# Transcript: IT Podcast - Ep 118 - Software Backup-Carolyn Sher-DeCusatis and Mark Kinkead

*The following transcript is a verbatim account of the video or audio file accompanying this transcript.*

Speaker #1 (Narrator):

WGU's IT audio series, flexible, portable, profound.

Speaker #2 (Carolyn Sher-DeCusatis):

Hello, I'm Carolyn Sher-DeCusatis.

Speaker #3 (Mark Kinkead):

I am Mark Kinkead, and we're here today to talk about software backup, which is actually an extremely important conversation. Carolyn, why should we backup our software?

Speaker #2 (Carolyn Sher-DeCusatis):

So that we don't have to start from scratch every morning.

Speaker #3 (Mark Kinkead):

Well, that's a good motivator as it is I would think because you don't want to lose the work that you did the day before.

Speaker #2 (Carolyn Sher-DeCusatis):

Backup is old as computers are I think.

Speaker #3 (Mark Kinkead):

Well, I don't know, probably even older. We find the dead sea scrolls and all other stuff. I was seeing an interesting report about the Library of Alexandria the other day, and how when they started together all materials and stuff and how they would stop ships coming into port. You were required to handover any text you had so that they could copy it and give it back to you so that they would have it in the library. Of course, what they didn't foresee is that those texts were made of paper are some wood and they would eventually rot and disappear. If you want to somehow be able to backup your data.

Speaker #2 (Carolyn Sher-DeCusatis):

Historically as you say a lot of this was paper that could rot. Then we went through the computer error where they were magnetic tapes. I still have some magnetic tapes in my office from the 80s. There were eight inch floppies, which really were floppy. Five and a quarter inches, and then you got the three and a quarter inches that were stiffies. I think I even forgot punch cards in that.

Speaker #3 (Mark Kinkead):

I was a big fan of the zip drives, if you remember those. It was a hard plastic case because, to hold your breath, they could hold megabytes of data on it. That was big so that you could get a lot of data on those one giant zip disk and zip disk we go in through. It was the printer port at the back of your machine. It could interface that way and you could get it. It was quite a challenge in the early days to do backups. We laugh about what we had. Where I worked we had called sneaker net, which is where you would burn something like the zip disk and then you would take it somewhere else. The whole idea is you needed to have that stuff off sight, out of your physical building because fires can happen. Things can explode, air conditioner could go out, media that the data is on can melt, all fun stuff like that. It was very important to somehow get a copy of everything everybody's working on and get it off sight. Especially in financial industry, for sure you had to always keep records and keep that stuff backed up.

Speaker #2 (Carolyn Sher-DeCusatis):

It used to be an old joke that you would take a form of magnetic storage and use a magnet to connect it to your refrigerator and destroy it. But now we've gotten to a place where you can do some pretty cool things with modern day backup. Especially with the Cloud, you don't want to only backup to the Cloud. You want to keep a local copy, if for no other reason, if you want to work on it. Well, your Internets disrupted.

Speaker #3 (Mark Kinkead):

Certainly, yes. All good options for backing up. You have OneDrive which is available through the school. You have Google Drive, which Google gives you some free storage capabilities. You can always go to the store and buy those little bitty flash drives. They have a lot of gigabytes on now days and some days will be laughing about that one of these days. How small they are, when you only have 50 gigabytes on a finger sized flash drive, but those are good. Then of course, you've got your Cloud solutions like GitHub and GitLab, and various other things that you can take and store your data upon.

Speaker #2 (Carolyn Sher-DeCusatis):

We have a couple of webinars about connecting to get in the Cloud because it's really cool to just be able to press a few buttons and commit and push whenever you've hit a break-point that you think you accomplished something. So that when you can always roll back to your last commit in case you screw something up so that's powerful.

Speaker #3 (Mark Kinkead):

As a developer just writing code. Generally, you press save a lot. Nowadays it's a little bit easier because our IDs they have autosave features. You really don't have to do that much, IntelliJ is a great example. Visual Studio, another one but you should always be pressing "Save" at some point. You really get used to doing that. That's a habit that developers should have. But in the end, there's this question of when to backup. When should you backup your data? How much work does it take to backup your data? What do you think?

Speaker #2 (Carolyn Sher-DeCusatis):

Well, I think of it in terms of data and also in terms of code. In terms of code, once you've got it set up with a repository in something like GitHub or GitLab. All you have to do is highlight it, commit, push. You can do that every hour or even less. Whenever you've gotten something working that you don't want to have to redo if you lose it all.

Speaker #3 (Mark Kinkead):

That's right. It's the habit you have to develop. The habit of backing up, saving, backing up, and not putting it off to the next day. I have a story about a place where I worked and we hired a GUI developer to create a GUI and flash for us. This was an oil concern and it was going to report down whole information. We were going to have pie charts and all wonderful stuff that he was working on. He had been working on this application for six months. The partners were very adamant to him that he needed to make sure that he backed up his software. I was asking, "Are you backing it up?" "Oh, yeah I'm backing it up," he says. Then one day he didn't show up to work and we call him and he says, "I've got a problem at home. My truck has been stolen." Turns out it took him five days to find his truck and it turns out that his laptop was in the truck. It turns out he had never backed up his work into our backup storage solutions and that was pretty rough. He knew we didn't see him while his car had been missing. He knew that if he came in with nothing backed up, he would not have his job the next day. As it is he was strongly spoken to about it, but he did manage to recover his vehicle with his laptop and be able to come back to work with the six months of work that he had lost. That's waiting a little to long, definitely. I usually put the rule and for myself personally, that if it's the end of the day I'm going to back it up. Also if I do work that if the lights were to suddenly go out and I couldn't get the machine back on that I would cry. Then I definitely want to make sure that I've got that backup or yet. Because you don't want to lose that work, and software is a very creative thing. You don't want to lose that inspired element that you did your coding. It's very important to backup your work. Any final thoughts Carolyn?

Speaker #2 (Carolyn Sher-DeCusatis):

We live in a wonderful time where all of us have access to this Cloud backup. That means that when we screw up we can get it all back. Which is to me amazing. It's a miracle.

Speaker #3 (Mark Kinkead):

Yes, definitely take advantage of that. Thank you for listening, and we will talk to you soon.

Speaker #1 (Narrator):

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