



www.upline.com

Backup Review Rating



Reviewed on 5/3/2008

Tries to do too much:

Hp Upline used to be called Titanize and was the product of a company called Opelin that was acquired by HP last year. At \$59 per year for unlimited capacity, it's \$10 more expensive than Carbonite and \$5 more expensive than Mozy Home. There is a "Family plan" that backs up 3 PCs for \$149/yr, and a Business version that starts at \$299 per year for 3 PCs.

HP Upline tries to do too much – backup, file sharing, photo sharing, publishing, and so on. It doesn't do any of them really well. We gave Upline 1 star out of 5. As a backup service, it lacks most of the basic features and ease-of-use of pure backup services like Carbonite and Mozy. For collaboration, file sharing, syncing, publishing, and so forth, it isn't nearly as slick as the new SugarSync or BeInSync products.

When we first signed up, their whole system went down for several days. HP said that they had an "isolated problem", but blogs indicated that a customer who was attempting to restore his data actually got someone else's data – if true, there's probably nothing that could be worse for a backup company and not likely to inspire confidence.

There's a basic problem with products that try to combine backup with publishing, photo sharing, file sharing, and the like: all this other stuff just makes life complicated if all you want to do is protect the data on your PC.

Test Results:

The sign-up process for HP Upline is rather lengthy; you need to fill in 10 different text boxes just to set up your account. Also, even though we clicked on a "Try Now" button that was separate from a "Buy Now" button, we had to confirm our \$0.00 purchase in order to get started. We're assuming HP put this in place in the event that they want to charge people for a trial some day, but, for now, it was an unnecessary extra step.

HOME ACCOUNT FEATURES	
Licenses	1
Storage	Unlimited
Support	Basic
Online Backup	✓
Share	✓
Publish	✓
Search	✓
Dashboard	✗
Price per year	\$59

The installation itself wasn't complicated, but it did take a while. The HP Upline website mentions the only requirements are "A PC running Windows 2000, XP or Vista, with at least 60 MB of free disk space," but it actually also requires the Microsoft .NET Framework 2.0, the VC++ 2005 SP1 Runtime, and MSI 3.0. It automatically installs them for you, but it took almost ten minutes for us. Installing .NET Framework is a BIG install and likely to put off many potential users. None of the other backup services that we have reviewed require this. All in all, including signup and installation, it took us 13 clicks to get started with HP Upline.

The initial scan of our PC put a noticeable drain on the CPU. We were trying to write this review at the same time and decided to stop the scan because it was causing the PC to drag noticeably. Upline does not sense when the user is attempting to use their PC for other work and automatically move to a lower priority mode – a refinement available from other vendors.

We first had Upline back up 10MB of files; it took 5 minutes and 45 seconds. The compression of the files took 31 seconds, it took another second to encrypt the data, and 5 minutes, 13 seconds to actually send the compressed data. That's about 250 kbps, about 1/3rd of the upstream bandwidth of our DSL connection. It's certainly not in line with what we have come to expect from any of the big names in online backup. Backing up 100 MB took 45 minutes; yielding a slightly better backup speed – 296kbps, but still less than half of my available bandwidth.

The backup interface itself wasn't easy or simple; there is no way to backup files (or see if files are backed up) outside of the HP control panel itself. It took seven clicks to backup a single new file, and we had to enter our HP Upline password to make the change. Upline doesn't back up email, and you can't tell Upline to back up a single file unless you have already added its type into a separate window of the interface.

Restoring files was pretty easy; any files that are available for restore appear right in the main status window. Unfortunately, you can only restore files to their original location. This fits most of the common recovery goals, but restoring them to new locations is a nice benefit and allows users to have more control over their files. And if you have backed up from an XP computer and are restoring to a Vista computer, you will definitely have a problem because the file structures are different and default folders have different names to start with.

Interestingly enough, it took a minute *longer* to restore my 100 MB than it did to back it up: 46 minutes. The fact that HP's uploading and downloading bandwidth was symmetrical, as well as the fact that we achieved significantly lower speeds (in either direction) than we had with other backup solutions, leads us to believe that HP throttles Upline's bandwidth. Of course, they have every right to set their bandwidth, but when we need to recover important files, we'd like to be able to restore them as fast as our internet connection will allow. Throttling the upload speed might be a good way to limit the exposure of offering "unlimited" backup, but there is absolutely no point in limiting restore speed. Other "unlimited" vendors have told us that the average user backs up around 25-30GB. At HP's speed, a full restore of 25GB would take 8 days running 24 hours a day – versus less than 2 days for Carbonite or Mozy.

Unlike most other services, HP Upline does not offer a private encryption key option. If you are a lawyer, health care professional, or anyone else who is required to keep a private encryption key (or just paranoid), Upline is not for you.

Upline does not keep previous versions of your documents – they keep only the most current version. If you accidentally overwrite a document that you are working on, you can't go back and get the version from yesterday. Most of the major backup vendors now offer versioning.

Upline does not back up locked or open files. To back up the file you are working on, you must close the file first and click "Backup". Upline cannot back up your Outlook .pst email file since that file is almost always open and changing frequently. If you have a large file and you make a change to it,

Upline must back up the whole file again. Mozy, Carbonite, and others back up only the changed portions of the file.

Sharing and Publishing could be viewed as Upline's advantage. To publish files, you select files to publish and they are posted on <http://library.upline.com> for all to see. There is a pretty nice-looking search bar that allows you to find any person's files. Upline also provides a URL at which anybody can access each of your particular files. However, it is cumbersome to get a file's URL from within the Upline program itself. The problem is, if what you really want to do is sharing and remote access, there are much slicker products on the market, including Microsoft's SkyDrive which offers 5GB of free space.

Summary:

Backupreview.info focuses on backing up your PC – an activity that we think everyone needs to do. The problem with HP Upline is that it does a lot of things that have nothing to do with backing up your computer. And it does none of them, including the backup part, very well. It lacks basic backup features that have been available for a while from the market leaders.