

This transcript was created with the help of AI and transcription tools. It has not been edited for errors or accuracy.

Resourceful Designer Episode 337: Backing Up: It's better to be safe than sorry.

I had a completely different topic I was gonna record for you this week. But then, something happened with one of my clients. And it made me think I should really put out this, call it a PSA, a public service announcement about backups. Now I know I've talked about backups before and their importance.

And if you think the same thing and you're saying, oh, well, I'll just skip this episode, please stick with me. I've got a couple of stories I wanna share with you that emphasize the importance. So here's the first one I wanna share with you. I was recently contacted by a new prospective client asking me if I would be willing to update their website. They told me that their current or previous web designer was no longer doing this. They were getting out of the business, and they were looking for somebody new and they had been referred from somebody else that, to contact me. And I was told that their previous web designer was still accessible to get all sorts of information from them or whatever help they would provide, but they just weren't willing to do the, website anymore. And in the same email, she was asking how fast I could get to it because her website wasn't working.

Well, right there, you you start wondering. It's like, okay, what's going on here? Sure enough, I go check the domain and the website wasn't working. So I contacted the previous web designer, and they were very courteous. She offered me all the assets she had, which weren't very much, surprisingly, as well as all the login information for the website and the domain. Now it turns out that the website was hosted on Bluehost. And when I went to log in to Bluehost, it told me that I had either the email or the password incorrect. And I contacted the web designer and said, did you give me the right password? Because I can't get in. And she said, well, those are the ones I have.

And she even resent them to me. She says, here, I'll copy and paste them again just in case. And she resent it to me, and sure enough, they were identical, and I couldn't get into Bluehost. So at this point, I contacted the client, and I asked had anything changed? Had they tried to access it? And they said, no. They actually hadn't thought of the website in months months, and they don't know how long the website's been down. So long story short, going through some back and forth, the client finally realized that they had forgotten to update a credit card with Bluehost almost a year ago. And after a, I guess, a grace period, Bluehost deleted their account. Now she was in a panic.

They ended up setting up a new account. She sent me the login and password for it. And at first, she wasn't sure if it was a new account or if they were able to revive her old account. So she sent me the username and password and I was able to log in, but sure enough, you look around and there's nothing there. It's a fresh account with no history behind it. So since I was logged in, I was able to pretend to be the client and contact Bluehost support. And sure enough, they said that they deleted the account after the, the the previous one and there was no way to recover any of it. So my next step was to contact the web designer again and just find out if they had backups of the website.

Because, you know, now that they had a new account Des up, all I had to do was restore a backup and get the website up and running. Now she still wanted me to design the new website or or revamp it, but at least I can get her current website or her old website up and running again. When I contact the web host or not the web host. When I contacted the, web designer, she told me that, yeah, of course she did backups. Bluehost takes care of the backups. And I asked, I said, do you have anything else? Because that account is no more. And when you let the web host take care of the backups, those backups are stored in that account. They're stored on the same server as the website.

This transcript was created with the help of AI and transcription tools. It has not been edited for errors or accuracy.

And because the account was deleted, that meant so were the backups. And she said no. She always just relied on the web host to back up the websites in case something happened, and she didn't have anything. So we're left with no website whatsoever. Now luckily, the website was archived in the, the Internet archive, the Wayback Machine. I was able to go back, see what it looked like, get some information from it. So at least I have a starting point to rebuild the website. But my cautionary tale that I wanted to share with you is the importance of backups and not just letting your web host do the backups.

You need to have off-site or off server backups. Whether that's you manually going in and exporting the website and downloading a copy and keeping it on your computer. Or use a plugin such as SolidWP's backup which formerly was Ithemes BackupBuddy but Ithemes is now SolidWP so it's still BackupBuddy but now they call it SolidWP backup. But that's what I use on every single website, both my own and my clients, in order to create off server backups. And what solid backups allows you to do is send those backups to multiple destinations. There is a stash like a hard drive that you can purchase through them or if you have Dropbox or OneDrive or Google Drive or many others, Amazon. There there's many other options. They're called destinations.

