Advice from Middle Aged Female Tech
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I have been in the industry with my own company since 1994. The entire time I have worked in this field there have been very few times any two techs ever agree completely. The advice I give here is based on my experiences, testing, and what I know works.

Today's Subject: **Backup? – Might want to try cloning software**

I am often asked, "I have to install all my programs back? What if I lost the software or lost the keys to them?"

When hard drives go bad or get infected with virus or an un-cleanable rootkit. You might consider cloning your hard drive

With software today this is easy work, and well worth it. In some cases as little as 1 hour you are back to the EXACT spot when you made the clone.

What is needed:

1. Software (list of those later – all free of course)
2. A hard drive same size or larger of the one that is in your computer.
3. Hard drive to usb kit or hard drive enclosure (external hard drive works also)

The reason you need these things is:

1. You have to transfer the information from your hard drive to another hard drive to "clone" and have a safe backup.
2. The software to make the backup complete with Operating System and programs.
   a. Yes, the cloned Operating System will be as valid as the one on the original drive
   b. You insert the software (99% of the time on a CD, can be from a usb drive) and boot the computer with it, Operating System software can NOT be cloned while it is operating.
3. It's a better idea to use a kit instead of an external hard drive, that case you just replace the cloned hard drive into your computer and boom, you are back up and running, and nothing else you have to do.

Downside you ask?

1. ONLY works for the computer that the drive was originally in. This is because the drivers, and the make and model is set for the Operating System for that computer - that is how Microsoft Licenses the Operating systems.
2. You have to remember to do this BEFORE you have an hard drive failure, and at least after every program install, or you will have to install the programs and lost email when you replace the drive with the cloned one.

You can do both, have a great clone done and stored away, and use a standard backup for email, folders, and files. *(Easiest and doable solution)*

There are several different cloning software out there. I am very fond of HDClone (all these are free). Here are more:

1. HDClone http://www.miray.de/products/sat.hdclone.html
2. DriveImage XML http://www.runtime.org/driveimage-xml.htm
3. Macrium http://www.macrium.com/reflectfree.aspx
4. ShadowCopy http://www.runtime.org/shadow-copy.htm
5. EaseUs Disk Copy http://www.easeus.com/disk-copy/

Remember this is what I recommend for those who "CAN NOT" be down (without their computer) for any period of time. I realize this sounds complicated, with the hardware kit, booting to cd, and afraid you won't do it right, but it is MUCH simpler than it looks on paper.

Have fun with it, have a cloning party with all your friends and their computers and/or laptops, while the software is doing the cloning, you all could play cards, have a BBQ, and a wine tasting party! Just a suggestion…. Again, if you have ANY questions, don't hesitate to email me! I answer all questions to the best of my ability.

I am always about saving money and not spending it on things you don't need to

Remember ANY questions, Email me at: Montgomery@Hollyecho.com.