Backup How To

by Sandy Berger
http://www.compukiss.com/

Many of the letters that I have received are questions concerning lost data files. Once data is lost, it is difficult to recover. Having a good backup provides you with an important safety net.

Why You Need a Backup

The hard disk is the main storage medium in personal computers. Unfortunately, hard disks do sometimes fail, or in computer lingo, crash. When a hard disk crashes, all of your data is in jeopardy. Sometimes information can be retrieved after a crash, but it is usually an aggravating, time-consuming procedure that may end in despair.

To backup your files simply means copying files to a second medium as a precaution in case the first medium fails. The medium used to make the copy can be any of a number of different storage choices including floppy disks, hard disks, zip disks, CDs, or tapes.

Backup a Few Quick Files

The floppy disk is a dying medium. Some computers like the iMac don't even come with a floppy disk. Yet, right now more than 90% of personal computers still have a floppy drive, and it is an easy way to backup a single file or a small set of files. Any important file can be copied to a floppy disk for backup purposes. If you happen to be working on an important document, you can quickly insert a floppy disk and copy the document to the floppy to ensure that loss of power, hard disk crash, or another unexpected calamity won't leave you unprepared.

Programs with Built-in Backups

Some programs, such as Quicken, have an icon that you can click or a menu choice to backup your data files. You will often have the choice of saving the files to a floppy disk or other medium that you have available. This type of backup only makes a copy of your data. It will not make a copy of the program itself. These built-in backups are very useful, especially for financial and other important files.

Backup Medium

The first thing that you must decide is what kind of medium to use to backup your data. While the good old floppy disk is adequate for copying a few files, floppies do not hold much data. Even if you backup individual files as you use them, it is good to occasionally backup all of your files. If you do

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Membership

Membership in LCACE is open to all individuals and families interested in personal computing. Annual dues are $20.00 per individual/family. Associate membership is only $10.00 (out of state, unable to attend meetings). Membership includes a one year subscription to the LCACE News Journal and access to all club libraries and functions. Applications for membership may be obtained at the monthly meeting, by request on the club Hotline, and are now available on our WEB site at - http://www.lcace.org.

Meetings

LCACE meetings are usually held on Saturdays at the Grayslake Area Public Library, 100 Library Lane, Grayslake, Illinois. The meeting room opens at noon and the formal meeting begins at 12:30 p.m. All meetings are open to the public. Bring a friend!

Advertising

Ad rates per issue: Full page - $25, Half page - $15, Quarter page - $10, Business Card - $5. Discounts are available on advance purchase of multiple issues. Please send camera-ready copy and payment to the club address by the 21st of the month preceding publication. For more information on ad pricing, please call our Hotline. Ads are FREE to all paid members.

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Relay For Life 2009

2009 is the 25th Anniversary of The American Cancer Society's Relay For Life. It's also been 3 1/2 years since I was diagnosed with lung cancer. I'm alive today and happy to say, "I am a Survivor!" My daughter's family formed the "Donna's Day" team shortly after I had part of my lung removed, while I was still sick and bald from the chemotherapy. Each year our team continues to raise funds for the Cancer Society in gratitude for all they did for me.

This year's Relay For Life will be overnight (6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.), July 25th and July 26th, 2009 on Saturday night and Sunday morning. We will be at the Lake Villa Township Park, commonly known as "Caboose Park," located at Grand Avenue and Fairfield Roads in Lake Villa. Please join us. It's so much fun. I can guarantee you will smile, laugh and perhaps shed a tear or two.

Now that it's income tax time, perhaps you're thinking of tax deductions. My fellow L.C.A.C.E. members, I think I can help you out for next year...... Please donate and help my team meet our fundraising goal. Make your tax deductible <u>checks payable to The American Cancer Society</u> and mail them to me. (I encourage checks rather than on-line deductions.) Feel free to pass on this message to everyone you know. Thank you and may you NEVER have to hear the words: "You have cancer."

Donna Lee Kalinoski
915 Broadway Avenue
North Chicago, IL 60064

Robin's RAMblings

LCACE had great attendance for Stephanie Ellington's *Smart Computing* presentation on February 7th, a beautiful sunny day. We all received a copy of the March issue, as well as a pen. Bob D'Agostino won a Smart People tee shirt; Jay Bitterman received a storage sleeve for his magazines, and Winnie Frost won a one year subscription to the magazine. Winnie graciously donated the subscription as a door prize for our April anniversary party. Winnie supplied us with hot coffee, and Mike McEnery brought cookies. Julio Rivera rejoined LCACE. Welcome back, Julio!

