

BASICS & BEYOND -- Session #15 -- May '09

Rollie Baumann – 895-2322 – slrollie@wbhsi.net

DELETING FILES –

When you delete a file on a hard drive, or flash drive, you really are not deleting the file, you are simply deleting the “reference point” or “address” of where the file is located on your drive. And, although we might “see” the file in the Recycle Bin the file remains on the drive until such time as it is overwritten by newer information that is saved to the drive. Even then only a portion of the file may have been overwritten, leaving the remainder of the original file available for recovery. And, interestingly, even if you format a drive with the normal formatting process, information that was on the drive may be partially or totally recovered with a professional recovery program.

If you have personal information, financial files, documents, passwords or other information that you want to delete, and you do not want the possibility of anyone ever recovering a file, you need to take additional steps to insure that the information is absolutely non-recoverable.

One way to accomplish this task is to use a program specifically designed to totally eliminate the file from the drive, not just its “name”, or “location”. **ERASER** is a *free* program that will do the trick. It is a very powerful program using highly sophisticated algorithms to delete a file. Actually, files are not deleted but are “overwritten”, and overwritten to a point that they can never be recovered. The method ERASER uses to overwrite a file exceeds the requirements mandated by the U.S. Dept. of Defense for file deletion.

Although the program sounds complicated ERASER is quite simple to use. The easiest method to erase a file is to open Windows Explorer, hi-lite a file, or folder, that you want to erase, right click on the file or folder and select “Erase” from the menu. A dialogue box will open asking you if you are sure that you want to erase the file. Click Yes, or NO. And, if you have deleted files in the past which may still be on your computer in “unused space” (i.e. they have not yet been overwritten) ERASER gives you the option of deleting all of the files contained in “unused space”. Read the Help file for information as to how to overwrite these areas.

ERASER, a *free* program, can be obtained at WWW.HEIDI.IE/NOTE/6 (Note that there is no “com” or “org” associated with this web address.)

REMEMBER - ERASER will permanently delete the file or folder you select. Once deleted it will NOT be recoverable, even with a professional recovery tool.

BACKUP, BACKUP, BACKUP –

I have throughout our 14 previous sessions ragged on you to backup any and all data that would be a disaster for you to loose, if you were to have a hard drive, or computer failure. I continue to feel that backing up data is still one of the most important functions in “computing”, and I strongly encourage you to do so. As such, I have come across a small *FREE* program, **Drive Backup 9.0 Express**, that will back up your entire hard drive, or portions thereof, to an external hard drive, a second internal hard drive, or to

DVD's. You can also create a "boot-up disk", or "boot-up flash drive" to use should you not be able to start your computer in the normal manner.

Although I have not personally used this program it has received excellent reviews and ratings from a number of computer magazines. And, it appears to be relatively easy to use. One note of caution here is that the free version will NOT do incremental backups. In other words, if you make changes to a specific file Paragon Express will not update that specific file. You would have to update (backup) that specific file yourself, or make another copy of the entire drive, or partition. What the program will do, however, is to eliminate the need to reload your entire Windows operating system and other programs, should you have a hard disk failure. To download go to www.paragon-software.com and click on "Downloads" and on the ensuing page click on "Free Downloads" and then select "**Drive Backup 9.0 Express for Windows**". Click "Run", when asked if you want to "Run" or "Save".

PASSWORD PROTECTION –

Do you have various passwords written down on little pieces of paper, which you then hide? Have you ever forgotten where you hid the little pieces of paper? Well, with a small *FREE* program called **KeePass** you can safely keep all of your passwords on your computer, ready to use when needed. KeePass encrypts the passwords you enter into the KeePass data base rendering them non-recoverable should your computer ever be compromised. You assign one "master password" to the program which will then allow you to enter KeePass and retrieve various other passwords. You **MUST** remember this "master password". Choose one that can not be easily broken, but choose one you can easily remember.

The program can also be placed onto a flash drive, making your passwords portable and available to use on any computer in which you plug in the flash drive. As an example, I put the KeePass program on a flash drive and then inserted my credit card numbers into the KeePass data base. I will take the flash drive with me when I travel and should a card become lost, stolen or compromised I will have all the information necessary to call and terminate the card. One could also store bank account numbers, and other sensitive information in the same manner, all safe and secure.

To download **KeePass** go to WWW.SNAPFILES.COM and when the Snap Files homepage comes up put "KeePass" (no quotes) into the search box at the top of the page, and click SEARCH. On the ensuing page click on KeePass and follow the directions. You can download the program onto your computer or direct it to download to your flash drive. Be sure to read all of the information contained in the Help file before using the program (Its a short read). You add new passwords to the data base by clicking on the icon on the tool bar, or you can do CTRL-Y to open the "new password" entry box.

HOUSEKEEPING --

Remember to run your Ad-Aware and SpyBot at least once each month. Also run Disk Cleanup followed by Disk Defragmenter at least once every couple of months. If you do not have MS Updates set to run automatically be sure and check weekly for new updates. Periodically check Startup under MS Services to see if there are new programs listed that you can eliminate on start up. (See Session # 14 notes for procedures on how to do this). Once a year take the cover off of your desktop computer and clean out the dust and grime. Blow the dust out of the power supply unit and from around your processor chip. A can of compressed air is very helpful for doing this. With the cover off start up your computer, if you can, and listen for any squeaks, moans and groans, a sure sign of an impending problem.

CHANGING YOUR WEB HOMEPAGE --

Don't like the web page that shows up every time you open your internet browser? There is a simple fix for this problem. In Internet Explorer go to a web page of your choice that you would like to use as your home page. Once it is open click on **TOOLS > INTERNET OPTIONS** on the tool bar and under the **GENERAL TAB / HOME PAGE** click **USE CURRENT** then click **APPLY** and **OK**. The next time your browser opens it will open to the new home page that you have selected.