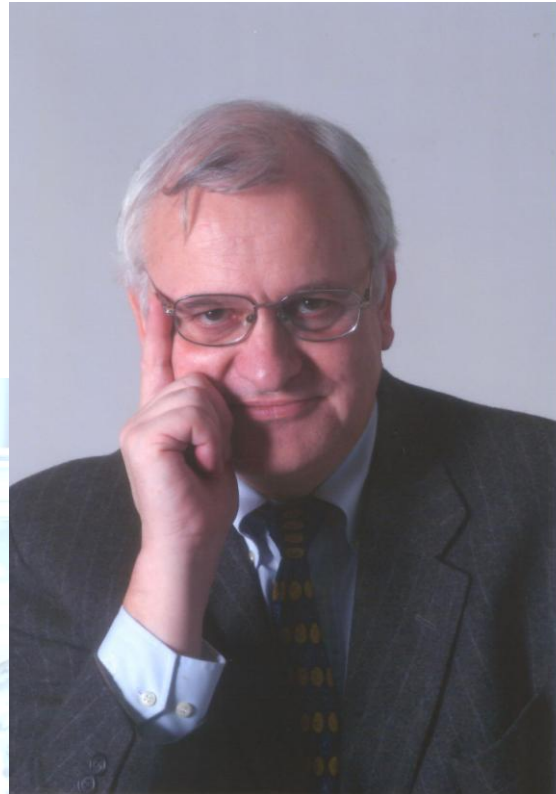


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## **ITMatters**

In this regular column Charles Zealey of ITSolve covers all aspects of business and personal computing. If you have a question about IT matters, email it to Charles on [itmatters@itsolve.co.uk](mailto:itmatters@itsolve.co.uk)



## **PET HATES**

I suppose that for all of us there is one thing above all others that we hate doing. For me it is telling a customer that the disk on which they have been happily storing their files has failed and that it is not possible, or uneconomic, to recover the information. Whether the files contain critical business information or treasured memories, the impact can be devastating.

## **DEATH BY BOREDOM**

That is why anyone in my position runs the risk of boring you to death at parties with dire warnings about the need for backups. Not only because of the very real probability of disk failure (it is certain that every disk will fail sooner or later) but also because of the possibility of accidental (or deliberate) deletion, corruption, virus infection, theft or fire damage.

## **HOW OFTEN?**

How often should you backup? Probably more often than you think. Ask yourself the simple question: what would happen if you lost all the information you have stored since you last took a backup? If that frightens you, backup more frequently.

## **WHAT TO USE?**

The means of backing up varies according to circumstances and the amount of data involved. You can use CD, DVD, tape, hard drives, as well as other options. You may need to take some advice here. Don't be afraid of multiple backup. Internet backup services are becoming very popular because they are off-site and can often be automated. If you have an operating system that supports either shadow copies or versions, then use those. They are no substitute for backups but provide a useful first line of defence.

## **HAVE YOU GOT EVERYTHING?**

It is well worth spending some time making sure that you have everything you need backed up. Email? Application data? Databases? Calendars? Contact lists? In some cases, databases or email systems for example, you may need to use specialised software to ensure that you have a backup that is consistent. Check with your IT provider.

## **CHECK AND TEST**

Finally, don't forget to check from time to time that you can actually recover files from the backups. Ideally, you could completely rebuild the system from backups but you may find these to be too expensive.

So, please, spend some time thinking and planning your backup strategy. That way, I won't have to break the bad news to you.

*Charles Zealey is a consultant working with business professionals helping them to improve their organisation's productivity and effectiveness with the use of Information Technology. Typically a return on investment can be achieved with 6-12 months. To access help sheets go to [www.itsolve.co.uk/HelpSheets/](http://www.itsolve.co.uk/HelpSheets/). For a free half-hour consultation on business IT issues phone 01635 869863 or email [lisa@itsolve.co.uk](mailto:lisa@itsolve.co.uk).*

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