Our upcoming meetings are:

March *Quicken Starter Edition*-Mike McEnery

April 4-Election, club party, Show and Tell, and Ask the Gurus

May 9-Best Buy-Mundelein will return to talk about the latest in technology

June 13-Skeletons in our Closet: Researching a Family Scandal-Robin Seidenberg

August 8

Our election process began in February when Linda Busch, Sherry Florian, Winnie Frost, Terri Hanlon, Lester Larkin, Mike McEnery, and Robin Seidenberg accepted nominations. Fred Barnett, J.J. Johnson, Donna Kalinoski, and Dorothy Sutherland declined. We take nominations again in March and April, elect our board in April, and then elect our president from the board. Please think of people to nominate. You can nominate yourself.

Happy computing!

How can I keep my PC clean and tidy?

Written by Gabe Goldberg, Computers and Publishing, Inc.
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Like changing your car's oil or replacing your home's air conditioner filter, a little PC cleaning pays off with a faster, more reliable, and longer-lasting computer.

Although nothing suggested here is either rocket science or inherently dangerous, always follow the medical adage, "First, do no harm". So don't do anything that makes you uncomfortable (perhaps have a more experienced person clean up while you watch and learn), and back up your system and data. Then reboot, to get a clean start, and don't open any programs,

Before starting, to measure what your cleanup deletes, determine how full your hard drive is. Open My Computer, Right Click your hard drive (usually labeled "Local Disk (C:)"), and click Properties. Note how much space is used and free, then close the dialogue box.

Next, use Windows' built-in disk cleaning tool. Click Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Cleanup, and the drive to clean, likely C. Choose what to clean; default selections are usually what you need. To be extra thorough, if your system has been running problem free, click the More Options tab and then Clean Up System
Restore. Confirm your choice and click OK.

Delete Web browser temporary files. Using Internet Explorer, click Tools on the Menu Bar, Internet Options, and Delete Files under the General tab. Other browsers provide similar functions, sometimes using "cache" to refer to the collection of temporary files.

Delete unneeded personal files, items outdated and no longer used. While most Microsoft Office programs (Word, Excel, etc.) store their files in the My Documents folder, you may have changed this default location. And other apps likely have their own favorite places to stash files. Look around, since cluttered files make Windows work harder to get things done and waste time and resources when they're backed up. If you collect photos,

a complete backup of your hard disk, you will be able to reconstruct the entire disk and/or restore any individual program or file.

A complete backup requires a medium that can handle a large amount of data. The tape drive is the tried-and-true backup medium, but it is slow and cumbersome to use. Recordable and/or rewritable CD-ROM drives, which have recently become affordable, are now one of the best backup mediums. Recordable CD-ROMs can only write a CD once. Rewritable CD-ROMs can write a CD, erase it, and rewrite on it again. Most writable CD-ROM devices come with software that helps you backup your data.

Online Backup Services:

Another option currently available is an online data backup, like Connected Online Backup . These subscription-based backup services allow you to schedule backups whenever you like. All you have to do is choose what you want to backup and how often and leave your computer on. Your computer will connect at whatever time you choose and backup your files to the Web service's computers. A monthly fee is charged based on the amount of data you want to backup. Obviously, you will want to make sure that the company you use for this kind of service is very good. You are putting your data in their hands, so make sure that they are using *secure* servers and encrypting (coding) the data so that your data cannot be accessed by anyone else.

What to Backup :

Your hard drive holds three things: the operating system, applications or programs, and data. The operating system is Windows or the Mac operating system. Although you may lose some settings that may have been customized, in general the operating system can be restored from the original CD that came with your computer. Your programs, again, minus some settings can also be restored from their original CDs. Your data includes all of the files and documents that you create, the e-mail that you send and receive, the favorites and/or bookmarks that you use in your browser, your Internet settings, and all of the photos, graphics, and other files stored on your computer.

Don't underestimate the importance of your data. I had a client who lost all the information in her family tree because she hadn't backed up the file. She didn't think that it was a very important file until she realized she had been working on her family history for three years. It will probably take her that long to reconstruct the information.

Obviously, there are many important things to backup. Unfortunately, Windows does not make this easy. Win-

dow 95/98 keeps all of your documents in a folder called *My Documents* , but your Internet settings, favorites, and other important data is scattered throughout the Windows directory. (Microsoft groups all of these files together in Windows 2000, but since Win 2000 is made for businesses, most home users cannot take advantage of this feature.) To make matters worse, many programs don't use the My Document folder, so even documents files that you create may be spread about your hard disk. If you can find all your documents and settings, you can back them up individually, but the easiest way to be sure that you copy them all is to do a complete backup of your hard disk.

