

## How to Create a System Repair Disc and do a Backup & a System Restore

**What is a system repair disc?** It's a CD that has a boot sequence on it for booting when your system has serious errors on it. You make one yourself because most manufacturers and Microsoft don't include them any more. For XP – you were most likely given a disc but for Vista & 7 you probably have to create your own disc.

**How do I create a system repair disc?** (Similar for XP, Vista & 7) To create a system repair disk click on “**Start**” then “**Control Panel**”, then click “**System and Maintenance**” and then “**Backup and Restore**”. In the left pane click “**Create system repair disk**” and then follow the steps. If you are prompted for administrator's password type it next. In the left pane (for Win 7) click create a **System repair disc** & follow the steps. (For XP you should use “**Recovery Console**” by clicking “**R**” during boot up with your disc in the CD drive bay.

**Why backup?** If you have not done a system backup in over 6 months you need to update that ASAP (**BEFORE YOU HAVE A PROBLEM**). If you have never made a complete system backup then you need to buy a data stick of about 2 GB or more *or better still* use an external HDD to store the *system image* with all the data and software. Full system backups are better done to an external HDD or best of all – another internal HDD → not the same as a partitioned hard drive. You can save your backup to a 2<sup>nd</sup> computer and vice versa. DVDs are good for data backups only. If the drive you are saving your backup on is formatted using the NTFS file system (like your computer uses if it's Vista or Win 7 not XP which uses Fat32 system) and if your drive has enough disk space, then a **complete system image** of your programs, Windows, and all drivers and registry settings are also included in the backup. DVDs and smaller data sticks can't handle this complete system backup but will do backups of all data, videos, documents & email.

**What is a system image?** A system image is an exact copy of a drive. By default a system image includes the drivers required for Windows OS to run. It also includes Windows and your system settings, programs, and files. It is much larger than a backup of just your docs, pics, vids & email.

**How do you do a backup with a complete system image?** – Some computer manufacturers have their own backup manager & you could use that or use Windows backup manager. First connect the storage device (external HDD) via USB, then click – “*Start*” and then type in “backup” in the search space – Win 7. For XP go to *Control Panel – Accessories – System*. Follow the easy steps or you could click the white flag in Win 7 in the system toolbar to get to “*backup*”.

**Troubleshooting:** Windows 7 also gives you a troubleshooting wizard to follow to check problems when you first encounter them. Click “*Start*” – type

“*troubleshoot*” in the search space and choose the selection that best describes your trouble. If that doesn’t fix the problem try **system restore**.

**What is a System Restore?** – It’s an operation whereby you can return your computer’s operating system (OS) → XP, Vista, or 7 back to a point in time when the computer was functioning properly. (Sometimes it actually fixes the problem).

**What does it do exactly?** – First of all it captures a system “picture” taken on a daily basis when your computer was working, so that when an OS disturbance happens you have a good copy of the *system* files to which you can return & do a restore.

**Does it restore all files?** – Nope. It only changes your **system** programs and its files back to another day which you choose from a calendar → XP or from a list → Vista & 7. It doesn’t touch documents that you have stored in folders. They neither get destroyed nor improved. However any files that were created but not saved could be lost into oblivion.

**Is Sys Restore like Backup?** No. Backing up includes all your documents, email, audio and video files (if you choose them). Sys Restore however, does not alter docs, audio, video, email – only the heart of OS → i.e. important *windows system* files.

**How do I do a System Restore?** Save all files you had open & close all running programs. Then – click *Start – All Programs – Accessories – System Tools – System Restore*. Sys Restore wizard opens & takes you through the steps. XP, Vista and Win7 are similar except that XP uses a calendar whereas the latter 2 have saved points done daily & before software was installed – for ex: before Windows patches and software updates are installed in a list – restore points are made automatically. Vista and 7 can detect when you are about to make changes to the system registry and so makes restore points for you. For XP you have to do a sys restore manually before you install new programs.

**How do I know which day/install point to choose?** You don’t really. You just guess at which day it last worked before you mangled your computer. Click “*next*” after you pick the day and cross your fingers.

**What happens next?** Your computer needs to shut down to do its house cleaning and then it will restart with a healthy system minus the software that botched the registry. Any recent software you installed after the restore point will have been completely removed.

**What if that didn’t fix the trouble?** You can choose to reverse the system restore and choose a different, earlier restore point to do it again or you can restore your computer to the **full backup** you saved to a large data stick or

external HDD. You have one made, don't you? And you are doing ongoing updates to that backup too, right? For XP use either *Acronis* or *Karen's Replicator* – both which are on our club stick.

**What if my computer doesn't even boot up?** Check Charlie's 2008 demo on *System Restore* for some extra info on uninstalling and going into "*Safe Mode*" under the heading "*System Restore*". If all else fails you can always boot using your system repair boot CD → Vista & 7 or from "*Recovery Console*" on your Win XP CD. Make sure to label and properly store yours so you've got it when disaster happens.

Good luck!