

Help Sheet: Document Storage and Backup on a standalone

◆ **Problem Description:**

Backing up your documents and other important files on your computer is essential.

Why do we need backups? Well, when all is going well and everything is working just fine, then backups are generally not used, however, there are a whole host of eventualities that can and do happen which mean that your important data becomes no longer accessible or is no longer correct.

For example:

- your hard disk may break potentially dumping all the data that was on it
- you may get a virus which deletes some or all of your data
- you accidentally delete one or more directories/files of your data
- you accidentally make some changes to one or more files that you want to reverse

◆ **Before you start:**

Firstly, obtain some external media on which to transfer a copy of all your data e.g. a cd, dvd, zip, backup tape, external harddisk, networked file storage etc.

The solution that will be appropriate for your situation will depend on a number of factors:

- how much data you have to backup e.g. just 25Mbytes of data in My Documents or 25 Gigabytes of data from a whole collection of directories or 2500Gb from a data farm
- how much money you are able to spend
- how often you are going to need to do backups
- how critical the data is

Making the process easy makes it more likely that it will actually happen.

You will need to setup a directory where you will keep all your data for backing up. This makes it easy to keep documents and data in one place .

A good suggestion would be to have a directory e.g. c:\data which would be the top-level directory underneath which all your important data will be stored. When the time comes for performing a data backup all you now need to do is copy this directory onto the backup media. If some files need to be placed elsewhere set up an automated copy which you run before commencing the backup process.

My Documents:

This folder is often where people place their office documents etc. However you want to ensure you capture this in your backup. If you right click the My Documents folder on your desktop and select properties this allows you to tell Windows where the My Documents folder should be located on your harddisk. If you are using c:\data as the repository for all the files you want to backup, it might be good to have a directory underneath that called my documents which you could point to i.e. c:\data\my documents.

Email:

You will not just want to backup your documents, but likely that email also will want to be saved. If you use web mail then this will not apply as you do not download mail onto your machine. If you are using Outlook, then you will have your mail in one or more files with the extension .pst. If you are using Outlook Express you will have a number of files with the extension .dbx which contain all your emails. You should create a directory called c:\data\email and then perform a search on your harddrive to locate where your email files are stored and then manually or automatically copy these files to the c:\data\email directory prior to performing the backup.

An alternative to this is to use the export facility in Outlook (Express) to place all your email into a single file which could then be re-imported if ever there was a requirement to restore from backup.

◆ **You need to:**

CD or DVD backup:

- have blank media available to use
- ensure your internal/external backup device is connected turned on
- launch your cd/dvd burning software. Here you will elect to create a “data” cd/dvd. Next you will select/add the directory/directories that need to be copied onto the backup media (Note: you can usually drag and drop the directories from one pane of the burning software application to another. One pane shows the directories on your harddisk, the other shows the directories that will be created on your cd/dvd)

ZIP, external Harddisk, network storage:

- launch windows explorer, locate the external device which will have a drive letter assigned to it, then select the directory/directories to be backed up and go to the edit menu and select copy. Then navigate to the drive where the data to be backed up to and the specific directory on that storage medium and then select it. Go to the edit menu and select paste. This will then proceed to copy all the backup files and directories across onto the external zip, harddisk or network storage.

Backup cassette:

- Insert a blank cassette
- Start your backup software for the cassette drive. This may simply be the built-in windows backup program
- Add the directory/directories to the cassette and then start the backup

Important checks:

- having made a backup, it is important to satisfy yourself that the media that you have created containing the backed up data is actually readable and does in fact contain everything you think it should. A backup that has terminated part-way through will have data missing and so should be fully re-created.

◆ **Regularly:**

Ensure that you carry out a backup at least once a week or more frequently if you have a lot of data changing that would be costly if you should lose those changes.

◆ **Checks to ensure everything is still working**

From time to time restore all the files from a backup to see that nothing is amiss.

Disclaimer: All reasonable care has been used in the production of this document but ITSolve Ltd can take no responsibility for the consequences of following the steps outlined here. If you are in any doubt about any of the procedures outlined above you should take advise from your IT service provider.