

SIMPLE 5-STEP BACKUP PLAN

(For The Job You Love To Hate)

By

MAX PINNER

YOURS TO SELL AND KEEP THE MONEY

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Revised December, 2007

CONTENTS

COPYRIGHT NOTICE	4
DISCLAIMERS	4
INTRODUCTION.....	5
SIMPLE FIXES FOR A SICK PC	6
SAVING versus BACKING UP.....	7
<i>Backing Up Defined</i>	<i>7</i>
Why You Should Back Up	8
What Should You Backup?.....	9
Backup Onto What?.....	10
Floppy Disks (Yep, spelt with a ‘k’)	10
USB Drive	10
CD/DVD Discs (Yep, spelt with a ‘c’)	10
Extra Hard Drive(s).....	11
Online Data Storage	11
<i>Frequency.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Reliability.....</i>	<i>12</i>
YOUR SIMPLE 5-STEP BACKUP PLAN.....	14
1. SAYG (Save As-You-Go)	14
2. Per Session Backup.....	14
3. Daily Backup.....	14
4. Monthly Archive Backups	15
5. Monthly System Backup	15
<i>Software Suggestions.....</i>	<i>16</i>
BACKING UP YOUR EMAIL	18
BACKING UP YOUR INTERNET FAVOURITES/FAVORITES .	20
For Internet Explorer	20
For Firefox.....	20
BACKUP YOUR REGISTRY	21

What Is The Registry?	21
How To Automatically Backup Your Registry	21
XP'S OWN BACKUP PROGRAM	23
VISTA'S OWN BACKUP PROGRAM	23
MEMORY MATTERS.....	25
THE FINAL WORD	26

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INTRODUCTION

This eBook is written specifically for non-technical computer users.

I've tried to keep it simple but you might be a bit challenged in places. Makes life interesting, though, doesn't it?

As a mobile, professional, sick PC troubleshooter, I've visited enough homes to learn many computer users realise they should back up stuff *but they don't*.

Is that you, too?

- *Sometimes it's sheer laziness* ("I know I should but...um...well, I just don't seem to get round to it...")
- *Sometimes it's ignorance of how to do it* (But surely mouths are made for asking friends 'how do I...?' And Google can find you almost anything you ask for if you use appropriate key words. Yes, the keywords can be a challenge, can't they?)
- *Sometimes it's a lack of confidence* (Well, hopefully, what you're about to read will help you gain confidence.)

So, here it is.

A simple, 5-Step, Backup Plan, written in clearly-stated steps.

Lots of hand-holding...Do this...Do that...to help you save your precious data on a regular basis.

Just do it! Now! Before your computer plays up again. (Next time it could play up badly enough to stop you ever getting your data back...It happens...)

By the way, the next page details **A Book You Should Get Without Delay!**

Enjoy.

SIMPLE FIXES FOR YOUR SICK PC **[Simple...Easy...DIY...No-Brainer Steps]**

ANYONE CAN DO IT!!

**SIMPLE No-Brainer Fixes Tell You Exactly What To Do, Step-By-Step,
Next Time Your PC Gets Sick**

**EASY Fixes To Give You Very Good Chance Of Fixing The Problems
All By Yourself. SAVES Heaps In Repairs**

**EFFEKTIVE Fixes To Save You Wasted Time Taking Your Sick PC For
Repairs, Being Without It A While, Then Having To Plug It All Back In
Correctly**

Things are going well when, suddenly, your computer plays up. It's what they do!

Your heart sinks. How serious is it? What will it cost this time? How long will you be without your PC? (Last time it was nearly two weeks...)

You wish you knew enough to try to fix it on-the-spot -- but you know little or nothing about PCs.

The solution? Get yourself a copy of my 182-page eBook, Simple Fixes For Your Sick PC.

I specifically wrote this eBook in clear, simple English:

- for folk who would like to be able to fix their PC on-the-spot
- for folk who would just like some Simple, Easy, No-Brainer steps to follow
- for folk who know little or nothing about computers
- for folk who are not really fond of the thing, but just want to use it

It includes:

- Quick PC Fixes (Some are almost as quick as opening or shutting a car door)
- Easy PC Fixes (Some are about as easy as checking oil, water, tyres and battery on your car)
- Simple Computer Fixes (As opposed to more complicated, technical options)
- Effective Fixes to save you time, money, worry and frustration

These are the same Simple Fixes that I use professionally during my morning home-visits to fix sick computers. They work for about 7 or 8 out of every 10 computers I treat. (The other two or three PCs are usually workshop jobs needing technical skills.)

