

Ok, I guess that someone never listened to me about the three most necessary words in computers.

### **BACKUP! BACKUP! BACKUP!**

I heard where a cell phone company had a problem with subscriber's data and the servers where their data was assumed to be backed up. But they will learn as everyone will, that backups are very important and unless you like to live dangerously, get it done NOW. (Get ready for Cloud Computing)

#### **Subject 1:**

I am happy that Microsoft in their infinite wisdom has decided to include image backups to most of their versions of Windows 7. Great decision and hopefully now you all who are upgrading to Windows 7 will remember this option. The only complaint that I have is that it only creates an image on the external/internal drive in the drives root directory, you can't put each image in a sub directory so that you can keep several images of your hard disks and restore which one you wish.

I usually make an image as soon as I have the system installed and working. Then as I add programs, I make a new image before installing anything major. And each time before I install any programs, I create a new image. This way, I can recover to my good image anytime that the new install put me in never-never land. And while you're at it, create a recovery disk so that it will boot your computer and allow you can restore the image.

I recommend purchasing one of those external USB or ESATA hard disks so that you can save your system image on this drive. In order to get around Microsoft's image backup shortcomings, I suggest that you partition the external drive into several smaller partitions, as long as there is enough room on them to store a complete image in a drive letter. (Remember that they must be formatted as NTFS to store images.) You will thank me, eventually when your computer craps out after you install some weird program and it crashes your system.

I have been using Windows 7 ever since the early Beta days and have never had a BSOD (Blue Screen of Death) {Knock on wood}. Of course I never download and install programs that are not from a good reliable source. Remember, you don't get nothing for nothing. No free lunches (Many of the problems that users run into can be attributed to the downloading and installing of FREE stuff or illegal copies of copyrighted programs)

#### **Subject 2:**

I have a pet peeve regarding those "Mail in Rebates", I had a \$15 rebate on something I bought and they offered me a debit Visa card instead of a check. What a mistake, It does work but they charge you \$2 to get it instead of a check. You have to log onto their web site and give them all kinds of information to figure out how much is left on the card. Don't do it. More aggravation than it is worth.

## **My recommendations on whether to upgrade to Windows 7:**

If you buy a new computer, **Yes:** get the latest version of Windows. If you have a computer over 3 years old and are running Windows XP, **No:** it is not worth the aggravation and it will not do much for you. Windows XP is a pretty good stable operating system after all the service packs are installed and it is working, Don't mess with success and what works.

I bought a new Toshiba 64 bit Intel Centrino laptop with 4 gigs of RAM (Random Access Memory), an ATI 1 Gigabyte graphics card and a 64 gigabyte Solid State C drive. Really fast and runs Windows 7 Ultimate quite speedily. I like the built in Webcam, microphone as well as its other features like a good readable screen and full size keyboard with number pad.

I installed the FREE Virtual PC from Microsoft and downloaded the FREE Windows XP Virtual Hard Disk (VHD) that will run those programs that you know and love but only work on Windows XP and not Vista or Windows 7. It just works great and you can create other VHD's for other operating systems as I have with DOS 6.22, Windows 3.11, Windows 98, Windows 2000 and Ubuntu Linux. You need lots of hard disk space and memory. (VPC is only available on the Professional Windows 7 and above)

But, I would never buy a new computer with less than 4 gigabytes of memory now-a-days. The price of memory is so cheap and really improves the performance of your computer, You also should go for the 64 bit version of Windows 7 so that you can use more memory than the 32 bit versions can address. There is a 3 gigabyte limitation with the 32bit operating systems where the limit for the 64bit versions is a lot higher.

I do not recommend that you purchase the Ultimate version of Windows 7 unless you need the bit locker drive encryption software. The Windows 7 Professional is more than enough and has all the real Windows 7 goodies included.

### **Subject 3:**

Those icons on your desktop when running Vista and Windows7 named desktop.ini. after updating and adding programs, many times the desktop has at least 1 but sometimes 2 of these icons on the desktop. Weird, I just delete them but I have never figured out why they end up on the desktop. (I just threw this in here to see if you're reading this post)

### **Subject 4:**

I have been installing Windows Server 2008 for a client and was I surprised on how easy the install and configuration went. Install on a clean server took all of 15 minutes to install and get to the desktop from a cold iron state. After downloading 285 Megabytes of updates, it was up and running in less than one hour. It is really an improvement over installing the much older server operating system Windows NT4 or Windows 2000.

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