You could set it up that when it does a website backup, it sends your file to that destination to be stored. And that way, should something ever happen such as the case of this client where their credit card was not updated and they ended up losing the account, which I still don't know how that happened. I mean, she should have been getting, email warnings to ask her to update it or say that the account was being deleted. But anyways, I'm not gonna get into that part. But by losing that, if there was an off server backup, we could have restored that site very easily. And that's why I do it. Should something happen to the server? Because you you think about it. Does it make sense to have the backup of your website? You know, this is a a security measure and have it in the same location as your website on the same server stored in the same place.

That's kind of like having an alarm system for your home and writing the the key code right next to the the alarm panel so that you don't forget it. It's it's kind of redundant. It it defeats the purpose. Now, yes, you can have your web Cotes back them up to the server and then go download that backup. But are you gonna remember to do that? And that's why I love this solid backups, formerly backup buddy because it does it automatically. You set it up and then you don't have to worry about it anymore. So I do that with every website to ensure that should something ever happen to the the website, to the host, to whatever their servers get compromised. I don't know.

Whatever. There's always an extra backup of the website that is easily to restore. So, anyways, that's the first story I wanted to share with you. The importance of backing up your website but not just backing it up. Having a backup stored somewhere else than where the website is. Because every web host out there offers backups. I personally use SiteGround for my web hosting. If you're interested in learning more about SiteGround, visit [resourceful designer.com/siteground](https://resourcefuldesigner.com/siteground).

I host all my websites and all my client websites there. I love their service. It's so easy to use and they have everything that I need. But they include a backup as well. But again, the backup is stored on the server. Now they make it extremely easy through their interface to download those backups if you wanna store them and then, you know, upload them to Dropbox or whatever. But again, that's something you have to remember to do. And I manage a lot of websites for clients so I don't have the time to go in and download these backups on a regular basis.

This transcript was created with the help of AI and transcription tools. It has not been edited for errors or accuracy.

But a plugin such as Solid Backups and there are other ones out there. I just this is the one that I've been using it for years and, it's the one I rely on. Using a plugin like this, it just automates the process. It'll make a backup and send it to the destination. The other thing I love about this is you can backup the entire website or you can backup just the database. So I will do like a full website backup maybe once a month or depending on how busy the website is, maybe even once a quarter. And then do either a daily or a weekly database backup again, depending on how often. If it's like a podcast that releases once a week, I'll do a weekly database backup.

So worst case scenario, they would lose the last podcast post. They would just have to repost it. Now they do have options to just back up the media or just back up the themes and plugins, but since I'm doing a full backup anyways that includes all that stuff, I've never bothered setting up those. So I usually set up a full backup that does it on, a schedule as I said either monthly or quarterly. And then I do a database backup which is much smaller and easier to back up and that one there I'll do on a either daily or weekly depending on how frequent the website is updated. So if you're interested in learning more about this plugin to install and, again, this is just for WordPress plugins. If you're not using WordPress, this won't help you. But you can visit resourcefuldesigner.com/backupbuddy because that's what it used to be called and that's still the link.

I should add, a new link. But for now, it's a resourcefuldesigner.com/backupbuddy. Will take you to the Solid, WP backup website and, you can learn more about it. Now the second story I wanna share with you is something I saw in a graphic design related Facebook group. I was just perusing them over the weekend, and I came across this story of a graphic designer from the the Ukraine who ended up having to flee their area because of the war that's going on there with the horrible thing that's happening over there. But they had to flee their area, and they weren't able to take up whatever they wanted with them. And they ended up leaving their computer and all that behind. And it turns out that and they didn't specify if it was a house, if it was an apartment, but they just said wherever they lived got destroyed.

It, a a a bomb or a missile or I I don't know. They didn't go into details. They just said that their where they lived was destroyed and they lost everything that they had. And in this conversation, somebody asked, like, did you lose everything? Because they were a self employed graphic designer. A freelancer, if you will. And they said, no. They were lucky. They had backed up everything to a cloud backup.

And as soon as they were able to get a new computer, it was just it was a very simple matter to download everything, and they had all their files and they were able to get back up and running because that's the way they supported themselves was doing graphic design work. So in that case, they had a proper cloud based backup of their system, and it was just a matter of getting a new computer and reinstalling via the backup, and they were up and running in no time. And that's another important reason to have proper backups. I was over at, visiting somebody's house recently and they knew I was, you know, they call me a computer guy. I mean, I'm a graphic designer. I use a computer. But people I don't know why. When you're a graphic designer, people tend to think you're a computer person.

