

Organizing And Protecting Your Personal Files

by Emil Volcheck, MLCUG, March 11, 2006

The files I'm considering are any that you, as a computer user, have created.

Such files, if not properly archived are unlikely to be retrievable or reproducible.

The approach can pretty much be spelled out in one sentence:

Make sure that any files which you create - using any application - are stored in the "My Documents" folder,

or a sub-folder in the My Documents folder.

This will require you to PERSUADE your programs to put the files you create with them in a position they may NOT naturally do!

Remember that YOU are the master of your information and those applications will just have to bow to your will.

START BY ASKING YOURSELF:

1) - what programs do I use, or have I used, to produce data files (these might be letters, posters, papers, homework, you name it).

2) - do these programs normally store your file in the "My Documents" folder?

If not, what must I do to make that happen?

With that behind us, do YOU have questions or concerns about any specific application that you use on your computer - that produces information files that are preserved?

If so, let's raise them Right Now !!!

**Preparation for
Full Backups,
Major Installations,
New Hard Drive**

FIRST STEP IS A GOOD CLEANUP/SLIM DOWN:

for all Windows versions:

- uninstall unneeded or unwanted programs
- delete as many temp files as possible:
 - C:\TEMP,
 - C:\WUTEMP
 - C:\WINDOWS\TEMP,

for XP/Me

- C:\DOCUMENTS AND SETTINGS
 \your account\LOCAL SETTINGS
 \TEMP\)

**NOTE: DO NOT DELETE ITEMS FROM
TODAY OR THE LAST FEW DAYS**

NEXT:

- delete Windows Update uninstall folders
 - in C:\Windows
- delete cookies & temporary internet files
 - in Internet Explorer
- or cookies & cache files
 - in Mozilla (Firefox or Netscape)

**NOW EMPTY THE
RECYCLE BIN!**

YOUR SECOND STEP IS THE SECURITY CLEANUP:

- **update your anti-spyware app(s)**
 - **do a complete system scan**
- **update your anti-virus app**
 - **do a complete system scan**
 - **if you use Norton Anti-virus, be sure to first run a full "*Live Update*", NOT just a regular update, before scanning**
- **run check disk, on your C drive (at least),**
 - **set it to fix any errors**
- **run defrag on your C drive (at least)**

NOW YOU'RE READY TO DO YOUR JOB(S)!

Example 1:

- **make a COMPLETE system backup**
 - **store a copy on an external medium for safety**
 - **if you can't do a complete backup, then be sure to, at least, thoroughly backup ALL THE FILES THAT YOU HAVE CREATED**

Example 2:

- **perform that major installation (like re-installing Windows)**

Example 3:

- install that new replacement hard drive:

**- unplug your internet connection
(modem OR broadband)**

- install the new HD - set to be SLAVE

**- run your cloning software to copy
the old drive to the new**

**e.g. with True Image, Ghost,
Drive Image, etc.**

- now replace the old HD, with the new

**make sure the new HD is now
set to MASTER**

Example 3A (if you have USB 2.0 ports):

- unplug your internet connection (modem OR broadband)
- set NEW HD to MASTER
- connect via a USB->IDE adapter
- run your cloning software to copy old drive to new
- now replace the old HD, with the new

QUESTIONS??

Backup Utilities

Your own batch file - free

Karen's Replicator - free

Microsoft Backup - free

Acronis True Image 9 - \$34