

BEEEEEP! BEEEEEP! BEEEEEP! BACK IT UP

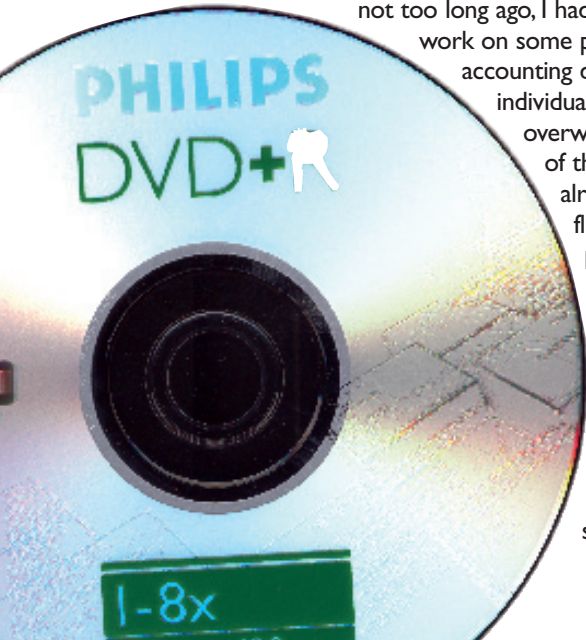
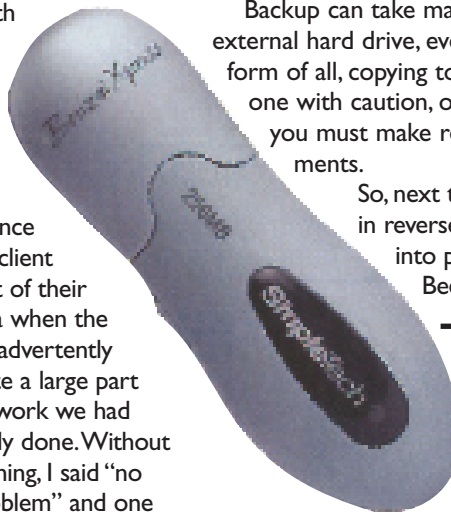
By Mario Nowogrodzki, CPA, MAccIS

There is no amount of money that can replace your information. This is the premise behind the top and easiest practice to follow when it comes to computer safety: backup.

If you inadvertently delete an important document, or if your business' contact database becomes corrupt and can no longer be opened, or if your accounting file is damaged, or ultimately if there is a natural disaster or fire and your computers are gone, you can always purchase new equipment—but there is no amount of money in the world that can replace the lost or damaged information stored in your computers.

After the recent major disruptions caused by Hurricane Wilma in our community, my staff and I have been around numerous instances of networks (computers, servers, printers, etc.) damaged by the storm itself or by power problems after the fact. In these cases, one major breath of relief is the fact that backups exist. Yes, replacing damaged equipment can be costly, but replacing lost information is priceless.

For illustration purposes, I make it a rule that anytime I work at any clients' QuickBooks file, the first thing I do is backup the working data file. It has saved me and the client several times. I recall one instance not too long ago, I had a client work on some part of their accounting data when the individual inadvertently overwrote a large part of the work we had already done. Without flinching, I said "no problem" and one minute later we had her QuickBooks data back to what it was at the beginning of the day, thanks to the backup I had made. It is incredible how something so sim-



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ple—and free, by the way—is so appreciated by everyone. It is still hard to understand why it is so underused.

Backup can take many forms: tape, CD-ROM, USB flash drive, external hard drive, even off-site internet backups, or the simplest form of all, copying to a temporary folder on your hard disk (use this one with caution, only as a quick, temporary backup). The lesson is you must make regular backups, at least of your important documents.

So, next time you hear a large truck's beeping as it is going in reverse, it should be a reminder to everyone to put into practice the fine art of computer backup. Beeeep! Beeeep! Beeeep! Back it up, back it up, back it up!

Mario Nowogrodzki, CPA, Master of Accounting Info Systems, is a Certified QuickBooks® ProAdvisor® and an information systems consultant and lecturer. He is the founder and principal of Mendelson Consulting—a computer-consulting firm specializing in small businesses since 1992. By focusing on providing a solution-based approach, customized to each client's individual and specific needs, Mendelson Consulting becomes the in-house technology department for small to mid-size firms at a fraction of the cost. Reach Mario at 954.447.0250 or at www.mendelsonconsulting.com.

