

COPY YOUR PERSONAL DATA FILES TO ANOTHER LOCATION FOR SAFE KEEPING:

A Seminar
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Why do you need to copy your important personal data to another location?

Viruses, power surges, and hard drive failures—each of these calamities can spell disaster for your PC's data. According to a report from a prominent digital data recovery service, 94% of surveyed PC users have experienced at least one significant data loss, so if you are lucky enough never to have experienced a data loss due to these or other mishaps, consider, statistically at least, that your PC is a ticking time bomb.

Hard disks are fragile mechanical devices. Packed with ultra-miniature electronics that zoom along at thousands of revolutions per minute, it's no wonder that they fail more often than any other major component in the average computer. When a disk crashes, it is usually impossible to recover your data without spending a small fortune at a data recovery service. **Unfortunately, the question you must ask yourself is not if your hard drive will fail, but when.**

Many technology-related factors other than hard drive problems can cause data loss. If you nudge the drive while it is writing data, experience a power surge, or place your PC too close to the magnets of your home stereo speakers, you can lose data.

The best way to recover quickly from loss of your personal data is to have a recent full backup or clone of your entire system. **However, most PC users (estimates range from 60% to as high as 85%) do not conduct backups/clones regularly and are unprepared when disaster strikes. In addition, many novice users are intimidated by the prospects of using backup or cloning software products.**

Fortunately, an informal **copy and paste plan** is not difficult to create. The plan that we will present here is easy to execute and requires no knowledge of a sophisticated backup/cloning utility. If you know the basics of **cutting/copying and pasting** from one location to another and are willing to follow the step-by-step instructions that follow, you will be able to implement this plan and be ready when your hard drive dies. You only need to decide what backup medium is suitable for your needs and what personal data files are truly critical.

How often should you copy your data to another location?

How much information can you afford to lose? That's how often you should copy your data files to another location. If you use your computer to create irreplaceable data files (such as lengthy word processing documents or personal financial data), you may want daily backups of these important files. If you use your PC primarily for surfing the Internet or sending email, or if you use it on an infrequent basis, a weekly or even monthly backup may be sufficient.

What should you back up?

Even the most casual PC user should back up his most cherished data files, for example: **important word processing documents, personal finance data, income tax records, downloaded music, photos** from your digital camera, Internet **Favorites, email folders, and your Address Book.** This is not as daunting a task as it might seem. Chances are good that only a few gigabytes of your files are important data files.

Where should you backup your data?

The medium you choose for your backups will depend on your storage needs, your personal preferences, and your budget. For very small backups, you can use 1.44MB floppies provided your computer has a floppy disk drive (most newer computers don't have these drives installed because it is such an outdated technology). You can also choose from zip drives (also old technology), removable and permanent hard drives, optical drives (CD and DVD), flash (thumb) drives, and remote servers. Each of these is appropriate for specific backup strategies.

Floppy disks (an older technology that requires a special disk drive that is no longer available on most computers) Suitable only for the smallest of backups, floppies have small storage capacities and are slow. They are also not very durable and prone to failure from dust, handling, heat, water, crushing, and demagnetization.

Zip disks (an older technology that requires a special disk drive that is no longer available on most computers) Removable zip disks suffer from the same failure problems as floppies, although crushing is less likely because of their harder cases. The 100MB Iomega Zip disk was the most popular removable drive cartridge for many years and is suitable for small backups. Iomega also offers 250MB and 750MB Zip disks that are even more spacious. A newer removable drive technology, the Castlewood ORB drive, has much larger capacities. It can store 2.2GB of data, which is ample enough for even a large collection of data files. However, the Zip drives and ORB drives and the disk media that must be used are quite expensive compared to other resources.

Thumb Drives: For the average user, Flash (Thumb) Drives are good for medium-sized data backups; however, they are too small to hold most full system backups unless you span several Thumb Drives. Reasonably priced Thumb Drives now hold up to 16 gigabytes of data.

Optical drives. For the average user, the choice in optical drives is CDs (up to 700 MB) or DVDs (up to 4.7 GB). CDs are good for medium-sized data backups. If you require more backup space, consider using a DVD (must be used with a DVD writer.)

Other Possibilities: Open a free web-based email account, and send the files to yourself; copy your data to another computer on your home network; upload your files to free web space; copy them to an external hard drive.

How do you backup your data?

Your first step will be to create a series of nested folders within the **My Documents** folder. Use Windows Explorer (Windows key + the E key) to create special folders where you can store related items. Doing this makes it easier to locate specific items when you create backup sets. Many advanced users who copy only their critical data files to a second medium place all their important files in appropriate file folders and nest them within the **My Documents** folder. Then all one has to do is copy the My Documents folder and all of its contents to another location beyond and away from the hard drive.

