

Crossing the Digital Divide Volume 26

“Stress Factors”

by Joseph Feigon

for the Observer

It's been a busy week – too much to do after being “off-line” for two weeks. This week's column will be short, but important.

Backups: you've heard me talk about backing up your pictures and documents and financial data, how are you doing? Backups are critical, particularly that information (data) that you could never replace, e.g., pictures. PC or Mac, having a secondary (external) drive for backup is essential. Let's consider a backup routine and device your first priority if you have no existing backups.

If you use a Mac, learn about Time Machine. If you use a PC, get a copy of SyncBakFree or use the native tools that came with the backup device you purchased. HP, Lacie, etc., all include a software package, with an easy-to-setup configuration guide that will enable you to backup your photos, documents and other important information without too much effort.

Let's assume you do have a backup device, let's consider what happens when that unit dies. Notice that I used “when”, disk drives will fail, all of them. Don't wait until you can't recover data to consider a tertiary (3rd) backup destination.

Cloud – Dropbox, Google, Microsoft, Apple – are you setup? 5-15GB of free storage, per vendor. I'm a big fan of Google's “free” suite of services. Dropbox offers 5GB gratis, as does Apple and Microsoft. Google Drive is 15GB! Get a gmail account, it's all there.

I purchased a couple of inexpensive tablets recently, and took one out of the box to test before delivering to my client. When I initiated the tablet, it asked me if I'd like to restore my data from my Google account. Of course I wanted to see how effective a bare-metal Cloud recovery was. I entered my Google ID and password, waiting roughly an hour for ALL my contacts and Droid desktop apps to populate on the new, 7” Android based tabled (about 10% the cost of an iPad). Wow – just after dinner, I was able to log onto Facebook, check Gmail, use my wireless tools, and grab just about every other “app” I have on my Smartphone. This is cool, and such a relief knowing, if I did lose my phone, my addressbook is safe in the Cloud. Next week, after my new Exede quota cycle starts, I'll replicate my photos to my Google Drive – everything non-business will be backed-up to the Cloud.

Need help, drop me a note.