You'll have a high chance of curing your Horror Box on your own, and bringing it more under your control. So, go on. Take a look. (No charge for looking ☺)

Full details at: <http://www.simplepcfixes.com/>

SAVING versus BACKING UP

Before we go any further let's be clear about the difference between *saving* a document or whatever, and *backing it up*.

Both involve copying but in slightly different ways. (And you thought using a PC is as easy as brushing your teeth?)

Saving Defined

Saving a file to a hard drive creates a permanent, retrievable copy of the important letter or report you created directly onto the hard drive.

It's been copied from the computer's volatile RAM onto the more permanent hard drive.

Until saved, the document or file you're working on is in the computer's volatile, short-term Random Access Memory (RAM).

This RAM is completely emptied when the PC is switched off. So if you don't save the document onto the hard drive you lose it.

OK. It's a bit safer now but the saved file still vulnerable until it's backed up onto an **external** device.

That's because if your hard drive crashes tomorrow or whenever then it's possibly goodbye to your saved copy.

Yes, I know data can sometimes -- not always -- be recovered from a crashed hard drive. But it's time-consuming, tricky, potentially expensive and not always successful.

You'd be extraordinarily unlucky if both your computer *and* external device came to a sticky end at exactly the same time. (About the same odds as the USA arming its military with daffodils, I'd say.)

Backing Up Defined

Backing up refers to the act of copying files already saved on the hard drive to another form of external storage – floppy disk, CD, extra internal or external hard drives. Even onto a USB thumb drive (or thumbthing like it).

Why You Should Back Up

WARNING

You must never. Ever. Trust. Your. PC.

It's fallible. It will never be 100% reliable 100% of the time... No such thing.

All computers are in a state of deterioration to some degree, depending on age, component quality and the variability of your local power provider.

As soon as you switch on any PC it develops errors – some irritating, others serious. This is an on-going process. Many are cumulative. Eventually Windows gets so corrupted it needs to be reinstalled.

Then, one fateful day, your hard drive will stop responding altogether. They all do eventually. Sadly, many die sooner, rather than later.

HENCE THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF REGULARLY BACKING UP YOUR PRECIOUS AND UNIQUE DATA.

Then you won't be able to run your programs, or access your data still on the hard drive -- and not backed up elsewhere. (Oh dear...oh dear...oh dearie me...Much wailing and gnashing of teeth...)

Professional data recovery services charge heaps to fully or partially recover files from crashed drives. This can be cost-effective for some businesses, but *never* for home users.

Often, Windows won't load at all. If it's just the MBR (Master Boot Record) that's damaged it's possibly fixable.

If the partition is damaged it's likely to be fatal. Much wailing and gnashing of teeth whatever the case.

Sometimes hard disk drives (HDDs) give advance warning signals of pending failure. For example: odd noises, odd things happen when you try to save stuff or try to run an application.

Newer PCs often have self-monitoring (SMART) settings to warn of a potentially compromised hard drive.

But sometimes they can just fail without warning the next time you boot your PC.

And, of course, at any time power fluctuations or lightning strikes could fatally damage your modem, power supply unit, motherboard/mainboard, hard drive or other vital bits.

All good reasons to keep a copy of *DIY Computer Fixes* on hand. You never know when you might need it. (How's that for a neat bit of promotion!)

OK. So by now I've convinced you to regularly backup your data -- ***starting from today.***

(If not then I've failed abysmally. So excuse me whilst I crawl off to open a vein.)

What Should You Backup?

Backup data – not programs.

“OK. Fine. But what's data?” you ask.

The simple answer is that it's

all the unique stuff you've created, and that you will weep over if you never see it again.

Imagine losing this little lot off your computer:

- photographs you've transferred from your camera to the hard drive (and then probably wiped off the camera)
- documents (letters, posters, reports, assignments -- hours of work.)
- your address book (some of you have dozens to type back in...sigh...)
- your browser's favourites (easily saved)
- emails and mail boxes (perhaps just print important emails; delete the rest?)
- other precious stuff (precious to you)

In other words, always backup the stuff YOU'VE CREATED.

NB: Do not backup programs.

If anything happens to them they must be reinstalled directly from the CDs or from the setup file you downloaded. (It's all to do with the registry—but that's another story.)

