Special Interest Group of WNCC
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How many of you backup your C/ Drive and how often and onto what?

How many of you have had a hard drive crash and lost everything or recovered from it via backup?

How many of you have faced a windows screen (BSD) or nothing at all that made it clear restarting will not fix it and Windows will not load or boot?

Backup on the Cheap and Reliable

Windows 7 has a clunky back up routine, but it is free and it works. It is contemplated for network storage or some external storage source. Most people only have one drive (C) including all laptops.

What I am going to talk about is using the Windows backup, but putting it on a new partition of the C Drive which I call Q drive or Backup. Note: most C-drives already have a small second partition used by the manufacturer to return the computer to its original shipping state.

As most know, one of the first steps in trouble shooting (when windows will boot) is to run System Restore and return the Windows (not data) to an earlier point in time. If Windows will not boot, this option is not available.

There are seven steps to my plan and it depends on having a C drive with at least 500 Gigs. Most C-drives I have seen use less than half unless they are full of pictures or movies--then back up to an external hard drive.

1. Start by Cleaning up your c drive. Use Disk Cleanup under Properties of your C-drive. When it finishes, click Clean up System Files and it will run again and show you More Options. Hit Clean up on the the second Option. You may be asked if you really want to delete--say yes. Note how much more unused space you have.

2. Now you want to make a system Repair Disc. Go to Control Panel and select "Back up and Restore". Select "Create a System Repair Disc. This will generate a CD which you can boot to or load without needing the defective Windows that won't load. Note, this can be created on any working Windows 7 machine.

3. Repartition C drive by Shrinking the C drive 100GB and creating a new 100 GB partition called Q Back up. Control Panel, Administrative Tools. Select Computer Management and then Disc Management. Select C-Drive and then Shrink Volume. It will give you how much space is being used and the option to decide how much to shrink. Shrink it 100000 (100 GB). It will give 100 GB Unallocated. Right Click and elect New Simple Volume. Follow the Wizard, including Drive Letter (Q) and Volume Label (backup).

Now you have a new partition on your C Drive that Windows will periodically back up to.

4 Schedule Backup. Go to Control Panel and Back up and Restore. Turn on Settings. Default is weekly on Sunday. I changed mine to monthly on the 15th. Your choice. Also you will need to tell it where to save it--it will complain, but do it anyhow.

5 Disaster!! Windows will not load or boot. Now we must boot from our CD. Load CD and boot into BIOS (with Dell, it is repeatedly hitting the F12 key while the Dell Logo is showing). You will then have a choice of booting from the CD drive and hitting any key to confirm. After System Recovery Options loads, you will have 5 Options, three of which are useful. First try Startup Repair. If it does not work, reboot the CD and try System Restore (works just as if your were is Windows.) If it does not work, reboot the CD and try System Image Recovery which will load the selected Back up.