Chapter 22 Backing Up Your Important Files

It is a well known fact that any data saved to your computer is not safe from being permanently lost unless you become fully cognoscente of of the term "backup." Computer savvy people are fully aware that "backup" is an important part of owning a computer. Until you have lost everything on your computer you probably will never appreciate that you must back up your important files on a regular basis.

It can be a very simple procedure once you learn how it is done and how to keep your computer organized so that the procedure is quick and simple. There is two ways to back up your computer. One is to "backup" only the files or data that you have created or saved to your hard drive. The second is to backup everything on your hard drive. The later is complex, very involved and usually requires a special program to do so. As a novice user backing up your data files only is the most practical way.

As part of Windows original installation it creates a folder called MyDocuments. If you can learn to keep all the files you create including pictures, music and specialty program created files in the MyDocuments folder you only have to back up this folder. This means you need to create subfolders for special things like Music, Pictures, and other special things you do. Understanding the file manage-

Organizing Your Computer for Back-up

When you first started using your computer the Hard Drive was organized for you when the Windows Operating System was installed. It installed a system of folders in the C:> drive (your hard drive) that included several folders including a Programs Folder and a MyDocuments. These two folders are the only folders that you should be adding to. The Programs Folder is where new programs are installed. MyDocuments is the folder where all the documents you create and add to your computer including pictures, music, visuals, etc. should be stored. The rest of everything in your C:> relates to the operating system of your computer and was installed and controlled by changes you make in your operating system.

Should your computer crash to where you loose everything on your hard drive you would have to reinstall your operating system and all the programs you installed after the operating system was installed. You should have a copy outside your computer usually on CDs of your operating system and all the programs you have installed on your computer. This is your back-up for all of your computers system/program files. All that is left is your document files that you have created or added to your computer as described above. If all of these files are kept or stored in your MyDocuments folder then you back-up is kept simple. All you need to do is periodically make a copy of your MyDocuments folder onto a CD. You must have a CD burner for this task. The use of 1.44MB floppy for this purpose is obsolete. Floppy's are just too small for the amount of storage space required.

This is why it is so important and that you very consciously keep all your documents in your MyDocuments folder. When your computer is new the number of files is only a few so it is alright to put all your creations into the one folder, My Documents. It doesn't take too long before this builds up and you must organize and create sub-folders in order to find anything. The operating system already does some of this for your be creating sub folders called MyPictures, MyMusic, and My Webs.

If you are using a digital camera it would be wise to store all your pictures in MyPictures folder. Even that will build whereas you will have to sub-folder that into categories in order to organize your pictures. If you are a music buff that too will also have to be similarly organized.

A CD holds approx. 650MB of data (documents). . . and if your already into DVDs that holds 4 times more. This amount of storage space will last you a long time for your back-up procedure. You must learn to use your CD or DVD burner for this purpose.

There are a dozen or more CD/DVD programs to use with your CD or DVD burner. If your computer came with a CD burner then the program is already installed. They all do the same thing but the steps and procedures vary somewhat. Most of the programs are designed for music but data is also an included feature and is usually handled separate from the music. Your computer back-up files are considered data files.

If all your records and documents are important to you, especially those family pictures, you must consider a back-up procedure. There is an old axiom among computer users that, " it's not if your computer crashes . . . it's when your computer crashes."

Plan your back-up program NOW! ! ! or Buy a commercial program for $40 www.backupplus.com

Backing Up Your Address Book and Your Favorites.

Windows does not back-up your Outlook Express **Address Book,** nor does it backup your **Favorites** that you saved from your Browser explorations. This you must do yourself.

Address Book

Start up and run your **Outlook Express**. From the menu bar at the top of the OE window click on the **File Menu.** There is a section **Import and Export.** Point to highlight **Export** then click on **Address Book.** You will open up a dialogue box that gives you a choice of programs to export or copy all your Address Book data. You should have two choices only if you have not installed any other e-mail programs. One choice is **Text File** (a comma separated simple text file) and the other is **Microsoft Exchange Personal Address Book.** The later is the Windows OE Address Book format which is your choice for Outlook Express. Click on it so that it is highlighted. Click on **Export.** Your Windows Address Book file has been created. You now have a file that is a copy of your address book on your computer but it does not give you a choice of to where you want it saved. You must locate it and copy it to your MyDocuments folder.

Windows does not make this procedure easy because it keeps the files among **hidden files** in the Windows (**Documents and Settings/owner/application Data/Microsoft/addressbook)** folder. The file should be called **Owner.wab**. If you click on it it will open up as your address book. If you right click on it the menu will let you **copy** it. Once you have copied it, open up your **MyDocuments** folder. Right click again and click on **paste.** You will now have a file in your MyDocuments folder called **Owner.wab** For your own information you may want to change the name to AddressBook date.wab. The Date must follow the character limitation rules. date e.a. Oct0704 (month/day/year).

Favorites

Favorites is much easier. Copy the **Favorites folder** to my documents. Make sure you add a date to it's folder name also. It is located in **Documents and Settings/owner/favorites.** As a folder it has an Icon of a yellow star. Right click on it. Choose **Copy** and then Paste it in your MyDocuments folder.