

Everybody tells you to make sure that you are backing up your PC, but what does that really mean? What files do you actually need to backup? Here are the basics of backing up your PC, what you should back up, and why.

Of course these rules won't suit everyone, so use a little common sense - **think about what is most important to you** on your PC, and make sure that you've figured out how to backup those files.

### The all-important rule of backups

The primary principle of backing up your data is that any important data should exist in **two** or more **physical** locations at once. You cannot create a backup and delete the original, or else it is no longer really a backup. You might think this is obvious, but you'd be surprised how many people say they have lost their data after their "backup" drive died.

### Where is your important data?

On a Windows PC you should stick with the suggested default locations of...

Save all your documents in	MY DOCUMENTS
Save all your photos in	MY PICTURES
Save all your music in	MY MUSIC
Save all your videos in	MY VIDEOS

E-MAILS in Outlook and Windows Live Mail are stored in .PST and .OST files

### Backup all these files more easily

Instead of trying to find all those locations, backup your entire Users folder, which is at C:\Users\Username in Windows 7 and Vista, and C:\Documents and Settings\Username for Windows XP. This will include all of those files, unless you've stored them somewhere else.

### What you need not bother to backup

Windows system itself and programs you have installed as these would have to be re-installed from your original licensed media in the event of a hard disk failure or theft. Having said that, you can do a system image backup which would help if you have a complete melt down, but these take a long time and a lot of disk space.

### Where should you backup to?

Backup your data (as above) to an **external USB disk drive** or an **online service** or **preferably both!**

Keep a copy of your regular backup **off site** (i.e. not in your house with your computer, in case of fire/theft). The advantage to backing up to a USB drive is that you can restore large amounts of data quickly but an online service would take longer to restore, but the online service is **always off site** and always up to date.

USB external disk drive. (Note a disk drive, not a USB memory stick)

Purchase a USB disk drive about twice the capacity of the drive in your computer. Prices are from about £42 for a 500Gb drive to £48 for a 1TB (1,000 GB) drive.

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On-Line backup service like [www.carbonite.co.uk](http://www.carbonite.co.uk) is £42 per year. Your data is automatically backed up and encrypted, so only you can access it.

If you are considering using Carbonite, please ask Richard to recommend you and receive a FREE extra month of subscription.

### When should you backup?

Daily is the simple answer, or at least when ever you do any work on your computer you do not want to lose. When you create a new document or save some photographs from your latest holiday or family event etc. With an on-line backup service, this happens automatically.

### How to do a backup

With an **on-line backup service** it's easy and instructions will come when you sign up. The first backup will take literally days, but subsequent backups will only back up any changes you have made to files and of course back up new files and this will happen at any time your computer is running and connected to the internet and without you even noticing it is happening.

To a **USB disk drive** you can use Windows backup and instructions are available at Windows 7

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-GB/windows7/help/videos/backing-up-and-restoring-your-computer>

Windows VISTA

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-vista/Back-up-your-files>

OR there are many **third party backup programs**, some are free and others included with Virus and other security suites you may have purchased.

Windows AOME Windows Backup Software <http://www.aomeitech.com/download.html>

### NOW Prove It !

Having done your first backup, can you can feel confident your data is safe? Well prove it by restoring a file from your backup. Also make sure you have a back up **off site** as discussed above.

