

## Re: Miantinence

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<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.newusers/2004-12/1100.html>

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**From:** Ted Zieglar (*teddyz\_at\_notmail.com*)

**Date:** 12/16/04

Date: Thu, 16 Dec 2004 12:07:25 -0500

Wow, what a great question. We wish more people would take such an interest in backing up. It's the single most important thing you can do to ensure problem-free computing.

Backup is a huge topic that is way beyond the limited scope of a newsgroup posting. The Internet is filled with good information about backing up, and I encourage you to read as much as you can on the subject. For a new user, PC World Online ([www.pcworld.com](http://www.pcworld.com)) will start you off in the right direction. What follows is a very general introduction:

At a minimum, you need to backup your personal files. That means your documents, spreadsheets, photos, music and videos. All you need to do is to copy them to recordable CDs. Do this often, so you'll always have recent copies of your personal files. You can save time by not backing up what already exists elsewhere. For example: If you transferred a music CD to your computer, there's no need to backup that if you own the CD.

For most people, the next thing to backup is their email address book and their e-mail messages. For this you may consult Tom Koch, the unheralded master of backing up Outlook Express. Find his instructions at Inside Outlook Express (<http://www.insideoutlookexpress.com/>). You may also want to backup your Favorites. This is most easily done within Internet Explorer: Go to File > Import and Export and 'export' your Favorites to My Documents. Now, your Favorites will be backed up every time you backup the contents of My Documents.

At this point, you'll want to consider something more sophisticated than just copying files to CDs. Time to look for backup software. There is a ton of this available. To sort things out, look for reviews in the popular computer e-zines, such as PC World and PC Magazine ([www.pcmag.com](http://www.pcmag.com)) and CNet ([www.cnet.com](http://www.cnet.com)). Backup software will make backing up more convenient; if it's more convenient you'll be glad to do it more often. Windows has its own backup software – called ntbakup – but it doesn't backup directly to CDs.

The next step is to backup your software, meaning Windows and all your applications. Some backup software can do this, but the best way to go is with something called 'disk imaging' software. Disk imaging gets rather

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complicated, so you may want to wait until you have more experience before trying it. Basically, an image is a bit-by-bit exact copy of your entire hard disk. You can image your entire hard disk in minutes and restore it just as quickly. It's the ultimate backup solution. Look at Ghost 9.0 by Symantec and True Image 8.0 by Acronis.

System Restore is not a method of backing up. System Restore creates restore points, which contain your registry and some essential system and user files. The idea behind System Restore is to restore enough of the essential guts of Windows to get you back to the user interface if you run into trouble. From the user interface you can troubleshoot (hopefully) whatever caused your problem in the first place.

When you need to backup your registry, just create a restore point. If there is a problem with your registry or with one of the system or user files contained in a restore point, you can quickly replace them with known good copies. Don't use a restore point that is more than a few days old: the mixture of old registry entries and new files can destabilize your system.

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Ted Ziegler

<martymkm@webtv.net> wrote in message

news:1540-41C1B4B6-199@storefull-3114.bay.webtv.net...

> I have WXP SP2 (with a cd-writer) that is humming right along with  
> Norton firewall & AV, Spybot, Ad-Aware, Spywareblaster, and Spyware  
> guard. The thing is I keep reading about backing up this and that,  
> registry, files. etc. Could you please tell me (or point me in the right  
> direction) of how and/or what I need to do? TIA

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> Happy Holidays; Marty

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