



[www.mozy.com](http://www.mozy.com)

## Backup Review Rating



*Reviewed on 12/02/07*

### Summary

Mozy and Carbonite lead the market in consumer and small business online backup. Mozy has two products: Mozy Home and Mozy Pro. Carbonite has yet to release their business backup service. Both appear to be very well engineered and solid. From the perspective of the home or SOHO user, Carbonite has a slight edge due to its simplicity. For the technically sophisticated user, both products are about equivalent and a decision will come down to a matter of personal taste in one's approach to the user interface. Mozy's approach was to take traditional IT backup features and boil them down to something manageable for an individual. Carbonite's approach seems to have been to ignore everything that came before in backup, start with a clean slate, and design something new with the consumer and SOHO user in mind.

Mozy was recently acquired by enterprise storage giant EMC. The good news is that EMC is a big company and Mozy is not likely to go out of business with a parent like that. The bad news is that the innovation and drive that has gotten Mozy this far may dissipate now that the founders and technical wizards are just drawing a paycheck from the big guys out East. EMC is strong in the enterprise space, but has a poor track record in the consumer market.

From what we've been able to learn, Mozy and Carbonite are about the same size – both have between 50 and 60 employees. Mozy's marketing has been based on attracting users to their 2GB free offer. You can sign up and get a free 2GB account forever. However, if you read the fine print in their License Terms, it states "Mozy, Inc. reserves the right at any time to modify, suspend, or discontinue providing the Service or any part thereof in its sole discretion with or without notice."

Once you've signed up for the free 2GB account, they're hoping that you'll upgrade to Mozy Home which offers unlimited capacity for \$4.95/mo, or \$55 per year. If you are a business user, their license agreement says that you must choose Mozy Pro which costs \$3.95/mo per PC, plus \$.50 per GB stored. This plan is significantly more expensive for anyone with a lot of data. On the other hand, you get a higher level of customer support and some extra features, such as account administration.

#### Pros:

- Free 2GB account for consumers
- Options tab with 15 checkboxes for notifications, daily preferences, etc.
- Backs up open and locked files
- Mac version in beta
- Block-level incremental backup
- Fast, generally limited only by your internet connection
- Versions – recover old versions of your files

- Paid version with unlimited space
- Allows manual throttling of CPU and bandwidth utilization
- Web access: retrieving one file from backup is fast and fairly simple
- Data encrypted before transmission to Mozy
- Offers private encryption key
- Backs up external hard drives

#### Cons:

- Advanced features can be overwhelming to a novice
- Full restore process is slow and cumbersome
- Configuration process for choosing files to back up is clumsy
- Online web restore process requires download of the full data amount (uncompressed) and is prone to failure
  - once a download stalls, there is no way to restart it
  - web restore does not place files back in their original locations
  - you must give Mozy permission to decrypt your data – a potential security issue
- The local Mozy client is not visually appealing and may be confusing to users who do not understand Windows file structures – somewhat techie
- Scheduled backup only (not continuous), though can be very frequent
- No telephone support for Mozy Home
- “Fastest bandwidth” setting makes computer use sluggish – could be more automatic

### **Company Information**

Location:	American Fork, UT
Est. revenues:	\$5.0 M 2007
Employees :	60
Financing:	Bought out in late 2007 by EMC
Subscribers:	400,000 (including free 2GB accounts)
Stored data:	3 petabytes
Positioning:	“Mozy is the industry-leading solution for online backup - back up your important files, photos, documents and more over the internet.”
Sales channels:	Primarily direct to consumer. Affiliate and reseller programs.

### **Pricing**

Mozy “Free”	2GB of free space
Mozy Home:	\$4.95/mo per PC. 1 year paid up front: Get one month free. 2 years paid up front: get 3 months free.
Mozy Pro:	\$3.95/mo per PC plus \$.50GB

Our guess is that the typical “Home” user has 15GB of data backed up for \$4.95/mo. Using Mozy Pro, that would be \$3.95 plus \$7.50, or \$11.45 per month. If you have 100GB of photos or music, you definitely want to use Mozy Home!