Backup Onto What?

The size of the files to be backed up, and their importance, largely determines the storage medium you will use.

Let's now consider common, external storage-options, in turn.

Floppy Disks (Yep, spelt with a 'k')

These hold about 1.44Mb (1440Kb) and are convenient for documents or spreadsheets – text data files, in other words. Not graphics stuff which takes up a lot of room.

Most older PCs have floppy drives. Today's new PCs generally don't.

External floppy drives are available that can plug into a USB port.

USB Drive

They seem to have different names depending on where you live! Key drive, pen drive, flash drive, USB drive, and thumb drive are just some I've seen.

They simply plug into a USB port to be read as another drive. USB drives come in different capacities ranging from 32Mb to several Gigabytes.

Very useful for carrying data with you if you work on more than one PC.

And great also for doing reliable, on-the-run backups as you generate data in, say, your word processor.

I have several and would never be without them. One of the world's most useful inventions, I reckon ☺

CD/DVD Discs (Yep, spelt with a 'c')

Backing up involves using burning software, although many XP users are unaware that you can burn using drag'n'drop from inside Windows Explorer.

Most burners you buy these days are pretty cheap. They often include burning software that's 'fingerprinted' to that drive only.

By the way, burning is more successful on PCs with CPUs of at least 350-400MHz. So forget about adding a burner to a very early Pentium PC.

Graphics files (photos and so on) are often several hundred kilobytes and rarely fit onto a floppy disk. These eventually need to be burned onto a CD for archiving/permanent storage.

Don't use the really cheap CDs or DVDs if reliability is important, or if your data is particularly valuable. The old adage "you only get what you pay for" is very true.

Extra Hard Drive(s)

Some folk also have a second hard drive installed *inside* their PC for backing up data.

That's fine, but if anything happens to your PC (fire, theft, owner violence) then you've probably lost that internal (infernally?) drive and its data as well (groan).

An extra, *external* hard drive, in a special enclosure and accessed by USB, is far, far better for two major reasons:

1. Being quite separate from your PC it's not going to crash when your PC is zapped by a power surge or lightning. (You do take phone line out of your modem when it's stormy...don't you? I fried a PC once because I forgot...)
2. And it's more secure. If your PC is stolen, then your external hard drive is less likely to walk as well, if you store it well away from your PC where it can't be found.

However, even with extra (potentially fallible) hard drives, you still need to backup your critical data files onto CDs. (Remember the crash warning above?)

This belt'n'braces approach will pay off one day. (And you'll immediately remember me in your will. Please.)

Online Data Storage

Very useful for archiving space-hungry stuff such as photos, videos and music. I would never entrust *personal or financial stuff* to an online storage site. Other stuff, sure.

If you Google these keywords: *online storage backup* you'll unearth dozens of sites.

Some are free; some are not.

Googlemail (Gmail) offers about 2Gb of free storage. Online data storage could be useful in the case of your house burning down or theft of your computer.

Look, here's how it is. Be very, very cautious about what you store online. You don't know who is the other end, how reliable their site is or how honest they are. The site could even just disappear one day – with your data!

The last thing you want is an organised gang of some sort handling your data, flogging its contents, accessing your accounts.

And then, to add insult to injury, they demand more money from you when you want to retrieve your data.

So NEVER use online sites to backup financial stuff, very personal stuff or names and passwords and the like.

Always make sure you also backup to other forms of storage I've mentioned above. The saying about eggs and baskets comes readily to mind at this point.

Frequency

How often you back up, and how thoroughly you back up, depends on how well you understand that *intricate electronic bits can fail at any time without prior warning.*

Reliability

We're talking here about making *reliable* backups. (As far as PCs are concerned, if it *can* go wrong it *will* go wrong. In spades.)

- What if the media you back up onto is already corrupted? (Very cheap CD/DVDs.)
- Or it becomes corrupted over time ? (Very cheap CD/DVDs can lose their data quite quickly.)
- Or the data file you just backed up has become corrupted during the backup process? (Believe me, it often happens.)

As a form of data-checking, use Windows Explorer to select a random sample of files from the backup device. Then open each file in turn to make absolutely sure they are not corrupted.

Some files might not open properly, not because of corruption, but because of a faulty File Association.

Let me explain. Files with different extensions (doc, pps, jpg and so on) are normally associated with the appropriate program that may, or may not, already be installed on your PC.

