Backing up files

A good backup regime is essential these days but the more inconvenient it is the less you are likely to do it. For example, while it's a slow and unwieldy process, you could just manually copy your data to an external hard drive or to rewritable DVDs on a daily or weekly basis. If you have any kind of disaster, big or little, backup copies can save you hours or days of work.

Some general guidelines about backing up your files include:

- keep at least two sets of backup storage, each at a different location (options could include: external hard drive; thumb drive; DVDs/CDs; Cloud)
- have sets for alternate days, so if you discover that something went wrong yesterday, you will have the day-before-yesterday’s version
- make archival sets of your files whenever you finish an important document (include all of the files that are needed to recreate a final formatted paper)
- label the backup storage clearly
- date them (remember to include the year)
- keep them in a safe place far away from your computer (preferably off-site but must be able to be quickly accessed)
- devise a fool-proof way of ensuring the relevant data finds its way to the backup storage
- decide how often you should backup - this will depend on
  - value of your data
  - how often it changes (for example if you are using your library every day then you should back it up every day, but if you only use it on the weekends then that is when you should back up)
- have a plan B solution in case something untoward hits your primary backup
- know which files you should back up