



Series 6 – How Do I Backup my Important Files?

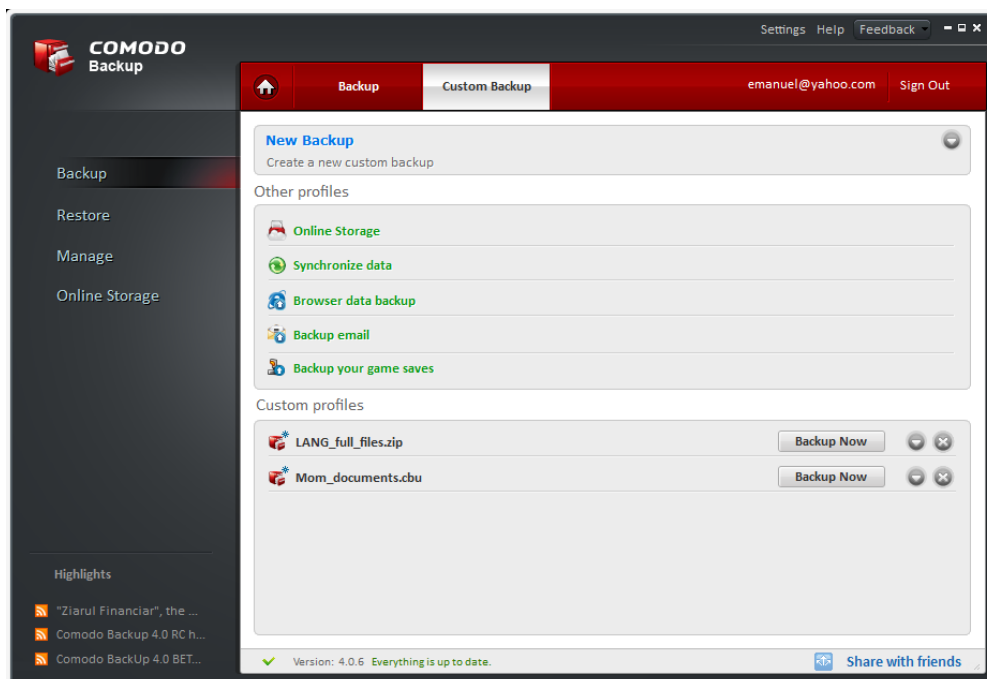
Welcome back to a series of computer related articles brought to you by VistaSol Computer Solutions. Over the coming weeks we're going to be featuring articles based on the theme of 'How do I . . .?'

This week we're continuing with our new series of articles on the subject of 'How Do I Backup my Data', and to this end we're offering some practical advice on choosing suitable backup software.

Part 3 – Backup Software

Over the last couple of weeks we've been discussing the why's and wherefore's of backing up your data. If all of that seemed a little daunting, don't worry there are plenty of software packages around which will automate these activities for you – and best of all, some of them are free. This week I'm making some suggestions on which backup software you may wish to try out. For the purposes of this article I'll stick to the free ones!

1. Comodo Backup



Comodo Backup is a powerful and easy to use desktop application aimed at helping home and business users to protect their valuable data against damage or loss.

The application boasts a wealth of innovative and advanced features while the simple, task orientated interface, means that even novice users can run their first backup job in a matter of minutes. Each user also receives 5 GB of secure online storage space free.

Main Features

- Quickly create backups of your priceless data to a wide range of storage media
- Smart Profiles auto-detect and group document types so you can back them up with one click
- Step-by-step wizards allow you to create your first backup within minutes
- Junk file scanner eliminates duplicates and temp files so you don't waste time and disk space
- Free 5 GB online storage space for each user

Before you can download this program you'll need to register with them – this is just in case you want to take advantage of their free 5GB of online storage.

