



Disaster Planning

...for your computer

A few weeks ago my computer crashed. The closest diagnosis was that a Trojan that I had wounded the week before, had done more damage than we initially suspected. So one night the screen went blue...and then black. The hard drive had to be replaced.

My livelihood is tied to my computer. I am lost without all of the information that I store on it. I have customer files, subscribers lists, articles that have been published, plus articles, newsletters, booklets and presentations in various stages of completion. In addition, I have family photos and images for my articles.

I learned a lot from this experience about what to do and what not to do. Here is a list of the things I did right *and* the things I did wrong:

What I did right:

- **Backed up info to a memory stick.** This was a lifesaver for all of my documents. *I had some initial anxiety when I learned that the computer crashed because of the Trojan. I worried that since I had used the memory stick minutes before the crash, that my backup would also be corrupt. They reassured me that Trojans don't work that way. Which gave me some relief during the several days that my computer was in the shop.*
- **Had a file box full of 3x5 cards with codes and passwords.** Once I got back the stripped down version of my computer, everything had to be reinstalled. Having all of the passwords on file and the CDs stored together, saved me time.
- **Made a hard copy of important documents.** Many of you have received my Time Savers Kit. I was updating it at the time of the crash. That entire file was lost. Thank goodness I had a hard copy. So even though I had to retype five pages and find new images, I didn't have to start over from scratch.
- **Uploaded pictures to Shutterfly.** I've recommended this company before. Now I have an even bigger reason to sing their praises. They store all of my photos on their server for free. So even though I lost my computer copies-there are copies in albums waiting for me on their site!

What I did wrong.

- **Didn't take advantage of the firewalls** provided (for free) by Windows. This would have been useful with McAfee (which I was using at the time.) It would be unnecessary with Norton (which I use now.)
- **Downloaded my anti-spy ware and anti-virus updates.** It seemed like a faster more efficient solution at the time. What I didn't realize was that the links are only good for 30 days *unless* you pay for extended coverage- I didn't.

- **Wasn't diligent about saving pictures to disc.** I wanted to wait to have a reasonable amount of photos before burning a CD. I will now do it monthly! (*Thankfully, I used Shutterfly.*)

What I would do differently.

- Buy a physical copy of any anti-virus program to guarantee that I get the full year that I paid for. Or I'd use the installer file and save a copy to CD. Noting the serial # on a 3x5 card was essential.
- I lost what I was working on and everything else in that folder. I will be more diligent about backing up documents while I am working on them instead of waiting to hit the save key until I've completed it.
- Backup to an online service. I've just become aware of this service. Just as I use a server to hold my subscribers lists (phew!) I can rent space on a server for important documents. This is one of the services I'm considering: Xdrive www.xdrive.com.

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Karen Henke is the owner of Come2Order in Minneapolis, MN. Visit www.come2order2day.com and request a *free* Time-Savers Kit which is loaded with time-saving tips and services. *And* sign up for a subscription to the *free* monthly newsletter.