Backup…Backup…Backup

I know we've all heard this before, but it is very true. When we talk about the backup procedure, we mean copying the files that you definitely want to have should your hard drive become unusable. There are many levels of backup and the correct amount of backup is that level that lets you sleep at night *(kind of like a well-balanced stock portfolio).*

In a perfect world we would not need to backup anything. Every time we turned our computer on, it would turn on without a hesitation or problems. And, there would never be cause to worry about viruses, spyware or any such malware, because they would not exist. Unfortunately this is not a perfect world and we have to be concerned with potential hardware and software problems. Hardware sometimes fails, and software problems and malware do exist. So, backup is protection against some hardware failures, namely hard drive failures, and backup is protection against software problems or an infection of malware. In either case not having your data and system backed up may force you to re-load your operating system and begin from a fresh start, and/or spend a lot of time reproducing the data that was lost.

Copy all the files ('My Documents' folder) you want to back up to an external hard drive. The amount of data to be backed up helps determine the backup media. For small amounts of data, a USB stick would work just fine. For large amounts of data, external hard drives are the best choice.

Data Backup
So, what exactly are we backing up?
1. All of your digital pictures. These are usually .jpg or .bmp file types
2. All of the data that you have created using "Office like" applications. Such as .doc, .xls, .ppt, .pps, .docx, .xlsx, file types.
3. All of the video files you have created or collected
4. All of the music files that you have bought, created, collected, or ripped from CD's.

How often to backup is the next decision. Basically, as soon as a file is created or changed, it is a candidate for backup. If during the day, there were a large number of files created or changed, then they are probably reason enough to backup at the end of the day. If there are very few changes from day to day, then daily backups are probably not necessary. With this philosophy, in the worst case scenario, all of your data is only one week old, and your important data is only one day old. This should let you sleep pretty well.

If you would like to submit a question or suggest a topic for future column consideration, please email your questions or comments to: info.vpcuc@gmail.com

The next monthly meeting of the Vernon PC Users' Club will be Tuesday, October 10th, at 6:30 PM in the cafeteria at the Schubert Centre.

We start off every meeting with a 'TANSQ' session. Come check us out!

Call Betty at 250-542-7024 or Grace at 250-549-4318 for more information.