

Re: Outlook, Acronis, system restore, and back ups

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- *From:* "Pop`" <nodoby@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Thu, 28 Sep 2006 18:32:30 -0400
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soyelmango@xxxxxxxxxx wrote:

Hi all,

I have a few questions due to an unfortunate chain of events!

Firstly, I'll give you my specs and what happened:

PC with AMD Athlon X2

2gb RAM

C: 80gb, OS and programs only

D: 2x150gb, mirrored hardware RAID, data only

Windows XP pro, SP2 and up to date patches

Antivir Personal Edition Premium

Spyware Blaster, Spybot S&D

Day to day running in a user level account

One day, my PC spontaneously rebooted.

Usually that's a sign of a hardware problem; what was the message when the machine restarted?

As it was starting up, the

system began to automatically check the disk, and made some repairs.

To the System drive? Or if not, which drive?

When I went to open Outlook 2003, it reported that the personal folders .pst was not valid. It turns out that Windows had 'repaired' my personal folders .pst my making it 0 bytes! Fortunately, I was able to resync with my PDA, losing only a couple of days of changes.

WAIT just a minute here: You have a RAID setup but you require an external

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drive for archival purposes?

This indicates a serious communications problem either on your end or on mine! If you have a RAID setup with two drives, why would you need your PDA or an external drive for backups? 2 x 150 + 80 is 380 Gig you're going to have to potentially provide for. Are you SURE you know what you're about here?

Not wanting this to happen again, I ordered an external hard drive so that I can have a back up – yes, I learnt the hard way that the expense of a backup is nothing compared to what I could have lost!

WHAT are the two 150 Gig RAID drives for?

In the meantime, I downloaded a trial of the backup software 'Acronis True Image'. It began installing, then –BAM– Blue Screen of Death!!! Unfortunately, I can't remember the exact details. I restarted, and tried to go into Safe Mode, but, again – BSOD! I restarted once more and chose to revert to the last good configuration [I didn't know about 'System Restore' at the time].

Did you even try system restore? It might still work if you haven't frogged too many things up!

There was no evidence of Acronis in the add/remove programs control panel. I ran ccleaner which cleaned up some stray Acronis registry entries, but left many of them there still. When I restarted, Windows was really slow in logging in, switching users, shutting down, and running programs.

I ran Windows Installer Clean Up, and that forced something to happen, allowing ccleaner to remove a whole bunch of Acronis registry entries.

Things were a little faster, but still not like it was pre-crash.

I then installed User Profile Hive Cleanup Service, and that helped a lot, though it feels like a bit of a kludge solution in getting my system's speed back.

UPHClean was the right thing to do at that point.

In addition, try running regmon from sysinternals. It has a handy optimizer for the registry hidden away in its features that I've found very useful several times to optimize boot times, and for evaluating just what is making the boot so slow.

Before you run the optimizer, run a couple captures of the reg during boot so you can see/keep track of the changes it makes. Regmon does NOT make registry changes; it will only monitor and rearrange run orders for registry work, so it's safe to use as long as it's not interrupted while

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it's optimizing.

OK, the questions:

1: Does System Restore also store Outlook's .pst files, so that I can revert to the good version I had before the crash?

No, it does not.

2: Having done all that ccleaner cleaning, installing and running of WICU and UPHCS, should I just leave things as they are now? – though it's not as fast as it was pre-crash.

Possibly, hard to say; only you can judge that for sure. Try regmon mentioned above; it might achieve "pre-crash" for you.

3: Or would it be safe to do a System Restore to before the crash happened [2 days ago], given that I've since installed WICU and UPHCS to get things back?

Still worth a try. You –should– be able to undo a Restore that isn't doing any good, and bring it right back to where you started the restore from. You may not have Restore Points that far back, but if you do, I'd definitely try one of them and see what happens. You will NOT be able to "restore" back to where you started though, once you restore to an earlier time and close the program; it's a 1-shot deal.

4: I'm staying away from Acronis as a potential back up solution now. I need software that will do daily scheduled incremental backups of my system and my data to an external drive. I'm certain that I don't want to use Symantec Ghost, due to Symantec's poor rep! Paragon Drive Backup 8 looks like something suitable. Does anyone have any opinion on that choice?

It's your choice of course, but Acronis and Ghost are both good programs IMO. There is also BootitNG, which is pretty decent. I tested all three and finally chose Ghost because of some of the bells & whistles it included. Acronis and Bootit were \$ten/twenty cheaper, than Ghost, but IMO it was worth the extra cost.

WHATEVER you decide, BEFORE you install ANY program that delves that deeply into the operating system, get your BACKUPS in order FIRST! That cannot be emphasized enough. Back up FIRST!! At the very least, get the system drive into a Full Backup and whatever you use to make that backup, be CERTAIN it

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uses Shadow Copy or it won't backup the files that are in use!
Backup that's part of XP is perfectly fine for doing a backup of this sort and does use Shadow Copy. So does Ghost; not positive but think Acronis does too. Dunno about Bootit, but assume it does. You can NOT backup a system drive without using shadow copy or another third party prog for the same purpose.

:)

If I were you, I would:

- Get the system working as I can accept it.
- Back up the system drive somehow, to an online freebie location if I can't do it otherwise. .
- Back up all data on other drives.
- Run AV and spyware checks; update EACH just before you run it.
- Then retry Acronis again. AFAIK your machine should handle it just fine. But, like I said, I use Ghost, not Acronis so I don't really have much experience with it details-wise.

Regards,

Pop`

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