August 2013

The Bytes of Las Vegas

A publication of the Las Vegas PC Users Group ● www.lvpcug.org
A non profit corporation serving the Las Vegas, Nevada area since 1985

SIGS (Special Interest Groups)

When you plan to attend a SIG meeting and have specific questions or problems you would like someone to work on or answer, please email us at info@lvpcug.org . This will help assure that we will try to have someone there with the expertise. The email Subject Line: SIG Help

The meeting formats for the Helping Hands & How-to SIGS are usually one-on-one help as compared to the Novice SIG which is group attendance with questions and answers from the audience during and after the presentations.

UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

All meeting open to Public No Charge

SIGs (Special Meeting Groups)

Saturday August 3, 10am to 4pm
Helping Hands and How-to SIGs
Location: Las Vegas JC Park - Clubhouse, 5805 W. Harmon Ave, Las Vegas 89103.
Parking available on both sides of clubhouse.
Nearest major intersection: Flamingo/Jones.

Saturday, August 10, 1pm to 4pm
Novice SIG and
Software & Product Review SIG
Location: ITT Technical Institute, 3825 W. Cheyenne Ave., North Las Vegas 89032 (between Decatur & Simmons).

Come one, come all and bring your friends

September 7th at approx. 1:00pm Ceazar will teach a Special Class on processing photos using Microsoft Windows Products.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A STRONG PASSWORD

The longer the better. Microsoft recommends that passwords be at least 14 characters long to be effective but feel free to make your passwords even longer than that: Each additional character reduces the chances that a hacker will be able to guess your passwords.

Simple is synonymous with insecure. You know better than to make your password "12345" all lowercase letters, or a simple word you can find in the dictionary. Mix it up using symbols, numbers and a combination of capitalized and lower-case letters.

Change is good. Think of your passwords as having shelf life. Change them a few time a year.

Don't make a master key. Do not use the same password for all on line accounts. No matter how good your password is the Cyber Criminals are able to obtain it.

7 Important Email Security Tips

Safe online practices are important to keeping your online identity unadulterated and free from viruses, hackers, and all sorts of Internet-based shenanigans. And the best place to start? Your inbox. Here are some simple yet important security tips you should know in order to keep your email account as secure as possible.

1. Use Separate Email Accounts
2. Create a Unique Password
3. Beware Of Phishing Scams
4. Never Click Links in Emails
5. Do Not Open Unsolicited Attachments
6. Scan for Viruses & Malware
7. Avoid Public Wi-Fi

This article describes instances of each point and the how/why of the suggestion. Worth the read:

http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/7-important-email-security-tips-you-should-know-about

Special Deal from Acronis

Backing up your computer

As I talk with computer users about their backup systems, I am amazed how many still use obsolete backup approaches to protect their computer system. If they only knew the risks they were taking with their important files by using these ineffective backup methods. So, I decided to dedicate this issue of the newsletter to explain the five most common backup methods used today and to point out the limitations of many of these approach. Hopefully, this article will make it clear that four of the five backup approaches are flawed and should not be relied on for your important backups. I hope you will find this article enlightening.

Picking the Right Backup Approach

By Gene Barlow
User Group Relations

Doing regular backups of your computer system is the most effective way to protect your computer from the loss of your important files and expense of repairing a crashed computer. There are many backup systems available today, which make picking the best backup approach somewhat difficult. In this article, I will describe the five most common backups approaches used and explain which is the best and why.

RAID Mirrored Hard Drives

Businesses have used RAID mirrored systems for years to keep their critical servers running even if one of their hard drives should fail. A RAID mirrored system consists of two identical hard drives in the computer. When one hard drive is updated, RAID automatically updates the second hard drive in exactly the same way. If one of these two identical hard drives should physically fail, the computer can continue to run on the other hard drive without any down time on the server.

Recently, home computers have become available with the option of a RAID mirrored system. End-users mistakenly think that a RAID mirrored system is a form of backup. It is true that if one of the two RAID hard drives fails because of a physical problem, then the other RAID hard drive is a form of backup. Unfortunately, most hard drive crashes are caused by software failure (80% probability) and not hardware failures (20% probability). So, if your Windows operating system becomes corrupted or a virus attacks your computer, the RAID system makes sure that both of your RAID mirrored drives crash at the same time. Running a RAID mirrored system is not a good backup approach.

File Backup System

Thirty years ago, backup systems could only back up individual files, one at a time. Today, the best backup systems backup entire hard drives and not just individual files. Yet, over half of all backup utilities on the market today still only backup individual files. File Backup Systems save only your data files that you have selected to be backed up. Application programs and the Windows operating system files are not saved with file backup systems. So, at best, these are just partial backup systems and not complete computer backup solutions.

If your computer should fail and all that you have is a backup of just a few of your data files, then you will have to take your computer into the repair shop to have Windows reinstalled on your computer along with all of your application programs. This could be an expensive fix and leave you without a computer for several days. File Backup Systems are antiquated and do not properly protect your entire hard drive. Don't rely on them for the primary backup of your computer.

