

Re: Partition help

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http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.help_and_support/2008-03/msg01103.htm

- *From:* "Bill in Co." <not_really_here@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Thu, 13 Mar 2008 20:23:27 -0600
-

Anna wrote:

"mag" <the1mag@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
news:DvudnaSyO7zgp0XanZ2dnUVZ_oaonZ2d@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

We're about to take delivery of a new (actually a Dell refurb) computer with a 320 hard drive and XP Pro pre-installed. I've always previously had a small C drive for the OS and programs and a large secondary drive, called D, for data, so a single hard drive of this size is making me nervous! I think it probably should be partitioned but I have no idea how to go about doing it. Should I get something like Partition Magic? One friend suggested wiping the hard drive, reinstalling the OS and partitioning at that point.

Any advice will be appreciated.

Maggie

"mag" <the1mag@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
news:Xcqndy-5vTl2UXanZ2dnUVZ_rmjnZ2d@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Ken,

I just read your article, thanks, and you've mentioned the reason I said

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maybe I "should" partition the drive, which is that we backup the data to an external hard drive every day. I thought having a partition just for data would make the process easier but perhaps it doesn't really matter.

I'm thinking now that if I'm going to wipe the hard drive anyway, maybe I'll get a smaller hard drive and continue with what I currently do, ie have the OS and programs on a small C drive and the data on a large D drive.

Thanks,

Maggie

Anna wrote:

Maggie:

Let me give you another point-of-view to consider...

You are certainly correct in your objective to "backup the data to an external hard drive every day". Not only is this a worthwhile objective, it really should be your **primary**, if not exclusive objective. And when we use the term "data" in this context, consider that this "data" includes **everything** on your day-to-day working HDD, i.e, your XP operating system (OS), all your programs/applications, as well as your user-created data. So that by a comprehensive backup of your data you can, in effect, have a copy of your HDD. A precise copy whereby should your day-to-day HDD fail or your system becomes unbootable because of a corrupt OS, you

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would have the
wherewithal to restore your system to a bootable, functional
state with
a
minimum of fuss. What better backup system can one have?

You can achieve this through the use of a disk-cloning (or
disk-imaging
program). A comprehensive backup program that you could
use on a daily
basis should you want.

There are a number of disk-to-disk cloning programs
available. The
program
we greatly prefer as a disk-to-disk cloning program is the
Casper 4
program – see
<http://www.fssdev.com>

It's extremely simple to use even for an inexperienced user,
reasonably
quick in operation, and quite effective. There's virtually no
learning
curve in undertaking the disk cloning process as one
navigates through
the few
easy-to-understand screens with a final mouse-click on the
button on the
screen which will trigger the disk-cloning process. After
undertaking
one
or two disk-cloning operations it should take the user no
more than 20
seconds or so to get to that point.

The significant advantage of the Casper 4.0 disk cloning
program
compared
with other disk cloning programs that we're familiar with is
its ability
to create *incremental* disk clones following the creation of
the
original
(first) disk clone. Employing what Casper calls its
"SmartClone"
technology the program can create subsequent disk clones of
the source
HDD usually at a fraction of the time it takes to create a
"full" disk
clone. This results in a decided incentive for the user to

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undertake
frequent complete backups of
his or her system knowing that they can create "incremental"
disk clones
in a relatively short period of time. Understand that this
"incremental
disk
clone" is a *complete* clone (copy) of the "source" HDD.

So, for example, in your case where your interest would be in
backing up
your system on a daily basis, following the first time you
clone the
contents of your internal (boot) HDD to your USB external
HDD (USBHDD),
it
would probably take no more than two or three minutes each
day to
thereafter perform the disk-cloning operation. Again, bear in
mind that
your USBHDD would contain the *complete* contents of
your internal HDD.
While the USBHDD would not ordinarily be bootable in an
XP OS, it would
be a simple matter to clone the contents of the USBHDD
back to a
internal
HDD should a restoration of the system be necessary. Again,
what better
backup system can one >> have?