Tips for Backing Up:
1. Test your backups. Make sure that the tape or disk actually contains the files you think they do. Test your backup by trying to restore a file or two.
2. Rotate your medium. Keep four or five disks, tapes, or sets of disks or tapes for your backups. Rotate them, using them in succession each time you backup.
3. Remember that a disk or tape can wear out after many uses. After a few months or a year, (depending on how much you use it) you might want to replace the disks or tapes that you are using with new ones.
4. Proper labeling is also an important part of backing up. Be sure to label your tape or disk with the date and contents.
5. Keep all of your program disks together so you can find them when you need them.
6. If you backup only your data, you'll have to reinstall all your applications in the case of a hard disk crash. If you have a Zip, Jaz, or CD-R/RW drive, create a disk to hold all the files, patches, updates, and other things you download. This will make reinstalling your applications much easier.
7. Keep your backups in a safe place. If you consider your data extremely important, you should keep a copy offsite, in a safe deposit box, or another location protected from theft or fire. When you make two sets of backup data and keep an extra set in another location, you minimize the chance of data loss.

Backing up your data makes good sense. It's like buying an insurance policy. You hope you will never need it, but when disaster strikes, that backup will be your most appreciated forethought.

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music and such, delete those you no longer want or need, perhaps saving them on CD/DVD or ISB drive. Sorting files by size or date helps find deletion candidates.

If you run PC-based email software, it's worth periodically purging Sent and Trash folders, perhaps pitching material older than a certain date. Then look for a Compact Folders option, sometimes on the File pulldown menu, which squeezes out unused space from email folders.

Weed out software no longer used or useful by uninstalling applications with Window's Control Panel Add/Remove Software tool.

The Recycle Bin, which preserves erased files for recovery until it's emptied, has likely grown during this cleanup process. To empty it, Right Click its Windows desktop icon and click Empty Recycle Bin. Note that programs such as Norton Utilities may offer other cleanup options for the Recycle Bin and other Windows components.

Finally, remember that when writing to your hard drive, Windows places bits of each file in the next available open space on the hard drive.

While Windows can reassemble them, having many files fragmented slows access to them. So, to store all files as single entities, periodically defragment the hard drive. To do this, click Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Defragmenter, select a drive, and click Defragment.

When finished, compare the amount of hard drive space used and free to what you saw initially. If this is the first cleanup you've done in a while, the amount of space recovered may surprise you.

Many books give much more detailed instructions for PC cleanups. Search Amazon.com for "degunking windows" and "cleaning windows" to see choices (but don't be distracted by instructions for cleaning house, office, and car windows!).

Smart Computing in Plain English

USER GROUP PROGRAM

• **Check Those Requirements:** Before you purchase computer software, such as a game or a greeting card creator, be sure to check the system requirements, which are generally listed on the side or bottom of the software box. Oftentimes, you will see two lists of system specifications: minimum system requirements and recommended system requirements. Verify that your computer meets the minimum system requirements for the software, but try to take the recommended requirements into account. If you meet the recommended settings, the program will run more smoothly. Attempting to run the program on the minimum settings may result in slow response times, reduced graphics settings, and

• **Computer Maintenance Practices:** There are some easy ways to help keep your computer running healthy. First, configure your antispyware or antivirus program to run at least once a day. Most protection programs give you the option of choosing when the scan will occur, whether it's when the computer starts up, or at a specific time of day. Second, defragment your hard drive on a regular basis. Defragmenting combines fragmented files when possible, ultimately cleaning up your hard drive and making file access, and overall computer use, faster. Lastly, keeping your computer healthy means keeping your files safe. Regularly back up your most important files on an external hard drive or DVD, which ensures less data loss if some-

• **Restart Your Computer For Better Performance:** Many users log off their computer every night as a way to try to keep unwanted people from accessing their files on the computer. Instead of logging off of your computer every night, restart it. In doing so, you will enable Windows to refresh itself and remove temporary files. It will also let your computer free memory and other resources that some of your hardware and software will not release, thereby making your computer work more smoothly and at a faster rate.

Mike's Picks

By Michael J. McEnery
Editor L.C.A.C.E. News Journal

If you are like me, your Windows desktop can get cluttered with an assortment of shortcuts. Last week I finally had enough of being unable to find different programs and other documents so I went out browsing for a desktop utility that would help me clean up this mess. **I found it**. This neat little utility called "Stardock Fences" came to my rescue. It not only will automatically group your icons (shortcuts) together so that you can see them all at a glance, but it is also fully customizable. Another nice feature is that you can keep your favorite wallpaper as it is, an overlay. If you want all your shortcuts to disappear all you have to do is double click a free spot on your desktop and poof they are gone; if you want them back, do the same thing - double click your desktop and there they are. I cannot recommend this enough. This program can be found at:

http://www.askvg.com/organize-your-windows-desktop-icons-in-a-new-way-using-stardock-fences/

Tech News That Affects Everybody

Written by Sandy Berger, CompuKISS
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This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Some of us scour the technology and business sections of the newspaper and the Web to get the latest news. Some of us head for the lifestyle and community sections, without much of a care about technology. Yet, today's technology news is often news that will affect everyone's life in one way or another.

