Transcription

Crashplan vs Backblaze

Hey and welcome to cloudwards.net and another exciting video of two major unlimited online backup services namely Backblaze and CrashPlan or CrashPlan or Backblaze. It doesn't matter.

Now we're gonna talk in this video about exactly which service is the best for your needs. Because both are very similar in features but there are some major differences that we're gonna talk about in this video. You can also read all the details and our featured article on cloudwards.net that you can find right here in the video or below in the description window so you can click either way. Let me see if that works later in the YouTube edit. So what we're gonna do in this video is basically we're gonna do a feature comparison. We're gonna do a pricing comparison and then we're gonna give a general recommendation of what service is the best for your needs. Now there's a short version and there's a long version. This video is gonna be a longer video so I guess 20 minutes, 30 minutes or something. But in the beginning, I'll give you like the short answer which service you should pick when... when deciding to move your files in the cloud. Now just one disclaimer, I do not care which services... which service you buy basically because I have no stake in those services. However, I do get a small commission when you sign up through one of my links and if you do that, you help to support Cloudwards at no additional cost to you obviously. So thank you very much if you do that.

Which service should you pick – the short version

Now, let's get continue with the review. So, we have on one hand CrashPlan and we have on the other hand Backblaze. Now both services are very very similar. Both their services work extremely well when it comes to backing up your files and now if you are just a beginning computer user who has difficulty with basic things like installing apps or something or just know your way around, then Backblaze is certainly the right decision because Backblaze... Let me just put it

that way, Backblaze just works out-of-the-box. You just put your email address, you pay or you sign up for the 15 day free trial and it just works. It just backs up everything on your computer.

Whereas, on the other hand, CrashPlan is a little more complicated. It's also very easy to use but there're more features, there're more settings, there're more details to your online backup that you need or at least can set up. So beginning computer users might actually be a little overwhelmed by the sheer plethora features CrashPlan offers. So, if you don't want to think about your backups at all, go for Backblaze. Or if you want to install a backup for a person who is not very computer savvy, go with Backblaze. You will not get any questions from that person whatsoever about this software because it runs in the background and it will not bother the computer user with any questions or any any additional setup. So it just runs in the background. Before we actually get started with the actual comparison, let me just clarify a couple of things. Now both services run under the operation or under the name unlimited online backup.

What does unlimited online backup mean?

Now what does that mean actually? Unlimited online backup sounds really like a marketing term and I've a... I've dug little deeper into another video here in YouTube and on cloudwards.net what that means. Now fortunately today unlimited online backup really means unlimited. So the services offer you unlimited storage. You have no restrictions whatsoever when it comes to uploading your files that goes for CrashPlan and Backblaze. There are some sneaky services that actually limit the bandwidth or limit the file size. They say they are limited services but in reality they are not. But Backblaze and CrashPlan are unlimited services. Now, how is that possible? Well, they make money by the average Joe so to speak. The average Joe, maybe has 10 GB, 20GB, 50GB of files but does not have an abundance of 2, 4, 5, 10 TB of files. Now I would consider myself a pro-computer user. I work a lot with video so I have a lot of files. They certainly lose money on me. By the way, I'm a client of both. I am paying user of both services. So I have a lot of data that I upload to their servers. But they make obviously money on people that have less data but purchase the complete unlimited plan anyways. So that's how the principle of unlimited online backup basically works, just in case you were asking.

Another thing I wanted to mention that those services are not the only services offering unlimited online backup. If you go to cloudwards.net you find a detailed comparison chart of other services that offer unlimited online backup. There're for example, Carbonite, Livedrive, Zoolz, SOS online backup recently switched to an unlimited offering as well. So you have also another option that you can choose from. However, I do recommend those services with my whole heart basically because I've made such good experience with them. Let's have a general overview of those services.

Backup only – no sharing or syncing

Both CrashPlan and Backblaze are backup service only. So if you expect them to do any other task, you will not be happy because they just won't sync your files. You will not be able to share your files. You will not be able to do anything else than pure cloud backup. But that's a beauty of it, they do this task incredibly well and this is what this reviews about. So we only are gonna judge the service for their backup capabilities but this is something they do extremely well. They're focused on backup only and I think this is a good thing. Now, both services are truly unlimited. I've mentioned this in the introduction before. There is no bandwidth limitations. There's no file size limitations. Backblaze one or two years ago had a file size limitation in place. They started with 5 GB of file size restrictions. Then, they updated it to 9 GB, I believe and now they got rid of that completely. When I first signed up for CrashPlan, they had tremendous bandwidth trouble because I live in Germany so I have to transfer my files from Germany to base of their service in the US and would take a long, long time.

I tried to fix a lot of things in the bandwidth settings that you can do with CrashPlan but to no avail. So there was no way to actually improve the upload rate. But they have now fixed this issue and upload speed is actually pretty nice also for European users.

