

Radio Days – 2009-08-29

Tip of the Week – Storing Information

There are many small pieces of information which people need to store. Just think of a few: your email address, your email password, the butcher's phone number, your aunt's birthday. These pieces of information are all small, all important and all too often forgotten or lost. Today I will tell you about three simple free programs to store all these various pieces of information.

For dates (birthdays, anniversaries, etc) my favourite program is Sunbird. This program from Mozilla (the makers of Firefox), is free and it allows you to store date-related information. It is also easy to use. I set it to start automatically when my computer starts so that I can see what is coming up.

For small pieces of easily-forgotten information my two favourite programs are Treepad Lite and NoteTab. Both programs are free to download and allow you to store small snippets of free-form text. Both programs are easy to use, and I suggest that you pick one and use it to store all those easy-to-lose snippets of information. These last two programs both have their strengths so I suggest that you download them both and see which one works best for you.

Has My Backup Worked?

There is nothing as infuriating as having a backup only to find that the data which you need is not there or cannot be read. There are several things that you need to check for each backup:

Has the backup been done?

Skipped backups are, in my experience, the greatest cause of problems

Are all the files you need in the backup?

You must check to see if each needed file is present in your backup. Files which are easy to forget are your emails, your address book or contacts and your templates for programs like Word and Excel.

Can you read each file in the backup?

My favourite program for checking each file is CDCheck: it reads each file on your backup and checks that there have been no errors in writing the backup. This is especially important for optical media: CDs and DVDs. If you are still using floppy discs then it is, if anything, even more important for you to check that your backups can be read back. I recommend that you use USB thumb drives and USB external discs for your backups.

Is the backup medium safe and restorable?

Your backup must be kept in a safe place: not beside the computer. Too many backups get taken because they are next to the computer and taken at the same time.

Websites

NoteTab	www.notetab.com
Treepad Lite	www.treepad.com
Sunbird	www.mozilla.org/projects/calendar/sunbird
CDCheck	www.kvipu.com/cdcheck