To create subfolders (also called nested folders) within your My Documents folder, follow these steps:

1. Open Windows Explorer by pressing the Windows key together with the E key.
2. In the left column, click directly on top of the **My Documents** folder.
3. The right column shows the contents of the **My Documents** folder.
4. Note that you already may have nested folders called: My eBooks, My Music, and My Pictures.
5. To add a new nested folder, right-click on any blank space in the right column (pane).
6. Move down to **New** then over to and click on **Folder**.
7. Rename the folder to suit your personal needs. Some possibilities are: **Correspondence, Income Tax Records, Personal Finance Records (for example, your data files from Quicken or MSMoney), Commercial Program Downloads, All Email, Selected Email, Web Favorites and Address Book.**

8. Repeat steps 5, 6, and 7 until you have created all the nested folders that you want. More can be added later as the need arises.
9. Note that as you add nested folders in the right column, those same nested folders appear in the left column.

To Move Your Important Data Files (such as Documents, Photos, Music, Downloads, Financial, and Taxes) to Your New Nested Folders within My Documents, follow these steps:

1. From the Windows Explorer's (Windows key + E) left column, browse through your other drives and folders to locate any appropriate data files that you wish to copy to My Documents. When you click on a folder or nested folder in the left column, its contents can be viewed in the right column.
2. When you find data files of a certain group that you want to move for safe keeping, select them either individually or collectively, right-click on any one of them and select **cut**. This action will send the file(s) to the clipboard.
3. Move over to the left column and locate the appropriate nested folder that you created in step 7 above. Right-click on the folder and then select **Paste**. This action will move the data file(s) that you selected from the right column and place it in the appropriate nested folder that appears in the left column. To verify that this action took place, click on the nested folder in the left column and view its contents in the right column.
4. Repeat this process until you have moved all relevant documents. (The first time you open a moved document, you may have to help your program locate it.) From now on when you save a document, make sure you navigate to the appropriate nested folder within My Documents. Check the preferences or settings of your favorite programs (MSMoney or Quicken, for example) because you may also be able to choose which folder is the default for saving files.

To copy all your INTERNET EXPLORER FAVORITES to My Documents, follow these steps:

1. Open Internet Explorer.
2. From the Menu Bar, click on File.
3. Click on Import/Export, then Next.
4. Select Export Favorites, then Next.
5. In the Export Favorites Source Folder, confirm that Favorites is highlighted, then Next.
6. Select Browse and find your My Documents folder. If you created a nested folder (perhaps called Web Favorites), you will want to select it.
7. By default the file name is Bookmark. Click Finish.

8. If in the future you make any additions or deletions to your Favorites, you will want to perform steps 1-7 so that the Bookmark file that is housed in your My Documents/Web Favorites is up-to-date.

To move all of your OUTLOOK EXPRESS EMAIL FILES to a new nested folder within My Documents, follow these steps:

1. While in Outlook Express, select **Options** on the **Tools** menu.
2. Click the **Maintenance** tab.
3. Click the **Store Folder** button and navigate (click **Change**) to the new nested folder (you probably called it All Email) within **My Documents**.
4. The next time you open Outlook Express, it will move ALL of your email messages (including deleted messages) to the new location and continue storing them there.

To move selected OUTLOOK EXPRESS EMAIL FILES (both received and sent messages) to a new nested folder within My Documents, follow these steps:

1. Open Outlook Express.
2. Navigate to the folder that contains the message that you wish to save.
3. Highlight the target message.
4. From the Menu bar, go to **File** and click on **Save As**.
5. When the **Save Messages As** dialogue box appears, navigate to the appropriate nested folder that you have created for your Selected Outlook Express Email (perhaps you called it **Selected Email**).
6. Note that the file name is the same as the message's subject. You can change the file name to be more descriptive in identifying the message's contents and author.

To move your OUTLOOK EXPRESS ADDRESS BOOK to a new nested folder within my documents, follow these steps:

1. Open Outlook Express.
2. Open your Address Book.
3. On the Address Book's Menu bar, click on **File**, then **Export >> Address Book**.
4. At the **Select Address Book File to Export to**, select **My Documents**.
5. Now select the appropriate nested folder (probably **Address Book**).
6. Name the file **Address Book**.
7. Click **Save**.
8. **If in the future you make any additions or deletions to your Address Book, you will want to perform steps 1-6 so that the Address Book file that is housed in your My Documents is up-to-date.**

To determine the size of your My Documents folder, follow these steps:

1. Open Windows Explorer (Windows key + E key).
2. Right click on the My Documents folder.
3. Select **Properties**.
4. Select the **General** tab if it is not already selected.
5. The total size of the My Documents folder, plus the total number of files and the number of nested folders will be given.
6. This information will be useful as you determine the medium to use for storing your backup data files.

(For this presentation, we will demonstrate how to copy (burn) your my Documents folder to a blank CD, using the “plain vanilla” burning program that comes with the Windows XP operating system. In addition, we will demonstrate how to copy your My Documents folder to a thumb drive.)