

Backups are great.

I experiment and many times I end up in more troubles with my computer, mainly I feel good because I know that I can always get back to where it works, easily. I have been a evangelist for Backing up ever since I started my first computers backup onto 5 ¼" 160Kbyte floppy disks. Now-a-days with the cheap USB/E-Sata external hard disks, it is even easier. I have a couple laying around where I can save an image of my computer's C drive in about 10 minutes or so.

Before I purchased my new Toshiba 64bit Vista Home Premium laptop, I had a Toshiba Vista Ultimate laptop where Vista Business and Ultimate include a backup image function in the system backup folder. I still don't understand why Microsoft doesn't include that in all Vista versions. But, anyway, my old old friend Gene Barlow of User Group Relations (<http://ugr.com>) has been selling Acronis backup software for several years. (He sells it at a great price to User Group Members), I like to support friends so I had purchased one of his special deals on Acronis True Image Home 2009. I had installed it on my new toshiba shortly after I had decrapified¹ it and created the recovery DVD's.

I haven't tried to install Windows 7(RTM) on this new computer but I thought that I would like to have the Ultimate version of Vista on it before upgrading to Windows 7 Ultimate. So credit card in hand, I logged into the Microsoft update site and ordered the upgrade from Windows Vista Home Premium to Ultimate. Not cheap but after all nothing to do with computers is cheap, now-a-days. It arrived and I had created an image a few days earlier of my 64Gigabyte SSD (Solid State Drive) on one of my external USB hard disks. Because the SSD C drive is so small, I had installed most of my programs and data on my 80Gigabyte SSD D drive. The computer came with a 64gig C drive and a 320Gig regular hard disk. I kinda like the speed of SSD drives so I had replaced the 2nd Hard disk with a 80Gig Intel SSD drive. It is really quiet and fast.

BTW (By The Way), I am mad at Toshiba for not telling me where physically on the computer the C drive is located. It must be buried under the keyboard somewhere. When I find out, I will replace it with a larger C drive . But, I digress.

I thought I was all ready to upgrade to Vista Ultimate when my postman brought the DVD from Microsoft. I was ready but evidently something is amiss. I inserted the DVD and away it ran, gave me options to select the standard locality settings and then I had to enter my new validation codes. It ran and kachunked (It made a lot of noise when it ran) away for almost an hour and then right in the middle of the screen an error message pop'd up. Sorry Charlie but it had a serious error and could not complete. So I thought, well I guess this is it for now. But, nothing I did would allow me to backout the changes or restart to backout the upgrade. Nothing, believe me, I tried and tried everything that I could but no soap, Repair or no options. So, ain't it wonderful to have image backups?

I went and retrieved my boot DVD that Acronis was nice enough to prompt me to create when I created my first hard disk image. Searching thru my external drives, I finally found my latest image of the C drive and 15 minutes later, I was back in business. All is well again.

But there is a lesson here, I give you three guess what it is. (The first two don't count)

BACKUP! BACKUP! BACKUP!

I researched on the Microsoft and Toshiba sites and there are lots of other people with similar problems when upgrading the vista home premium to vista ultimate. I e-mailed Microsoft about their disk and they have another one on the way, More on that later..

New Subject:

As most techi computer people, I end up being the Tech Support for my friends. So, when friends wanted to buy their grandsons a new laptop, Who do you think they came to for a recommendation? Best Buy had a flyer with a pretty good Toshiba laptop for around \$500 that looked like it was just what they needed.

After the initial startup, the first thing I accomplished was to create the recovery disks (That takes 4 DVD disks), This is a very important step as you need to be able to restore to the original configuration when all hell breaks loose. <G> (that is an old time big grin) And believe me, it will happen and you had better be ready. The system manufacturers don't stress this feature as much as they should. I have done it on at least 5 different computers for friends and I had to use it twice. It takes a while but it is a real warm fuzzy.

The second thing that many new computer owners forget is that the "trial" anti-virus software installed has to be paid and updated. Otherwise it is not worth the space on the disk when you end up getting a virus or trojan. I have seen users with three year old versions of Symantec Anti-Virus installed and 2 years out of date.

Also, make sure that you connect to Microsoft update to download all the latest security fixes for your computer or you could regret it. I pity people using Dial-Up as there was over 262 Megabytes of updates to the Best Buy E-Machine that another friend had bought for their son. While I am talking about Microsoft update, they sure are foolish for installing the Microsoft Internet Explorer version 8 via a Pop-Under during the installation of updates. You can sit there waiting and not see that there is a underneath the update window another window that is asking you to accept whether you want IE 8 to be installed and to select Agree.. I am wise to this "feature", but an unskilled computer user would sit there for hours waiting for the updates to complete the install. Dumb move on Microsoft's part.

¹ Decrapify=Remove all the trial software and extraneous junk installed by the manufacturer on most new machines in the hopes that you will pay the price and they could receive a kick-back payment.

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