## Getting started and initial backup

The signup process for Mozy is simple. To register for a free 2GB account, all you need is an email address and password. Purchasing is also simple and straightforward. One nice thing about Mozy's "shopping cart" is you can buy multiple licenses with one transaction.

### Sign Up: MozyHome Unlimited Account Information

**NOTE:** MozyHome Unlimited is for personal, non-commercial use only. Business users check out [MozyPro](#).

#### Account Information

Email:   
It helps to put your main email address.

Password:   
Password must be at least six characters.

Password again:

#### MozyHome Unlimited Plan

Computers:    
Each computer costs \$4.95/month.

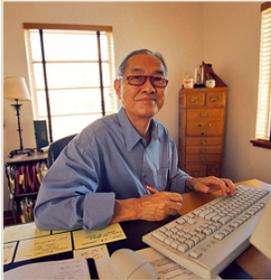
Billing Period:  Two-year (get 3 months free!)  
 Yearly (get 1 month free!)  
 Monthly

The installation of the PC software was quick and easy. As part of the setup, you are asked whether you want to let Mozy keep your encryption key or whether you want to keep it yourself.

### Mozy Remote Backup Configuration Wizard

#### Encryption Settings

How should Mozy encrypt your data?



Mozy Remote Backup always encrypts your data with a 448-bit encryption key.

Should Mozy use its own key, or would you like to provide your own private key?

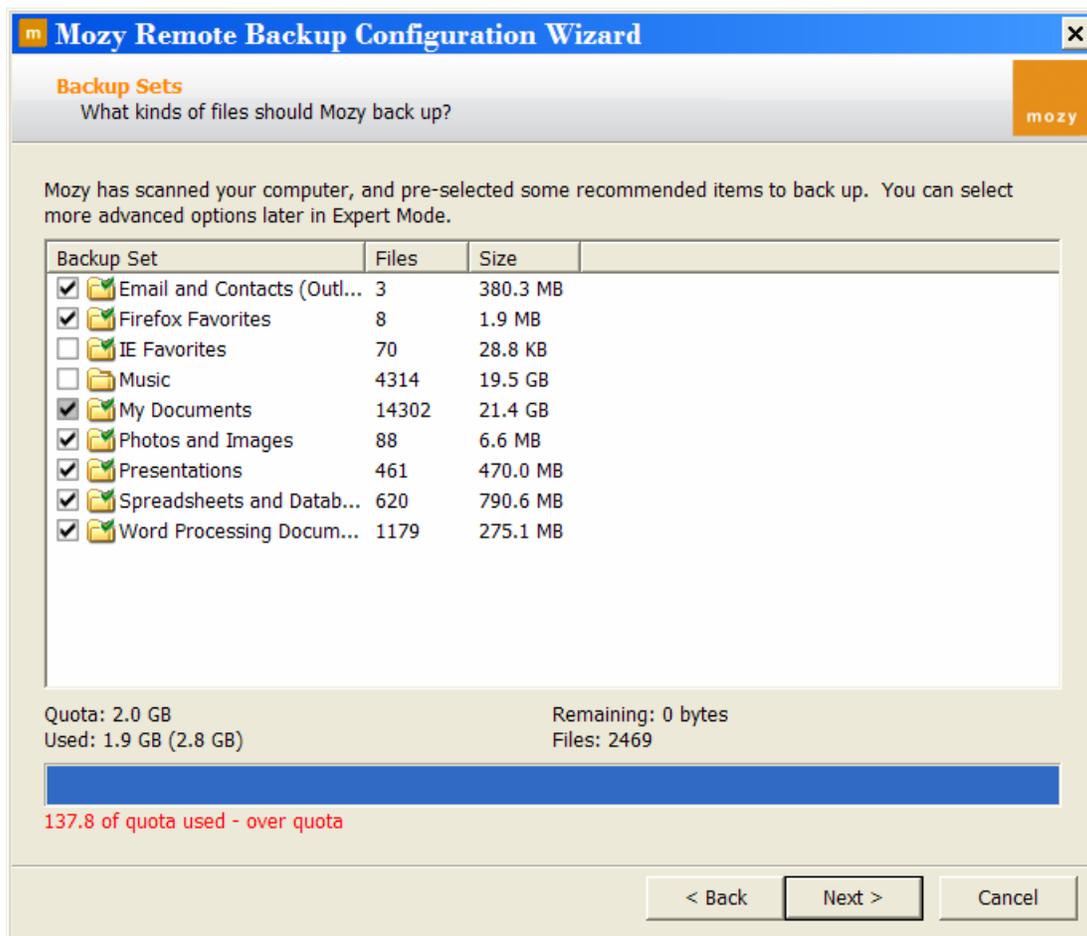
Encrypt my data with Mozy's own 448-bit key (Recommended)  
 I'd rather manage my own private symmetric key

