

How To Backup Your Mac Intelligently

Here's a detailed approach to backing up your Mac. Please feel free to add other solutions or approaches.

- <http://www.sitening.com/blog/2006/05/23/how-to-backup-your-mac-intelligently/>

Apple's next version of the OSX operating system will include a backup system service called "Time Machine"

- <http://www.apple.com/macosx/leopard/timemachine.html>
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Here's some feedback from a March 2007 [UCLA OS/X Forum](#) post with the question. What backup software do you recommend?

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Retrospect is the traditional back-up utility for Macs, but Prosoft Engineering has a nice back-up utility, Data Backup. Their Website is <http://www.prosofteng.com/>, and you can find their products your local Apple store.

There are some other back-up utilities (you can search [VersionTracker](#)), but I'm partial to Prosoft Engineering's products. Data Rescue has saved my bacon on a number of occasions (it's a non-destructive data recovery tool, and it's extremely effective, even with drives that have severely corrupted directory structures). The quality of this product, its ease of use, and the company's excellent support won me over, so I've tried some of their other products (specifically, Picture Rescue and Data Backup).

I haven't had a situation where I could really test Picture Rescue (knock on wood), but I like Data Backup and find it up to the standard of Data Rescue. I think you'll find a consensus on this forum that Prosoft Engineering is one of the really good developers.

You can download software from Prosoft Engineering's Website and demo it.

I know this won't help you until June, but have you looked at the Time Machine feature of Leopard? Looks very neat. You can set it up to mirror to external drives (see <http://www.apple.com/macosx/leopard/timemachine.html>)

It depends on what you want from a backup: full, bootable mirror? Incremental file additions/deletions? Selected folders?

A really simple thing to do is cron rsync at a set interval. I personally use SuperDuper (<http://www.shirt-pocket.com/SuperDuper/SuperDuperDescription.html>).

On a related note, for those wishing to synchronize files and folders between machines, you might look into Unison, developed out of Penn State (<http://www.cis.upenn.edu/~bcpierce/unison/>). I've been using it for three months now with success.

Let's not forget Time Machine. But that's for another day.

Right now there are a lot of solutions out there. You can see them from <http://www.versiontracker.com/macosx/>. I can recommend Synchronize! and Retrospect although I've found Dantz (maker of Retrospect) slacking off with their Mac version recently. Maybe that's changed.

I've found the cheapest being rsync. Below is a script I've used successfully.

```
@ #!/bin/tcsh -f@
@ # UCLA Statistics, 10/21/2005@
set thishost = `hostname`
set mailto = "you|your.email.domain" # change this to your email@
set subject = "Backup completed on: $thishost"
set source = "/your/source/folder" # change this to your source
set target = "the mounted target" # change this to your mounted target
set dest_volume = "/Volumes/$target"

set mailprog = "/usr/bin/mail"
set syncprog = "/usr/bin/rsync"

# Guarantee the destination volume is mounted

if !( -d '$dest_volume' / ) then
@ /usr/sbin/diskutil mount `/usr/sbin/diskutil list | /usr/bin/grep '$target' | /usr/bin/awk '{print $6}'`@
endif
@@cat <<EndOfMessage | $mailprog -s '$subject' $mailto|
***** Running $syncprog -rlptDv $source $dest_volume|

`$syncprog -rlptDv $source $dest_volume`
```

We use Retrospect. Though, over the network back-ups are a requirement on our side.

UCLA pricing: <http://www.cdwg.com/ucla>

Do agree on the comment of EMC, which acquired Dantz in late 2004, as slacking off on Retrospect's Mac OS versions...

Agree that Synchronize! is a very nice product.

Personally, my favorite is from ProSoft... DataBackup>. It is a fully featured personal backup program that includes the great features of Sync & full backup. But the closer for me was the ability to create bootable backups... that is an extremely cool feature and very handy.

Backuppc has really great resource management. For example, I'm currently backing up 663.14GB of data on 110GB of actual disk space. It does this through the normal, run of the mill hard linking method and a pooling system that matches identical files across multiple clients and only backs it up once.

In homogenous labs, the results are outstanding. For example, if you did 20 full backups of 50 fresh installs of OSX....it most likely would only use the same amount of disk space as a single full backup of a single client would.

Pros:

- Web interface with access controls to limit functionality of admin users vs. normal users.
- CLI interface for scripting or management over ssh.
- Capable of bare metal restoration
- Built around standard unix programs such as rsync, tar, apache, perl, etc. (this was a big one for me, retrieving data from a proprietary backup archive discontinued a couple of years ago = no fun)
- 100% cross platform (windows, freebsd, unix, solaris...anything)

Cons:

- It's a disk backup system. So no tape, etc. backups
- It's not "plug and run", you have to design a backup policy that suits your needs, be familiar with setting up an apache server with mod_perl, etc.

- If your clients aren't using smb services and need to use dhcp, you have to serve a static dhcp address (map the ip to the mac of the requesting client)
- Requires familiarity with unix command line.

Besides the above points, it's as feature full as any other package I was looking at.

So far, I've been very satisfied. I haven't gotten around to testing the new rsync that came with the 10.4.9 patch that's supposed to be capable of handling extended attributes and ACL's, but this would make it even better. ;)

I should add, that for home backups and syncing for my various machines (work, server account, home) I mostly use [unison](#)

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- <http://www.lacie.com/silverkeeper/> - freeware from Lacie
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