ReadyNetGo .... News

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TIP OF THE MONTH

Important Folders to Back up

In **Windows 2000 & XP**, data and custom settings are stored in the *Documents and Settings* folder under the C: drive. For backup purposes, simply select this folder and your important files and custom settings will be saved.

For **Win 9x** and **ME**, data is stored in various folders on your C: drive. If you save all of your files and documents under the **My Documents** folder, you only need to back up three more folders that contain your **email** (.pst) files, your browser **favorites** and your **custom settings** (like address book and templates). These folders are: C:\Windows\Local settings; C:\Windows\Favorites; and C:\Windows\Application data

(It is possible to combine folders under Win 9x & ME but links need to be updated accordingly so your computer automatically saves data to the right location.)

To determine how much data a folder contains, right click the folder and choose properties. This will give you an indication of how large your backup media should be.

Note: Two folders you don't need to backup are: *Temp* and *Temporary Internet Files.*

Have you Been Backing Up Your Data?

How important is your data to you? If your hard drive failed tomorrow, what would you do?

Backing up your data is probably the most important task to do on a regular basis – yet many people just don't do it. Some view it as an inconvenience, others don't know what hardware or software to use and still others just don't know what files they need to back up and which ones can be left alone. This newsletter will hopefully answer these questions and dispel the myths that backing up your data is a difficult and time intensive activity. Everyone who uses a computer should be familiar with back up options so even if you aren't the system administrator, read on….

Why do you need to backup your files?

It's human nature to not expect the worst … but sometimes the worst happens and unless you're prepared, you might have to spend many more hours in front of the computer than you'd like. If a hard disk fails (and they do; hard disks only last for a few years given optimal operating conditions), electricity strikes, your computer is stolen, a virus wipes out your data or any of a number of incidents occur, you could be faced with having to buy a new hard drive or replace the computer entirely. Nearly everyone sees the value in insurance, (car, health, life, etc.) so take out some insurance on your PC and back up your data regularly.

WWW (Websites Worth Watching)

1. www.cartalk.cars.com - Handy tips on vehicles from the car kings of NPR - Tom & Ray

2. www.irishphotos.com - In honor of St. Patty's Day

3. www.wine.com - Learn about different varieties, tasting etiquette, featured wineries and more

4. www.penzeys.com - Excellent source for fresh spices - Peruse the site for great recipes

5. www.recipesource.com - If you can think it, there's a recipe for it. Take a look for new ideas to freshen up old meals ...

Which files should you back up?

The most important files to back up are those that you create and edit on a regular basis: Word and Excel documents, Desktop publishing files, email, website (html) files, custom settings, and databases. You don't need to back up programs or your operating system (Win98, Win2000, etc.) unless you don't have an original copy on disk (e.g. CD-ROM). See the *Tip of the Month* for a listing of the most important files to back up regularly.

How should you back up your data?

There are many options for backing up your data … all convenient and relatively inexpensive.

1. <u>Tape drives</u> – excellent for large data back-ups – commonly used tapes hold up to 40 GB of data. Tapes can be rewritten multiple times and cost $10-$20 each. Drives cost between $150-$1000.

2. <u>CD-RW or CD-R</u> – another excellent way to back up data. Each CD can hold up to 650 MB. Cost per disc is $1 for CD-RW and about $.50 for CD-R. CD-RW discs can be rewritten almost 1000 times before degradation becomes an issue. CD-R discs can only be written once which makes them good for archiving files that will not change such as newsletters, graphic images and outdated files such as prior years' financial data. CD-RW drives cost between $100-$400.

3. <u>Zip drives</u> – are handy for transferring larger files and backing up a limited number of files as each zip disk can only handle 100 MB or 250 MB of data. Zip disks cost about $10-$14 each while the drive will cost between $80-150 (depending on the size and platform of the drive).

4. <u>2nd Hard Drive</u> – Using a hard drive to backup your data is another option. You'll need an extra drive bay in your PC or will have to purchase an external hard drive to complete this process. Internal hard drives dedicated for back-ups aren't as safe as saving your data to external tape or disks. If your computer is infected with a virus or is struck by lightning, you may be out of luck. The real benefit of using a second internal hard drive for back-ups is the ease and convenience. Backing up files merely requires a quick copy and paste command and you're done (if you put all your files under one folder). If you like this idea, think about using a second hard drive on a daily basis and external tape on a weekly or monthly basis. If you realize 3 days late that a faulty file has been saved, you can still go back to the tape or disk and restore the original.

5. <u>Floppy drives</u> – Floppy drives should not be used for backing up data. Although inexpensive and widely available, floppies are unreliable and can hold only a limited amount of data (1.4 MB to be exact). For full data backups, they are the most inconvenient and time-consuming method available.

When should you back up your data?

Whenever you create a file, you should create a backup of that file and store it in a different location than the original. This means, in most cases, that backups should be done whenever you use your computer. Ideally, **more than one tape** or disk should be used and a **schedule of rotation** should be established. <u>For example</u>, purchase three tapes; use the first to back up your data every day. Use the second tape for a full backup of all your data at the end of the week. Use the third tape to backup your data at the end of the month. This way if your computer crashes and your data are lost, you will have multiple tapes from which to restore your data. If one of the tapes fails, you will still have a partial backup of your data. [We recommend using **7-10 tapes** - one for each day of the week, one (or four) for week end and one for month end - this ensures more reliability if you need to restore your data.]

One final note: Unexpected events can and do happen (fire, flood, etc.) so it's a good idea to keep a copy of your data off-site or at least in a fire-proof, locked safe.