<mark>Backup & Recovery</mark> (top)

Keeping a good backup routine can spare you from unpleasant, and sometimes costly, computer problems. A computer's hard drive (the part that stores your data) is one of the least reliable parts in your computer, which makes it extremely important to keep multiple copies of your important files.

In addition to copying files on two separate devices, it can be helpful to keep your most important data in two different physical locations, to prevent loss in cases of fire, flood, or other disastrous occurrences. We provide network space on our servers, which you can use to protect your most important data. Please refer to Back Up Policies for more specific information about this service.

Use the articles in this section as a guide for performing common back up and restore operations. If you are a CGIS affiliate and need assistance backing up your data, contact us.

For information about backing up and restoring Thunderbird email and settings, see Archiving, Exporting, & Importing.

For information about backing up and restoring Webmail email and address books, see Backing Up and Restoring.

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Backing up Browers Setting

An important backup procedure that often is overlooked, is backing up your Internet Explorer favorites or Firefox bookmarks. Use the procedures below to back up this data.
Backing up Your Internet Explorer Favorites

Your Internet Explorer favorites are contained in your profile folder with most of your other important data. To back these up:

    Click the Start menu in the lower left, and then select My Computer.
    The My Computer window opens.
    The My Computer window lists your available drives. Double-click your system drive (the drive that contains your windows installation).
    This is usually the C: drive.
    Double-click the Documents and Settings folder.
    In the Documents and Settings folder, double-click the folder with the same name as your username.
    This is your profile folder.
    In your profile folder you see a folder called Favorites. Copy this to your backup location.

Backing up Your Firefox Bookmarks

Your Firefox bookmarks can be backed up by exporting a bookmark file from within Firefox. Use the following instructions to back up your bookmarks:

    Launch Firefox.
    Click the Bookmarks menu at top, and then select Organize Bookmarks.
    The Library (or Bookmarks Manager, in version 2) window appears.
    Click the Import and Backup button, and then select Backup.
    Save the backup file in your backup location.

Restoring Browser Settings

Use these procedures to restore backed up browser data.

Restoring Your Internet Explorer Favorites

To restore your Internet Explorer favorites:

    Click the Start menu in the lower left, and then select My Computer.
    The My Computer window opens, and lists all of your available drives.
    Double-click your system drive (the drive that contains your windows installation). This is usually the C: drive.
    Double-click the Documents and Settings folder.
    Double-click the folder with the same name as your username. This is your profile folder.
    Copy your backed up Favorites folder to your profile folder.

You are prompted whether you want to replace the existing Favorites folder. Click the Yes to all button.

Restoring Your Firefox Bookmarks

To restore your Firefox bookmarks:

Launch Firefox.
Click the Bookmarks menu, and then select Organize Bookmarks.
The Library (or Bookmark Manager, in version 2) window appears.
Click the Import and Backup button, click Restore, and then click Choose File.
Navigate to your Firefox backup file, which should have the suffix .json. Then, double-click the backup file.
Your Firefox bookmarks are restored.

Backing Up Locally

The term local back up refers to copying your important data to devices directly connected to your computer. Local back ups generally are the preferred method to back up large amounts of data, since they usually use connections with faster data transfer rates. In addition to higher speeds, they also do not require your computer to be on a high-speed data network, which most often is necessary for remote back ups.

There are many different kinds of devices that can be used for local back ups, but the most popular devices currently are external USB hard drives (or flash drives for smaller amounts of data), and CD/DVD drives.
Backing Up to an External Hard Drive

External hard drives are probably the easiest and fastest devices used to back up large volumes of personal data.

To back up your data to an external hard drive, connect the USB cable from your hard drive to your computer, and connect the external power supply to your external hard drive if it has one. Your computer should find your hard drive automatically, and install necessary drivers. After it is connected, your hard drive should appear either as an icon on your desktop (for Macs), or as a drive in the My Computer window (for PCs).

To restore files that were backed up to an external hard drive, copy the backed up files to their original location on your system drive, usually the C: drive.
Backing Up to CD or DVD

Backing up data to CD or DVD also can be a good way to back up data locally, and often is cheaper than backing up to external hard drives.

One thing to keep in mind when backing up data to CD or DVD is that there is a much smaller storage capacity on these media discs than there is on external hard drives, with about 700 MB for CDs and about 4 GB for DVDs. Because of this limit in capacity, it is important to take a look at the size of the files you are backing up,

and group them in appropriately sized sets before copying them to CD or DVD.

To restore files that were backed up to CD or DVD, simply copy the backed up files to their original location on your system drive (usually the C: drive).

Backing Up Remotely

Remotely backing up your data involves copying your important files to a location that is not attached directly to your computer. Generally, this means copying your data over a network to a location on a file server. This can be useful in cases of fire, flood, or other disastrous situations that not only could cause your computer components to fail, but also could cause damage to hardware near your computer.

Another advantage to remote back ups is that often the file servers to which you back up are themselves backed up regularly. This has advantages such as backup redundancy, and creates back ups of multiple revisions of your files.

We provide network file space that CGIS affiliates can use to back up their data remotely. For more information, please refer to Accessing Remotely Using VPN.

Backup Up Your Files

One of the most important parts of keeping good backups is figuring out what you should back up. Although this is something that varies from person to person, important files most often include office documents, favorites or bookmarks, pictures, and email. Use the guides below, and refer to Archiving, Exporting, & Importing or Backing Up and Restoring, and Backing Up Browser Settings for instructions on backing up these files.
PC File Locations

In Windows, most of your important files are located in your profile folder. Use the following steps to locate these files:

    Click the Start menu in the lower left, and then select My Computer.
    The My Computer window opens, which lists all of your available drives.
    Double-click your system drive (the drive that contains your windows installation). This is usually the C: drive.
    Double-click the Documents and Settings folder.
    In the Documents and Settings folder, double-click the folder with the same name as your username.
    This is your profile folder.
    In your profile folder, you see a Desktop folder and a My Documents folder. These are the most common locations for your office documents and picture files.
    Copy both of these to your backup location.

Mac File Locations

In Mac OS X, most of your important files are located in your home directory. Use the foloowing steps to locate these files:

Double-click your system drive, usually in the upper-right hand corner of your desktop.
A finder window opens.
Click the Home icon at the top to open your home directory.
In your home directory, you see Documents, Desktop and Pictures folders. Copy these to your backup locations. It also is useful to copy other folders in the home directory, such as Music, Movies or Library. If you are unsure of what files to back up, Apple recommends backing up your entire home directory.

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Restoring Files

To restore files that were backed up to an external hard drive, CD, or DVD, copy the files from the back up location to your system drive, usually the C: drive.

To restore files that were backed up to network drives from CGIS or RCE accounts, contact us for assistance. Please see Back Up Policies for more information.