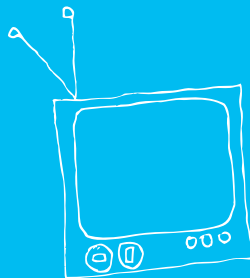
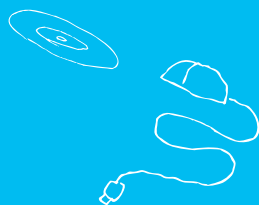


at risk



COMPUTER FILES

According to a recent survey cited in USA Today, only 57 percent of people back up their data. Are your personal records, memories, music, photos and documents at risk of being lost forever?



TIP: BACK UP YOUR DATA

Establish a backup system so your computer files are copied on a regular basis to CDs, DVDs or, better yet, to an external hard drive. Make more than one copy of your digital files and store the copies in different physical locations.



FINDING DIGITAL MATERIAL

How will you remember where to find the digital photograph your sister sent last Christmas? If there is no system of organization or search mechanism available for your digital files, you may not be able to.



TIP: TAGGING

Descriptive keywords will help you retrieve and organize digital materials -- be they digital photographs, videos or music. The popular term for adding keywords to digital content is tagging. Tag or label your digital files so you and your family can find them later.



DIGITAL PHOTOS

Family memories and special events that future generations would value are increasingly documented in digital photographs. But 10 years from now current memory sticks and software will most likely be obsolete, trapping the images in unusable or unsupported storage media.



TIP: MIGRATE AND SAVE

Because digital photographs require specific hardware and software to view, it is important to migrate files to the latest storage media using freely available formats. Make several copies of digital photographs and keep them in different places. Saving copies of your photos on Web sites and printing copies with archive-quality ink and high-quality paper are also options for preservation.



IMPORTANT E-MAIL

The everyday activities, work, major current events and personal observations documented in e-mail are a direct record of our lives. If e-mail is not preserved, a part of our history will be lost.



TIP: SAVE AS TEXT FILES

E-mail should be saved and managed just like any other important digital file. Save important personal e-mail on a hard drive or storage disk as simple text files, making sure to save the header information. Ask if your employer has a policy about saving work-related e-mail. You may also print out important e-mails.



STORAGE DISKS

The backup disks you make today may become damaged or obsolete in the future.



TIP: PRESERVATION-QUALITY DISKS

Never use rewritable discs for long-term storage. Do not use stickers to label disks, and always store them covered in a dark dry place. Also, convert old disks to new formats as they become available.