

The Webmaster's Edge (<http://webmastersedge.net/>)

Pre-Format File Back Up Checklist.

- Clean up your **Desktop**. Figure out what items on your Desktop you need to keep and back them up.
- Check your “**My Documents**” folder and subfolders. Figure out which items to back up, or just back up the whole thing.
- Back up your **Favorites/Bookmarks**. This is an OFTEN overlooked item that many tend to forget to back up.
- Back up your **E-mail**. I may post some guides for doing this in various e-mail programs sometime in the near future.
- Back up your **E-mail Software Settings**. I may post some guides for doing this in various e-mail programs sometime in the near future.
- Back up your **E-mail Address Book**. I may post some guides for doing this in various e-mail programs sometime in the near future.
- Back up your **E-mail Filtering Rules**. I may post some guides for doing this in various e-mail programs sometime in the near future.
- Back up and/or download your **E-mail Software Plugins and Browser Software Plugins**.
- Back up your **Documents** that may not be located in your “My Documents” folder. It wouldn't hurt to do a search of your whole computer for XLS, DOC, PDF, ODS, and other files of that type.
- Backup your **Pictures and Photos**. Make sure to check the folders of any photo software you might be using.
- Backup your **Music and Movies!** If you use iTunes or similar software to download music and/or movies, make sure to back them all up!
- Backup your **Chat Conversations**. If you save your chat history then make sure to back it up!
- Backup your **Fonts!** This is an often overlooked item to backup, but important all the same. If you have downloaded fonts in the past, make sure to back up your fonts so that you don't have to spend a ton of time searching them out later on down the road.
- Backup and make sure that you have all of your **Product Keys and any Software Receipts**. It would be very unfortunate to format and then find that you don't have the key to activate a piece of software you rely on.
- Backup your **Save Files and Personalized Settings**. If you are running software that allows you to “save games” or have special configurations that you like, make sure to back up the configuration and save files so that you don't have to spend much time configuring the software when you get it back up and running.
- Backup and/or download your **Hardware Drivers and Patches**. It will be helpful if you have all the drivers that you need for your PC ready to go BEFORE you format, rather than hunting for them after you format when you REALLY need them. Most important are NIC and Modem drivers. Without these you may have trouble getting online to grab drivers you may have missed.
- Download **Software Installers** and then back them up! You'll thank me for this if you have the space to do so. Download installers such as Firefox, Thunderbird, OpenOffice, Flash, Acrobat Reader, WinSCP, Instant Messengers, and other such installers so that you don't have to worry about much of this after the format. Another important one to grab would be your Windows Service Packs so that you can have it ready to go and not spend hours updating Windows.
- Write down your **Network Settings or ISP Connection Settings**. After all, you'll need this to get back online and get anything you missed.
- Finally, check **every nook and cranny** of your hard drive for anything else you may have missed and back it up! If you have two drives that are similar in speed/space or have a better drive, it could behoove you to not delete the data off of your current main drive, and to use your other drive as your new main drive.