

Best Practices for Electronic Backup

There are several important reasons to maintain backup files for the various important documents and files that you use in your real estate business. We all have either had a computer crash or know someone who has. If you have ever been through it you want to make sure that the next time recovering your data is a more friendly experience. Let's look at what we should back up:

- Backing up your hard drive should be the first thing you do. There are online services that will constantly backup your computer and maintain it on a secure server in a remote location. You can also purchase an external hard drive that will connect to your system via a USB port and you can back up your important files to it and maintain it yourself. Recently FMLS announced a backup system that is free of charge. Check with them for additional information.
- Do you have a copy of the custom pages with your original content from your website? Heaven forbid that the server hosting your site would crash and all your custom data be lost, but it could happen. With backup copies of all your pertinent pages it would take much less time to recreate the site should you have to.
- Another reason to backup your website custom pages is from a copyright standpoint. As you create a page you should save it as a word document. When you save it in this manner Microsoft puts a date stamp on the document. Should a copyright issue arise you have the proof of when you actually created your page. This is important in case someone were to copy your intellectual property and paste it to their site without your permission. If someone is displaying your copyrighted work illegally you may be able to take advantage of the "Digital Millennium Copyright Act" (DMCA) of 1998. For more information on the DMCA you can go to <http://www.copyright.gov/legislation/dmca.pdf>.

Here is an interesting site to try: <http://www.copyscape.com>. Go ahead and input your web address into the search box and press go. Does it return any results? If it does, click on them to see the content on their site that matches the content on your site. Is this content the "Default" content from your web host that they put on every site? If it is then why not separate yourself from the crowd and change the default content to meaningful original content. It makes a huge difference in how your site ranks!