

Deleting old TimeMachine Backups

Are you using an external hard drive for TimeMachine backup?

Are you using it to store other data as well?

Didn't you divide your hard drive it into a data and TimeMachine partition? (Hell No ...!)

Now you're running out of free disk space and need more room? (Hell Yes ...!)

Solution #1: Buy another (bigger) hard drive.

Solution #2: Remove some old TimeMachine backups to recover some space.

To do the later, open up a Console and type in this command:

```
bash-3.2# tmutil listbackups
```

You'll get a list of backups available on your hard drive, which looks something like this:

```
/Volumes/My Passport/Backups.backupdb/Gianpaolo Del Mattos MacBook Pro/2009-12-05-145734  
/Volumes/My Passport/Backups.backupdb/Gianpaolo Del Mattos MacBook Pro/2009-12-18-204014  
/Volumes/My Passport/Backups.backupdb/Gianpaolo Del Mattos MacBook Pro/2010-01-01-020640  
[...]  
/Volumes/My Passport/Backups.backupdb/Gianpaolo Del Mattos MacBook Pro/2011-12-10-064156  
/Volumes/My Passport/Backups.backupdb/Gianpaolo Del Mattos MacBook Pro/2011-12-10-074201  
/Volumes/My Passport/Backups.backupdb/Gianpaolo Del Mattos MacBook Pro/2011-12-10-110239
```

Now if you feel, that you won't need any old backups anymore (like I do for the pre-2011 backups, you can remove them easily like this:

```
bash-3.2# tmutil delete "/Volumes/My Passport/Backups.backupdb/Gianpaolo Del Mattos MacBook Pro/2009-12-05-145734"
```

Note: Don't forget to enquote the string to cope with white spaces, otherwise you'll get an error message.

Now if you want to be a bit more efficient, you can delete multiple backups at once.

Let's say, we want to delete all 2009 and 2010 backups, this command will do:

```
tmutil listbackups | grep -E -e '20(09|10)-[[:digit:]]{2}-[[:digit:]]{2}-' | while read backup;  
do echo "Working on backup '$backup' ..."; tmutil delete "$backup"; done
```