

How to use Windows Vista to Backup Computer Files

Use Windows to back up your computer

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When you make backup copies of your information, a simple copy and paste will do the trick. Or if you use Windows Vista or Windows XP, a backup tool is just a few clicks away.

After you've decided **what files to back up** and **where to store your backups**, you can follow the steps in this article to make backup copies of your important information.

Windows Vista: Backup and Restore Center

Depending on the version of Windows Vista you have, there are two approaches you can take to back up files: Automatic Backup, which backs up just your files and data; or Complete PC Backup, which backs up everything on your computer, including the operating system and applications. You can choose the method in the **Backup and Restore Center**.

To access the Backup and Restore Center:

1. Click **Start**, and point to **Control Panel**.
2. Click **System and Maintenance** and then click **Back up your computer**.



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Automatic Backup

Automatic File Backup helps to keep your files safe and is available in almost all editions of Windows Vista (it is not included in Starter and has only basic functionality in Home Basic edition). Windows Complete PC Backup is available in

the Business, Ultimate, and Enterprise editions, and performs a complete, image-based backup of the entire computer.



Help protect your files and your work by backing them up.

Scheduled and Network Backup

Two particularly useful Automatic Backup features are the ability to do a scheduled backup and the ability to back up your files to a network location. (These features are available in all editions of Windows Vista except for Home Basic.)

To help make protecting your files as convenient as possible, with Automatic Backup, you can back up your files to an external hard drive, secondary hard drive, writable CD or DVD, or to a network location. Best of all, Windows Vista will automatically make backups of your data on the schedule that you set, so you never have to worry about forgetting to back up your work.



File Backup Scheduling Wizard lets you schedule when backups occur.

Previously backed-up versions of files use only a bare minimum of disk space. If only a small part of a file changes (such as one slide in a presentation), only that portion gets tracked and saved.

Of course, backup is only as useful as the process you use to recover your work, and Windows Vista makes this a cinch. A recovery wizard helps you select the files or folders you want to restore and prompts you for the backup storage medium you used. Then it restores your files.

By the way, if you've accidentally written over a file, say saving an older version of a report you're writing over the top of

a newer version, then the **Shadow Copy** feature can help you recover a prior version of that file.

Windows Complete PC Backup and Restore

Available in Windows Vista Business, Ultimate, and Enterprise editions, Windows Complete PC Backup and Restore is a comprehensive, image-based backup tool that will help you out of a tight spot if you need to recover your entire system.

While file restore is useful in cases of file loss and data corruption, Windows Complete PC Backup and Restore is most useful for disaster recovery when your PC malfunctions. This feature helps you create complete PC backups, and then in the event of a serious system issue or data loss, Windows Complete PC Backup and Restore can restore your entire PC environment, including the operating system, installed programs, user settings, and data files.

You can restore your PC back to its original state or onto another PC. Windows Complete PC Backup and Restore can be initiated from within Windows Vista or from the Windows Vista installation CD, if the PC is not able to start up normally from the hard disk.

System Restore

System Restore enables you to restore your computer to an earlier state without losing data. This is ideal if your computer is not operating well because of a configuration change, a problem with an application, or the introduction of viruses or other unwanted software. By restoring to an earlier point—a point before your computer began displaying problems—you may be able to easily resolve the problems. (Applications that have been installed since the restore point will be removed.) You don't have to worry about taking periodic system snapshots—System Restore automatically creates easily identifiable restore points. You can also manually create restore points at any time.