Transferring Data

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Moving data between your old and new PC has never been so simple. This guide shows you how with File and Settings Transfer Wizard

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Having decided to upgrade to a newer PC, the euphoria of being the proud owner of a spanking new system can suddenly be cut short. The problem is, there's all that data that needs to be transferred from your old machine to your new one. It can be difficult trying to decide which files and folders are to be copied over, and then there are the program settings for the individual applications that you have installed. Take a moment to think about the other items too, including email messages and account information, not to mention your Internet connection settings. All these will need to be moved from one PC to the other. If you're in the position of upgrading to a Windows XP system then you should make full use of the 'File and Settings Transfer Wizard.' This built-in utility makes light work of moving important data and settings from one PC to another.

The File and Settings Transfer Wizard will work with any Windows operating system. It will enable you to transfer data from Windows 95 upwards, restoring files and settings in the both the Home and Professional Editions of Windows XP. Your data can be moved using a variety of methods. For example, you can use a direct connection between the two PCs, perhaps a network or a cable link. Alternatively, you can create a file that contains all the transferable data and save it to a hard drive partition or removable media such as a recordable CD/DVD or Zip disk.

Full control
The settings within the wizard enable you to back up as much or as little of your existing data as you want. Not only will you be able to transfer your files and folders, but it's also possible to incorporate individual user settings. Details of desktop display, wallpaper and themes, folder settings and Internet connection information can all be saved. You can also copy over elements of Internet Explorer that you'll require on your new PC. These include Favorites, cookies and security certificates. Information contained within Outlook and Outlook Express, such as email settings and address books can also be transferred. However, if you've created Identities in Outlook Express, any messages and folders won't be copied over separately. Instead, all messages will end up being grouped together.

One aspect of the File and Settings Transfer Wizard that you'll find particularly useful, enables Registry settings and preferences from applications to be transferred. It works well for both Microsoft and non-Microsoft programs. Should the wizard encounter an application that it's unable to deal with then you'll be informed accordingly.

Getting started
In order to transfer data from an old PC to your new system you'll need to have your original Windows XP installation CD to hand. When the menu appears, choose 'Perform Additional Tasks' and select 'Transfer Files and Settings.' Click Next and under 'Select a Transfer Method' you'll have to choose how the information is to be copied over. Having both machines on a network is the easiest method of transferring your data. Without

some kind of direct connection you should select 'Floppy drive or other removable media'. This will enable you to use media such as a recordable CD/DVD.

With your chosen method selected, click Next and decide exactly want you want to back up. Select 'Both files and settings' as it's best to be as thorough as possible and remember to check the option that will enable you to make your own selections. On the next screen you'll see specific files, folders and settings that are to be backed up. Leave everything selected unless you're sure there's something there that you don't need. The default selections will ensure that the items, My Documents and My Pictures are selected for back up. However, you'll need to make sure that any folders you've created are included in the transfer process. To do this click Add Folder and Add File and select exactly what you want. Once you're sure you've got everything you need for the transfer click on Next and wait while the information is collected from your system. This may take a while if there's a lot of content coming over from your old PC.

Don't worry if the amount of data you're transferring exceeds the capacity of the removable media you've decided to use. The File and Settings Transfer Wizard will automatically span the backed up data over as many disc sets that you require. This will enable you to restore the information with ease. With the transfer of data completed, click on Finish. Now you're ready to restore the data on your new PC. Having got this far you're probably wondering if this Transfer Wizard could be used as a regular back-up tool, even though its intended use is to transfer data from one PC to another. Although, Windows XP comes with its own dedicated back-up utility, the File and Settings Transfer Wizard is ideal if you want to back up specific items and system configuration settings.

Using the File and Settings Transfer Wizard

* Place the original Windows XP CD in the drive of your old PC, choose 'Perform Additional Tasks' and choose 'Transfer Files and Settings' then click Next. Select Old PC then under 'Select a Transfer Method' choose how you want to copy the info.
* If space of media capacity is at a premium then Settings only should be your preferred option. The Files only option covers specific folders including the Desktop and My Documents. So, ideally you should choose 'Both files and settings'.
* Choose to select from a 'Custom list of files' and you can click Add Setting, Add Folder, Add File and Add File Type, to include your own items. Having selected all the items to be transferred, click Next and wait for the process to complete.
* With everything now backed up it's time to move over to the Windows XP machine. Click Start -> All Programs -> Accessories -> System Tools -> File and Settings Transfer Wizard. Select the New computer option, click Next and wait.
* Choose the final option 'I have already collected my files and settings from my old computer' and click Next. Select the location of the stored files whether it's cable, removable media or drive location and click Next.
* It's not possible to be selective with the info that you import on to your new machine. All the data and application configuration settings will be transferred in one go. If there's anything you don't need you'll have to delete it afterwards