< Back   Next >   Cancel

This could be useful for healthcare organizations or law firms where either convention or legislation require you to keep your own encryption key. Consumers beware, however: if you keep the key yourself then lose it, you can kiss your backup goodbye. Wisely, Mozy recommends that they keep your key.

After installing the PC software, Mozy scans your hard drive – for us, that took about 2 minutes and used a lot of resources while it was happening – you wouldn't want to be working on your PC at the same time. When the scan was done, Mozy presents you with a menu of backup options. You decide what you want to back up and what you don't want to back up. If you are signing up for the free 2GB, you have to get the total down to 2GB before you can start your backup. If you don't know exactly what you want to back up or where your important files are located, the process of checking and un-checking boxes can be maddening. Matters are complicated by mixing file types and folders in one list – for example, you need to choose which folders to include for each file type (choosing to not include "My Documents" multiple times, once each for pictures, documents, music, etc.)

The good news is if you check "Photos and Images" for example, Mozy will find your photos no matter where they are. However, all of this complexity is unnecessary if you're selling unlimited backup space – it should just start backing up everything by default. So our guess is that the idea of "unlimited" backup was an afterthought because this interface is what you would design if you were selling a limited amount of space.



After selecting what you do and don't want to back up, Mozy tests the speed of your Internet connection and gives you a rough idea of how long your initial backup will take – a nice touch as most people don't realize how slow DSL and cable modems are at uploading. You then get to choose how much bandwidth you're going to devote to backup with a little slider that says "Faster Computer" and "Faster Backups." Your estimated time to complete will change accordingly. This feature will totally baffle a novice who doesn't understand where they should set this control and why.



When you've made all your selections, you can start the initial backup. Unfortunately, in our case, Windows froze after pressing Finish. We needed to force-quit Windows and restart. After a restart, Mozy kept running and did a good job of monitoring CPU usage and scaling back when the computer was in use. An email to customer support concerning this problem went unanswered.

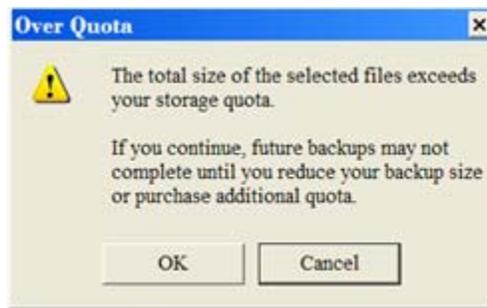
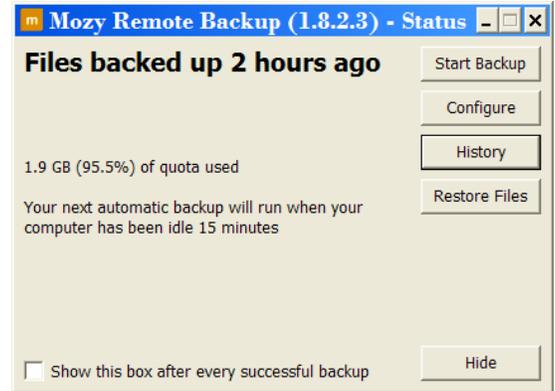


