

Radio Days – 2010-03-06

Tip of the Week – Backup, Backup, Backup

There are two kinds of people: those who have just lost data in a computer crash and those who are about to lose data in a computer crash. Which kind are you?

There is only one reliable way to get your data back after a crash: recover from a reliable backup copy. If you do not have a backup copy you will (please note that word WILL) lose at least some of your data. Over the years I have recommended a number of programs for a number of tasks, including backup. My current favourite backup program is called SyncBack. There are three versions: Free, SE and Pro and they range in price from nothing to \$ US 50. The free version will do the vast majority of the things which home users need, so this is the one which I recommend for my clients.

Download and install the version of your choice then create the profile that fits your needs. The next step is to actually run your backup program and this is where too many people fall down: they think that it will take far too long to do a backup. On my computer, with my data (which is far more than most people have), a first backup takes about 45 minutes. After that, because the program only copies changed data files, a backup will take much less than ten minutes if I have not done one for a week or two.

The final step is to check that your backup includes all (repeat ALL) the data that you want and need. This includes your emails and your address book, all the photos which you have stored in unlikely places, such as your desktop. Having checked, please check again as the most common error is to miss some really important files.

Keep Your Data Clean

The obvious question for this topic is *What is clean data?* The answer is *Accurate data with nothing missing and nothing added.* And why is this important? There are so many answers to this question, but one which will appeal to many parents is when a school has to contact a child's parents in a hurry only to find that the phone numbers needed for both parents are missing or wrong. How would you feel if this happened to you?

I recently spoke to a woman who was the head of an organisation funded by the state government. She followed the rules for changing the name of the contact person because she was getting lots of letters and emails for the person three before her as supervisor of the organisation. Despite sending a number of faxes, letters and emails (all in the format which the department said that it needed) it took some months before her details were corrected on their databases. If schools were as sloppy as these departments you can imagine the outcry in the press, but there was no outcry in this instance.

In business, which has at least to appear to be on top of its game, it is perhaps even more important that its data is correct. It is also important for families: do you really want your Christmas Cards to be returned by the post office because your address list is wrong? Do you want to lose touch with family or friends because you do not know their new phone number?

These are the sorts of reasons why clean data is important. Is your data up to scratch?

Websites

SyncBack www.2brightsparks.com