

Tech tip: Save It Yourself

One day, late in December, I was sitting with an adviser. She went to pull an InDesign file up on her monitor so I could look at it. All of a sudden she screamed. She could not find any yearbook files at all on their server.

Then she called her school's tech person who said that "No, nothing is wrong with the network." After much discussion, weeping and wailing it turns out that the entire YearTech folder had been deleted from the server, "accidentally." Can you imagine this happening to you? Sends chills up your spine, doesn't it?

Luckily for her and her staff the network administrator at the school was able to restore the pages from a backup. The only trouble was that they only back up the network once a week and it was scheduled for that night so the staff lost a week of work. HORRORS!

I can also not count the number of times I have been in a school and the staff wants to show me something they are working on and the network is down. So that means a return trip to the school for me and another week until they can get their particular question answered. Not to mention the aggravation and delay that happen every time the networks goes down, even if their files are still there when it returns a few minutes, hours or sometimes days later they have lost a ton of irreplaceable production time.

There is a solution to both these problems. And yes it will cost money. But not a lot of money. Here it is:

Buy an external hard drive

Right now you can purchase an external USB 2 or FireWire hard drive with plenty of room to store your entire yearbook for less than \$200. This could wind up being the best \$200 you have ever spent in your yearbook life.

For you non-techy folks out there, USB and FireWire are standards for connecting to your PC or Mac. FireWire is predominately a Mac thing although you can find PCs with FireWire cards. USB 2 is a standard connector for PCs and even the newest Macs. You can also buy external hard drives that have both.

While I hesitate to recommend one brand over the other, I can tell you that reading reviews of external hard drives in PC magazines or online at epinions.com is helpful. Or just ask your school's tech person to get one for you, hook it up and maybe even set up some backup software for you. (Many external hard drives come with backup software included.) Tell the tech person you want at least 120 gigabytes. That should hold not only your yearbook pages,

proofs and PDFs but all your digital photos as well.

Once you have the hard drive hook it up to your computer (not a student computer) and each and every night, just before you go home, copy the entire 2006 YearTech folder from your network server to this hard drive.

Then the next time that server goes down or someone accidentally trashes the yearbook folder, just continue working from the external hard drive. Once the network is restored, just copy the entire folder from the external hard drive back to the network and you are good to go. No lost time. No lost data and always a backup of everything you have done that day.

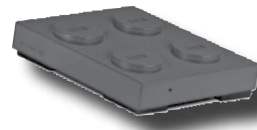
If you have a great tech person at your school, he or she can rig the whole thing up for you to do this automatically every single day.

So take a load off your mind and order an external hard drive today. Oh, and one other thing you will love about them. Once you have copied all your files to it, you (the adviser) can take it home and work on the yearbook there. This is great for advisers who have computers at home and want to work to finish a deadline.

If you do this, just make sure that the first thing you do the next morning is to copy the entire yearbook folder from the external hard drive you took home back to the server so you are working on the latest files.



This hard drive is a dual USB 2/FireWire drive. You can connect it to any Mac or PC and it should work fine. Cost is dependent on capacity.



No, this isn't a Lego™. It's a brand new, stackable USB 2 hard drive from a company named LaCie. These drives come in cool colors and can be stacked if you get more than one.

One final money saving note: If you or your school are getting rid of any old computers, ask your tech person if he or she can pull one of the ATA hard drives (the type usually found as an internal hard disk) and install it in a FireWire or USB 2 enclosure for you. A great way to get a very low cost external drive. ✕