## After the initial backup is complete

Mozy places a little icon on the system tray like most of the other backup services we tried. Clicking the icon brings up a menu that lets you:

- Start Backup
- Configure
- History
- Restore Files

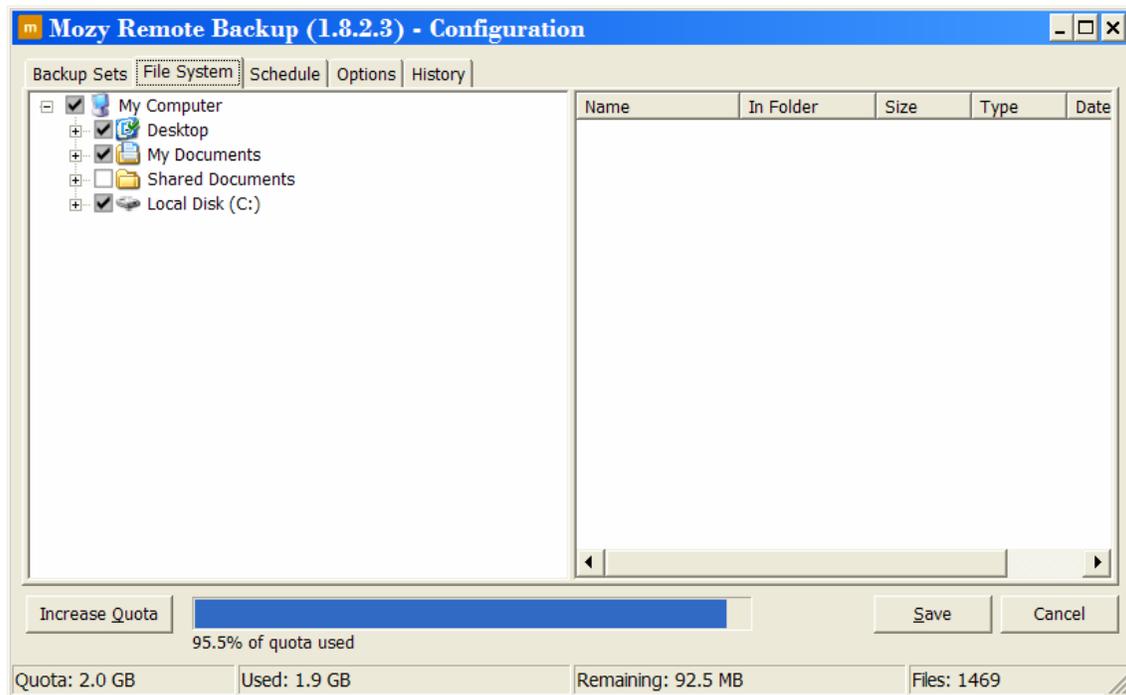
If you're using the free 2GB service, you have to keep an eye on your quota – if you go over 2GB, your backup won't start until you eliminate something. The pop-up says "future backups may not complete..." It should say "will not." In fact, they won't even start. Fair enough – it's free, after all.



