WHAT IS BACKUP AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?
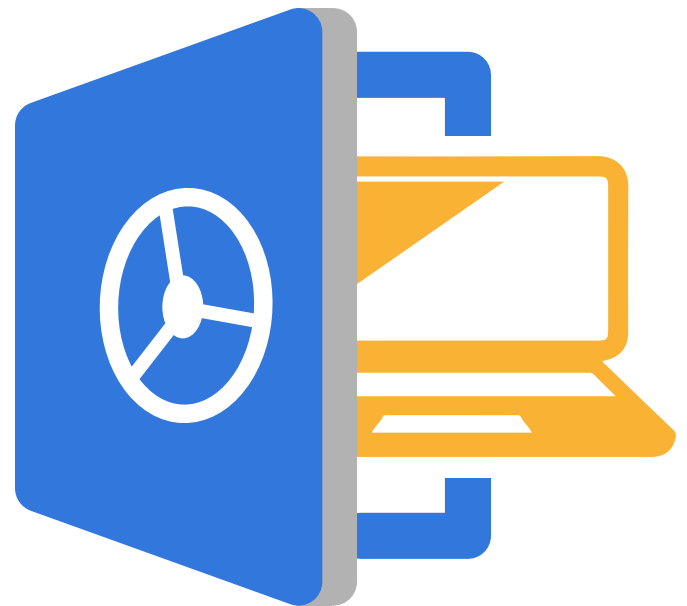
Target Audience: eTwinning teachers   **Subject:** Backup

EUROPEAN
CYBER
SECURITY
MONTH

According to the Cambridge and Oxford dictionaries, a backup is "a copy of information held on a computer that is stored separately from the computer"[1] and/or "a copy of a file or other item of data made in case the original is lost or damaged."[2]

Backups are important because they allow the restoring of files and data that are lost or stolen.

1   https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/backup
2   https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/backup

THREE RULES TO FOLLOW

1. Backup everything that is important

When one has to decide what to backup, you should start by answering a really simple question:

What files or data do you have in your computer that you would hate to lose?

Example for teachers

You could explain to students the context in which they should do a back up. There are things that people usually hate losing such as pictures and homework. Explain that you know this is difficult and often seen as a hassle but it is important. You can tell your students that when they go home at the end of a holiday it is important to make a copy of any photos that they've taken just in case!

2. Backup as often as you value your data

Backup as often as you value your files and data: if you would hate to lose the work you'd done just from one day, then backup every day! Teachers spend a lot of time planning and creating and time is precious, backing up is really important. The job is difficult enough, don't make it worse by losing your work. A school in the UK was recently attacked by cyber-criminals[3], their server was encrypted and the school actually paid the ransom to have the files released. This sort of thing does happen – but having a good back up means it is much less of a problem.

IF YOU WOULD HATE TO LOSE THE WORK YOU'D DONE JUST FROM ONE DAY, BACKUP EVERY DAY!

Example for teachers

You could give your students an example to make them realize the importance of backing up data. It was the end of the summer and I was writing the final paragraphs of my summer essay. I was really proud of it, it was the result of almost 3 weeks of work. I knew I was going to impress my teacher and get a good grade. I was writing the final paragraphs when, suddenly, the house's lights went off and my computer froze. When I turned my computer on again, my essay was gone! Three weeks of sweat and hard work all gone! In the end, I managed to rewrite the essay, but it was not as good as the first one...and I had to stay home and spend the last two weeks of the summer rewriting it rather than playing football with my mates. From that day, I backup my homework every night.

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3   https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tyne-44045355

3. Backup with a USB pen drive or a external driver

It is important to backup data using a device other than the computer on which data are stored. Saving your files on a personal computer is not enough. That computer can be stolen or hacked and those files can be gone in a minute.

There are many devices that store files. A USB pen drive or an external hard disk are great, they are relatively cheap and they have plenty of space to store. Choose the perfect device: a USB pen drive is smaller, but a hard drive has more space.

For an extra layer of security
consider using an online storage service

There are plenty of online storage services that allow storing files online free of charge for a limited amount of space, ranging from 2 to 15 GB. As rule of thumb: 2GB can contain between 200 and 400 pictures depending on their quality, while 15GB stores between 750 and 1,500 pictures. Take a look at some services on Wikipedia for a comparison:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_file_hosting_services [1]

An important feature of these services is that you can access the stored files from anywhere. The user usually has to go onto the service provider's website, enter their own account details with their username and password and download them.

There is obviously a security problem. Theoretically, if the service provider is breached, data can be found and accessed by criminals. This is why users should carefully choose what to upload online as well as taking care over where to store it.

BACKUP DATA USING A DEVICE OTHER THAN THE COMPUTER ON WHICH DATA ARE STORED.

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[1] In alternative, use this: https://www.pcmag.com/roundup/306323/the-best-cloud-storage-providers-and-file-syncing-services

Find more resources on the Better Internet for Kids portal!

More cyber hygiene resources in various European languages can be found at the Better Internet for Kids portal. Check out the #SaferInternet4EU campaign page.