



DO YOU BACK-UP YOUR FILES OFFSITE?

by Julie H. Ferguson

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In 1986, I was writing my first book on a computer with miniscule memory. I used floppies to save everything. Now floppy discs would not hold a complete book, so each chapter was a file. In the end I had 36 floppies! When I printed out the ms for my publisher in 1992, #5 was blank.

Since that awful day, I have been obsessive about backing-up my work. Are you?

Having discussed this topic with my colleagues recently, I discovered that most writers are not paying enough attention to this vital task.

I have my software set to auto-save every five minutes, but this is not what I'm talking about. I back-up all my ms files every day and not only on a thumb drive, but also on my server.

It is not good enough to back-up files on devices in your home. What if a thief takes your computers and accessories? What if you drop your laptop? What if your hard-drive burns up? My point here is: **you must back-up offsite and do it every day.**

There are several ways to do it:

- If you have a website, most servers give you enough space so you can upload important files to a private section as well. But you have to do it manually using a File Transfer Protocol (FTP) program. You also have to remember!
- There are many websites that offer storage for important files, which you can encrypt for added security. For example, www.myotherdrive.com provides 5gb storage free (enough for many mss); for USD\$1.99/month they give you 25gb. If you pay the fee, you can set up the transfers to take place automatically every day; if not, you must do it manually. I consider the fee worth every penny.
- Internet service providers often have a program that will do it automatically for you for a small monthly fee. You choose the folders and files for uploading and set a schedule that suits you. I have my files transferred every day during the dinner hour.