

This will scare you to death...

How safe is your yearbook?

On October 22nd, I got an e-mail from the adviser at one of my biggest high schools. This is exactly what it said:



“I really apologize, but could you possibly e-mail a copy of the photos you took of us at the summer workshop? **Our server completely crashed, and our building lost all of our data**, so we no longer have any part of the yearbook that we had already worked on. We lost all of our e-mails and couldn't send or receive for a week. (Counselors, secretaries, bookkeeper—everyone lost a serious amount of info.) **Yearbook is starting over.** We've recovered some photos and data, but the files are corrupted (same for all of my other classes) so we're working to rebuild pages and work from notes we've taken and things we had printed. It's not fun at all.

I have now purchased an external hard drive for my classroom.

We're doing okay, though. There are still more fall sport games that we can take pictures of, and fortunately our homecoming hadn't happened yet. Most of the other photos we can

just redo, but we won't have anything in the book from before October 20th. The kids were pretty upset, but for the most part they are better now and are 'comfortable' with the idea of putting in overtime hours. As for me...lesson learned.”

The bold face type is my emphasis so I could make sure that you saw a couple of very important things. Please concentrate on those parts of her e-mail that I put in bold while I ask you some tough questions.

First is the line that says, “**Our server completely crashed, and our building lost all of our data...**” Do you rely on someone else to back up your files? This is important for all of you. Even if you use YTO and your pages and any photos you have uploaded are on our server (with the redundancy Jostens has your data there is safe), you still have photos that you have not uploaded yet and other parts of your yearbook world (like e-mails, artwork, etc.) And if you do your yearbook using InDesign, are you relying on your tech department to make sure your data is backed up? This adviser relied on her school district's technical staff to keep her data safe. Bad choice.

Then focus on the line that says, “**Yearbook is starting over.**” Doesn't that scare you to death? Can you imagine if this happened to you, today? What would you do if you lost everything you had worked on up to this point? If that scares you, good!

Lastly, really focus on this line—“**I have now purchased an external hard drive for my classroom.**” This is the key. This one piece of advice can save you more time and headaches than you can believe. Don't rely on others to back up your data. Do it yourself. If you are tech savvy enough to automatically back up your photos and pages, super! If not, here's how to do it.

As soon as you can, buy a USB external hard drive. Get as big a drive as you can afford. If you can afford a terabyte, get it. I have seen 500-gigabyte drives for sale online and at places like Walmart and Costco for less than

\$200. You will be able to fit your entire yearbook on this drive with no problem. Probably two or three copies of it.

Then every day before you go home (you have to either find a way to make this automatic or do it consistently), copy ALL your yearbook data (if you are using YearTech for InDesign and keeping your digital photos in the 2009 YearTech folder, that's all you need to copy) to this external hard drive. Replace the ones from the day before. This is simply a matter of dragging that folder from one place to another and telling the drive to replace the older folder. There are lots of backup programs that will do this for you. The point here is to do it! You could even keep multiple copies of the folder if you wanted to. If you are really worried about the data, then take this drive home with you.

If this adviser had done that, she could have just waited until the district server was back up and then just dragged that yearbook folder back to the server. Everything would have been right inside, ready to go back to work.

Remember! There are only two kinds of hard drives.

Those that have failed...

And those that are about to.

