Basic Windows Backup

Maintaining a recent backup of your important documents is vital to avoid work interruption. Data can delete or corrupt, or a laptop can be lost or stolen. Follow the steps in *Copy Files to USB Drive* below to learn how to quickly accomplish creating a backup. Additional help is provided to determine the size of a USB drive you might need and how to properly setup the drive if required to do so.
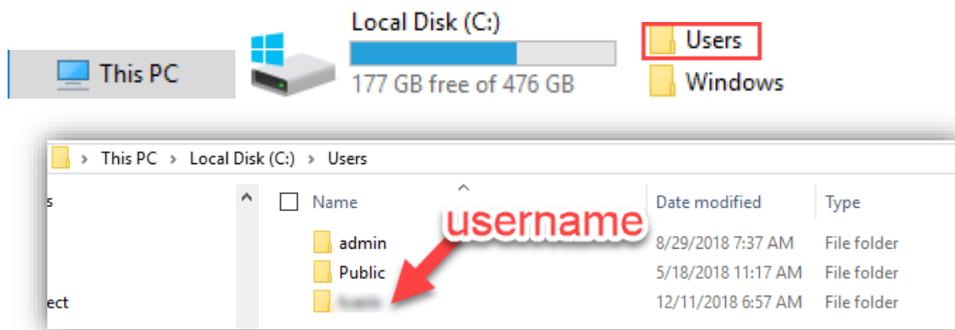
Prerequisites

- External Drive such as a USB Flash Drive with plenty of space

Copy Files to USB Drive

Follow these steps to copy files from your computer to a USB drive.

1. Insert your USB drive into a USB 3 port (USB 2 ports work too, but at slower transfer speeds).
2. Open File Explorer
3. Go to your user folder located under C:\Users\<username>

4. In your user folder, right-click and **Copy** (or Ctrl + C) the folder you would like to copy.

Tip: Most documents are saved in the Desktop or Documents folder. Take a moment to find where your important documents are stored.

5. Next, go to your USB drive. It is usually listed in the left margin of the File Explorer.
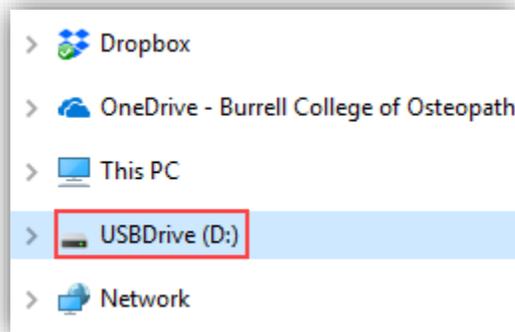
6. Once you have navigated to the USB drive, create a new folder and give it a name.

Tip: Suggested names: "Backup [date]" or "[date] backup"

7. Inside the newly created backup folder, right-click and **Paste** (or Ctrl + V) the folder you copied.
8. A window should appear with a progress bar and some information about what is being copied.
9. Once complete, a copy of your folder should exist on the external drive.
10. **Repeat steps 4 - 7** for every folder you wish to copy.

Tip: If you are comfortable with selecting multiple folders, you can reduce the amount of times you must copy and paste.

Determine Space Required (Optional)

This section explains how to determine the amount of space you require to back up your files.

1. Determine all the folders you wish to backup.
2. Open File Explorer and navigate to each folder.
3. Hover over the folder with your mouse **OR** right-click the folder and click on Properties.
4. With either method, a window will appear that states the *size* of the folder.
5. Add the sizes of all your folders together to determine the space required.

Type	Abbreviation	Amount of Previous
Bit	b	N/A
Byte	B	8 Bits
Kilobyte	KB	1,024 B
Megabytes	MB	1,024 KB
Gigabyte	GB	1,024 MB
Terabyte	TB	1,024 GB

Tip: Determine Backup Size Example

Let's say your Documents folder is 1.2 GB, your Desktop is 430 MB, and your Music folder is 32.7 GB.

1. First, convert all to the same unit. 1.2 GB and 3.27 GB becomes 1200 MB and 3270 MB respectively.

2. Add all three together:
$$\begin{array}{r} 1200 \text{ MB} \\ 430 \text{ MB} \\ + \underline{3270 \text{ MB}} \\ \mathbf{4900 \text{ MB}} \end{array}$$

3. Convert it back to highest unit applicable. 4904 MB becomes **4.9 GB** (round to nearest tenth if necessary).

4. You will require **at least 5 GB** of space on an external drive to copy this data.

Insert USB Drive and Format (Optional)

This section explains how to correctly plug-in a USB drive for optimal performance and how to format a drive **(FORMATTING A DRIVE WILL DELETE ALL DATA)**.

Plugging in a USB Drive

USB ports on a computer are not all identical. Most modern computers have USB 3 ports, which is usually signified by either a blue USB port or a SuperSpeed (SS) symbol. USB 3 ports provide 10-15x faster transfer rates than USB 2 ports, cutting the time it takes to transfer down dramatically.

Formatting a USB Drive (Advanced)

CAUTION: FORMATTING A DRIVE WILL DELETE ALL DATA.

It is best to copy any data currently on the drive to a safe location before proceeding.

Formatting a drive is normally not necessary as most USB drives work directly out of the box. However, if you are going to be using your drive between a Windows and Mac computer, or on an older computer running earlier version of Windows, you may consider first formatting to ensure compatibility.

1. Plug in your USB Drive
2. Locate your drive in File Explorer
3. Right-Click your drive and select Format
4. Select the File system type

Tip: File Systems

exFAT – Compatible with Windows and Mac.

NTFS – Compatible with older Windows PCs.

5. Leave all other settings alone.
6. Choose a Volume Label.
7. Check Quick Format.
8. Click Start (again, all data will be deleted)