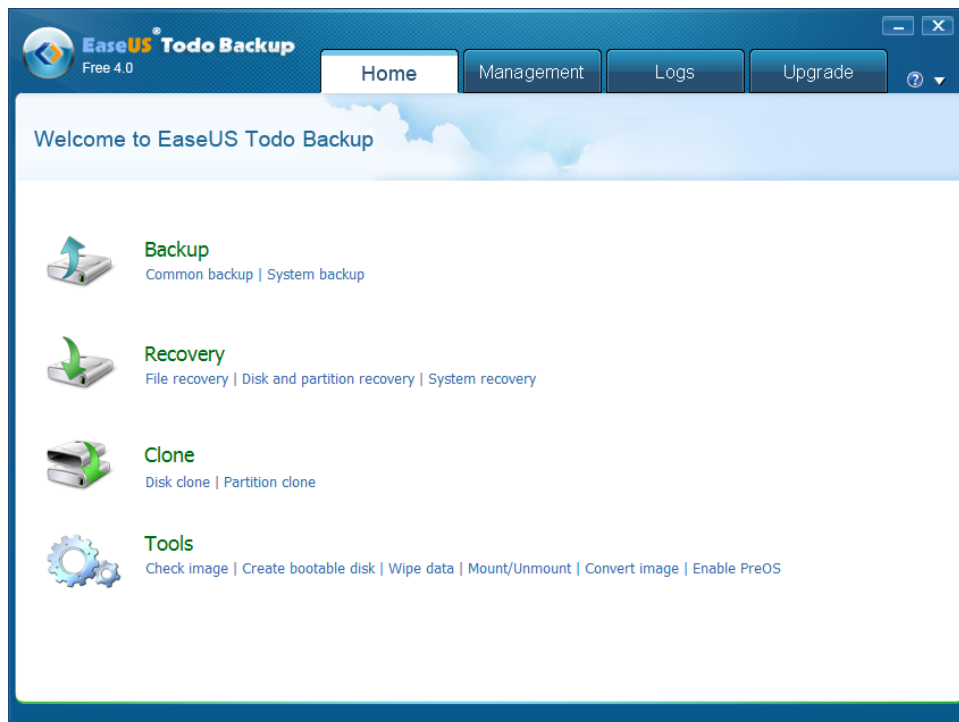
You can find out more information about this program, and download it here:

<http://backup.comodo.com/>

This link will take you to the on-line user manual:

http://backup.comodo.com/comodo_backup_user_manual.pdf

2. EaseUS Todo Backup



The great news about EASEUS Todo Backup Free is that it's actually a rebadged version of Todo Backup Home, which was previously sold as a commercial product. It's capable of backing up everything from selected files and file types to entire partitions or drives (there's also cloning tools included for upgrading from one drive to another), with scheduling options and support for incremental updates so backups are kept as small and efficient as possible.

There are lots of recovery and restore options too, such as being able to browse disk and partition backups for individual files and folders, plus an option for creating a WinPE-based recovery disc that allows you to use the program outside of Windows, making it perfect for drive upgrades or recovering crashed systems.

Main Features

System Backup and Recovery

One-click system backup. Back up the entire system state including the operating system and installed applications on-the-fly without interrupting your work to get the system up in time after crash.

File and Folder Backup

Back up specified files, network shared files, files in use, folders or file types in case of virus attack, hard disk failure, or deletion by accident, etc.

Incremental/Differential Backup

Provide alternatives to perform full backups each time by offering incremental backup and differential backup to capture changes with saving time & disk space.

Backup Schedule

To run backups automatically, at a predefined time. By scheduling a backup task, your system and important data can be backed up now, daily, weekly, monthly.

You can find this free backup program here:

<http://www.easeus.com/disk-copy/>

This link will take you to the on-line user manual:

http://www.todo-backup.com/download/docs/User_Guide.pdf

3. Paragon Backup & Recovery 2012 Free



In our experience free backup tools often have annoying restrictions, especially when they come from commercial companies who really want you to upgrade. Paragon Backup and Recovery 2012 Free is an exception, though: the program comes packed with functions and features, more than enough to satisfy the demands of many PC users.

After choosing the drive you'd like to back up, and the archive destination (which can be a local or network drive, CDs, DVDs or Blu-ray discs), for instance, there are all kinds of options on offer. So you can choose to exclude particular file types from the

backup in a click or two; set your archive compression level; password-protect your backup for security; set up CD/ DVD/ Blu-ray disc burning options, and more.

A comprehensive scheduler means your backup job can be automatically run at system start-up, logon, daily, weekly or monthly.

Switch to the Advanced Mode and you'll find even more options, including the ability to create differential backups of your drive, as well as a useful set of partitioning tools (there's everything you need to create, format, move, resize, hide, unhide, delete and otherwise organise your partitions).

Paragon Backup & Recovery 2012 Free requires registering before you'll be able to receive the product key and serial number necessary to get it running. Nothing too onerous: just click the Registration button during installation and enter your name, country and email address, and you'll be sent the details via email within a few moments.

You can download this backup program here:

<http://www.paragon-software.com/home/br-free/>

Recomendations

I've listed these backup products in what we consider to be our preferred order of selection; however individuals will inevitably have different requirements and expectations. With this in mind, our recommendation would be to perhaps try all of them – especially as they are all free!