

The Hard Drive Organization

To prevent the loss of any of my pictures I have come up with the following hardware for off computer storage. This might seem a bit redundant to most of you. But I come from an IT background and there can never be enough redundancy when it comes to the safety of our images.

Each year I buy two very large external Firewire 800 drives. Typically these are Western Digital MyBooks. Each drive contains two 2-terabyte drives setup in a RAID 1 format. What this means is that what ever is written to the first drive also gets written to the second drive. It is a backup of your data in the same external container. With the second MyBook that I purchase, I use it to backup the first one where I write all my data. It is setup exactly like the first one. So I actually have 4 drives (2 in each MyBook) that contain the same information. It is a backup of the backups. If my primary MyBook fails, then I automatically have the second one that still contains all my files.

Now having the hardware backups to the backups to my originals is nice. But if it isn't organized correctly, then it becomes tedious and very cumbersome to try and locate the files. So, I have come up with the following data structure to help with that. On the primary drive I have a folder that I call "00_Clients". Inside this folder is where all my pictures and client work will go. Including work I do for myself as I am my own client. There are other folders contained in the root as well. Some examples are "01_Accounting", "02_Accounting Backups", etc. All of my folders are preceded with a 2-digit number. This helps me keep them in the order I want them to appear. Otherwise, the accounting folders would be listed above my client folder.

Now, inside the client folder are subfolders. Typically I start off each year with the following:

- 01_Weddings
- 02_Portraits
- 03_Events
- 04_Personal
- 05_Videos
- 99_Lightroom Catalogs

Then inside each of these folders I have additional subfolders. Inside my "01_Weddings" folder is a list of subfolders labeled as "00001_Bride & Grooms Name". Each of those folders start out with a "01_Raw Images" and "02_Output". Then each of these folders contains whatever subfolders are needed.

This might sound a bit confusing but once you've worked with it, it makes locating and working with a particular clients data very easy and quick to find if you have to go back to previous years.