

# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FILE LEVEL AND IMAGE LEVEL BACKUP?

by Darby TechForce



You know how important it is to back up your data and have a [disaster recovery plan](#) in place. Making a digital copy of the operating system, files, folders, programs, and settings on your dental practice computers is the most efficient way – and often the only way – to get your office up and running quickly after a major data loss. Not to mention, HIPAA requires you store a copy of your practice files in a secure, offsite location. While you know you should be backing up your data, you might not know that you have options when it comes to how you do it.

Essentially, there are two ways to save a copy of your patient and practice data: file level backup and image level backup. Here's a look at the differences between these two methods and which solution is best for protecting your practice in case of a disaster.

## What is file level backup?

As the name suggests, file level backup allows you to save individual files and folders from your office computer to a remote location. You've probably used a consumer-level backup program to save files, such as Google Drive, Dropbox, or Microsoft Office Drive. Because only changed data is saved with each backup, the total backup is smaller in size and therefore requires less storage space. While file level backup is a great solution for saving copies of individual files in a healthy system, major problems could occur in the event of a disaster.

In a serious failure, restoring your system from a file level backup would take a long time because you would have to reconstruct everything from scratch. To start, you would have to reinstall the operating system, software applications, and the software you used to backup your files. Then you could begin restoring the files and folders themselves. However, because file level backup is a "selective" backup, only the files and folders you chose to backup would be restored. All other data would be irretrievable – gone forever.

## What is image level backup?

Image level backup is a more complete option for backing up your practice data. Rather than copying individual files and folders, image level backup takes a snapshot of your entire operating system and all of the data associated with it. The backup is saved in a single file called an image, which can be retrieved and restored if your practice suffers a major data loss. This backup method requires more storage space, but it's much more efficient when you want to get back up and running as quickly as possible.

Another benefit of image level backup is that the copy of your operating system can be restored to any computer. So, if your hardware is damaged due to a fire or flood, or if your computers are stolen, there's no need to search for and purchase compatible older machines. And, while the main benefit of image level backup is having the ability to quickly restore your entire server from a single file, it's also possible to retrieve a singular file – eliminating the need for file level backups.



## Protect your practice from disaster with DataSafe and Rapid Restore

Digital dentistry is a beautiful thing, but it also comes with risks. A fire, flood, or cybersecurity attack could wipe out your entire network and leave you without access to your most important files and patient records. That's why it's so important to back up your data and have a disaster recovery plan if catastrophe strikes.

[DataSafe](#) is a HIPAA-compliant backup service that stores all of the files your practice needs in a safe, offsite location. Not only does Darby TechForce keep a current copy of your server, we also monitor and manage your backups to make sure they are working as they should. If something happens to your practice, [Rapid Restore](#) can have you back up and running in a matter of hours instead of the one to two days it can take to recover file-level backups. Simply put, there's no faster way to bounce back from a disaster.

To speak to a Darby TechForce specialist call 800-886-2093 or [email](#) to learn more about how DataSafe and Rapid Restore can help protect your dental practice. Experts will explain how TechForce backup and disaster recovery services work in simple terms so you can confidently choose a solution that works for your business.

