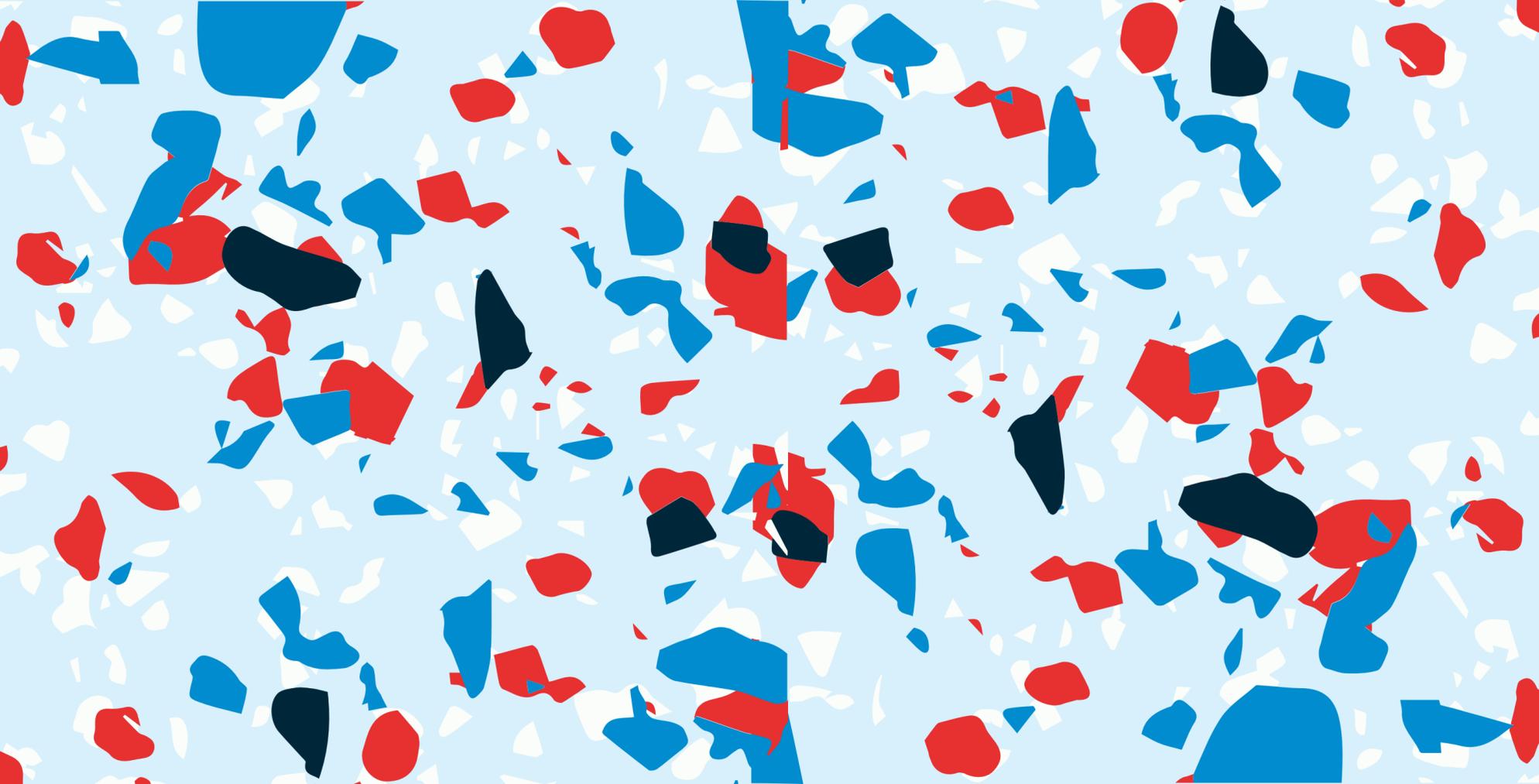




A Guide to Finding the Best  
WordPress Backup Plugin:

# 10 MUST-HAVE FEATURES

 **iThemes**



# Introduction

How do you know if you're choosing the best WordPress backup plugin when it seems that all the plugins seem to do the same thing?

