

Making PC backups is critical

Like paying your taxes and mowing regularly, backing up your PC is one of life's annoying necessities.

Consider the consequences if everything stored on your computer suddenly vanishes: your Word files, Quicken records, digital photos, address book, everything. It's a chilling thought, but it happens. Frequently.

I speak from experience when I say that someday — maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but probably sooner than you think — your computer's hard drive will go kaput. That will be one very bleak day.

Or it may not, if you make regular backups.

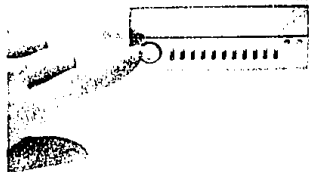
A backup can consist of just your most prized data or of the complete contents of your hard drive, software and all. I recommend you practice both methods, because even backups aren't infallible, and sometimes it's better to have one kind over another.

It's relatively easy to make a data-only backup, provided you keep your files reasonably well organized and own a CD-RW drive (also known as a CD burner).

Every week or so, just copy your most crucial data — your work files, digital photos, Internet Favorites folder, etc. — to a blank CD.

For everything else, maintain a complete hard-drive backup, the most effective safety net you can have.

For instance, suppose your hard drive starts making a clanking noise 15 minutes later your PC is dead. If you have a second hard drive that's an exact copy of the first, all you need to do is



Plug in Maxtor's Personal Storage 5000LE and you've got a quick, easy, and reliable backup solution.

swap it in. No software or data to reload, no messing around with the computer's system — restore CDs — just a ready-to-run carbon copy of your dearly departed drive.

You see, not all cloning is controversial.

In my computer there are two 80-gigabyte hard drives.

The first is the primary drive, the one I use every day.

The second is my backup drive. I use a simple, inexpensive utility called Casper XP (www.fssdew.com) to copy the full contents of the primary drive to the backup drive. I do this once a week at the end of a work day; the process takes about two hours.

Of course, this requires installing a second drive inside your PC, which may be more work than you care to do.

In that case I recommend an external option like the Maxtor Personal Storage 5000LE (www.maxtor.com).

Just plug the unit into a USB port, press a button, and presto: your backup is underway.

It's also an ideal solution for

notebooks, which don't usually have the option of a second internal drive.

I tested the 5000LE and found it fast and affordable (\$199 for the 80-gigabyte model), though ironically the backup button didn't work. I had to start the software manually.

Having just scratched the surface of backup methods, I'll discuss more of them in future columns.

In the meantime, don't wait another day before you safeguard your data.

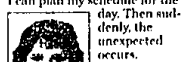
Rick Broida has joined the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers as a columnist who will write about computers and technology for the At Home section.

A Farmington Hills native, Broida resides in Commerce Township. Broida has written for over 13 years, mostly in computer and technology magazines, including Wired, PC Magazine, FamilyPC and Home Office Computing. Broida is a co-author of several books on handheld computing, including "How to Do Everything With Your Palm Handheld", third edition. Readers who have questions for Broida can email him at rickbroida@excite.com

Alphabet system helps plan for change

Q: My day is planned out and something or someone forces my plans to change. It is upsetting and hard for me to accomplish anything when plans constantly change. Any suggestions?

A: Plans change continually. I can plan my schedule for the day. Then suddenly, the unexpected occurs.



Our dog, Buffy, digs under the fence and is gone. I have to cancel my errands or my weekly golf game. The children are upset and I need to find their furry friend.

To keep my emotions under control, I use the alphabet system. Each letter of the alphabet is a potential activity. Be prepared to do plan "B" when plan "A" doesn't work.

For instance, plan "A" is to wash the windows on Tuesday morning. You awaken Tuesday and find the windows are dirty.

Washing windows won't work, so you are faced with a choice. You can choose to be discouraged and accomplish nothing, or put plan "B" into action. Plan "B" is to clean the baseboards in your home.

You walk to the kitchen and open the cabinet to find the wood cleaner. Surprise! The bottle is empty. What happens when plan "B" doesn't work? This is what is great about the alphabet system. You can move on to plan "C". Plan "C" is to reorganize the hall closet.

Please note: You will rarely get to plan "D". You would have to go through plenty of letters before you would need a new system.

If you always have a series of plans, you will always be able to accomplish something even when the unexpected occurs.

