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**A solid intro to backing up your MacOS computer**

# **Insider tips for Computer and Smartphone users**

## **Newsletter Volume 1 Issue 2**

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Some of the saddest calls I've had as a technical advisor for Apple were when a Parent or Grandparent would call for help because they can no longer find the photos they had of children or grandchildren on their computer.

There are many kinds of data; Resumes, Tax returns, Bookmarked links, Address books etc, but the Photos of family lost hit me the hardest and my first question was always, "Do you have a back up?" My heart would sink when I realized they didn't even know what I meant.

If you do nothing else in the way of maintenance with your computer and phone, get a reliable back up system so when they crash, and they probably will, you can restore your computer or phone as it was before the loss of data occurred.

Without warning the storage device on your computer or phone can simply stop working. Also, accidents happen. Spilled drink on computer, theft, drops and sometimes stuff on your computer just disappears. There's usually a reason, often user error, but the reason doesn't matter.

I've worked for companies that supported Windows PCs and for Apple supporting it's Mac, iPhone and iPad. I have to say Apple has the most elegant and easy to use backup system for it's line of desktop and laptop computers and it comes included with the computer - free. The only cost is for an external USB hard drive to keep the backed up data on and almost any brand of drive will do so you can shop for the best deal at Walmart, Amazon, Staples, wherever. I've seen one terabyte (TB) USB drives as low as \$59. You may need a larger USB drive and I'll discuss that later.

Back up programs were always considered 'Utility Software' which is the same category as Disk Defragmenters, Virus protection and other technical software and in general these programs were not very easy to figure out how to use for the non-technical computer owner and not always easy for technical users either. Having any doubt as to whether I have a reliable backup because I did it right or not is not very reassuring when it comes to something as important as your data albeit documents, photos or whatever, The second part of the equation is even if I have a good, complete and current backup on a separate hard drive is

how the heck do I get it back to the main hard drive if I lose data from the main drive? The whole process can overwhelm the average user to the point where he either does not backup or copies only a few files to a different location.

## The best Back up program

There are too many choices to list here so I'll discuss my favorite which comes, of course, from my experience which began in 1983. There was no Microsoft Windows and not quite a Macintosh either. DOS was king. There were backup utilities for the IBM PC and the Apple II and frankly, I don't think they are appreciatively easier to use now than they were then. When I was hired by Apple in 2012 I shifted my focus from Windows PCs to the Mac and its system called at the time OSX , now MacOS. Included with the Mac is a backup program called Time Machine. It is the best back up program I've ever used for several reasons and I'm still looking for a Windows equivalent since I'm involved with both Macs and Windows PCs.

If you buy an iMac, MacBook or other MacOS computer, it includes the Time Machine software but not the external hard drive. If your new Mac has an internal drive size of say one terabyte for example, you should purchase an external USB hard drive of AT A MINIMUM one TB in size. I capitalize that because I recommend you get an external drive of at least double the size of your internal drive. Larger if you can afford it.

Here's the reason I say that. The Mac Time Machine software is named that because it stores different snapshots of your files at different dates in time right up to an hour ago, even if some of the old files are no longer on your main drive. You can specify how far back in time to restore from. How far back you can go is only limited by the size of your external backup drive.



As that drive fills with hourly incremental backups, it will eventually run out of room, at which point it will automatically delete the oldest backups on the external drive to make room for new backups. You don't want to use a partition on your internal hard drive for backup because if the hard drive fails, and they do, you will lose the original and the backup data at once.

# How to start backing up with Time Machine

Plug in the new USB external drive into the Mac,

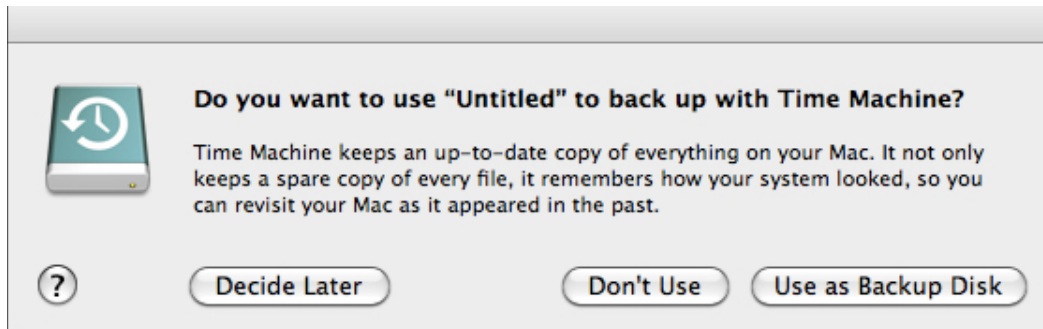
The Mac will usually sense it and ask you if you want to use this new drive for Time Machine Backup? as shown below. Click yes and thats it. You can forget about it as long as it is plugged in.

