

Backup Tips And Tricks – The Less Work, The Better

Most of us don't think about backup of our computer data until just after we delete a file, get hit by a computer virus, or even worse. There are several commercial programs that will do this for you, but let's look at what all of us can do if we don't have them.

First, put all of your data files, documents, photos, bookmarks, easy to find. The best way to do this is create a new folder on the C: drive just for these personal files. I created a new folder called **C:/LIBS** for all of my files.

If you have many different files, you can also create separate folders under C:/LIBS for them. I have separate folders for the PPS group photos, SBH photos, Social Security DARS issues, etc. Once the folders are created, just tell the programs you use (WORD, EXCEL, ACCESS, etc) to SAVE the files in these new folders instead of the default locations.

Example: C:/LIBS/DISASTER_RECOVERY
C:/LIBS/PPS
C:/LIBS/STARBASE_HOUSTON
C:/LIBS/UTILITIES

When you are ready to do the actual backup, right-mouse-click on the folder LIBS, then select PROPERTIES. It will count up the number of files & total size, you can fit up to 700 megs on a blank cd. If you have a dvd burner, it will fit 4,400 megs or 4.4 gigs on a blank dvd. You can also backup just one or two of the folders on the cd/dvd, just keep that calculator handy and do the math. Yes, math can be our friend sometimes.

If you have hundreds of megs to backup, an external USB drive is the best way to go. It just plugs into the USB port on your computer, and you can use them between different computers. They are available at BestBuy, Fry's, even at Wal-Mart. Check online or contact me for more information, you don't have to spend a fortune to get a good one.

Finally, open your cd/dvd burning software on your computer, and tell it to copy all the files in the C:/LIBS folders. Most computers come with ROXIO, SONIC or similar burners for free, and are fine for these files. Don't burn at the fastest speed, the slower speeds allow for more compatibility between older computers.

If you have an external USB drive, all you need to do is plug it unto your computer, and see what drive letter is assigned to it. Just right-mouse-click on the folder LIBS, select COPY, and PASTE it all to the external USB drive. It may take a few moments for the copy process to get going, but that's what I have used since the prices dropped recently.

Just remember to put your backup cd/dvds or external USB drive in a safe place, and hope you never have to use it. But how long it would take to re-create all your documents, spreadsheets, or photos? Just one bad virus can wipe it all out.....