

Let's solve the problem of data loss once and for all

Everyone who has ever lost important data knows how annoying, painful, or even life-ruining it can be. Yet, there's all this backup software and everyone gives "backup your shit" as the most important advice, so how can it happen? Well, even if you are familiar with all the backup software and regularly use it, think about what's actually required to backup something. First of all you need a secondary drive that has enough space to hold everything you want to. This is a bigger problem than it seems, especially now in the age of laptops which usually can't hold more than one drive so have to rely on USB drives / SD cards (which are limited in space). And those backup drives can still fail. Those few who still have a stationary computer have it easier, but not foolproof since theft or a fire could still just ruin all the backups. Smartphone users, obviously, are in the worst position, since their devices lack ports for external storage. So the unfortunate victims of "modernity" and "progress" are left only with online storage as a backup option. Almost always meaning big tech that simply loves to have you chained inside their ecosystem of evil. They will bury you with doxing requirements, recaptcha, or similar stuff. And when the EU ID requirement comes around, they will surely implement that, too. Not to mention that they spy on your files and can ban you from the internet or even get you in trouble with the law for something totally innocent. Therefore big tech is not a reliable solution. But maybe we could repurpose online storage in another way? Enter the *Mutualist Backup System*:

- You sign up for an account on a website.
- You allocate a certain amount of space on your disk (say 200gb) to host other people's backups.
- You are now allowed 200gb of space on other people's drives who have also signed up.
- When you upload whatever you want to backup, the online software randomly finds someone who has the required amount of free space to store your backup. If you yourself have more "allowance" left than what your backup required, then it finds another person. And another, and another. Depending on how much backups of others **you** have stored, you can store **your** backup on very many people. Ideally, with enough people, this prevents data loss **ever** and solves the problem. To give an example, if you download 200gb of other people's backups, and yours is 40gb, you can store it on five people's drives.
- The online software tracks who hosts whose backups, and whether their servers are online. If you want to download your backup, you login to your account and see whose servers of the people that have your backup are online. Then pick one and download.
- Hashes of your backup would be stored during your upload and compared to the hashes of the people who decided to host your backup. Tampered backups would be displayed in red, legit in green. Servers currently offline maybe in orange or something.
- There would be no server-side encryption attempts. By the principle of user choice, the user would need to encrypt his backup if he wanted to. Veracrypt containers, encrypted zips would all be options, or a naked backup if that is what you want. Ideally the website never sees the actual files, only their hashes and destinations. It would only be for managing uploads, downloads, showing what your free space left is, etc.

Details remain to be elucidated. But as a concept it's a great solution for me. Mutualism and justice enforced by software, fixing a very real problem that so far hasn't even been truly touched, if I have to be honest. Many features could be added to this system after the basics are done. Maybe choosing the people that can or can't host your backups (though I like the randomization). Maybe someone could decide to be more generous and offer 2x for every x uploaded backups. Maybe if we get enough "available space" we could let people take without giving (useful especially for the smartphone users). Maybe a way to use this system without an account, and independently from the website, can be baked over somehow. In general, the idea is that **everyone's disk becomes partially yours**; storage is distributed between the world's computers. Immunizing everyone to fires, thefts, apartment block collapses, or just having to juggle too many drives in their own setups. Oh, and of course you wouldn't have to pay for cloud storage, thus avoiding resource extraction by big tech. Imagine, there is so much disk space being unused right now inside people's hard drives, that are rotting in the cupboard or basement, or simply right there inside the computer because someone simply isn't storing much data. Despite that, we're still paying ransom to businesses for backups - so inefficient! With the *MBS*, since the uploads and downloads would be done in the browser, nothing new would have to be learned. Of course, all of this needs devs, so feel free to share this with others, or pick it up yourself if you are one. Or maybe there is something similar to this already, but if so, I have not been able to find it (notify me in this case).

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