

COMPARATIVE EVALUATION

Performance

When evaluating performance with online backup software, we look into two key components: backup and restore. How long your backup takes to complete is important, but the time spent waiting while your data is downloaded and restored is also equally important. We do have to stress that the consistency and speed of your broadband connection does play a major role in determining just how fast your backup and restore will be, along with other equally important factors such as server load and your geographical location, as server response times between the USA and Canada for example, will obviously be a lot faster than between the USA and Singapore, due to the distance between you and the servers of the backup service provider you choose. In our tests however, Mozy proved to be the fastest and most consistent of the lot, clocking in about an hour for backups and approximately 30 minutes to download and restore our test data.

Ease of Use

When it comes to ease of use, the user interface of the service is an important factor, as first-time users shouldn't have to muck around figuring out which controls do what. Having a good sense of web and user interface design helps greatly, and this is where Mozy and Carbonite excel. Both services are easy on the eye, and are very user-friendly, with great emphasis on being able to do what you want with minimal mouse clicking involved – both for backup and restoration.

Functionality

Besides the basic requirements of just being able to back up and restore data, additional features are always welcome, such as the ability to customize your backup and restore tasks to suit individual preferences. Though Mozy and Carbonite will undoubtedly appeal to first-time users with their simplified user interfaces, users might start to look for more control as they become familiar with the system. SOS has this particular area pegged, with a great many options available to the end user, including the ability to schedule customized backup procedures.



**HWM
Recommended:
Carbonite**

Among all the contestants in this shootout, we felt that Mozy and Carbonite were both worthy solutions. However, Carbonite gets our vote, considering that their solution managed to restore our test data in just 13 minutes. No one wants to sit around twiddling their thumbs waiting for their data to be restored, and in this instance, Carbonite manages to deliver the goods. In addition, Carbonite also boasts an extensive collection of information in terms of support for the end user, by far the most comprehensive of all the solutions compared.

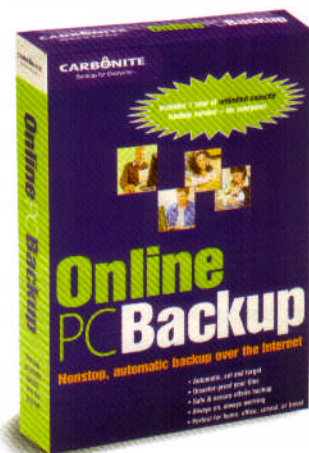
The Final Take: Analysis

According to a survey asking the question

of what we would most likely save first from a burning house, the majority of the respondents all agreed that their photo albums would be first and foremost on their minds. Adapt that scenario to the current age and time, and you'll probably agree with us when we say that the thought of people rummaging through their desks looking for thumb drives and portable hard disks while their homes burn down around them sounds more than a little ridiculous.

As it is, backups remain just that: a precautionary copy set aside for then possibility that disaster might strike, rendering your originals useless and inaccessible. That said, we also have to keep in mind that nothing is for certain, even if you make the best of efforts to backup your data religiously. Your physical backup hardware may decide to fail; your CD and DVD backups may end up fungus-ridden and unreadable; the online backup companies you paid good money to may one day close up shop, leaving you in the lurch. Security measures are aplenty, but even though there is no foolproof way to keep your data secure, the best you can do is to try and reduce the potential for damage in as many ways as possible. For those who've previously relied on nothing more than just thumb drives and portable hard disk drives, the act of backing up your data online is worth considering as another alternative to your arsenal. So what are you waiting for? Backup!

CONTEST



We like Carbonite so much that we are giving you a chance to try it out! We are going to hook 5 lucky readers up with a year's subscription fully paid of course! That's 1 year of unlimited backups! All you have to do is write to us and tell us what is the most important or the first thing you would backup. Email your answer and contact details with the subject header: **"Carbonite" to carbackup@hardwaremag.com**

>> **"Back up my hard drive? How do I put it in reverse?"** - Author unknown

Test Platform:

We used the Sony VGN-N Series running Windows XP on a Wi-Fi connection.

