



# Backups

One of those rather mundane yet necessary things you need for all data whether that's online or at your premises. This is even more critical if you have an online shop website. Do you know if you can access your backups? Can you restore your site from those backups? Hopefully you've never had to test it, but do you know for sure?

Your website lives on a server, it's a group of files (including a database) and they live there in one place.

But what happens if something compromises your website? It could be a natural disaster, a fire, a break in or a server failure. You'll need to get that site up and running again on another server and that depends on having a backup of the site!

Resorting to restoring to a back up would be the last resort, if you have people placing orders on an ecommerce site, those may be disrupted or lost if you return the site to an older version, even if that is just a few days old. You might want to download a backup to examine the files to check for anomalies, or you might be working on a new version of the website and need the backup to install at another location to work on without prying eyes.

## Backups via the server versus backups via the website's interface

WordPress has plugins that can automatically back the site up on the server which you can access and restore from the website's interface. These are easy to install, set up and usually user-friendly. You can grab a backup from last Tuesday (for example), and either download it or replace the current website with this one, but you only want to do that last part if you are absolutely sure, especially if it's an online shop, as it could potentially really mess up your orders!

Accessing backups from the WordPress dashboard is fine, but what if your website goes down, you won't be able to access those unless you can get on the server, possibly by SFTP or file access in Control Panel and download from here, this is not a very user-friendly approach and requires some technical knowledge. It seems unlikely your site would go down - but it does happen, and no matter how insignificant your website seems it can also be a target for hackers.

Having the website backups accessible via the dashboard is very convenient and requires very little technical knowledge. However, there is a risk that if you can't access the admin area of your website, you won't be able to access the backups.

This might be due to the site being hacked or a DDoS attack. In which case you won't be able to download those backups from the website if the website is down, although you may be able to by SFTP, wipe the site, install the plugin and re import a backup, as many plugins with WordPress mean that the backups need to be imported via the WordPress interface rather than being able to unzip a file to do so.

Another disadvantage is your website hosting may be limited in disc space, the average website can be 100s megabytes, sometimes several gigabytes in size, so imagine your plugin or module is saving each of these backups on your hosting, that's a lot of space being taken up even if it's limited to 30 backups. These can slow your website down if all these files are saved within the website's directory.

Having backups run via the server to an area outside of the website can be a much easier solution and doesn't require access to the website, so these don't slow the website down. You

can usually download these as zipped files. With most control panels you can restore from backups too, choosing whether you want to restore just the database or the files, or both. You might want to restore only the files if you've run into issues running the latest update and need to roll it back, this won't affect any data on the site including online orders.

It is all very well having back ups, but can you restore from them? A few years ago, someone asked me if I could help with their website as it was down, they weren't a client and I hate not being able to help, but there was nothing I could do, you simply couldn't restore from his backups. So make sure you don't have some sort of token backup scenario!

With our hosting, backups run daily on the server and securely on cloud storage. All our hosting is GDPR compliant and based in the UK. We give our clients full access to the backend of their website as well as to the server if they request it with full technical guidance from us. We believe in empowering our customers in a transparent and approachable way!

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