With thousands of free plugins available on the WordPress repository alone (and a multitude of premium plugins available elsewhere), the question of choosing the right WordPress backup plugin (or service) can seem pretty daunting.

If you want a solid backup strategy for your WordPress site, these 10 features must exist in a WordPress backup plugin.

# 1. Full-Site (Complete) Backups

You might assume that a WordPress backup plugin should be able to backup an entire WordPress site, but you would be wrong.

When choosing a backup plugin, you need to make sure that the plugin can backup the ENTIRE site, not just the database or an XML export of the content.

What should a full WordPress backup include?

- A complete copy of a WordPress database, including the option of having non-default WordPress tables included/excluded.
- All files in the server's site directory
- All plugin and theme files
- The option to include non-WordPress related files and data associated with the server's site directory

If a WordPress backup plugin is unable to offer each item in the list above, you will be required to have multiple backup solutions, and this makes your backup process extremely inefficient.

Look for a WordPress backup plugin that provides options for inclusions/exclusions, while also enabling the user to backup every file related to the WordPress site.

## 2. Ability to Schedule Backups

Most WordPress users don't live 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year connected to their WordPress dashboard. Life is full of interruptions and unexpected events. So, if a WordPress backup plugin doesn't have the ability to schedule backups, you are taking on the responsibility to remember to login and initiate backups on a regular basis.

**A WordPress backup plugin should offer the ability to schedule backups to run automatically.**

Look for these backup scheduling features:

- **Multiple types of backups** - When comparing a WordPress backup plugin's backup scheduling feature, don't stop at the ability to schedule a single type of backup. Look for the ability to schedule multiple types of backups (full-site backups, database-only backup, combinations of backups, etc.)
- **Backup schedule intervals & start times**
  - Make sure the backup plugin offers a wide variety of backup intervals (i.e. hourly, daily, weekly, etc.) and the ability to choose the date/time a backup will run.

- **Scheduled backups automatically send backups off-site** - What good is a scheduled backup if it leaves the backup file on the same server as the site? If your site goes down, the latest backup file will be inaccessible. Make sure the WordPress backup plugin you use can not only schedule backups but can also send that backup file to a remote storage destination as part of the scheduled backup process.
- **Scheduling doesn't rely on WordPress Cron jobs** - Check to confirm the plugin doesn't rely on WordPress Cron jobs to initiate scheduled backups. WordPress Cron jobs are triggered by website traffic, so if one visits your website, then Cron jobs are never initiated, and no scheduled backups will occur.

# 3. Multiple Off-site Storage Locations for Your Backups

When discussing WordPress backup plugins, the word redundancy should be in your vocabulary. We aren't talking about having multiple plugins that do the same thing, but we are talking about having multiple storage locations of your WordPress backup files. Nothing makes a bad day worse than discovering your server is down AND your backup location is inaccessible at the same time.

There are many options that a WordPress backup plugin can utilize as a backup storage location:

- [Amazon Web Services](#) (AWS or more commonly referred to as Amazon S3)
- [Google Drive](#)
- [Dropbox](#)
- [BackupBuddy Stash](#)
- Rackspace Cloud
- Remote servers (sFTP/FTP)
- Email

**The important thing regarding backup remote storage locations is that a WordPress backup plugin offers you multiple locations to choose from and that you can use them concurrently.**

## 4. Easy (and Fast) Restoration of Backups

Obviously, a WordPress backup plugin should be able to backup your WordPress website, but the plugin also needs to offer a quick and easy way to restore the site from a backup. If a backup restoration takes too long or requires technical prowess, that plugin is missing the concept of making sure downtime of a site is kept to a minimum.

Questions to ask about your WordPress backup plugin:

- Does the plugin have a solution for combining [WordPress backup and restore](#)?
- Does it allow me to restore a WordPress website with minimal downtime?
- What is the process of restoring the site if it goes down? What do I need?
- Can I overwrite existing files and/or existing databases?
- Can I choose to only restore files or only restore a database?
- Does my WordPress dashboard have to be accessible to restore my site?
- Can I restore my current version of WordPress?