Plans & Pricing

So, next let's have a quick glance at the plans and pricing. Now CrashPlan used to offer a 10 GB plan and then an unlimited plan. I think I couldn't find the 10 GB plan anymore so they got rid of it and the unlimited plan used to be called CrashPlan Plus and this is now only like the CrashPlan cloud backup plan and starts for $5.99 per month. Of course if you purchase for a year or two years, or

even four years, you get additional savings of up to 21%. Now, Backblaze starts for as low as $5 per month if you opt for the month-to-month payment option. Now, if you sign up for two years, you can really bring the bill down to $3.96, which is amazingly cheap for unlimited online backup. So, if I were you, I would just pre-purchase the two-year plan and then not having to worry about it anymore.

CrashPlan on the other hand has also some business plans, CrashPlan Pro and crash plan Pro E for enterprise so if you have a small business or even an enterprise, CrashPlan is certainly a very good solution to look at because it allows you to administer and to check on all the computers and your network that are backed up and you have more fine-grained control over your data. Backblaze also has a business plan that cost $50 per year per computer. So for the business plans, you generally have to pay per computer. Now, if you have more than one computer to back up, you might want to have a look at the CrashPlan family plan because with the family plan, you can back up to 2 to 10 computers for a very, very cheap price so this is definitely worth a look.

Ease-of-use

Let's have a look at one of the categories that is pretty much important for beginning computer users who are novices that is the ease of use. I've already mentioned that in the beginning when you decide which backup service to use, Backblaze is the clear winner when it comes to ease of use. Basically it starts with signing up. You just put your email address into their signup form, then the software is downloaded automatically to your computer and you can start the backup right away with their free test trial version for 15 days and you can see how the software works. Backblaze will just back up anything without even asking you what exactly to backup. Now, they will not backup system or program files but only the most important files like pictures, documents and other files that you have in the computer that're basically irreplaceable and cannot be re-installed.

Now, we can also exclude some files. For example, if you have a huge of file of a virtual machine for example, you can exclude that file or just speed up your backup. Same thing with CrashPlan but CrashPlan is little more complicated to set up. Well, it's not really difficult but you have to think about, "okay, which folder do I want to backup? Do I have to backup my external hard drives? Do I have to select other files that I want to backup?" So there's a little more to actually start the

backup when you're using CrashPlan. Now, both services will backup external hard drives but you have to select those external hard drives in your backup selection. And when you disconnect the external hard drives, they will obviously not... the files will obviously not be backup and Backblaze even deletes your files after a certain period when you do not connect the external hard drive. We're gonna talk about that in the feature section of this review.

Reliability

Now, another major issue or topic when talking about unlimited online backup services of course is their reliability. So, how reliable the service back up your files and most importantly does the service restore your files properly. Now, for the purposes of these reviews, we publish here... we have a test folder of 10 GB in size with several photos, documents, presentations, PDF files. We upload the files to their servers to see how fast the backup is and then we download those files again to see if anything is damaged or the restore has some hiccups or whatever. So for the reliability, both services CrashPlan and Backblaze were worked very very very well. The backup was just flawlessly. We could access our files online or on the go and then just pick the files we wanted to restore and then have them restored in our computer. Now, the restore mechanic works a little differently for both services. We have on one hand Backblaze that will send you a zipped file of your of your files that you want to restore. While CrashPlan, the restore takes place basically in the software client and you can then select a destination where to restore those files and what to do with those files.

So there's again a little more detail, a little more option that you have with a restore with CrashPlan. Backblaze is just like getting a file link via email, you click on it and you can download it and basically unpack your files and then use them for whatever you like. Let's talk quickly about speed.

Backup Speed

Now, speed is a very difficult measure. It's very difficult to really nail how long a backup service takes to upload and download your files. Because there are compression in place. There is duplication in place. There are many different factors that come into play when judging how fast a backup really is. We have a network monitor and we just monitor the upload speed or the bandwidth that a service takes for uploading and downloading files from their servers. Both servers

fortunately performed very very fast. CrashPlan took 0.5 hours to download our... I'm sorry, to upload our 10 GB test folder. So this is an average of 325 KB per second up speed. We have a 10 MB upload connection. And Backblaze was little faster. It took 7.9 hours or 350 KB per second to upload all of our files onto their servers. Well, if you have like a terabyte of files, you have to be willing to wait a couple of months until everything is backed up depending on your connection, depending on if you have your computer running 24/7. There're lot of factors. But do have that in mind when you start your Cloud backup. That's why you need to have a local backup first and then go for a Cloud backup so if you happen to have data loss happening to you right now, you always have the local backup first and then you can refer it to your Cloud backup because it's going to take a while.

