

Radio Days – 2011-09-24

Tip of the Week – Slow Computer or Slow Internet?

A client rang asking me to copy the data from his old computer to his new one. He mentioned that he had a dialup internet connection so I thought of the problems which that might cause in this time of broadband. It turned out that the problem was that his daughter could not distinguish between a slow computer and a slow internet connection. She had complained that his computer was too slow so he should get a new one. He bought a new one without a dialup internet connection.

His computer is quite fast enough for his needs (even if his daughter and grandchildren get frustrated by his dialup internet connection) so there was no need to copy his data from old to new computer. The problem was to convince him that the problem was that his daughter could not discriminate between a slow computer and a slow internet connection.

Recovering Lost Data

Everybody will, at some stage, lose some important data from their computer. Everybody, at some stage, will want to get that data back. It is probably at this moment that they will realise that they should have made a backup before the need to recover lost files, but that is another story.

There are three main points to remember when recovering data from a computer.

Be prepared

Before you lose data you should prepare for the loss. It will come, so prepare for it. The main things that you need to do before recovering data are to defragment your hard disc (because this makes for easier data recovery) and install a good data recovery program. These vary a lot in price and ability: the one that I use to recover clients' data is called Recuva. It is free.

Act quickly

The longer you wait after deleting your precious data files the more difficult it will be to get them back. This is because Windows uses the space left vacant by deleted files, because it can. This means that all activity on your computer's hard disc after your files have been deleted risks over-writing them. Once a file has been over-written it cannot be recovered. Over-writing is the process used by programs which delete a file permanently, because it works!

Restore to a different drive

Always restore your recovered data files to a different disc. The reason for this is that you cannot recover a file which has been over-written: recovering a file to the same disc always risks over-writing an important deleted file. For this reason I always suggest that you use a USB memory stick.

USB memory sticks are so cheap that you can always buy one just for this purpose. Again, this is because recovering a file to the original drive may well overwrite another file which, otherwise, could have been recovered successfully.

Further Information

Recuva www.piriform.com/recuva