# 5. Customization of Backup Contents

As previously mentioned, a WordPress backup plugin should be able to backup your entire WordPress site, and an added benefit is the ability to customize what is actually included in a backup.

**The capability to exclude/include specific files, folders, and database tables can be a huge time-saver (and server resource saver) for some sites.**

For example, the ability to exclude a directory that stores the high-resolution images of a photo gallery site from the regularly scheduled daily backups can ensure that your backups are performed quickly and without issue.

This approach will also save you storage space in your remote destination. You can then schedule a secondary backup that backs up your high-resolution folder at times when your server is not busy.

## 6. Ability to Move a WordPress Site to a New Location

Moving a WordPress website (also known as [WordPress migration](#) or WordPress deployment) can be a very time-consuming process. You can't simply upload a backup file to a new location and restore the site.

You need to investigate whether a WordPress backup plugin can handle the following tasks when moving a WordPress website:

- Does the plugin replace all the coded URLs on the site (including in the database and options settings)?
- Can the plugin provide a way to search and replace text across the entire site and database?
- Does the plugin handle serialized data correctly...including serialized data that is stored inside other serialized data?
- Can the plugin [clone WordPress](#)?
- Can the plugin handle [WordPress staging](#)?

## 7. Email Notifications

Having a WordPress backup plugin that does everything you want is great, but what happens when something doesn't go according to plan? This is when having a robust notification system within the plugin is helpful.

**A good WordPress backup plugin will have the ability to notify a user when a task was successfully completed and or when a task (like a backup) failed to complete properly.**

If the WordPress backup plugin you are looking at does not notify you when a backup fails, you will never know (until its too late) that you now do not have a current and useful backup of your website.

## 8. Ability to Roll Back Files and Databases

The following scenario occurs way too often for web designers who work with clients (or maybe for yourself, but we won't ask you to admit it). A "client" accidentally deletes a file or image from the server and now you, as the developer, are called upon to "fix" the site.

Sure, you could just do a whole site restore and be done with it. But it would be faster to simply roll back that file or database to a time before the error/deletion occurred.

**If your WordPress backup plugin does not have a rollback ability, you may be forcing yourself to do more work than you actually need to do.**

## 9. Server Tools

Backing up a WordPress website calls for an extra set of tools related to your server. Several tools/features that are helpful for a WordPress backup plugin to possess are:

- **Malware Scan** - The ability to perform a malware scan of your site. If you are making backups of a site that is already infected with malware, your backups are essentially useless. Make sure you have the capability to verify your site is clean and ready for a backup to be performed.
- **Database Scan & Repair** - The same concept is true regarding the database. We don't want to make copies of databases that are bloated, unoptimized, and possibly full of errors. A WordPress backup plugin that can scan and repair your database before a backup is made can be a life saver.
- **Monitor Storage & Resource Usage** - Can you monitor the storage space available for your site and see where you are using most of your hosting's storage caps?
- **WordPress Cron Job Management** - The flexibility of being able to view and manage WordPress scheduled CRON jobs can be the difference in running your server's CPU process into the ground or having an efficiently running website.

# 10. Automatic Backups

A WordPress backup plugin that offers all nine features listed above is an excellent solution, but if you are looking for a plugin that can protect your site at all times, you ultimately need to find a plugin that offers [automatic WordPress backups](#).