Let me give you a few examples. The Pope recently announced opening of the Vatican YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/vaticanit) which will feature short video clips of Pope Benedict XVI's activities and links to news and information about the Catholic Church. The Pope is posting two or three videos each day. Most are short clips showing the Pope's speeches, activities, and participation in important events. In a recent speech, the Pope praised the Internet as offering rich opportunities for dialogue, friendship and spreading the Christian message.

There is a lot of irreverent stuff on YouTube, but the Pope's participation shows how mainstream this popular video website has become. YouTube, FaceBook, MySpace, and other social networking websites have become more and more popular. If you haven't yet visited any of these, YouTube is a great place to start. (www.youtube.com)

Another recent news announcement was the Palm Pre, which is a smartphone that will be available in a few months through Sprint. You might think that this is just another phone, and you would be right. But the implications for cell phones are quite dramatic. Palm has developed a totally new version of the operating system for this phone. Google now has their own cell phone operating system as do Microsoft, BlackBerry, and Apple. These are some pretty big name and you will notice that the software that runs these phones is called an operating system. That's because these phone are really mini-computers that can do email, surf the web, and perform many other functions. Cell phones are changing dramatically. They are turning into handheld computers that will change the lives of those who use them.

We also should not overlook Apple's recent announcement that they will be dropping the DRM (digital rights management) for all songs in their iTunes store. The DRM crippled the songs so they had limited use. For instance, they could only be played on a certain number of devices or be copied a certain number of times. So music lovers the world over will be rejoicing to see that by April of this year, all of iTunes 10 million songs will be DRM-free. There is one caveat. Those who have previously purchased music and/or videos on iTunes that included Apple's DRM will now have to pay to get the DRM removed. Apple will be charging 30 cents a song. iTunes has sold six billion songs since going online in 2003. They did not offer any DRM-free music until recently. So most of those six billion songs had DRM. If every purchaser pays Apple 30 cents for taking away the DRM, Apple would make $180,000,000. A boon to Apple, a pain-in-the-rear for honest music lovers who previously used the iTunes store.

Microsoft was also in the news recently with their announcement that the beta testing version Windows 7, their next operating system could be downloaded and tried for free. Their website was inundated by curious Windows users. So many came, that they had to add more servers and download services. They originally said that they would limit the downloads to 2.5 million, but recently removed that restriction and will continue to offer the beta trial until February. Don't think that you will be getting something for nothing, though. The beta of Windows 7 will stop being functional on August 1, 2009. At that time you will either have to reinstall your previous operating system or pay for Windows 7.

Last but not least in the technology news is the announcement that Western Digital has created a 2 terabyte hard disk drive. Believe it or not, this may have one of the biggest effects on individual users. As we can store more and more digital data at reasonable prices, more and more data will be digitized. We are already living in a digital world, but that world gets more reliant on technology every day.

February Meeting in Pictures

Sherry Florian won L.C.A.C.E. 50/50 Raffle

Jay Bitterman won the Smart Computing Magazine Holder

Bob D'Agostino won the Smart Computing T-shirt

Stephanie Ellington from Smart Computing

Winnie Frost won a year's subscription to Smart Computing Magazine and donated it to the L.C.A.C.E.

Mike McEnery, Robin Seidenberg, Stephanie Ellington, "J.J." Johnson

Lester Larkin, Donna Kalinoski, Terri Hanlon, "J.J." Johnson, Stephanie Ellington, Linda Busch, Jim Rutledge, Food Sig

If you do not see your name, something is misspelled or wrong, please let Mike McEnery know.

As much as we try, we do make errors. Please advise us if there is a mistake in your e-mail address or if it is not included in this listing. Send e-mail to Linda Busch at membership@lcace.org with your additions and/or corrections. Thank you. This listing last updated Sept. 23, 2006.

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TIME TO RENEW

All memberships are now renewable annually on April 1st. This change in the payment of annual dues will allow the treasurer to budget our money more closely. If you haven't already renewed your membership, see Linda Busch or Winnie Frost.

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April 4, 2009-LCACE 26th Anniversary

Elections, refreshments, door prizes

Ask the Gurus, Show and Tell

Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts
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