

# *Tech Tips for Seniors*

## **Computer Data Backup and Storage**

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The information we all have on our computers... from photos to financial assets ... are among our most valuable and sensitive possessions.

Creating an archive of your data is as important task as regularly checking your bank account statement.

There are two ways to protect your digital data:

- An external storage device connected with a wire or plugged into to your computer
- A subscription to a remote data storage service, usually called “cloud” storage.

## Local External Storage

If you want complete control of your personal data, the safest way is to purchase your own external storage device.

You can find them in brick-and- mortar stores such as Staples and Best Buy, or you can find them on Amazon.

They come in a wide variety of sizes and shapes, ranging from a plug-in “thumb drive” to a larger drive with a wire that plugs into a USB port on your computer.

The larger the amount of storage, the larger the cost. The nice thing is, it is a one-time cost.

The process is simple. Plug your device into a USB port and an icon representing your storage device will appear on your computer's screen. Tap that icon on your computer screen and the storage device's screen will open.

You can then select one or many files, photos or folders on your computer and drag them onto your storage device.

This is a manual process and the storage files will be updated only when you do it.

**“Cloud” Storage**

No, cloud storage isn't located in Heaven. It is a large array of computers ... located here on Earth ... where your private data are securely stored.

Those remote computers are configured in much the same way as you might place and organize file folders in a vertical metal file cabinet with four drawers.

Companies such as Microsoft, Apple and Google sell storage space (gigabytes and terabytes) in their large computer data centers. Some companies offer a small amount of data storage for free. You would be charged every month for your data storage.

They simply create a main file folder for you on their computers. Your data account has a web address, secured with your personal ID and a password.

Your main folder can include your own folders of data or photos organized any way you want.

You can transmit data (photos, files and documents) to your own folder. And you can retrieve and change your data. All you need is a Wi-Fi connection for your computer.

Your data is usually backed up every day and often is located in a second location to make sure power outages and disasters such fires don't destroy your data.

The process is as simple as selecting a file, a folder of files or all of your data folders and dragging them into your cloud storage account.

Here are some of the most popular “cloud” storage systems:

Microsoft One Drive - [onedrive.com](https://onedrive.com)

Apple iCloud - [iCloud.com](https://icloud.com)

Google Drive - [cloud.google.com](https://cloud.google.com)

Dropbox - [Dropbox.com](https://Dropbox.com)

Do an Internet search on the words “cloud storage” for additional services and information.

A final suggestion: Back up and update your computer’s files on a regular schedule.

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If you have questions about any of this, feel free to make a “Technology Tips” appointment on Tuesday mornings at Generations, when the center opens. Just call the main number: 215-723-5841.

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