Radio Days – 2011-05-14

Tip of the Week – Backups Going Bad

This week I had the weird experience of a client who had not one but two discs die on her. The first disc to die was her computer's hard disc. I picked this up because her computer was running slowly. I then checked, and tried to correct, the errors on her hard disc but to no avail. She got a new hard disc installed and we expected that to be the end of the matter.

After her computer was returned from hospital her backup would not work. We ran it again with another USB memory stick and, sure enough, her backup worked on this new stick. This was an easy problem to solve, but not much cheaper to fix because USB memory sticks are expensive for their capacity.

To check if a backup has worked, and that the backup files can be read, you can use a free program called **CDCheck**. This program will read every file on your backup and report those which are unreadable. Despite its name, CDCheck will read every sort of device: hard discs, USB sticks, floppy discs and optical discs (CDs & DVDs). Priceless for your peace of mind!

Selecting Files & Folders

Last week we spoke about burning optical discs (CDs and DVDs). One of the skills needed to do this is the ability to select files and folders. This is a skill which eludes too many people.

There are some places where Windows stores files and folders without any intervention on your part. The main folder containing most peoples' files is called *Documents* in Windows 7. Windows XP users will find that Documents is called *My Documents*. If you check what is in (My) Documents you will usually find that all your word processing documents are in here.

You should also find that there are three other special folders in Documents:

- Music (or *My Music*)
- Pictures (or *My Pictures*)
- Videos (or *My Videos*)

I have given two names for these folders for a good reason: Windows XP used the twee names *My Music*, etc, whereas Windows 7 uses the more acceptable *Music*.

These folders will normally contain the files which you need to select for the CD or DVD which you want to burn. They will also be the files which you will want to select for your backup (another pet subject of mine!).

The main exceptions to these locations will be the files for your accounting program (if you run a business) and your emails (which most people say are not important for their backup). The main result of this decision by Microsoft is that navigating to your files for burning an optical disc or doing a backup is easier than most people thought!

If you know the name of a file and want to know its location then download the free program *Everything*. This program will index your hard disc and find all files with a given name. If you know the contents of a text or word processing file you can use a free program called *Copernic Desktop Search* to find many files.

Further Information

CDCheck	www.kvipu.com/CDCheck/
Everything	www.voidtools.com
Copernic	www.copernic.com