

Re: Could use a general education on where things are stored on my PC

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Source:

<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.general/2008-06/msg03113.html>

- *From:* Malke <malke@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Tue, 17 Jun 2008 06:50:39 -0700
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tcarp wrote:

(snippage and comments inline)

The question here is about what I see as folders/files on my C-drive and, in general, what's stored in them. I duplicated this question in the bowels of another thread but it was beginning to get off-subject.

As I look at these, the big three appear to be Documents and Settings, Program Files, and Windows. Am I correct in assuming that the Windows folder (possibly along with the hidden folders) is all that's needed to have a runnable Windows system?

No, you aren't correct. See below for how to back up your system.

I'm not ignoring the files listed below.

The files on the C-drive:

AUTOEXEC.BAT
boot.ini
config.sys
drwtsn32.log
IO.SYS
MSDOS.SYS
NTDETECT.COM
ntldr
pagefile.sys

All of these are hidden so I'm assuming they are needed to have a runnable system.

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XP doesn't use autoexec.bat, io.sys, msdos.sys, or config.sys. They are there only for backwards compatibility. The other files are necessary.

Am I naive to assume that in general the Program Files are, in fact, all the applications and the Documents and Settings are, in fact, my documents and application configuration settings files. Or am I only wishful?

"Documents and Settings" is the "container" for all user settings. Each user will have [username] Documents, Music, Videos, My Pictures. In general, installed programs will put their program files in the Program Files directory, however that depends on the program. Some older programs will use the root of C:\ instead.

Most programs will save their data in your My Documents directory but this depends on the program. Some older programs will save at the root of C: or in the Shared Documents folder. You need to examine the options of each program that you use to determine this. You also need to examine how each program saves – and just as importantly, restores – that data. For example, some programs like QuickBooks and Quicken will want you to backup from within the program and restore from within the program.

There are two different ways to approach backup. To get back a completely working install, configured exactly the way you want, you should use an imaging program like Acronis True Image. Purchase an external hard drive and store the images on it. True Image can also do incremental backups.

<http://www.acronis.com>

You can also back up just your data, either by copying it to the external hard drive manually or by using a backup program. I like Second Copy from www.centered.com. It is inexpensive (\$29.95), flexible, and doesn't put the copied data into a proprietary format.

In addition to regularly backing up to an external hard drive, I also suggest periodically burning the data to CD/DVD-R and storing it off-site or at least in a safe place not next to the computer.

Malke

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MS-MVP

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Don't Panic!

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