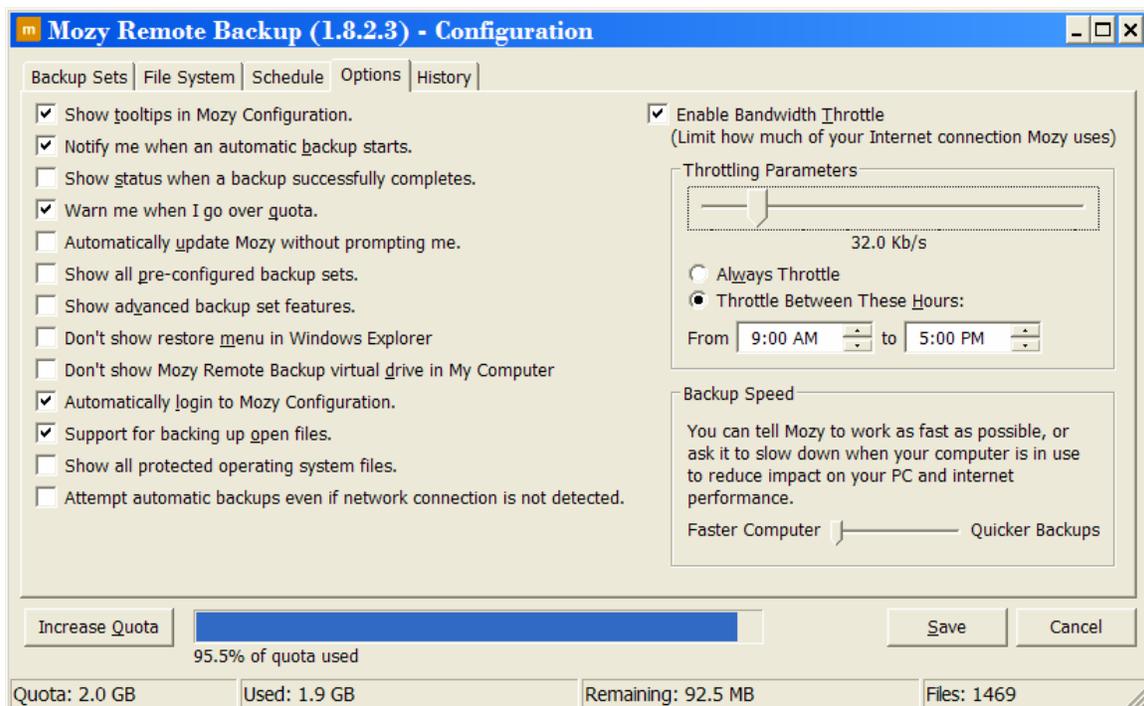
This "History" button lets you see all your past backups. We are not sure what a user would make of this. For example, the 3<sup>rd</sup> file down on this list shows "Size Encoded" as 3.1MB and "Size Transferred" as 1.6MB. There's probably a good explanation for what this all means, but it would surely not mean much to the average consumer.

Start Time	Type	Duration	Result	Files	Size	File Encoded	Size Encoded	Files Transferred	Size Transferred
11/16/2007 03:03 PM	Automatic	00:00:37	Success	1466	1.9 GB	0	0 bytes	0	0 bytes
11/16/2007 01:03 PM	Automatic	00:01:30	Success	1466	1.9 GB	0	0 bytes	0	0 bytes
11/16/2007 11:03 AM	Automatic	00:02:23	Success	1466	1.9 GB	9	3.1 MB	7	1.6 MB
11/15/2007 12:13 PM	Automatic	00:03:15	Success	1460	1.9 GB	8	2.4 MB	7	788.6 KB
11/14/2007 04:33 PM	Automatic	00:21:32	Success	1457	1.9 GB	0	0 bytes	0	0 bytes
11/14/2007 12:27 PM	Automatic	00:08:37	Success	1457	1.9 GB	6	1.3 MB	6	1.3 MB
11/13/2007 04:22 PM	Automatic	00:03:03	Success	1456	1.9 GB	1	0 bytes	1	0 bytes
11/13/2007 12:14 PM	Automatic	00:02:50	Success	1456	1.9 GB	5	335.6 KB	4	319.6 KB
11/12/2007 12:06 PM	Automatic	00:02:39	Success	1457	1.9 GB	3	1.2 MB	3	1.2 MB
11/09/2007 01:45 PM	Automatic	00:22:53	Success	1457	1.9 GB	9	1.1 MB	9	1.1 MB
11/08/2007 11:53 AM	Automatic	00:39:47	Success	1467	1.9 GB	21	5.1 MB	20	5.1 MB
11/07/2007 12:16 PM	Automatic	00:02:44	Success	1451	1.9 GB	4	382.4 KB	4	382.4 KB
11/07/2007 07:40 AM	Automatic	00:00:39	Success	1450	1.9 GB	0	0 bytes	0	0 bytes
11/07/2007 05:40 AM	Automatic	00:00:56	Success	1450	1.9 GB	0	0 bytes	0	0 bytes

When you click the "Configure" button (you would have to do this if you needed to reduce the size of your backup, for example), you get the same kind of screen that you saw initially for picking what you do and don't want to back up. We were surprised that it took 60 seconds for this screen to appear, however.



