

the *Availability Digest*

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Carbonite – The Online File Copy Utility

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In this issue's "WannaCry Ransomware Global Attack," I described how I would have been protected if my system had been attacked by WannaCry. WannaCry is ransomware middleware that propagates over networks and infects computers with an unpatched vulnerability in the Microsoft Server Message Block Protocol.



When it finds such a system, it installs itself and encrypts all of the system's files. It then posts a message demanding a ransom of \$300 in bitcoins, an untraceable cryptocurrency. If not paid in three days, the ransom increases to \$600. If the ransom is not paid in seven days, WannaCry says that it will delete the files, though there are no known cases of files actually having been deleted.

I was protected from WannaCry in two ways. WannaCry infected mainly Windows 7 servers. I already had upgraded to Windows 10. Security patches are automatically applied by Microsoft to Windows 10, and it was protected from WannaCry infections.

The other protection was that my files were all backed up online. If WannaCry had infected my system and had encrypted my files, all I would have had to do was to delete those files from my system and reload the latest unencrypted files from my online backup.

The online copy service I use is Carbonite (www.carbonite.com).

Carbonite

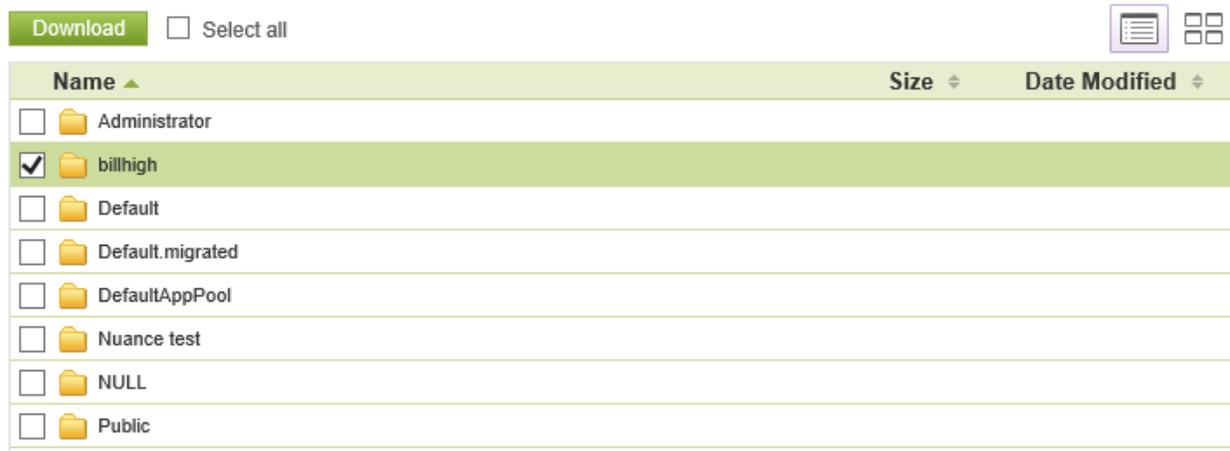
Carbonite's home page states its case succinctly:

"All it takes is a simple mistake or malicious ransomware virus and you could lose all the files on your computer forever. But not if you have backup. Carbonite Computer Backup gives you peace of mind knowing your files and photos are backed up safely to the cloud."

In essence, Carbonite copies every file after it has been changed and stores it in its cloud.

 BILLHIGH-PC (edit)	Computer options ▾
 Last backed up June 4, 2017 30,133 files (30.66 GB) This Personal Basic Backup subscription renews automatically on Mar. 28, 2018	View files Get files back

Carbonite provides unlimited cloud storage for your files, no matter how big or how many. Notice that Carbonite has backed up over 30,000 of my files. Carbonite is always on and encrypts files at every step to ensure security. You can view your files from any browser.



Most importantly, you can restore one or all files with just a few clicks.

More precisely, you can mark the files that you wish Carbonite to back up. File names are marked with a colored dot that indicate whether the file has been selected for backup or not.

My Many Saves by Carbonite

Carbonite has saved me on many occasions. There have been times when I have accidentally deleted a file and couldn't restore it. At other times, I have corrupted a file by removing records inappropriately or by modifying records with garbage.

In all of these cases, I was able to go to Carbonite and retrieve a good copy of the file. All I had to do was to view the list of files stored online by Carbonite, click on it, and click "Restore." Each time that has happened, I have said "God bless Carbonite!"

Another feature of Carbonite lets you restore all files.

Older Versions

Carbonite will even store older versions of a file. As a file changes and is closed, Carbonite makes an online copy of that file and stores it for later retrieval. However, it also saves some older versions of files. When you request that a file be restored by clicking on it, Carbonite will present a list of the versions of the files to which it has access. Simply click on the version that you want.

Carbonite will store older versions of files for 30 days. After that, it deletes them and they are no longer recoverable. This feature almost got me into trouble a few years ago. I had purchased a new PC and used Carbonite to load my files onto it. This worked great, and I carried on with my normal activities. At the end of the month, it was time to add the latest version of the *Availability Digest*. To my chagrin, I found that the *Availability Digest* files were not on my computer. I then realized that it had been a little over a month since I had last accessed the *Digest*, so Carbonite had deleted my *Digest* files. Fortunately, they were still on my old computer. I had to purchase a special box to allow me to transfer files between the computers, but I was able to recover the *Digest* in that way.

Customer Support

An important strength of Carbonite is its customer support service. There were occasions when I could not find the version of the file that I wanted to download from Carbonite. In each case, a call to Carbonite customer support quickly resolved the issue. Carbonite's customer support personnel were quick to understand my needs and seemed to magically find what I could not.

Summary

There have been many times when I would have been in deep hurt if I could not restore a file that I had lost or corrupted. In each case, Carbonite saved the day for me.

Carbonite comes at a price of \$59.99 per year. In my view and experience, this is an expense well worth it.

There are other online file copy utilities available, such as IDrive, CrashPlan, and OpenDrive.¹ You are well-advised to choose one of these utilities and use it to provide security for your file system. Someday you are likely to say, as I have done, "God bless xxx."

¹ [The Best Online Backup Services of 2017](#), *PC Magazine*; May 5, 2017.