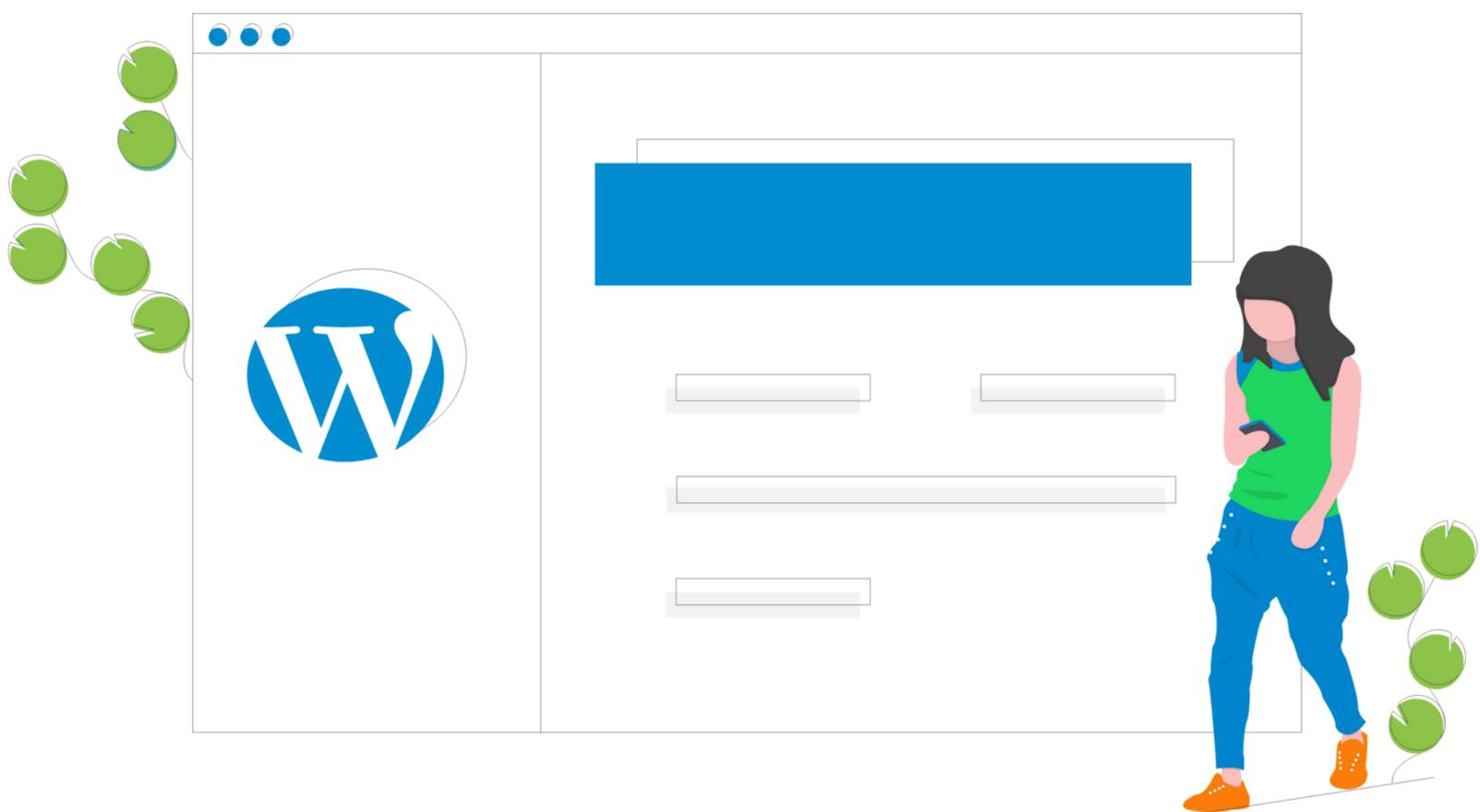
**An automatic WordPress backup feature continuously watches for changes to posts, pages, media uploads, plugin/theme additions or modifications, and any other changes that occur on your WordPress site, and then immediately pushes those changes up to a secure storage location.**