The first backup will backup everything and therefore take some time, but you can use your Mac for other

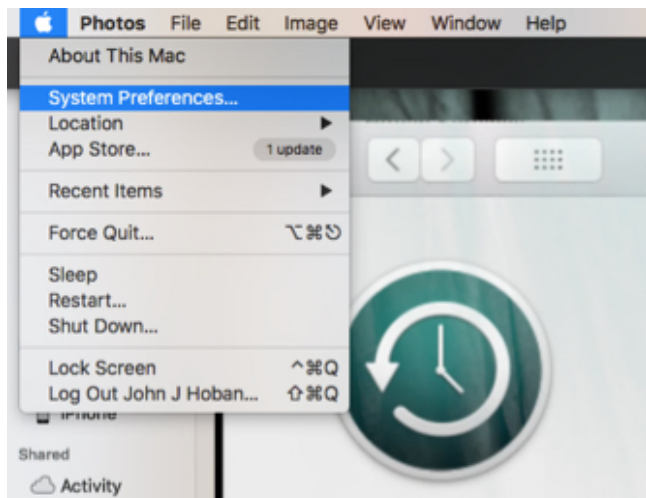
things during this process. After that it will backup any changes or new files every hour in the background.

That's it!

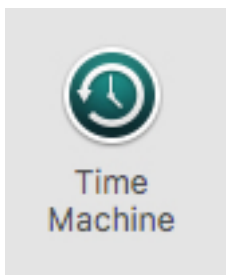
Set it up and forget it.



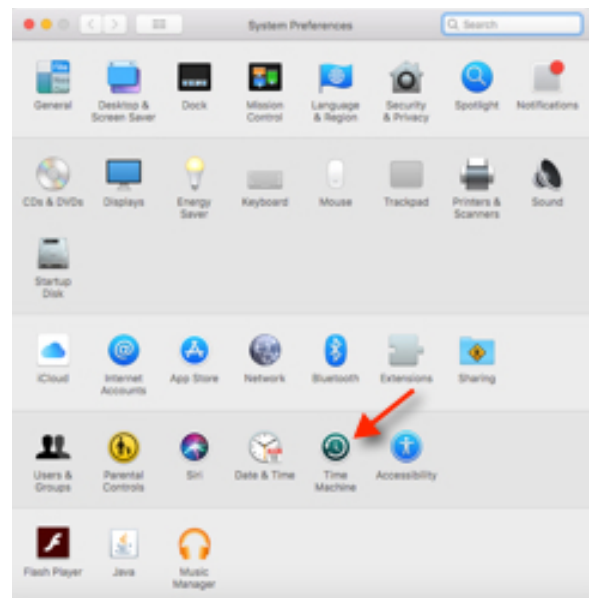
If you don't get the message in the above image when you plug your new external drive into the Mac take these steps:



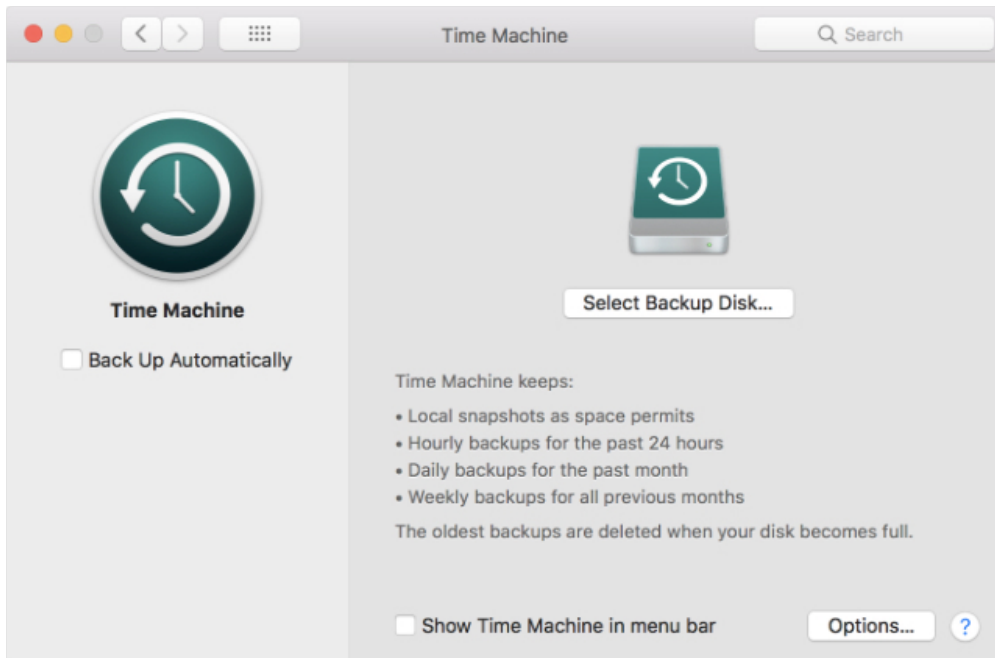
Click on the black Apple in the extreme upper left hand corner of your computer screen and select 'System Preferences'



Then click on the icon for Time Machine Preferences. Your System Preference menu may be ordered differently but this is the icon for Time Machine Preferences.



You should then see the following window:



Check back up automatically or 'turn on', depending on the version Mac OS you are using.

Click on "Select Backup Disk..." and you should see your external USB drive listed there. It's name will vary depending on which manufacturers drive you bought and the model, common are 'Untitled', "MyBackup", Seagate backup drive", etc, but it should be fairly obvious.

There are other backup programs for the Mac on the market, including more than one choice to backup to remote sites or 'cloud backup' which would negate losing your data in the case of a house fire or theft of the computer and backup drive , but for most people Time Machine is enough.

When you back up your iPhone or iPad to your Mac, that backup also gets backed up to your Time Machine external drive. More on iPhone and iPad backups in a future issue.

I'm still looking for a Windows PC backup program that works as well and is as easy to use as is Apple's Time Machine. when and if I find one, I'll do a newsletter about it



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