

Waldo Canyon Fire

Towards the end of June a terrible wild fire destroyed 350+ homes in the foothills of Colorado Springs. The pictures show whole streets with nothing but ash where homes once stood. Fortunately or unfortunately, Michelle and I were on vacation during the worst of it. We flew home Sunday, July 1st and were wondering if we would see any fire or smoke on the mountain side as we landed, but we saw nothing. By the time we returned to Colorado Springs 350+ families had lost their homes in the most destructive wild fire in Colorado history. Thankfully our home was never in any danger, but it was a close one for all of us living in Colorado Springs. [Click here](#) to see over 70 incredible pictures from the *Denver Post* Blog.



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Why Backups Are Important

This is an unpleasant reminder of why we do backups of our computers, smartphones and tablets. Whether it is a wildfire, earthquake, hurricane, tornado or theft, there is always a risk that the data on our gadgets might be

gone in a second. So we perform two kinds of backups: 1.) we backup the entire contents of our computer hard drive to an external hard drive and 2.) we backup our important data to the Internet (the "Cloud").

Generally smartphones and tablets are syncing in some way to either our computer, the Cloud, or both. Then when we make a backup of our computer hard drive to an external hard drive we have a second copy. If we are also backing up to the Cloud then we have a third copy of some of our important data. Finally, the reason we still do a backup to an external hard drive is because if the hard drive in the computer were to stop working we would replace it with a new drive and copy the entire contents back from the external hard drive saving many hours of reinstalling software and settings.



Mountain Shadows neighborhood

External Hard Drive Backup

Backing up the entire contents of your hard drive to an external hard drive is very easy these days. In *Windows 7* you would use the [Backup and Restore](#) utility and on a *Mac* you would use [Time Machine](#). Both utilities will copy the entire contents of your computer hard drive to the external hard drive and then copy only new and changed files as time goes on.



A home burnt to the ground

Cloud Backup

The easiest way to get a Cloud backup of your important files is with [Carbonite](#) for \$60 per year. This is a service that backups your files to the Internet so in case your computer and external hard drive are destroyed or stolen you would be able to recover your files from the Internet. If this ever happened to you, God forbid, you would buy a new computer, install Carbonite, and magically all your files would return.

It is true that some of the new syncing solutions for smartphones and tablets (for example [Apple's iCloud](#) service) perform a similar function with some of your data, but that might only work, for example, with your contacts and calendar and some of your photos. These syncing services certainly do not backup your entire photo library and all the documents you might have on your computer. That is where a service like *Carbonite* comes in.



The Fire Approaches the Air Force Academy

In Summary

- Everyone should have an external hard drive backup for the entire contents of their computer hard drive.
- If you wish to have an "off-site" backup solution, install [Carbonite](#) for \$60/year.
- If your smartphone or tablet is syncing it's data automatically then you might also have a "Cloud" copy of that same data that is syncing. But if you are still syncing by using a cable and manually performing the sync then the only two copies of your data are probably your device and the computer with no "off-site" copy in case of disaster.

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