TECH SHEETS

Backup copies and archiving

Backing up and archiving your files is the first step towards recovering from a computer disaster (i.e. computer breakdown, file corruption, virus infection, fire, flood, plague).   A backup copy also allows a certain flexibility – you can significantly change or modify a document with out worrying that you will lose any information.

When you back up your computer, don't worry about backing up the entire hard drive. Only back up files that you've created or have had sent to you (i.e. letters, memos, pictures, e-mail, bookmarks). The operating system (Microsoft Windows 98, etc) and installed programs (Microsoft Word, Excel, AOL) all have their own installation disks. If disaster strikes, you will need to install these programs directly from their own disks instead of from your own backup.

Try to back up your hard drive at least once a month – more if you use your computer daily.

Quick definitions

Archive:

To back up files onto a disk or tape.

Backup and recovery:

A set of procedures to restore lost files in the event of a hardware or software failure.

Here's how to do it

1. Store all of your original files (letters, writing, e-mail, photos, etc) in one folder on your computer. If you are on a PC, save them in the "My Documents" folder (you can rename it later). If you are on a Mac, create a folder with a unique name.   This one folder can be divided into sub-folders.

2. Insert a floppy disk into your drive. You will be able to store 1.44 MB of information on this disk.   Alternately, if you have an Iomega Zip drive or CD burner on your computer, insert a blank Zip disk (100/250 MB) or a blank CD-R/CD-RW (650-700 MB), respectively

3. If you are on a PC, open Windows Explorer ("Start→ Programs→ Windows Explorer" or "Start→ Programs→ Accessories→ Windows Explorer").   If you are on a Mac, open MacOS Finder or the folder you wish to back up (i..e Ingrid's Documents)

<CONT>

Here's how to do it (cont.)

4. If you are on a PC, click the checkmark next to "Local Disk C:" to expand the column. Find your folder (i.e. "My Documents") and click and hold the left mouse button down. Drag the entire folder onto the A: drive if you're backing up onto a floppy. Release the left mouse button. The files will start copying onto the floppy disk. If you have more files than space on the floppy, your computer will prompt you to insert another disk.

5. If you are on a Mac, click and drag your file onto the desktop floppy icon. Release the mouse button. The files will start copying automatically onto the floppy disk. If you have more files than space on the floppy, your computer will prompt you to insert another disk.

6. To restore your files, insert the floppy disk (or Zip disk or CD) into your computer. Select the files from your disk and copy them back onto the hard drive.

7. (optional) Back up your e-mail by opening your mail program (i.e. AOL, Yahoo Mail, Outlook Express, Yahoo, etc.), opening a message, and selecting "File→Save As." Type in a useful name (i.e. Morgan's Message 1/16/02), and save as a text message instead of HTML (takes up less room). Be sure to save all your messages in the same folder.

8. (optional) Back up your Internet favorites by opening your web browser (Internet Explorer or Netscape). In Internet Explorer, select "File→Import and Export→Next→Export Favorite→Next→Export to a File or Address". Save the file (bookmark.htm) to your hard drive. In Netscape, select "Bookmarks→Manage Bookmarks→File→Export Bookmarks→Save as→bookmarks.html")

About Microsoft Backup:

If you are running a PC with Windows 95 or higher, you may have Microsoft Backup installed on your machine.

Click Start→ Programs → Accessories→ System Tools→ Backup to run.

Microsoft Backup will automate your backup tasks, and even do it automatically for you.

CONTACT US

The System Department of the New York Society Library selects, upgrades, and maintains computer resources for the Library staff and patrons. If you have a question or problem with any Library-related computer resource, please contact us.

Further resources

Friedman, Alan. The Computer Glossary: The Complete Illustrated Desk Reference, The Computer Language Company, ©1991 (001.6 F)

Friendlybear Backing Up: http://www.friendlybear.com/backingup.htm