

Synovative Technology

The Home of Do-It-Yourself PC Maintenance

April 2009 Newsletter

So you didn't get instructions on how to use the application ...

There are times when you come face-to-face with a PC application feature you have not seen before. Do not worry! Thanks to Apple Corporation, most applications today have a very good help system. For applications with menu bars, the help system is usually under the right most menu choice. It usually is titled "Help ..." Click on it and you will usually find a search capability that will let you locate the use of Keywords within the Help file. Use it like a Google search. Give it a try the next time you are stuck and wondering how to get that application to do something.

Does your PC seem slow?

If your PC is running XP and you have less than 1 GB of memory or your PC is running Vista and you have less than 2 GB of memory, then more memory may allow it to run faster. To check on your system's memory and the possibility of adding more simply surf out to:

<http://www.crucial.com>

Run their PC scan and it will tell you what you have and what your options are. They sell memory at very good prices. If you are comfortable changing PC memory, then consider buying and installing some yourself. If the report suggests more memory will fit and you are NOT comfortable changing PC memory, call your local PC stores, Best Buy, Staples, etc. to find a good price from someone who will also install it for you.

Updates to Tech Notes

A new tech note has been added to Synovative.com. The new note is called "**How to Configure a second SOUP userid on the same PC**". It can be found on the Tech Note page.

Backup and Shutdown

It has been obvious since the first documents "disappeared" from a PC hard drive that a scheme to bring them back was needed. It is important to remember that even with a backup scheme in place it is always possible to lose data.

In professional Information Technology (IT) circles the scheme that saves copies of key data files is referred to as Backup and Recovery. Complete Backup and Recovery can be a daunting task. This task can be one that even IT professionals mess up from time to time. SOUP Backup & Shutdown was designed to garner most (but not all) of the Backup and Recovery benefits while providing a simple scheme for PC users. The best time for Backup is before the machine is turned off. Backup & Shutdown makes that easy. When your work with the PC is done, run Backup and Shutdown to collect a backup and then automatically shutdown (or logoff) your PC.

Most SOUP Backup & Shutdown design features have been driven by the cost and size of available hard drives for use as a second, backup drive in the PC. Our design price point for the drive has been about \$100. Over the years the size of these drives has greatly increased in this \$100 price category. It is now over 500 gigabytes. In addition, the cost of a Local Area Network attached file server has dropped to under \$400. At this price one can get 500 gigabytes of storage that is capable of being shared for individual backup for each desktop and laptop user on the same network. In addition, with Windows XP, it became easy to add an external USB hard drive to act as the "second drive" repository for backup copies.

Early PC systems had but one hard drive. PC users first started to protect themselves by creating a second copy of their files on diskettes or, when the size of the file exceeded the capacity of the diskette, they would keep a second copy on their hard drive. This would protect them from application errors and simple erasures. It would not protect them from a hardware failure of the actual hard drive.

Synovative's early Backup and Recovery required an additional, internal hard drive. The initial design was to save copies of key documents, Internet favorite bookmarks and application .INI (configuration) files on a daily basis in a 3 day rotation. Documents copied had to reside within the My Documents folder or within a folder within the My Documents folder. The backup copies were kept on the second hard drive, the originals were left on the first hard drive. This reduced the impact of a drive hardware failure to an acceptable level. More permanent, but also not 100% reliable, solutions include

burning files and folders to CD or DVD media. CDs and DVDs, however, have low capacities and are usually too small to hold today's PC data requirements.

Documents erased from your My Documents folder would have at least 2 copies on the second drive for recovery. **It is important to note that once a file/folder is deleted from My Documents it may not be recoverable after 2 days.**

With the increase in size of hard drives, the next major addition to the Backup & Shutdown scheme was to keep a monthly copy. Monthly backups have been implemented for several years. Some of you have noticed that with the addition of monthly backups your backup hard drive has slowly filled up. New, bigger, better hard drive replacements are one answer. Those with a router (and thus a local area network created by the router) can also save these backups to other PCs with space available on their backup drive. In addition, a new solution is now available: a NAS (Network Attached Storage device).

Network Attached Storage (NAS) devices are available to us at attractive prices. A fully redundant 500 Gigabyte drive is available in the marketplace for about \$400 (Western Digital 1Tb World Book.) The NAS becomes an attractive repository as it can be configured to keep a mirror image of the 500 GB drive on its second 500 GB drive, thus providing backup of data from routine backups as well as Monthly backups. The chance of losing data has been reduced, but NOT eliminated. It is also capable of sharing its storage among multiple PCs, both wired and wireless, on the same local area network. It can be easily placed near and connected directly to a port in your router and shared among all wired and wireless PCs. Once again, the size of inexpensive hard drives and NAS file servers has allowed for backup across the LAN.

The SOUP Backup and Shutdown current design takes advantage of large, inexpensive hard drives as well as NAS hardware. On the software side it provides a scheme to accommodate music, picture and video files in the SOUP spirit of efficiency and simplicity. These very large files with low modification rates can consume large amounts of backup storage if multiple copies are kept. This would happen in older versions of Backup and Shutdown and would easily gobble up space without need. The current version of Backup and Shutdown will save only ONE copy of these multimedia directories. Care must be taken in this approach to have the approximate date in your folder's name to assure unique names in the backup repository. As there is now only one copy of these files, it is possible to "save" them, delete the original folder/file, create a new folder/file use the same name as before and, after running backup, the original backup folder/file may get overwritten and lost. **Do not re-use folder names within your media folders.** Adding an approximate date to the folder names of these multimedia files should prevent this from happening.

Other Synovative menu choices include Backup Catalog and Backup Log. Recovery can be made by using the Backup Catalog menu selection. The Backup Log selection will display the log created by the last backup performed.

Get Organized Now!

First, get organized. Backup and recovery will work better if your files are organized into unique folders. Unique folder names are easily created by appending the month and year to the customary folder name. For example, if the normal folder name for your pictures is "Trip to Italy", try changing it to "Trip to Italy - May 2006". With the approximate date in the folder name it becomes highly unlikely that you will use the same name twice.

If appropriate, use the manual configuration option. After you run SOUP Configuration and setup BSD, you will notice a folder in My Documents. It is called BSD Input. It contains 4 folders named: Do Not Copy, files, folders and sub trees.

Entries to these folders are shortcuts created that point to a file or folder. The Files folder contains shortcuts to individual files that need to be backed up. The Folders folder contains shortcuts to folders where only the files in the folder are to be copied. Folders within the folder are ignored. The sub trees folder is where you place shortcuts to folders where the files and all folders within the original folder are to be copied. In the Do Not Copy folder you can place shortcuts to folders that you do not want BSD to copy.

What is the current version of SOUP?

SOUP 9.5.15 is the latest version. If you are not running this version, we strongly suggest that you run the SOUP Web Update Utility to get it. IF you have any issues getting this update, simply uninstall your version of SOUP and download the current version from the Download page of the Synovative web site.

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Contact Tech Support, using the Request for Support program, if you have any issues.

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