



Most of us realize we need to keep a backup of our computer files, AFTER it's too late. Following a few simple steps, we can ensure our files are safely backed up.

In our computers, notebook or desktops, there is a "Hard Drive". Our pictures (link to better pictures), emails, homework, tax records, electronic check book, music, videos, everything that's important to us, are stored on this device. You want to keep a copy of these files in case the HD in the computer fails, or your computer falls victim to viruses.

The guiding principle is to copy all that's important on regular bases, to a separate hard disk or other storage devices. These days, the best choices for consumers, is to use an External HD. And, for most of us that uses Microsoft Windows XP (see Appendix for determining Windows XP Versions), creating backups is relatively simple.

The first step is to purchase an External Hard Drive (aka External HD). There are many different brands and capacity available. Make your selection based on these three criteria's.

1. **Capacity.** Pick one that's at least 3 times the size of your computer's hard drive. Ex. Your notebook computer has an 80G Hard Drive, pick a drive that's at least 240 GB.
2. **Ease of connection.** For home use, a USB connection is good enough.
3. **Reliability.** Buy a brand name product with good warranty. Remember, this is the back up, you want it to be reliable. You can read reviews online (Ex: [cnet](#)) or ask a friend.

Based on these criteria's, you should budget about \$200 or so for the external Hard Drive. This may seem like a lot, but, imagine the hours you have to spend and the possibility you won't be able to get your files back. It's an insurance that's worth its cost.

The second step is determining where all your important files are located. What are the important files? Documents such as your resume, college application essay, .etc. These are usually located in the My Documents folder. Here are some examples of other files you will want to consider backing up,

- Outlook Express e-mail messages, Email account information, and address book (for instructions on how export these information, refer to [Microsoft KB 270670](#). You will want to save these files on a regular bases to My Documents folder)
- Internet Explorer Favorites and cookies
- A list of ID / PW used for accounts, web sites, .etc. I use a password protected Word Documents to keep all my ID/Passwords for the 20 or so web sites I frequent. This file is saved in My Documents folder.
- Quicken files, I created a backup folder within Quicken, and store them in My Documents folder.

The standard files folder; C:\Documents and Settings\JohnSmith\My Documents, includes My Music, My Video, My Slideshow, etc. I back up this folder and I am ensured all the files important to me are safe.

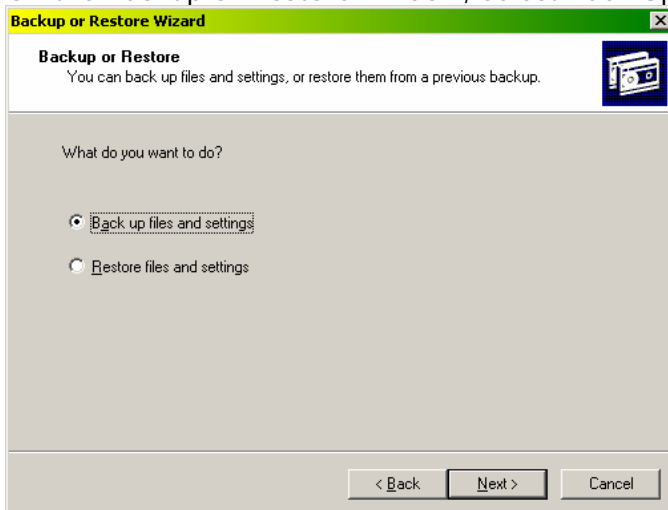
Once you have connected your External HD and identified your important files, its time to make a backup. Windows XP makes this task especially easy with a backup Wizard. To start the wizar, select Start > All Programs > Accessories > System Tools > Backup.