And even though, yeah, I do know, you know, a bunch about computers. I don't necessarily call myself that. But anyways, that's beside the point. This guy wanted to show me his computer. He had built a computer. Again, a PC. I'm a Mac guy. He had built a PC.

This transcript was created with the help of AI and transcription tools. It has not been edited for errors or accuracy.

But, he had, you know, meticulously researched each and every part, and he was really proud of what he built. And part of his setup was he had a RAID system. And if you're not familiar what that is, it's it's an enclosure that has multiple hard drives in it. And in his case, the hard drives were he had 3 hard drives in it, and they're all mirrored of themselves. In his case, there's different ways to set up a RAID system. But in his case, he had them mirrored so that all three drives had the exact same information on them. And that was his backup system. So if one of the hard drives failed, the other 2 would have the information in it.

So he he had those. And the way the the RAID system works is you could actually take one of the drives out and bring it somewhere else for safe keeping, but he he doesn't do that. So he was saying, like, you know, he had this redundancy in backups because he had 3 hard drives. And this is backup of his computer. So in essence, he had 4 copies of his data. And then I asked him, I said, do you also back up to the cloud? And his response was, I don't trust the cloud. I don't put anything on it because I don't trust I know my system. I can trust the security measures I put in place so I'm not gonna get hacked.

I can't trust that the cloud won't be hacked, so I don't put anything on there. And that's a mentality that I know a lot of people have that, and I I understand it. But think of this, he is spending so much money to create these backups, and he's so proud of it because he has these redundancies. If one of the hard drive fails, he has 2 additional hard drives that still have the same data on it. So he you know, what are the chances of all 3 of them failing? But what he's not taking into consideration is things like that that story I just shared you, this graphic designer from the Ukraine whose dwelling got destroyed in an attack. He lost his computer. He lost his backups. He lost everything.

But he was lucky because he had an online or a cloud backup, and he was able to get back up and running again. Now you may be thinking, well, I'm not in a war torn country and that's not gonna happen to me. But what about floods? What about fires? What about earthquakes? What about tornadoes? What about hurricanes? Any of those could destroy your system, and it doesn't matter if you have 1 redundancy, 2 redundancies, 3 redundancies. If they're all in the same location, they can all be destroyed. It's the same thing as I just mentioned earlier with the websites. What's the point of backing up your website and storing that backup on the same server that the website's on? If something happens to the server, you lose the backup as well. Well, that's what happens with these physical backups. It's great.

I have a 5 TB hard drive here on my desk, and that's my immediate backup of my computer. But I use a system called Backblaze that also backs up to the cloud. So my hard drive here is great if I need to quickly restore something or look something up. But Backblaze is kind of my insurance, my security blanket. If something was to happen, if my house was to burn down, if, I'm I'm not in a flood area, but who knows? There there are earthquakes around here. So if something happened in earthquake and my house was destroyed or even somebody just broke in and grabbed my computer and my hard drive and and took off with it, I would be able to be back up and running in no time because of Backblaze. Now Backblaze is something you set it up on your computer, and you can set it up to back up your computer. You can set it up to back up external hard drives, and it just sends all the information to the cloud.

As you make changes to your computer, it checks it on a regular basis. And and regular, I mean, several times a day. And it looks and it says, oh, there's a new file here or this file has been updated. I better back it up. And it does. It sends it right away. So your backup is always up to date. It's a set it and forget it solution.

This transcript was created with the help of AI and transcription tools. It has not been edited for errors or accuracy.

You install Backblaze on your computer, you configure it, and then you never worry about it again. Or you hope to never have to worry about it again. But if something ever happens, you have that peace of mind knowing that all you need to do is get your hands on another computer, and you can restore everything you have from Backblaze. Now if you're interested to learn more, visit resourcefuldesigner.com/backblaze. And I wanted to share those two stories with you because, I mean, one of them was a client that just reached out to me out of the blue and that was the situation they're in. And the other was a conversation that I just read. Now I don't know when this took place, but to me, I just read it. So it's new.

And these two incidents were fresh in my mind. And it's an important enough message that I wanted to reach out to you and ensure that you are protecting yourself. You know, I'm old enough that I remember a time before the internet. And even at the infancy of the, the internet when people weren't thinking of online backups or there was no, options for cloud or online backup at the time. I remember watching the news and seeing things like floods or fires or, you know, in some case, earthquake or, you know, watching news from the the US where tornadoes were passing through. The people that were Des, that their homes had been lost. And the thing that affected them the most was not their furniture and all that stuff. Most of them, it was the Cotes.