For example:

anyfilename.*doc* commonly opens with Word (or another compatible word processor)

anyfilename.*pps* commonly opens with PowerPoint (or a special PP viewer)

If the program is missing from your PC, or if the file association is lost (it happens quite often), then the file won't open just by double-clicking it.

Therefore, you have two options:

1. Visit <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/307859> to change your file association if that's the issue.
2. Or install the appropriate program if that's the issue.

Finally, do **make a second set of your backed up data** if it's of really critical importance. Data gets corrupted...eggs...baskets...

And **keep a third set off-site**. You'll be pleased you did in cases of theft or vandalism, and fire, floods, storms or other natural disasters.

Astute businesses always keep sets of data off-site, as part of their data-protection policy.

YOUR SIMPLE 5-STEP BACKUP PLAN

1. SAYG (Save As-You-Go)

When I write in MS Word I simply *hold down Ctrl and then tap S* after each sentence I write.

This saves what I've already written. The most I can lose is the last sentence I was working on.

After all, none of us ever know when the power will go off, do we? A fond farewell to the seven pages you've just worked on for three hours. (Happened to me once...never again, though.)

Yes, yes, I know Word can be told to create automatic backups at pre-determined intervals, but not everyone knows how to do that.

Tapping Ctrl-S is so much simpler.

Many programs allow you save on-the-fly in this way, but to find out how you'll need to read their Help File (or manual) of course.

2. Per Session Backup

At the end of a computing session (i.e. you close Word, or whichever program you are using, to move on to another task) use Windows Explorer to drag'n'drop that document, picture or whatever, to a convenient external device.

- a floppy disk (If your PC has a floppy drive)
- a USB thumb drive (If your PC has USB ports. Older PCs don't)

3. Daily Backup

Be sure to do a full data backup at the end of the day, before closing down.

At the end of each day, just before I switch the PC off, I use a wonderful, free backup program called Replicator.

It's written by Karen, an ace programmer. You can get it from her at:

<http://www.karenware.com/powertools/ptreplicator.asp>

You can tell Replicator to backup whatever you want, to wherever you want.

I've set mine to backup My Documents and Email Data both to an external hard drive each day, AND to a USB thumb drive.

A belt'n'braces man, such as I am, does not put all his digital eggs in just one electronic basket.

Remember – do not trust computers or other electronic devices. Nothing lasts for ever...

4. Monthly Archive Backups

At the end of each month burn copies of key data folders onto CDs or DVDs.

Repeat the exercise each month. In this way you will build cumulative archives.

Remember to label the CDs as you go along. (*And, by the way, always use a marker to do this – not a biro or similar. The top of the CD does not appreciate hard, writing implements.*)

5. Monthly System Backup

In my opinion the best way to backup your whole computer is to use *Imaging Software at least monthly*.

It takes a sort of 'snapshot' of your whole system and saves it in a special image file.

You can then restore your Windows, programs, data and settings from that image file should your system ever become corrupted.

Given today's vicious generations of viruses, spyware and other diverse forms of malware, expect your system to become unusable at least once every two or three years – more often if you practise unsafe surfing, and don't keep your security up-to-date.

You must decide how regularly you'll image your whole system.

I do mine at least once or twice each month, with in-between, as-I-go, data-backups onto my external hard drive, and USB thumb drive.

Your overall strategy, then is this:

- **during the month you save data as-you-go onto a mixture of floppy, hard drive or USB drive**
- **at the end of each month burn full archive copies of all your data files**
- **at the end of each month burn a full image-backup of your complete hard drive**

NB: As mentioned before, burn onto good quality CDs or DVDs. El cheapos work in the short-term, but you can't trust their durability or data integrity over time.

Software Suggestions

There are plenty of imaging packages around. Some are cheap; some very expensive. Some easy to use; some very complicated.

1. I use Windows Imaging software from: <http://www.terabyteunlimited.com/>

The software has always worked well, both saving and verifying the image. I find it easy to understand and to use.

And nor is it hard to use for non-technical PC users.

2. I can also recommend: <http://www.acronis.com/homecomputing/>

Creating another image with another company's package can only be a good thing. Belt'n'braces...Pretty unlikely for both images from two different software applications to fail, I reckon. Don't you?

(Mind you, anything can happen with computers so let's not be over-confident!)

Some other alternative packages are, in my humble opinion, more costly, harder to use and are needlessly complicated.

