

## Rich's Ramblings for March 2007 ©<sub>2007</sub>

A few weeks ago I bit the bullet and ordered a new Toshiba A130 Laptop with Microsoft's Vista Ultimate. The Laptop came with an Intel Dual core T7600 processor at 2.33 GHz, 2 Gigabytes of RAM, a NVIDIA GeForce 7600 w/258 Megabyte video and a 160 gigabyte SATA hard disk. All the bells and whistles... <G>

Once I removed all the Junk that most of the computer vendors place on their new machines, I proceeded to install the programs that I use and love. There were probably over 1+ Gigabytes of trial/demo software pre-installed. Removing some of it requires several reboots but eventually I had the computer configured the way I wanted it. Of course some of the programs that I regularly use required upgrades or at least updates. A few dollars later, My WS-FTP and Nero 7 were ready to go. I installed AVG Anti-Virus version 7.5 Professional and it works great. Or at least I have a warm Fuzzy about it. Sunbelt software's CounterSpy came out with a newer version to become Vista compatible and It installed without problems and it seems much faster than before.

I really like Vista's built-in ability to be able to repartition/resize your hard disk on the fly. I was able to resize the C drive from 160 Gigabytes down to 100 Gigabytes with the extra 60 Gigabytes ending up as my E drive. All of this on the fly, I could increase or decrease the C drive as I wished. Piece of cake that works. Of course you have to format the new drive letter which is pretty easy...

I hear people complaining about Vista and the Security pop-ups that remind you that you are trying to do something that could screw up your computer. Good. I appreciate that the Operating System is finally getting a bit of conscience and asking me if I am sure that I want to do something that is out of the ordinary. There are by-pass methods but after a while, you get to understand what these prompts are for. My recommendation is to not jump to any of the fast fixes.

One of my worries with a laptop is having a good backup procedure for disaster recovery. Well, thank you Microsoft for including image backup capability in Vista. (There are also incremental and file backup capabilities, but I am going to discuss the image feature only)

Vista image restore:

Having a spare USB external hard disk with enough free space is a prerequisite for creating and restoring a Vista system image. You do have the option of creating DVD disks but that would entail a hell of a lot of disk swapping based on the size of your hard disk. Mine takes up over 50+ gigabytes of data on the C and E drives. This would require over 10 DVD's to back up. Too many.... <G>

Under Accessories, System tools Backup status and configuration, I ran the system tool for complete PC image backup. I did this to my external drive and made sure that I

included the C and E disk drives in the selection criteria. This is very important if you have more than one drive or partition. The image restore is an all or nothing option, Individual file or directory backup and restore is another option in the system backup/restore folder. But an image restore is a complete 100% restore. You can not restore individual files or directories from an image backup. You do have the option to restore your system drive or the whole hard disk. (Vista Business and Ultimate ONLY)

So here we go.

Let's say your computers hard disk completely goes south? No problem, all you have to do is go to the computer store and buy another hard disk of the same or larger size. I installed a new 160 Gigabyte Toshiba hard disk into the laptop. I booted the Vista system install/upgrade disk which has an option to repair a system. This is the second screen after you select English as your language.

Going onto the screen where you can select the system recovery option. Selecting the option to do a Windows Complete PC Restore. Make sure that the external USB drive was hooked up when I turned on the system Of course you have to make sure that your computer is setup to be able to boot from your DVD cdrom drive.

It then searched my system peripherals for an external backup. It found the USB external drive and allowed me to select the complete backup. I then selected the option to Format and repartition the hard disks. I also made sure that I selected to restore my system disk and the data drive E. You have to confirm that this is what you want.

It only took about ½ hour and my computer looked exactly like when I had backed it up a few minutes earlier. I really feel that this is a boon to those of us who beta test programs that sometimes tend to really mess up your system. I call it a warm fuzzy.

Rich Schinnell has been writing his Rich's Ramblings for well over 20 years and keeps up to date with the latest toys and gadgets. Rich is retired from the USN and Vitro Corporation. He volunteers at the Centers for the Handicapped helping them with their computer networks. He has several small business clients who depend on him to keep their network and workstations working properly. He was selected as a Maryland Senior Citizen Hall of Fame honoree in 2006. He volunteered at Capital PC User Group for well over 20 years.. Serving as President and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President for too many years. Permission to reprint granted to Non-Profit PC User Groups, all others require permission.

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