Radio Days – 2009-07-25

Tip of the Week – Check Your Backups 3

The backup saga has now ended! I have never known such a long-winded way to install and get working a backup program (well two, in fact) which has worked so well on so many other computers. I still do not know what the problem was, and I probably never will.

A colleague suggested that I use an external hard disc to do the backup: this worked. Again, I did a backup to a USB drive and it failed as it had last time. I did something that I had not wanted to do: compress the output. The reason that I do not like to compress a backup is because compression makes it much more difficult to find a file to restore. The whole backup worked with the compression and the problem is now solved. The next step is to check that the backup worked and was readable: for that I use a program called *CDCheck*. CDCheck reads the backup files and reports all errors.

The mystery still remains: why does the backup work with compression but not when files are copied individually. If anyone knows please ring and let me know.

Staying Online Long Enough

For too many of my clients the internet is a worrying place as it seems to have no rhyme or reason. The case in point for quite a number of them over the last few weeks is that things did not go as expected.

The first type of error involved people who kept on getting the same emails every time they switched their computer on. One client couple had some 20 copies of about ten emails and they were getting very frustrated because there was one email which had not arrived despite their friend assuring them that it had been sent. I helped him start the computer then dial into the internet. Then the next step was to start Outlook Express to download all the emails. I showed my client the *Send/Receive* button: he clicked on it and was astounded at just how slowly his emails were coming down. He was also frustrated to find that the same emails that he had downloaded so many times before were still coming into his inbox. The eleventh email was a large one and took about ten minutes to download, then the remainder (including the missing email) came down quite quickly after the apparent blockage caused by the one large email. He was satisfied, and I explained that he should stay online until the *Send/Receive* window stated that all downloads had completed. This he now understood, and was happy.

A similar problem occurred with some other clients who found that they appeared to have a virus. I checked what they were doing online and found that they were shutting the computer down before their anti-virus program had downloaded its updates. Again we got online and waited for the update to complete: this took some time as the download was about 8 MB at about 8 minutes per MB. Once the download had completed and had been installed we had to reboot the computer then run a full scan. This took time, but removed all traces of the virus so they were happy. The moral of these stories is that you have to wait until the job is complete!

There are many people who feel that a computer should be fast (as in **FAST**), and that time spent waiting on a computer is a sign that their computer is slacking on the job. This attitude does not help when they find that there are certain steps which are going to take as long as they take, and that swearing at the computer does not improve its performance. Computers are such fickle things!

Websites

Comodo backup	backup.comodo.com
CDCheck	www.kvipu.com/CDCheck