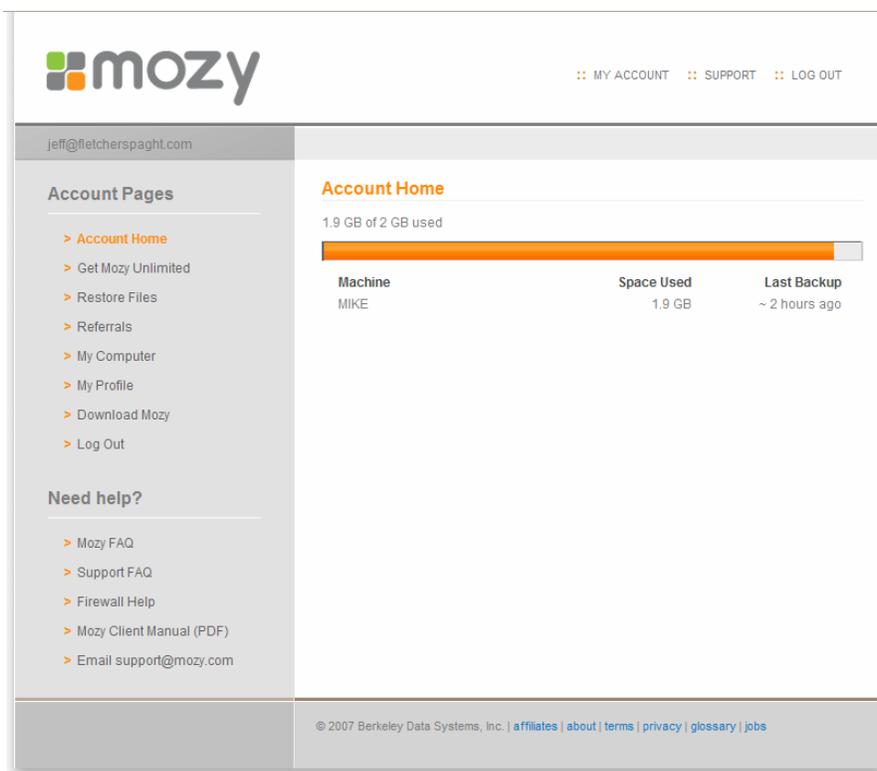
The Options tab brings up a bewildering selection of options that only a developer at Microsoft could love. Most consumers wouldn't have a clue what to do with most of these. In a product review in the Wall St. Journal last year, super-geek technology writer Walter Mossberg decided he liked Mozy best because of the extra control it gave him. This is the sort of menu that he must have been referring to.



## Restoring files

With Mozy you can restore files using just a web browser – a nice feature if you're away from your computer and you need to get at something you've previously backed up. Like the rest of the Mozy web site, everything is clean, attractive, and well-organized. One issue you should be aware of with web-based file access is that Mozy must decrypt your data at their data center and send you unencrypted files. I don't know how you feel about letting the vendor decrypt your files and send them over an un-secure link, but it makes us a little nervous. This is true for any web-based remote access feature, not just Mozy. So unless there's an emergency need, we'd prefer to use Mozy's client software which decrypts the data locally.

With the web browser application, when you log in, you get a visual representation of your quota:



You then select the files that you want to restore using a folder tree structure that is similar to what you'd see with Windows Explorer.

When you're done, you click "Submit" and your request goes off to Mozy. You can select whether you want to restore the selected files to your computer or have them mailed to you via Fedex on a DVD for roughly \$65.