I urge you most emphatically to get some imaging software *and backup your whole system without further delay.*

It's your call, of course, but look on it as peace-of-mind insurance that will pay you out handsomely in your hour of need.

It certainly saved my bacon. One day I switched on the PC and Windows failed to load. I soon discovered the reason -- *the contents of my hard drive had disappeared!*

Gone...No prior warning. Only two, sad little files remained.

Anyway, I ran the Terabyte image software's recovery routine, and restored the image I'd burned only a fortnight before

I will never forget the intense relief when Windows then loaded perfectly after rebooting, and my computer was back to normal, as though no disaster had happened. Everything was intact.

All I had to do then was to simply copy across my data I'd saved on external devices in the two weeks since the image was burned, and then it was business as usual.

Magic.

BACKING UP YOUR EMAIL

Backing up email is pretty important.

Apart from your PC grinding to an undignified halt it's not unknown for mail programs to become corrupted.

I've selected the following software because they all offer trial periods and prices are similar.

Try each and see which one you prefer from the following:.

- Numbers 1-3 are for Outlook Express (One is FREE)
- Number 4 is for Outlook Express plus 8 other email programs as well
- Number 5 is for MS Outlook only

1 Outlook Express Backup Wizard: 30-day trial. Buy for \$39.95

<http://www.outlook-express-backup.com/>

According to the website:

The wizard backs up everything in your Outlook Express:

Email and news messages (including Hotmail messages)

Email folder structure and attachments

Identities

Address book

Message rules

Blocked senders list

Email and news accounts (including Hotmail accounts)

Signatures (including signatures stored in external files)

2 **ABF Outlook Express Backup:** 30-day trial. Buy for \$29.95

<http://www.abf-soft.com/outlook-express-backup.shtml>

3 **Outlook Express Quick Backup [FREE]**

<http://www.oehelp.com/OEBackup/Default.aspx>

Its quick instructions are here: <http://www.oehelp.com/OEBackup/oeqb.htm>

(Read them!)

4 **Outlook Express Backup Genie:** 15-day trial. Buy for 29.95 euros

<http://www.amicutilities.com/outlook-express-backup/>

A quote from the website:

“A handy software tool for MS Windows PCs created to save archived backup copies of your email database.

Outlook Express Backup Genie saves emails, settings, address book, message rules, mail and news accounts, blocked senders lists and signatures to a compact, compressed backup file from where your email can easily be restored when necessary. Unlike other email saving tools our product can backup the top 9 Email Clients such as Outlook Express, MS Outlook, Incredimail, Netscape Messenger, Eudora PocoMail.”

Notice the last sentence, did you? **It can backup 9 of the top email programs – not just Outlook Express.**

5 **Outback Plus 6:** 15-day trial. Buy for \$39.95

<http://ajsystems.com/obp.html>

BACKING UP YOUR INTERNET FAVOURITES/FAVORITES

I'll deal with the two most common browsers. (For other browsers consult their Help file)

For Internet Explorer

- At the top left: Click File > Import and Export (This now opens up a Wizard.)
- Click Next (Highlight Export Favorites because, in this case, that's the action you want from the various options displayed)
- Click Next (Now you'll see Favorites is already highlighted for selection. If you want to be more selective you can highlight separate folders within Favorites, if you have already created them)
- Click Next (Now choose the destination folder in which to save your Favorites file)
- Click Next > Finish

For Firefox

- At the top: Click Bookmarks > Organize Bookmarks (This opens Bookmarks Manager)
- At the top left: Click File > Export
- A window opens and the default destination Folder is Mozilla Firefox (You might prefer a different destination for your saved Bookmarks. I always change that to My Documents)
- The default file name of your about-to-be-saved bookmarks is *bookmarks.html* (I usually accept that name. Occasionally, though, you might want to save different sets of bookmarks, in which case using different meaningful names is very useful)

BACKUP YOUR REGISTRY

What Is The Registry?

The Registry is of major importance on your PC. A *corrupted Registry* is a major cause of a sick computer.

The Registry is a sort of master database in Windows, that contains references to settings and values for your operating system, programs, profiles, document types, property sheet settings, system hardware, ports and so on.

As Windows loads up it reads the Registry so it knows how to relate to all these things.

Each PC has a unique copy of the Registry. After all, no two computers are exactly alike, with exactly the same combinations of software and hardware.

Open a program and your PC immediately checks the Registry to find where the program is stored, and what settings are needed to handle it.