Prepare your mind and emotions for change. Disappointment is a result of inflexibility.

For example, you expect to spend the day with a close friend. You have planned a day of shopping, lunch and lots of fun.

The phone rings as you walk out the door. The voice on the other end says, "This is the school nurse and your son isn't feeling well. He has a temperature of 101 degrees. Can you please pick him up from school?" You must cancel lunch and shopping to spend the day with a sick child.

Plan "A" won't work, so plan "B" is now activated. Initially you are disappointed, so you need to whisper to yourself, "Let's get happy!" Decide not to be disappointed. You can

schedule another festive day with your friend. This is an opportunity to comfort and spend time with your son.

Attitude is very important when dealing with change. The transition from one plan to another works better with a positive attitude.

My son is great at implementing a new plan when the first plan doesn't work. As a preschooler he would often find himself accompanying me as I drove around doing errands. Invariably, a conversation similar to this would take place:

"Mommy, can we go to the zoo?" "No, Sweetie, it is raining outside." "Mommy, can we go to McDonald's?" "Not now, we just had lunch." "Mommy, can we go swimming at the pool?" "Not today, it is too cold."

This would continue for a long time until we found a plan that worked. He never got frustrated or upset. Be prepared to change plans at a minute's notice. Keep a positive attitude, making the most of plans that have changed.

Today's Refrigerator Bulletin: "Really, set, change! Be prepared to implement plan 'B' when 'A' doesn't work!"

Send your questions and success stories to: Diana Koenig, P.O. Box 102, Manchester, MD 20801; e-mail: diana@koenig@aol.com. Visit www.domesticplanner.com.

HOME CALENDAR

Plants for Planters

Edward Eaton of Eaton Nursery in West Bloomfield will lecture at 10 a.m. Friday, May 23, at the next meeting of Oakland University's Meadow Brook Plant Garden Club on the campus of Oakland University in Rochester.

Eaton will discuss the use of potted plants for year-round container gardening, soil types and use of fertilizers. He will have a display of containers and explain how to select the right one.

Reservations aren't required. There is a \$5 non-member club donation.

Garden Club member silent plant auction will follow the meeting.

Rona Decker, Haberman Fabrics, 905 S. Main in Royal Oak, presents home decor classes for a range of sewing experience levels.

The schedule includes Lampshades (fee is \$80; bring a wire frame), Thursday, May 22 to June 12, and Simple Curtains (\$50), Tuesdays, May 27 to June 10.

Registration and payment are required in advance. Space is limited. For information, call (248) 541-0010 or visit www.habermanfabrics.com.

Wind-up, and cast iron toys will be featured, as well as advertisements, figures and other fine collectibles.

Call (248) 646-1047 for flyer or other information.

Native plant sale

Oakland Land Conservancy will have its fourth annual Spring Native Plant Sale 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, June 1, at the Pontiac Pancake Shelter, near the Pontiac Library at the southeast corner of Pike and Mill in downtown Pontiac.

Proceeds will benefit the conservancy's land stewardship program and will be matched 50 cents to every dollar through a challenge grant from the Cels Foundation.

Admission is free. Many species of native grasses, wildflowers, trees, shrubs and woody vines, and 35-plant butterfly gardens, will be featured.

Most grasses and wildflowers are \$5 per quart, woody vines are \$8 to \$12 per quart, shrubs and trees are \$20 to \$28 per quart, and butterfly gardens are \$60 for 36 plants (for shady, sunny or wetland areas).

The plants are all native genotypes and are from Wildtype Nursery in Mason, Mich.

Call Oakland Land Conservancy at (248) 601-2016 for information and a plant list.

Co-sponsors of the event are the City of Pontiac, Clinton River Watershed Council and Wild Ones Historical Landscapers (Oakland County Chapter).

Matthew Botanical Gardens

Classes in the adult education program at the University of Michigan Matthew Botanical Gardens include:

Bruce Peninsula, a Memorial Day weekend trip (fee is \$295, \$280 for members; cost includes camping), Friday-Monday, May 23-26, and the three-session Macrophotography (\$90, \$81 for members; must be familiar with using a 35mm camera), beginning Tuesday, May 27. Call (734) 998-7011 for information.

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- Design/Build construction
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Limited Individual Sessions available Thursday afternoon. Please bring your plans and ideas for design help.
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