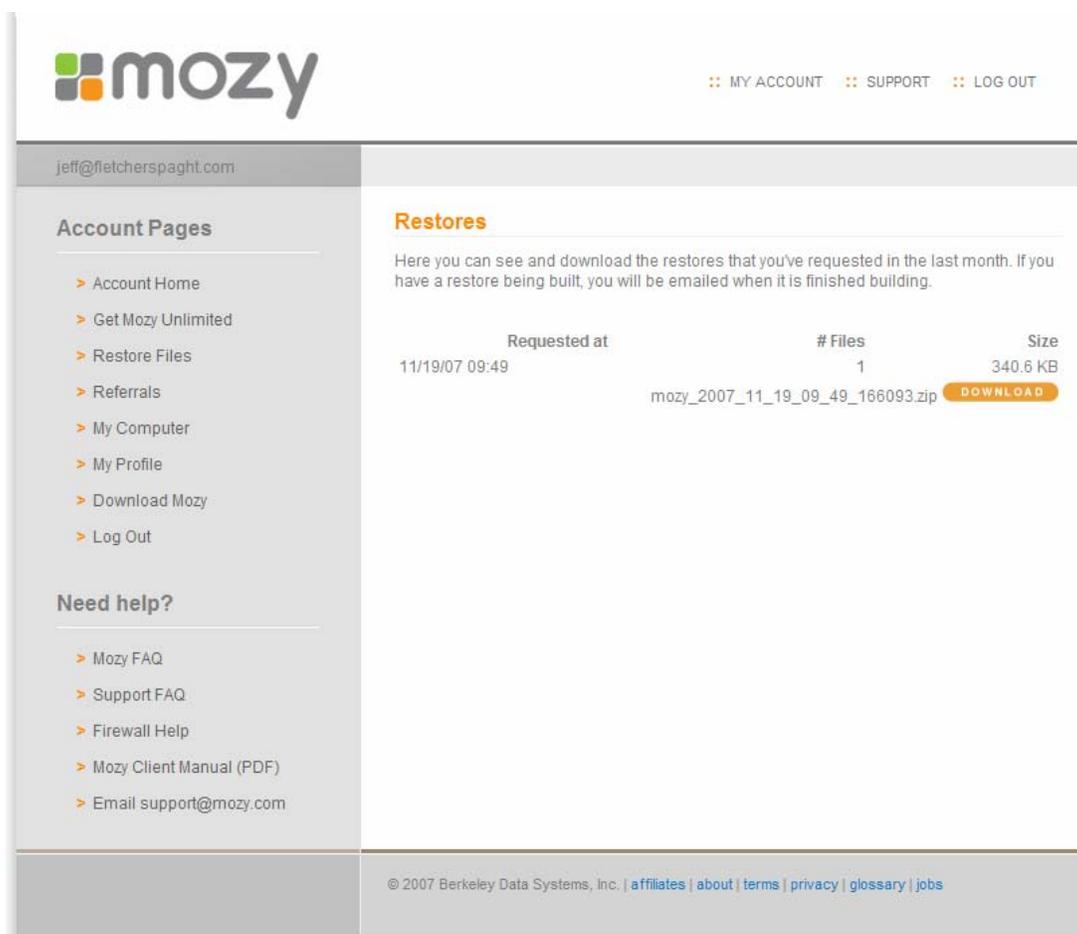
The web restore process is a little complicated. You get an email from Mozy saying that the selected files are ready to be downloaded. Then you go to the web page that shows your downloads. Your files are returned to you as a .zip file. We think most consumers aren't ready for this. Even if they know how to unzip a zip file, you then have to know where you want to put the restored files. It does work, however, and if you don't have a problem with zip files, then this should be ok.

We didn't test restoring our whole backup, but we suspect that the web interface is mainly for retrieving individual files. We can't imagine how you'd deal with, say, a 10GB zip file. The chances of a successful download are probably slim. We tried it with a 2.8 GB download and the download stalled at 32%. Tech support suggested we restart the download and said that any hiccup in the communications during the download will cause the restore to freeze. The web restore is also

inexplicably slow: Mozy's UI was indicating that it would take 9 hours for 2.8GB. That's only 86kbps and the bandwidth in our office is more than 20 times that speed.

The "clunkiness," unreliability, and slowness of a big restore might explain why Mozy offers the Fedex DVD option. It shouldn't be necessary: even a consumer-grade DSL connection gives you 2-3mbps download, which means you should be able to restore 20-30GB per day no problem. So we wouldn't think that FedExing a DVD would normally be the desired solution, especially at a cost of \$65.