Now, CrashPlan offers a seeded backup where they send you a hard drive you load the hard drive with your files and then send it back to CrashPlan. This is only for US customers and it would cost you around $150. And they also have a so called restore to door service where they send you your files on an external hard drive and then you can restore from that hard drive. This is an advantage if you need your files particularly fast and if you have a lot of files to restore.

Feature comparison

Let's have a look and this is obviously what, maybe, most of you guys are interested in, is the features. So let's just have a look at... of course, we cannot cover everything but I've just picked some of the major points that I think are important when you consider an online backup solution.

Now, unlimited online backup. Yes, both services do support unlimited online backup. There're no restrictions. You don't have to worry about anything, so check and check. File size, no file size restrictions whatsoever even if you have a huge media file 10 GB, 20 GB... No problem. You can back it up without any issues. Now, file retention, this is very interesting. Because Backblaze will delete your files within 30 days from their servers if they cannot find a duplicate on your hard drive. So when you've an external hard drive, you disconnect that hard drive and wait for 31 days. Those files will be deleted from their Cloud, so you would have to reconnect the hard drive again and then back those files up again. Now, if you have your hard drive constantly connected, it would obviously backup the whole time.

Now, CrashPlan on the other hand and this is why I really love CrashPlan. They will never ever delete your files from their service even if you disconnect the hard drive and do not connect it for 60 days, 90 days, a year. Those files will remain in their servers for you to access. Now... but let me tell you one thing. An unlimited online backup service is not an online storage service. It is a backup service, meaning your files are mirrored from your hard drive onto a server so do not confuse file storage with an actual backup. I would not recommend you use those services as an online storage service to free up some space on your hard drive. This is obviously involved with a security risk because you can lose those files and nobody is ever gonna guarantee you get those files back.

Now, what about network attached storage devices? I know many of you guys have a network attached storage device in your home or in your office with a lot of files. Backblaze does not officially support backing up from those devices. However, there are workarounds with CrashPlan where you can actually install some apps on your network attached storage device. For example, is Synology DiskStation and then back those files up. But it does not officially support it. So be cautious when backing up your files from a network attached storage device onto the CrashPlan cloud.

Now, you can access your file from a mobile device. You can browse the files on your iPhone for example and then select particular or individual files for restore. This is particularly handy if you're just on the go and need a file urgently. For example, an important presentation in a business meeting and you have forgotten your laptop at the hotel or something or at home even, you can just retrieve the file and have them sent it to you on your mobile device and you can open the PDF or the presentation. Both services also offer so called continuous backup so you just hit back all my files up and whenever some file changes or you add files to your backup selection, those files will be backed up automatically. And they have a prioritization service in place that backup the files that are most recently used first. So you run a lower risk of losing those files when you're actually working on them.

Another important aspect that is, particularly for me, very important is local encryption. There're services like Dropbox for example, that you certainly know, which do not encrypt your files locally before they actually leave your computer and this is a disaster because the NSA or whoever would like to access your files

could do so. So I always look for local encryption when checking the online backup services. Local encryption, first encrypt your files on your hard drive, then sends those files over a secure SSL connection to an online backup service and then your files are encrypted again on that particular server. And this mechanic is both true for Backblaze and CrashPlan. Where Backblaze uses a slightly higher encryption method of 448 bit Blowfish. But this is a major security factor and will protect your files from third-party access.

Now, there are more options that you have with CrashPlan in general. There're backup sets that you can use to manage your files so you could, for example, create a separate backup set for your photos, if you want to give those photos some priority and so structure your backup accordingly. Backblaze, as I've said before, is just a set it and forget it solution. You switch on the backup and you just forget it. There's no way to actually manage your files or manage your backups. It just runs automatically in the background.

Which is the best solution?
Which solution should you actually pick? Or who's the winner in this race? It's pretty difficult to determine it actually. I would personally lean more towards Backblaze because it is so easy to use. It is very fast when it comes to backing up your files and restoring your files. And it does not make me think. I've so many things I have to think about in my daily life and my business life. I actually can have backups being occupy mental real estate so to speak. So this way I personally would go for a Backblaze. Now CrashPlan is very sexy because you have all the beautiful settings. If you really like to geek out or if you're a Linux user, then CrashPlan is the best choice for you. You can really set up everything. You can set up network settings. You can set up a proxy server, You can play around with the CPU settings. You can structure your backups. There're so many options on how to personalize and perfect your backup strategy with CrashPlan. Also CrashPlan, you can use CrashPlan absolutely free if you just want to backup an external hard drive. You can let the CrashPlan software take care of the local backup for free. Or as another option, you could, for example, opt for the peer-to-peer backup. So you could install the CrashPlan client on a friend's computer or on another computer that is actually off site and then backup your files from your office to your home computer, for example, for free. It doesn't have to be in the same location. So they have this so-called triple redundancy backup, which is a very very nice option.

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