

As a club we bang on a lot about taking care of our files. As I write, the next meeting will be devoted to the subject and will be over by the time you read this. Reporting on that meeting might be the last on the topic for a while.

The trouble with the whole backing-up business is the time and effort it can take, but we keep assuring everyone that if losing files bothers you, the effort will be worthwhile.

Like many who freely offer good advice, I have to remind myself that I should follow it as well – and, yes, I fall by the wayside from time to time.

My files won't vanish into thin air, but I am still a bit idle about systematic storage of the copies I make. The result is that I am confident that I have the file I am looking for; it may be hard to find. Is it on my desktop; my laptop; one of the several external drives, my mini-drive or a memory stick?

A while ago I bought myself a gizmo that will hold all my files and automatically arrange them across multiple drives so that if one, or even two, drives should crash, by simply replacing the damaged drives with new ones the whole system will restore itself with no effort by me. That's fine, but it will only perform once I have completed the work to set it all up in the first place.

Meanwhile, the number of files is steadily increasing and spreading across more categories and over a longer period. The task is growing and must be tackled before it becomes simply too difficult to do. So I have been exploring systems for organising them (and myself).

There is no shortage of advice on the web. Lots of people delight in writing how they organise their stuff. Sadly, their needs do not match mine, but I can clearly see the organisational approach to take and I'm pursuing it.

There is one saving grace to my procrastination. Files are getting bigger – cameras now generate bigger files for better digital pictures – and mobile phones and tablets add to the number taken.

Thankfully this is more than balanced by the reduction in the cost of storage capacity.

In 2004 the cost of storing 1GB on an 80GB external hard drive was about 60p. A 1GB flash drive was then new technology costing you £100.

In 2012 a networked 3TB drive can cost as little as £130, bringing the cost per GB down from 60p to 4p. A big flash drive is now £67 for 128GB bringing the cost per GB down from £100 in 2004 to 52p, as do the 8GB and 16GB flash drives.

If only other things would follow suit.