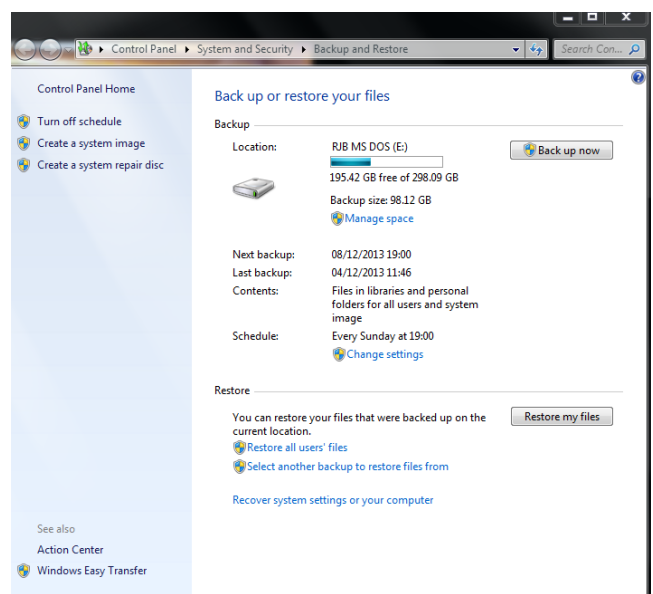
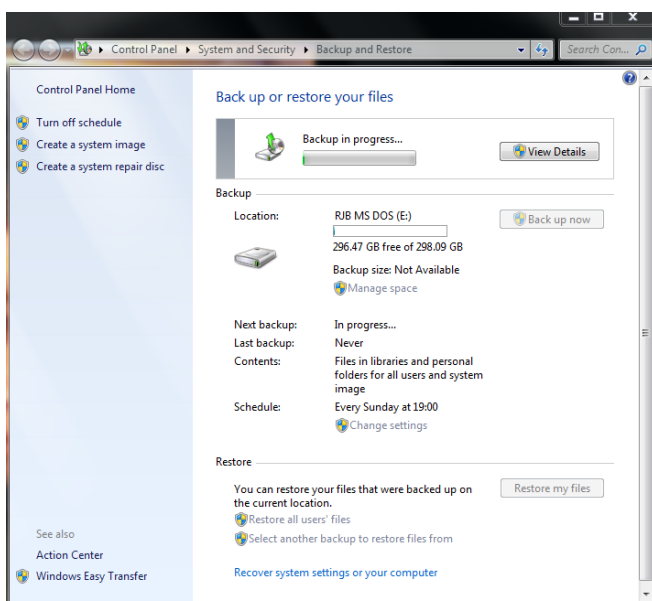
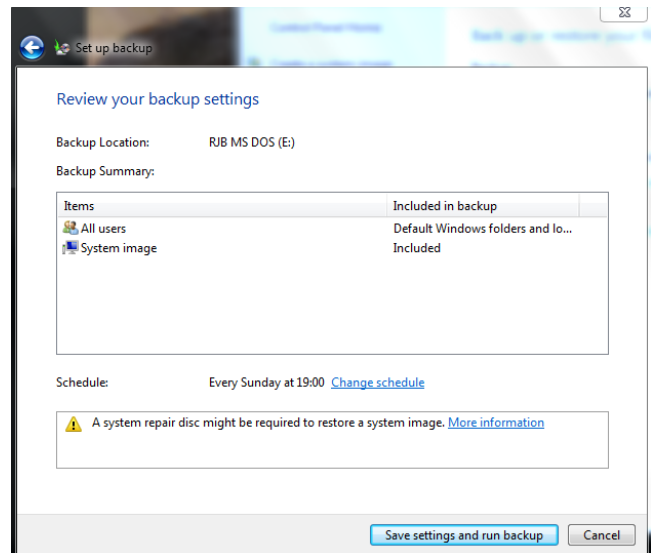
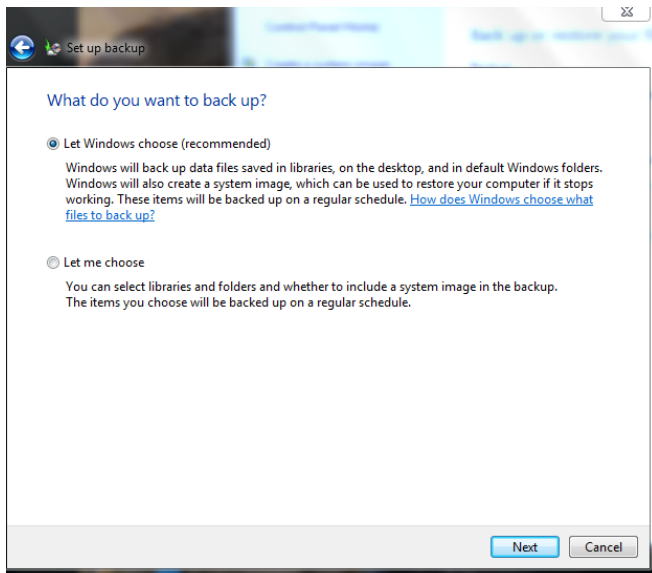
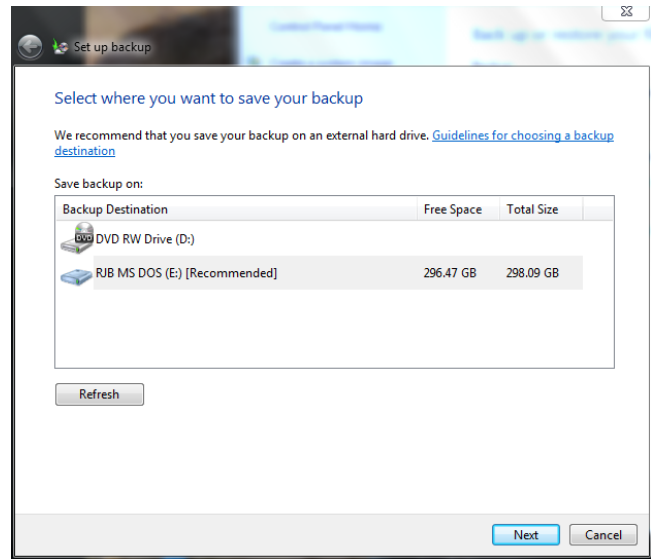
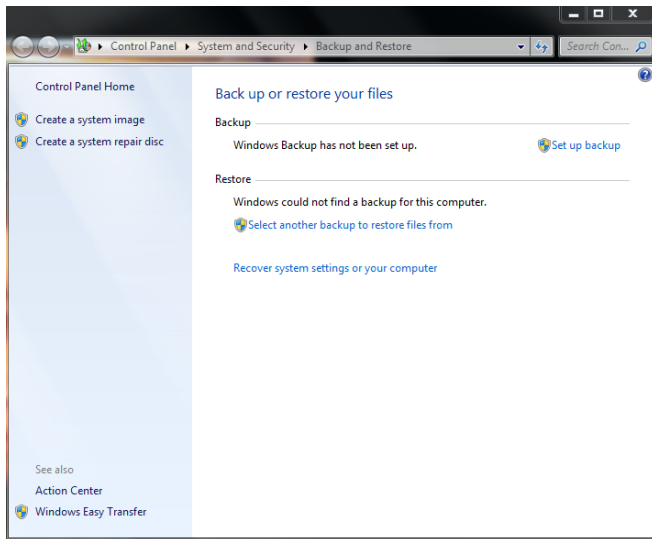
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To start the backup or restore program, click Windows START icon and in the SEARCH box type BACKUP and you will see the BACKUP and RESTORE program. Click on that and follow the screenshots below.



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To RESTORE start the BACKUP and RESTORE program again and follow screen shots below. Note you can restore a single file, multiple files, or everything. You can restore to it's original location or to somewhere different. In the examples below I have created a temporary folder in which to restore one Word file.