Online Backup Systems

The past few years, the speed of the internet has opened up the possibility of saving your backup files on the internet. Companies have popped up promoting the ability to backup your files to a location on the internet. Even Acronis offers a Cloud Backup option.

The first thing to understanding about Online Backup Systems is that these are also just file backup systems, only backing up a

few of your data files. The Windows operating system and your application programs do not get backed up to the Internet. So, if your computer should crash, you would still have to take the computer into a repair shop to have Windows and all of your application programs reinstalled. Again, this could be costly.

Also, there is an annual fee that companies charge you to save your backups on their internet servers. The Acronis Cloud is one of the most reasonable in this area at just under $5 monthly or $50 annually. Online backup systems are only partial backups and can be costly to run.

Hard Drive Clones

One of the earliest ways to backup your entire hard drive was the disk copy or clone approach. With this approach, you make an exact duplicate of your main hard drive onto a second physical hard drive. While this approach does backup your Windows operating system and all of your application programs with your data files, it has many limitations. The biggest limitation is that it takes an entire additional hard drive to make just one clone backup drive. Since you really need a minimum of three backups to protect your system, a single clone backup is very risky and not a good way to do backups.

Another limitation of the clone backup approach is that it involves a lot of physical replacement of your hard drives. A clone backup system done right should have three physical backup hard drives that are rotated through your computer system each week. Most end-users are not comfortable opening up their computer box to remove and replace hard drives. This is a cumbersome backup approach that most end-users should avoid.

Image Backup System

The best way to backup your computer is by doing weekly image backups of your computer main hard drive. This approach includes not only your important data files, but the Windows operating system files and all of your application programs. In other words, you backup everything stored on your main hard drive. Then, if your main hard drive should crash, you can quickly restore the entire main hard drive from your backup and be up and running again in minutes. This is the backup protection that businesses use today.

You may think that it is too complicated to do an image type of backup. Actually, it is much easier to do your backups this way than to have to pick and choose which individual files to backup and which files not to backup. The File Backup System and the Online Backup System are much more complicated to run than the Image Backup approach.

You also may think that backing up all of your hard drive would take too long and use up too much space on the backup drive. Actually, since backing up an entire hard drive can be done as one backup operation instead of having to backup each data file individually, Image Backup Systems run much faster than the File Backup Systems and very much faster than the slow Online Backup Systems. As for space used, a full Image Backup System can be backed up many times on a backup external hard drive that is the same size as your main hard drive. Clone backups wastefully take a separate physical hard drive for each backup made. Image Backup Systems are the best way to do backups today.

Acronis True Image Backup Utility

The best backup utility on the market today is the Acronis True Image Home 2013 software product. Using it, you can do most of the backup approaches discussed in this article; however, I highly recommend you do the Image Backup approach mentioned above as your main backup approach. Then if you want to also do one or two of the various other backup approaches in addition to the Image Backup approach, you can do it with the same True Image software package. You can order copies of Acronis True Image Home 2013 from us at substantial discounts in price. Our discount price is half of the normal retail price for this excellent backup utility. Not only that, we provide our customers with additional support that others do not offer. We provide a step by step True Image 2013 Starter Guide that you

can only get when you purchase your product from us. In addition, we offer our customers unlimited technical assistance when they have questions or problems. Acronis offers you only 30 days of Technical Support and then you are on your own. We want our customers to succeed using the True Image 2013 software they get from us. To order Acronis True Image Home 2013 from us, go to www.ugr.com and select the products you wish to purchase. Once you are on that product page, click on the appropriate *Buy Now* button to place your order. We charge only $25 for a single license or $60 for a three license Family Pack. You can order a download copy or we can mail you a CD with the software on it. (There is a $5 shipping fee per order if you order the CD.) When checking out of the shopping cart, enter in the special order code of UGNL0713.
If you have questions about this article or the True Image 2013 product, send an email to support@ugr.com and I will try to help you with your questions.

LVPCUG Officers
for fiscal year
May 1, 2013 thru April 30, 2014
President: Ceazar Dennis
Vice President: Charles Frederick
Executive Vice President: Lee Eastburn
Secretary: Jo Anne Rush
Treasurer: Linda DiGiovanni

Membership in LVPCUG is your biggest bang for the buck. Where else can you learn, have problems diagnosed and get help fixing your hardware for $30 per year?

Dues are $30 per year. Checks should be made payable to LVPCUG and sent to: P.O. Box 363772 North Las Vegas, NV 89036 or can be paid in cash at any meeting.

our website: www.lvpcug.org

The Bytes of Las Vegas is published by the Las Vegas PC Users Group of Las Vegas, Nevada.
Linda DiGiovanni, Editor

We are looking for Volunteers for our SIG's Meeting. We would like to start more SIG's like Photo, Music and Internet. If you are interested please contact any Board Member to let us know. Thanks for all your help.