

Radio Days – 2011-03-12

Tip of the Week – Updating Windows

I first met this problem when my computer would not complete its update of Windows. Then a client rang to say that his computer would not shut down to complete the update to Windows. The solution, as is so often the case, is something both easy and unexpected.

My client had turned his computer off at the wall. He had turned his computer off in every other way that he could imagine yet it still would not complete the update to Windows. I suggested that he started his computer normally then that he pressed the **Start** button on his system unit until his computer stopped, then press it again to restart his computer. This worked, and his copy of Windows completed its update.

I have no idea just why this way of turning a computer off is different from any other way of turning a computer off, but it worked whereas his way (and mine) had not. Wondrous are the workings of a wheelbarrow, to quote a master from my school days.

Ensure That Your Backup Works

A new client rang to say that his grandson had started, but not completed, a MYOB year-end roll-over. The grandson is five years old and, apparently, teaches his primary school teacher how to use computers. He also drives his grandfather (who does the books for the family business) to distraction.

When MYOB starts writing to its data file it sets a marker in that file. When MYOB stops writing to its data file it resets that marker. The next time it opens its data file it checks to see if the marker is set. If the marker is set then the data file is unusable because there is no way to determine if the file is in a consistent state. This is what had happened as a result of the aborted year-end procedure.

MYOB would not continue with this data file after his intervention so there was no option but to find a copy of the data file from before the grandson's escapade. This was not easy. I checked all through the computer for another copy of the data file with no success. We were reduced to going to their accountant's office to retrieve the USB stick which had recently been used to take their data file there. This, fortunately, contained a sufficiently recent copy of the data file which we needed (and was an off-site backup of sorts) but the closeness of the potential problem was not lost on either the grandfather or me.

After the work needed was all done I setup a good backup routine for them using my favourite backup program, SyncBack. This program is easy to use, once setup correctly but, like all backup programs, can be a pain to setup so that it copies the right files to the right location.

There are two lessons to be learned from this episode. The first is to keep grandchildren away from a business computer in the home and the second is to ensure that you have a working backup of your computer's accounting program's data: you never know when you will need it! You cannot always rely on your accountant having a current copy of your computer accounting program's data file.

How long would it take you to re-enter a year's worth of business data? Could you do it? If the answer to either is one that you do not like then you owe it to your business to ensure that you have working backup strategy.

Further Information

SyncBack backup www.2brightsparks.com