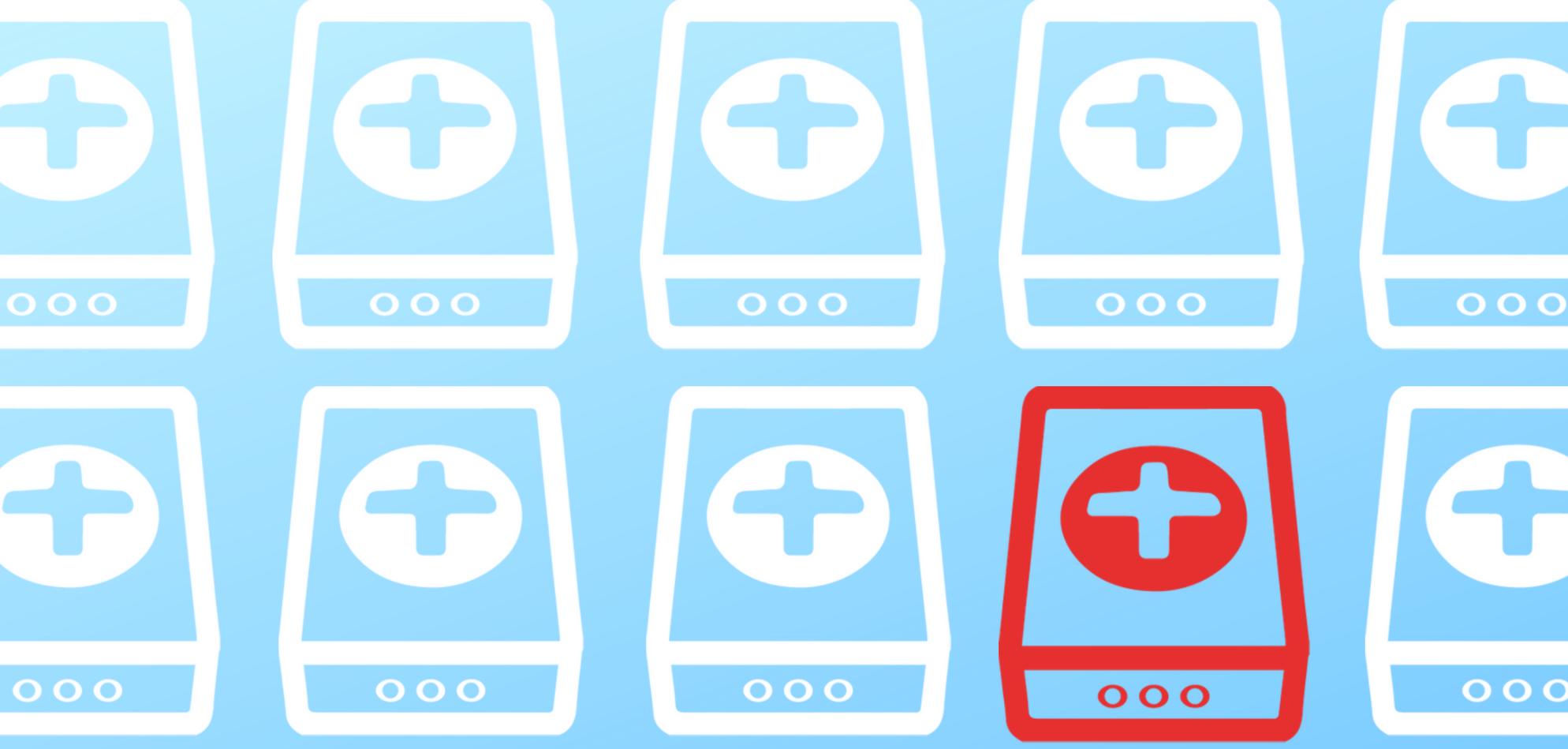
An automatic WordPress backup solution should only capture the aspects of your site that have changed since the last backup, which ultimately speeds the entire backup process up. Rather than running scheduled backups that capture everything on your server at a point in time, it keeps an ongoing real-time snapshot of your WordPress site.

# The Reality of WordPress Backup Plugins

Most WordPress backup plugins that claim to “do it all” don’t include all 10 of these features. Don’t just grab the product someone else calls the best WordPress backup plugin. Review the plugin closely to make sure it meets your needs and requirements.

Make sure your WordPress site is safe and protected by a trustworthy, reliable, feature-rich WordPress backup plugin like [BackupBuddy](#).





# BACKUPBUDDY

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