

# THIS & THAT

by  
Bob Lunaburg



Is there ever a time when you need to get your backup? I know of a time when you should. About once a month, or more often if you want, depending on how much you use your computer, you should backup your important files.

“Oh,” you say, “and what do you mean by that?”

“Well,” says I, “it’s a good idea to make copies of the stuff you don’t want to lose if your hard drive breaks.”

“My hard drive does what?” You ask.

“Your hard drive breaks,” I says.

Yes, it is possible for your hard drive to malfunction. When that happens everything on it is lost...just as if it were RAM with the power off. It really isn’t RAM, but a broken hard drive means it doesn’t work, which in turn means everything on it is inaccessible.

“Holy moly, that’s serious, isn’t it?” You ask.

You bet it’s serious. You could lose copies of valuable letters, financial records, pictures, genealogy, and a host of other possibilities, making life a bit unpleasant.

“And then, what about my programs, and my Windows. I could lose those too,” you say. They will need backing up too, won’t they?”

“Well” says I. “Yes you will lose all the

copies of your programs and your Windows operating system too if the hard drive breaks, BUT...you should already have backups of all those things right now.”

Most, if not all of your programs, including your Windows operating system, should be stored on the *Recovery CDs* that came with your computer. Any programs you bought and installed after you bought your computer will also be on the CD that came in the program boxes when you bought them.

“So what do I do to recover from a bad hard drive day?” You ask.

“Well,” says I, “it’s a five step process:”

1. Replace the bad hard drive with a good one of equal or larger size (Stay away from Western Digital drives, they are not as reliable as IBM, and Maxtor. Son Bob reports that he has replaced quite a few broken Western Digital drives here of late).

2. Use your system’s Recovery CDs to reinstall your operating system and the programs that came with your computer.

3. Install all the additional programs you want on your computer, using the CDs that came in the box when you obtained them.

4. If you installed an internet access program such as AOL, Earthlink, and the like, go online and update your operating system using Windows Update, and your Anti-virus updates. Both updates require you to be connected to the internet, and then use the START menu to find and start them.

5. USE YOUR DATA BACKUP to copy all your important data to the new hard drive.

By the way, a lot of folks believe that a backup means copying your whole hard drive, including the programs and operating system, to some backup device. This is not true. Not

only is it not true, but it is a waste of time because none of those programs will work without the system registry that was constructed when the programs were first installed. Since virtually all backup systems do not copy the registry (it's a locked system file, and the basic copy function will not work on locked system files) recopied programs from backup will not work anyway. They need to be installed, or better yet reinstalled since they were installed once on the hard drive before it broke, in order to recreate the registry.

Now here's a cliff hanger for you. I've run out of space, and you will have to wait until the next Bulletin when I'll offer a few strategies for backing up your important data.

Okay now all you hard drives out there, it's illegal for any of you to break until well after the next bulletin is in your owner's hands. Once you are backed up, nature can take its course.