The Casper 4.0 program is also capable of scheduling the
disk-cloning
process on a daily, weekly, or other time period selected by
the user so
that should you prefer you could arrange for automatic
backups at
pre-determined times.

There's a trial version available (see above link) although it's
somewhat
crippled but it will give you a good idea as to how the
program works.
And I can provide further details about using the program
should you be
interested.

The downside to the Casper 4 program as compared with the
Acronis and
most other disk-cloning programs is the cost of the program
which comes

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to \$49.95 for the program + \$9.95 for the "Casper Startup Disk" (the program to create the bootable CD containing the Casper program). So it's more expensive than the others. But in our view, well worth the additional cost considering its overall effectiveness and the fact that one will be using the program many, many times over the weeks & months ahead. AFAIK, the program is available only through download from the developer.

Another possible downside to the Casper 4 program (depending upon your interests) is that it's really not designed to create "generational" copies of your system. Some users like to maintain complete copies of their system at various points in time. To that end a disk-imaging program is more practical since to accomplish that objective using a disk-cloning program such as Casper 4 the user would obviously need a fair number of HDDs to serve as the recipients of the clones at these various points in time. But based on our experience I would say that the vast number of users (and I would assume you are one of them) are basically interested in only maintaining a current up-to-date copy of their system and have little or no interest in maintaining "generational" copies of such. But that may be a consideration for you & others.

Anyway, all of the above is predicated on the basis that you're seeking a reliable program to backup your *entire* day-to-day booting HDD, including the XP OS, all your programs & applications, and your user-created data, in short – everything that's on your "source" HDD. And you want an

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effective
simple-to-use program to do this on a systematic routine
basis and do so
reasonably quickly. To that end we've found this Casper 4.0
program
really
fills the bill. So I would suggest you take a look at it.

I really don't think there is any significant need for you to
multi-partition your HDD. There's no reason why you can't
work
effectively
with a single-partitioned HDD that includes *all* the data
on your HDD.
And simply create the files & folders to organize your work
on that
single
partition. This is especially so should you use a disk-to-disk
cloning
program such as the one I've suggested. In our experience
this supposed
additional security one gains from separating data through
partitioning
is
more myth than reality in the day-to-day world of personal
computing.
While there's no terrible harm in multi-partitioning your 320
GB HDD
should you
want to go that route, I honestly do not feel it's of any real
value to
the vast majority of PC users.

So, in summary, my advice would be to think more in terms
of
establishing
& maintaining a comprehensive backup system along the
lines I've
suggested
rather than multi-partitioning your HDD.
Anna

"Bill in Co." <not_really_here@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
news:uUzfPpLhIHA.944@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

I want to add to this that when I suggested partitioning, it was not to
separate all program data into into its own "data" partition, but rather
to
create room for a backup partition, and perhaps use a separate partition

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for huge work files – like video work.

That's what I have done. I've never used a separate partition for programs, and another one for user data, preferring to keep them together, so that when I back it up, it's ALL together and easily restorable and updateable, in a one shot operation.

Bill:

I really believe it's a serious mistake for most users to create a "backup partition" on the same physical HDD that one is backing up, assuming that partition (or any other area on the disk) will serve as the *only* repository of the backed-up data. How will a user be able to recover/restore his or her system should the HDD become defective which I'm sure you're aware is not a particularly rare event?

Is it not more prudent to store one's backup data on another HDD – preferably an external HDD or under certain circumstances another internal HDD?
Anna

I am storing my backup on an external USB Hard Disk Enclosure these days. And obviously that's the best approach.

But in the past, at least, I've kept a backup partition free on the main internal drive, and used that to good advantage (this was for my Win98SE computer), when I did a "clean (re)install of Windows w/o formatting, by leaving most folders in place, except Program Files and Windows (i.e., the fast way), by having copies of my Program Files and Windows folders right there on call on the second partition, ready to be called upon, as needed. And of course this way it doesn't rely on being able to read the USB external drive (which may be more problematic at the DOS or lower level operations).

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