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Time Machine logo  
Apple

## 'Time Machine Saved My Life'

### *A crash story with a happy ending*

Nobody talks about the importance of [backing up](#) your computer anymore. The subject is always brought up only when someone's hard drive crashes. But then it's too late, isn't it? However, it looks like at least one Mac user learned from others' mistakes, and acted before all was lost.

Meet [Jharston](#), the proud owner of a 13-inch White MacBook and fan of the Mac OS X (10.5.5) Leopard operating system. For one reason or another, the guy decided one day he'd use Time Machine to back up the contents of his Mac's hard drive. Call him paranoid, but gigs worth of videos and photos can mean everything to a person. One day, all of a sudden, his hard drive crashed. After successfully recovering all the data he had lost (including settings) using Apple's automatic backup system, Jharston immediately went online on the Apple Discussions forum to let everyone in on the benefits of backing up their systems.

"I just wanted to share this bit of information and the importance of backing up your computer," Jharston begins his post. "Out of the blue, today my MacBook's hard drive crashed. I have been using TM and was concerned, but not too much. I went down to the store today, bought a new hard drive, installed it, and used time machine to recover everything. In one hour, my MacBook was back in working order with my new hard drive," he explains.

"No problems and everything works as advertised. If you're not using Time Machine to backup your computer, don't wait. Get an external hard drive or Time Capsule and back it up," Jharston concluded. The user also revealed that all photos, videos and music were properly replaced. "Some of those pictures and videos were very important to me and was glad I had a backup," he says.

Readers should note that Jharston was able to get his Mac up and running (just as it was) on the very same day his hard drive crashed. An additional tip (on our behalf) is to compress and neatly store all your "keepers." This way, Time Machine can do its job faster, both backing up your files, and restoring them.

Some notes about [Time Machine](#) and [Time Capsule](#)...

For the initial backup, Time Machine copies the entire contents of the computer to your backup drive. It does that with every file exactly (without compression), skipping caches and other files that aren't required to restore your Mac to its original state. The cool thing about Apple's automatic backup tool is that, following the initial backup, Time Machine makes only incremental backups &mdash; copying just the items that have changed since the previous backup. Time Machine creates links to any unchanged files, so when you "travel back in time" you can see the entire contents of your Mac on a given day. However, to be able to do all this, the first thing you need to equip yourself with is an additional storage device, like Time Capsule.

Time Capsule is the Apple-developed backup device most recommended for use with Time Machine. It automatically (and wirelessly) backs up everything teaming up with Time

Machine. Time Capsule is also a full-featured 802.11n Wi-Fi base station. Every computer in your house can work off a wireless network, and of course, back up wirelessly to the device.

Do you have a Time Machine story you'd like to share? Have you ever lost important files because you neglected to back them up? Sound off in the comments.