



The Importance of Backups

Have you ever lost all your data? Been infected by a virus which resulted in having to throw away your computer? Had a hard drive failure? Had a computer stolen? These are only some of the causes for lost data.

Lost data may include documents, photos, music. Imagine if you lost all your data and needed to get it back.

As a responsible computer user, it is your job to back up all the data files on the computer.

The Importance of Backing Up Files

It is very important to do regular backups to prevent the loss of data. Software can usually be reinstalled but your data could quite possibly be gone forever. There are various causes for data loss, machine breakdown, virus, power outage, software upgrades, fire, flood and human error. Before continuing here's some terms used when referring to backup:

Backup - A duplicate copy of a file, program, folder or disk to be used if the original is damaged, corrupt or lost.

Restore - To copy the backed up version of information back to it's original location.

Backup Media - May be another computer, USB(s), CD(s), DVD(s) or any other recordable media for computers.

- USB Drives can hold up to 1TB
- CDs can hold 650-800MB
- DVDs can hold 4.7GB
- External hard drive can hold various amounts of information. How much will depend on the size of drive you have.

Full Backup - backing up everything on your computer. Includes data, software and operating system.

Incremental Backup - A backup of only what has changed since the last backup.

Why Backup?

The files on your computer are very fragile. They can be destroyed or damaged by a software malfunction, viruses, worms, the and biggest cause of lost files, the operator (You). Ever accidentally deleted a file, not saved your changes, lost a disk or been playing around with something new and broke your project?

Backing Up

How your files and folders are organized on your computer will help simplify the backup process. For the inexperienced, storing all your data files in Documents, in separate folders would be the simplest solution. The main idea is to have all your data files in one location so when backing up you don't have to remember or search for all your data files located on the computer.

Backing up is really just copying your information onto a removable disk that you can store somewhere safe in the case of an emergency. Ideally, you store your backup disks off-site (somewhere other than the building that your computer is in. Some places for storing backups could be, a friend's or at home if you work from an office).

Scheduling Back Ups

Full Backup

This should be done before installing new software and software update. This should be done periodically. The frequency would depend on how often you add to your system but at least twice a year.

Incremental Backup

This should be done daily especially if you work on the computer a lot changing files in a day.

Backup Software

For those who can't get in the habit of backing up regularly, try using a backup software package; this might be the best solution. There are various software packages available for little to no cost.

Summary

1. Put all your data into one location to make backing up your data easier.
2. Backup daily.
3. Perform a full backup before installing new software and updates.
4. Perform a full backup at least twice a year.