The their photo albums. You know, people crying because they no longer have any photos of their parents. They have no way to see what their parents look like anymore. Or the kids are grown up and they lost all the photos of the kids when they were younger. And that's what was really devastating. It was those memories that they lost because back then it was all physical photos. Well, now everything is digital. Most of your life is stored in your photos.

They're stored on your phone, on your computer and that well, if you somehow lose your device, something happens to it, and they're not backed up to the cloud in some form, you lose all those memories. And I just remember the faces of those people on the news, how devastated they were, and how, like, you know, the house didn't matter to them. The furniture didn't matter to them. You know, their dishes and all the belongings didn't matter to them. What mattered to them were those memories that they lost, especially the photos. So if you are not, and I hope you Mark, if you're already doing this, then great. But if you are not already taking care of your backups, don't wait any longer. You should stop what you're doing and look into it right now.

It's that important. Know, whether it's your website, make sure that you go right now if you're relying on your web host to create the backups. Go to your web host and download that backup right now to your computer, just in case. And then think of something whether you use solidwp backup, again, resourcefuldesigner.com/backupbuddy, it will take you there. Whether you use that or you find another solution, set something up that'll back up your website off server. And if you do if you host and manage websites for clients, make sure you do that for them as well. It's an additional selling feature as well. What anytime I sell a a web maintenance plan to a client, that's one of the features I I tell them is that I do off server backups.

And I explain to them the importance of that. And then use something like Backblaze. Now you some people say, well, I already back up my stuff to, to Dropbox or to to Google or or was it Google Drive or OneDrive and all that stuff? That's good. But you keep in mind, those things were not meant for that that reason. That's why I I because I I use Dropbox and I use these other ones as well, but I like Backblaze because it's a full complete backup. I can have everything backed up, my applications and the whole bit. And the other benefit with Backblaze is if you need, they will actually mail you a physical hard drive with your entire backup on it. So instead of trying to download everything and get a a new computer Des up,

This transcript was created with the help of AI and transcription tools. It has not been edited for errors or accuracy.

you can have them overnight a hard drive to you.

Just plug that hard drive in and, you know, reset, migrate, or or whatever, set up your new computer from that hard drive. And then you, there's a small fee involved. If you mail the hard drive back to them, then they you know, you only pay the small fee, or you can keep the hard drive and pay for it. But that's just another benefit of using something like Backblaze. So that's what I wanted to talk about today. It it's just it was kind of coincidence that 2 things happened in 1 week, both of them involving backups. One of them was a sad situation. She lost her website, and the other one was, I guess Cotes still a sad situation because the guy lost his home.

But at least his livelihood, he was able to get back up and running, help his clients, still make some money, and try to get back on his feet that way. And that was because he had the online backups. So if you aren't already, please, please, don't wait. Get on to this as soon as possible, and get your things backed up. It's like extra insurance. It'll give you peace of mind, and you never know. As I said, at the beginning, Cotes better to be safe than sorry. These are the type of things I've been paying for Backblaze for years, and I hope I hope that I never ever have to rely on them.

But I know that they're there, just in case. So anyways, thank you very much for putting up with this impromptu episode. I thought it was a very important thing. I know I've talked about backups in previous episodes, but it's that important that I wanted to talk about it again. Now before I go, if you have any questions or any concerns or anything like that and you wanna reach out to me, the easiest way to do so is connect me via the resourceful designer community. It's only \$15 a month. It's actually \$14.95 per month. Gives you access to the entire community where you could connect with myself and many other designers who are trying to grow their business.

They are dedicated to being the best selves they can be, and they're doing that through community, through learning, through sharing, through collaborating, and so much more. So if you are an at home based designer, or even if you're not, if you just want a a good community of people that are Des, that's why there's a price involved is because I want people who are truly dedicated to their business in the community. And if that sounds like something that interests you, please visit [resourceful designer.com/community](https://resourcefuldesigner.com/community) and join today. So thank you very much. Until next time, I am Mark Des Cotes, wishing you all the best with your design business and hoping that you have backups. So until next time, stay creative.