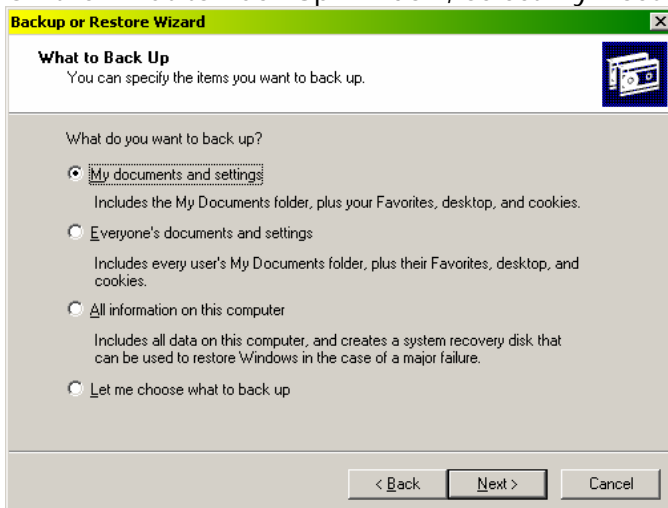
You will see the Backup or Restore Wizard Screen. Click NEXT



On the Backup or Restore window, select Back Up files and settings, then Click NEXT



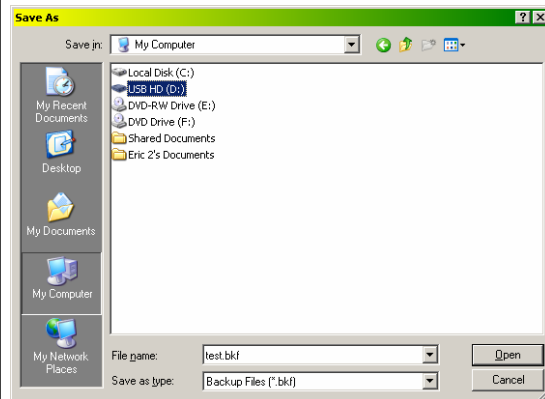
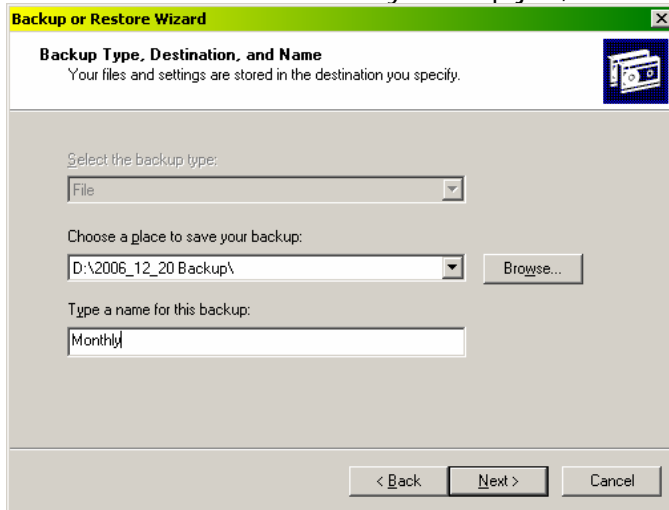
On the What to Back Up Window, select My Documents and Settings, then Click NEXT





On the Backup Type, Destination, and Name, press the Browse button to select your External HD, then Click NEXT

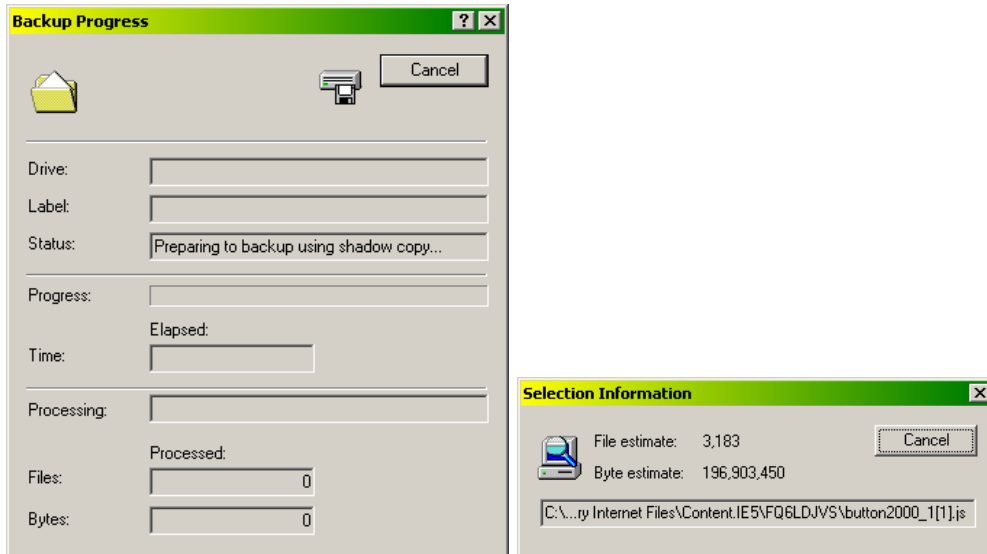
- In this case, it's the D drive. And I have Created the 2006_12_20 Backup folder to store my data.
- I have also named my backup job, Monthly