How To Automatically Backup Your Registry

Get ERUNT (Emergency Recovery Utility NT) because it will backup your complete Registry and let you restore it when needed. It's FREE.

<http://www.larshederer.homepage.t-online.de/erunt/>

ERUNT is very easy to use, and is far more effective and reliable than XP's System Restore which, I've found, only ever seems to work reliably 50% of the time.

When you install ERUNT be sure to include the option to start up with Windows. It will then automatically backup your Registry the first time you bootup each day. That's crucial. Fail to do that and you might as well not bother with it.

Before installing a program I always run ERUNT manually to backup the Registry. Then if things go pear-shaped I can restore and recover, quickly and easily.

ERUNT is very easy to use. It will reliably backup your complete Registry, and let you restore it when needed.

The only backup option you need to make is to choose where to save your Registry backup files.

The backup set includes a small program that will launch the Registry restoration if needed.

Therefore, if you have problems during the day with, say, a program you install, and it subsequently upsets your PC (it happens quite often) you simply restore the Registry. Reboot. Then uninstall the offending program.

You're now back to where you were before you installed the program – trouble-free.

NB: Do be sure to read the documentation. How else can you expect to use the program properly? ☺

XP'S OWN BACKUP PROGRAM

Bet you didn't know there was one!

Strangely, it was never included amongst all the other programs that were installed as part of XP. (Internet Explorer, Outlook Express, Windows Media Player, for example)

That's because Microsoft, in its wisdom, decided backing up was of such a low priority that you have to look for, find, and then install, the program off the XP installation CD.

It's not very satisfactory. I had all sorts of problems with it before I gave up on it, and switched to the alternatives I've already told you about.

Visit various sites and forums and you'll find I'm no orphan. The general consensus amongst the technical fraternity seems to be to use third-party software instead.

VISTA'S OWN BACKUP PROGRAM

I haven't gone out and bought all 5 versions of Vista (I'm not made of money!) so I'm not writing about Vista's backup program from experience. Instead, I'm writing from what I've read in magazines and gleaned from the Internet, so my apologies for any unintentional inaccuracies.

There seems to be good news and bad news, folks.

The bad news is that currently, Microsoft have not included their image-based *Complete PC Backup* with:

- Vista Home Basic
- Vista Home Premium

But they have included a standard, backup program.

Unfortunately, this can only deal with files categorised by type (such as documents, pictures, email and so on) rather than with user-selected files and folders.

This restricts user flexibility and options.

The good news is that currently, Microsoft have included their image-based *Complete PC Backup* with:

- Vista Business
- Vista Enterprise
- Vista Ultimate

This takes a 'digital-snapshot' of every single file on your PC in the form of a special Disk Image.

From that Image:

- you can then restore your PC to exactly how it was at the time of the image (subsequent stuff is no longer there, of course)
- you can't selectively restore individual folders
- you can't selectively restore individual files

Many users and reviewers are finding it to be inflexible and patchy in its results. For those reasons, third-party imaging software is more popular.

It's quite possible that later, updated versions of Vista might include changes to their backup software, so keep your eyes open for Microsoft news and announcements.

MEMORY MATTERS

Will you remember to backup regularly? We'll see! It's in your hands now.

Our PCs need healthy memory, otherwise they won't function properly. Very much like us, in that regard.

They need two types of memory:

- a sort of *short-term, volatile memory* called RAM (Random Access Memory)
- a more *longer-term, storage memory* (as on hard drives, CDs, floppy disks etc)

You will appreciate the similarities with us.

But what of your memory?

What are you doing to help use, develop and preserve it, to either avoid or delay dementia?

Statistics clearly show that this is already a serious problem that's expected to explode in numbers, especially as the 'baby boomers' move into the twilight years of their lives.

Fortunately, It's Not A Lost Cause

Dementia Need Not Be Inevitable

There Are Things We Can Do To Either Prevent It, Or Certainly Keep It At Arm's Length For Longer

I've read this excellent book, and I practise what it teaches.

Click here for more details: <http://keepyourmemorylonger.wordpress.com>

THE FINAL WORD

So there you have it.

I've supplied you with backup reasons and pitfalls, options and strategies.

The fine details are in each programs' Help file or manual. It's beyond the scope of this eBook to teach you how to use them.

But, at the end of the day, it's *your* choice

- what you backup
- how you backup
- when you backup

...or even if you decide to backup at all...!