Chris's Corner: Back it up, back up your back ups

It's a brave new technical world and our increasing use of smart phones, pads and computers to organize and run our lives and businesses increases at a rapid rate.

With all this reliance on technology it is important to remind ourselves that it is not the machine that is so valuable but the data it contains.

A business friend of mine recently suffered a ransomware attack and lost control of their server, its software and, more importantly, data. They were locked out unless they paid a ransom and then, presumably, the attacker would allow access.

That's a tough situation to be in, but in my case, I don't think I'd pay. You pay once and I can imagine they'd keep playing you like a yoyo and taking your money until you smartened up.

They didn't pay. But they did pay a company a lot of money to unlock and recover their system. The company failed. Fortunately, they refunded the money because they guaranteed they could do it and they couldn't.

So, my friend had to buy a new server and attempt to restore everything. Good news is they had a backup. The bad news is that they hadn't rotated their data cartridges since January. The only good backup they had was that one, because the one in the machine, which they hadn't been changing like they were supposed to, was infected.

They got up and running but they lost almost a year's worth of data. How do you recover from that?

I have five cartridges and I rotate them every night, Monday through Friday. If something goes bad like this, worst case scenario I lose a day's data. Even to me that seems like a lot and I am a tiny, tiny business.

I have OCD so I back up my own computer's files to the cloud and not trusting that I also back them up to an external hard drive and the really important ones to a thumb drive.

I back up my phone to the cloud regularly.

If I lose my wallet, I have stored in my phone every credit card, insurance card, dental card's information; just in case.

Our customers have PLU scales with files in them. The data belongs to the customer. We as a courtesy make backups when we can. However, I implore customers who have made a lot of changes, involving a lot of time and effort to call us and let us know. We will come make a

newer backup so if things get wiped out, we will have a copy reflecting many of the changes made.

Digital technology is wonderful, but you really have to plan for a catastrophe and have backups of backups; otherwise, you will be starting from scratch.