

LIFE GOES ON BAG - DATA MAINTAINANCE

[Workbook](#) page: None

[Listening to Katrina](#) companion page: [HYST - Documents](#)

If you have followed along up to this point, you should have a laptop (or other computer), a scanner, a printer, one or more USB Flash Drives, and an External Hard Drive. You should also have your data store set up, and all your important documents and photographs organized neatly.

The *meaning* of that is that you have a tremendous amount of data wealth that you never had before. Don't you feel rich? On this page we're going to talk about maintaining that data wealth over time. It really isn't nearly as difficult as some people make it out to be, so don't panic.

Having Your Stuff Together (HYST) isn't something you do just once or something that you do once every so often. It's a process that you have to start at some point, but once you HYST, it doesn't stay that way by magic. You have to continuously maintain it - but this doesn't really take much time. When you get a new license, for instance, you need to scan it into your encrypted store and then make sure that all your secondary copies get updated as well. This does not have to be overly grueling. I usually do my updates once a week. Once a month may work for you. Whatever you decide, you should have some kind of Strategy of Data Maintenance.

Think about what it takes to do it. If you get a new document of some kind, you just scan it and put the digital file into your Documents folder in whatever subfolder it belongs in. The physical document goes into your file box. If you take some photographs, you just copy them into your Photos folder where they go, make a second copy of them to your MemKey\Photos folder and use the image resizing software to make them smaller.

Once a week you plug in your USB Flash Drive and run the SyncToy - which takes all of three minutes.

Once a month (or more, if you like), you plug in your External Hard Drive and replicate your entire data store - which may take 10 or 15 minutes. You can do all of these things while watching television, listening to the radio, or otherwise performing some other task. I like to scan documents during commercial breaks in a television show, for instance. If you set up a little work area in your living room, this is very easy.

How often should you take redundant copies? My recommendation for most people is once a month. If you haven't made a lot of changes to your files, then maybe you can go even longer. If you make many changes - or important changes - to your files, then you should take a copy. If you just got back from Disney World, for instance, and uploaded 1,000 pictures of your kids enjoying the place, then you really want to go ahead and take a copy of those photos off into your External Hard Drive for safe keeping. You really don't know when the cat may decide to use your laptop as a litter box when you aren't looking...

You will be able to fit many redundant copies onto your External Hard Drive, and over time you will end up with a long list of logical date named folders. At some point you will approach the capacity of the drive. Don't worry too much about having a lot of free space. Free space isn't valuable. The copies are. As you approach the capacity of the drive, you will need to remove

some historical copies so that you can keep making current copies. There are two simple rules to follow:

1. Delete copies as you created them. That is, delete oldest copies first.
2. Keep at least one copy for each year. That means that you'll eventually end up with *very* old data archives, but that's OK. You may want that some day. Remember that empty storage space is not valuable, but the copies are.

If your laptop computer is struck by lightning, is lost, stolen, or otherwise suffers a terminal failure, you will be able to easily recover all of your data onto a new machine with little bother by copying the data back from your External Hard Drive. Should you lose both laptop and External Hard Drive, then you have to fall back to the USB Flash Drives. If you accidentally delete something that you *really* didn't want to, you can always recover the file directly from one of your redundant copies or the Flash Drives. This has saved me much heartache many times!

If you are bugging out, you will want to take your External Hard Drive along with you. Under normal circumstances, however, you do not want to keep them in the same bag - or even in the same location. I leave mine at work, for instance. That way if my LGO Bag is lost or stolen, my External Hard Drive is safe at work.

There are many variations on this theme. You may decide to place a copy of your encrypted documents onto your MP3 player, for instance. That way, even in the gym or out running laps or sitting in your deer stand or duck blind, you are never separated from a copy of your vital documents.

Whatever you decide to do, DO IT! I am always surprised at the number of people who come to me and beg me to recover data from their dead computers because they did not bother to make a copy of any kind. Remember: LAZY PEOPLE DO NOT PROSPER!

Shane