A quick Google of "Mozy restore" will indicate that the problems we encountered with the web interface at not isolated incidents.



The screenshot shows the Mozy web interface. At the top left is the Mozy logo. To the right are links for MY ACCOUNT, SUPPORT, and LOG OUT. Below the logo is the user's email address: jeff@fletcherspaght.com. The left sidebar contains two sections: "Account Pages" with links to Account Home, Get Mozy Unlimited, Restore Files, Referrals, My Computer, My Profile, Download Mozy, and Log Out; and "Need help?" with links to Mozy FAQ, Support FAQ, Firewall Help, Mozy Client Manual (PDF), and Email support@mozy.com. The main content area is titled "Restores" and contains a table with the following data:

Requested at	# Files	Size
11/19/07 09:49	1	340.6 KB
mozy_2007_11_19_09_49_166093.zip		<a href="#">DOWNLOAD</a>

At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with the text: © 2007 Berkeley Data Systems, Inc. | [affiliates](#) | [about](#) | [terms](#) | [privacy](#) | [glossary](#) | [jobs](#)

Using the Mozy PC client to do big or complete restores is a better way to go. This is the easiest, quickest, and most efficient way to restore files with Mozy. Using Windows Explorer, you can right-click files or folders to restore them to their original locations. You can also "Restore-To" any location as any file name. The "Explore" option is more cumbersome, but shows the parallel Mozy file structure as a network drive. In our tests, it was very quick for individual files or folders. The whole process was error free, easy, and efficient. We were able to restore a 2.8 GB backup in 7 hours 46 minutes. That represents a download speed of 850kbps. That's a lot faster than the web download, but still a lot slower than the typical DSL or Cable is capable of. Restored files were put back in their correct locations.

Canceling and restarting a restore operation takes a good 15 minutes or so, since the Mozy client doesn't seem to be very happy about responding to cancel requests. But normally you wouldn't do that unless you had started the request in error.

## Other Tests

Shutting the computer down in the middle of a backup raised some issues. There was no warning message or error message. It did not, for example, ask you if you want Mozy to complete the backup and then shut off the computer for you. A partial backup did not show up in the log file, even a failed process. So it is unclear whether anything was actually backed up.

## Conclusion

Mozy has a great web site. It's pretty simple to do backups, especially if you consider yourself PC literate. Overall, it does a nice job. And having a 2GB free account has been an awesome deal for a lot of people who only have a small amount of stuff to back up.

The restore process, however, is something of a mess and there a lot of complaints about it on the Internet. For example, we found the following blogs from the August-September time frame (2007):

"For over 40 days, I've been trying to get help restoring my 31 GB of data. Each time, they tell me that there is some known bug, and it will be solved soon... but that is not good enough for a data backup service."

*Tucker comment on wonko.com, 8/10/07*

"My home server also crashed with 94.2 GB backed up to Mozy. I have been waiting for over 15 days for a 29.2 GB partial restore since the Mozy website wouldn't allow me to request a full restore."

*TM comment on wonko.com, 8/31/07*

"Been waiting over 50 days for a restore to build (30 BG) and still nothing. Their tech support is beyond worthless. I've talked with the president of the company and all he knows to do is get someone else involved that is clueless... Looks like the problem stems from the top."

*No More Mozy on wonko.com, 9/12/07*

Our guess is that Mozy is very aware of these problems and we hope that they've got a plan to fix them in the near-term. And clearly not everyone has problems. There are far more positive comments about Mozy on the Internet than there are negatives, though we couldn't find anyone with anything positive to say about the restore process.

All in all, Mozy is one of only a few companies in the market with enough customers and stability that you can believe they'll weather the growing pains. We think this market will eventually belong to Mozy and Carbonite and both will prosper and co-exist – Mozy with their free offer and strong support among the technorati and bigger enterprises, and Carbonite with their "backup for everyone" approach and big-name endorsers (like Kim Komando and Howard Stern).