made.

For maximum protection, you need at minimum both a Time Machine and a 'bootable' backup. This will cover all eventualities apart from theft or fire. To protect against the latter, you need to duplicate both backups regularly and store off site or on a cloud-based server. But that gets expensive.

Which cruelly takes us back to the original question.

How much is your data worth and what can you afford to lose?

For a solid, reliable, automatic, dual backup solution for your Mac email **gethelp@aande.it** anytime!

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