Why do I need to backup my data?

As computer hardware has become increasingly reliable, some people develop a false sense of security. The incidence of hard drive failure is very low, but it can and still does happen.

Q. Why do hard drives fail?
A. The hard drive is a very complex electronic/mechanical device. There are two common types of failures, mechanical and electronic. Mechanical failures usually result from a failure of the high precision moving parts in the drive. Electronic failure is usually a result of a component failing on the controller board of the hard drive.

Q. How will I know if my hard drive is going to fail?
A. There is usually very little warning. You may receive messages that files are suddenly not accessible or that data cannot be written to the hard drive. A “buzz-click” noise from the hard drive indicates that failure is imminent or has already happened. In most cases, the PC will just fail to boot one day.

Q. What chance is there of retrieving any of my files from a failed hard drive?
A. The chances of retrieving any of the files from a failed hard drive are less than 50%.

Q. What happens to my files on the network N:\ drive when my computer’s C:\ drive crashes?
A. Nothing! Any files saved to your N:\ drive are not affected by nasty things that can happen on your C:\ drive. The N:\ drive is a very happy place for files to be.

Q. What should I do if my PC will not boot and the hard drive is making a buzz-click sound?
A. Don’t panic. Call AHS Computing and have your data backup ready for a re-build of your PC.

Q. How often should I backup my data?
A. Once a week, either to an external hard drive, to the N:\ drive, or to a USB key would be an excellent start.

Q. What if my hard drive fails and I don’t have a backup?
A. Panic.

Did you know???
As a last resort for data recovery, the AHSCO freezes hard drives to change the physical structure of the drive and to initially prevent over-heating upon boot.
Many people choose to save files on their desktop because the files are easily accessible. Everyone has done this at one time or another and with varying frequency. It is like putting stuff on your office desk... easy access! Stick a file on your desktop, it’s easy to find! However, what they may not know is that there are certain risks associated with this practice - the biggest one being that you increase the chances of losing your files!!!!

Files saved to the desktop are stored in your user profile, this is different than being stored on either 'My Documents' or on the N:\ drive. The user profile is a settings component of Windows, which means that the operating system (Windows) has full access to overwrite its content.

Files on the desktop increase the size of your profile. This in turn increases your login time and the chances of corruption. If your user profile becomes corrupt, you will lose all your desktop files.

Saving to the desktop is fine... for temporary purposes only!

Help in audio-visual emergencies in UW e-classrooms
from Derek Madge, audio-visual services, information systems and technology

AV has upgraded its emergency help phone line. If an instructor runs into a problem or just needs a bit of direction when using audio-visual equipment in electronic classrooms, he or she can simply pick up the red phone inside each AV cabinet and call the priority "Emergency Line", 3-3233.

Most calls are resolved in about two minutes. While many callers can be helped with their A/V problems over the phone, this number can also be used to dispatch an A/V technician to any Registrar's room on campus for help with E-Classrooms or other traditional A/V equipment.

The 3-3233 phone is answered in the A/V office from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. After 4:30 on Monday through Thursday, the line is forwarded to a single technician's cell phone. Instructors may also find the answer they need in the detailed instructions on the top of the E-Classroom podium cabinets.

The A/V technicians also welcome general inquiries about how to get the best use out of the equipment. Please call extension 3-3033 or 3-6197, to arrange for training of instructors, at a convenient time.

Please note that A/V deals only with A/V equipment (e.g. VCRs, TVs, Data Projectors).

Internet Explorer 7—IE7

Microsoft has released the newest upgrade for Internet Explorer (IE) to the general public. It can currently be downloaded from the Microsoft web site and has been available through Windows Update in November. It is limited to users running Windows XP SP2 and any of the Vista Betas.

The new browser is very different in layout and functionality than the current Internet Explorer. They’ve added the ability for tabbed browsing, anti-fraud detection, RSS feed reader, direct net searching, enhanced printing, and new zoom and Clear-type page technology. The most noticeable is tabbed browsing. This allows you to open multiple web pages within a single instance of IE (this in turn frees up resources for your computer). This is the same feature currently supported by Mozilla Firefox and Opera. This feature can be turned off if you prefer how IE6 works. The main feature Microsoft is boasting is the new anti-fraud/anti-phishing technology. Microsoft currently stores and updates a database of fraudulent web sites. If you accidentally browse to one of these sites you will get warnings in both your browsing window and the navigation bar. Also, if it detects a web site acting suspiciously, it will notify you of the behaviour.

Note: UW-ACE currently is not supporting IE 7. AHS Computing will not release IE 7 until UW-ACE is fully supported. Expected release date is late December for the start of the Winter 2007 term.

Please contact the AHS Computing Office for information regarding the installation and usage of Internet Explorer 7.