

LESSON 139

MS OUTLOOK - BACKING IT UP

Microsoft Outlook is the PIM (Personal Information Manager) of choice for most of us. Outlook manages our calendars, to-do lists, address books and for some of us, even our e-mail messages. As good as Outlook is, it lacks any viable system for backing up your valuable Outlook information. Here's what you need to know about backup for Outlook.

Outlook stores information in a data file called a "personal folder" file. It has a .pst extension. If you use Outlook 97, your .pst file is stored in the Windows folder. If you use Outlook 2000, that file is saved in the Windows\Local Setting\ApplicationData\Microsoft\Outlook folder.

Local Settings is normally a hidden file, so to find it using Explorer, you may have to select View from either Windows Explorer or My Computer and then select Folder Options. Click on the View tab and then click in the circle to the left of "Show all files" located below the "Hidden files" section. Click OK and close the Explorer or My Computer window.

The easiest way to back up all of your Outlook information is to copy your .pst file (in most cases Outlook.pst) to a Zip drive or to another hard drive if you have two drives. From Windows Explorer, drill down to your .pst file, right-click on the file and then select Copy. Now you can go to the drive where you want to place a copy of the .pst file. When the drive is highlighted, click on Edit and then select Paste, or just hold down the Ctrl key and press the V key.

Outlook lets you archive your data to a file called "Archive.pst" which places your oldest data into that file. You can, from Outlook, click on Tools and then on Options. Select the Other tab and click on the AutoArchive button. Now you can set your Outlook program to automate the Archive process so that the process runs every so many days.

Finally, you can use Outlook's Import/Export feature to back up your data. The Export feature copies data intact to a file, while Archive copies only old data to a file. To Export, open Outlook and click on file. Select Import and Export. The Import and Export Wizard will start.

Select "Export to a file" and click on Next. Now select "Personal Folder File (.pst)". Click Next. Now select "Personal Folders" at the top of the dialog box to back up all of your Outlook data. Make sure that the check box labeled "Include subfolders" is checked. Click on Next. Select a destination for the folder. Outlook labels the backup file "backup.pst", and you can set the destination by placing the drive letter before the destination file name. For example, if your Zip drive is drive R:, you would just type "R:\backup.pst" (without the quotes). It's a good idea to select "Do not export duplicate item" in the Options box. Finally, click on Finish and your Outlook data will be exported.



The nice thing about using Export is that you can choose to export any of the individual Outlook folders to export from. This lets you effectively back up just your Calendar folder or just your Contacts folder.

Please note that if you have problems exporting from Outlook 97, you can download a converter that will take care of the problem. Go to <http://officeupdate.microsoft.com/downloaddetails/outcvt.htm> to download the converter

In Lesson 140 I'll show you how to repair damaged Outlook files.