After all the selections are made, the Completing the Backup or Restore Wizard screen appears, Click FINISH.

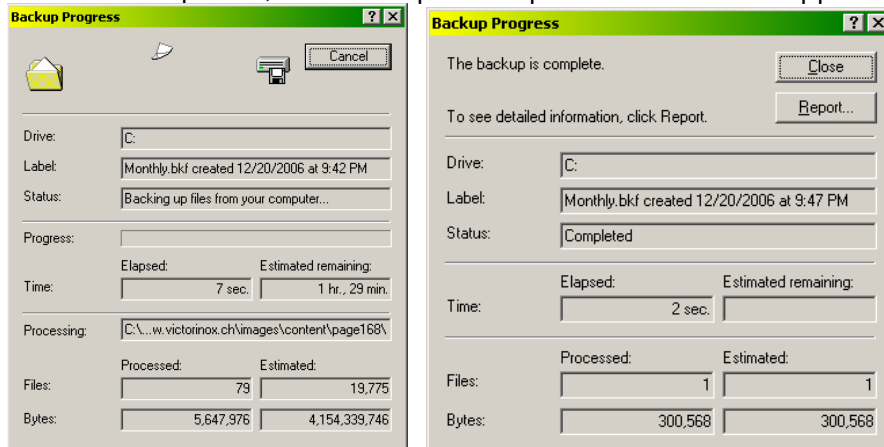


The backup will start, and you will see a few screens showing the Preparation step, then, the file / backup files size estimating screen.



Once the status box shows “Backing up files from your computer”, you are on your way. Depending on how much you have to backup, it may take 10min, it may take a few hours. You don't have to sit in front of the computer and wait, you can go run errands, go to work, for me, I will be playing a round of golf.

Once its completed, the Backup is completed window will appear and you are done!



Although these are simplified steps to create backups, it does the job. Next month, we will discuss what the “Advanced” button is all about, and in the case you have to do a restore, how to do it. Remember, if you have a desktop or notebook computer at work you can and should backup your documents also!

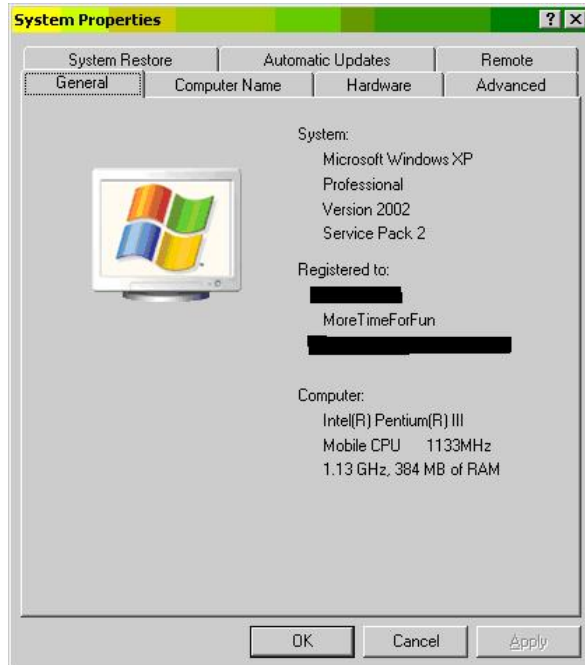


Appendix

Determine which version of Windows XP, Professional or Home.

Right mouse click on My Computer, and select Property.

You will see the System Properties screen. On the General Tab, under System; you will see which version of the Windows XP you have. This examples shows Professional.



If you have Windows XP Home, Please reference Microsoft's information page to download and install the backup tool. <http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;en-us;q302894>