Using Microsoft SyncToy to Automate Backups

Downloading and Installing Microsoft SyncToy

SyncToy is one of the many PowerToys offered by Microsoft for Windows XP. You can find a list of these utilities by visiting the site below.

http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/powertoys/xppowertoys.mspx

Click on the link on the right side for Microsoft SyncToy and you'll be sent to its download page. Click on the Download button and save the Setup.msi file to your desktop.

Once downloaded, find the installation file called Setup.msi on your desktop and double-click on it to install. Once installed SyncToy will be listed under All Programs.

Using SyncToy with Your Backup Device

Make sure you have connected your backup device to your PC and it shows up in My Computer correctly. Also, make a note of the drive letter or network path to your device. We will use this drive letter in SyncToy to tell it where to backup your data.

Open SyncToy and Configure Items to Backup

Find SyncToy under All Programs and click on it to open, you should see a screen similar to the one below.

Click on "Create New Folder Pair" to start adding items to backup. The Left Folder is where the data is currently located (usually on your hard drive, drive c or other known drive letter), while the Right Folder is the drive letter (and directory) of your external hard drive, usb drive, or other backup device.

Click on the Browse option and find the folder you want to backup on your hard drive. In this example, we are trying to backup the Favorites folder under the logged in user. As a note, in Windows XP, the Favorites folder for a particular user will generally be **C:\Documents and Settings\User Name\Favorites**, where "User Name" is replaced with the actual name of the logged in user.

Once we have chosen what to backup, in this case the Favorites folder, we have to tell it where to backup.

After clicking Browse for the Right Folder, choose the Drive Letter for your backup drive. In the example, we are backing up the data to Drive J.

You'll want to organize the data being backed up. A good way to do this is to create separate folders for each type of data we are saving. First, we'll create a folder called Backup. We do this by clicking on the "Make New Folder" button, then right-clicking on this new folder and choosing Rename. Type "Backup" (without the quotes) as the name for the new folder.
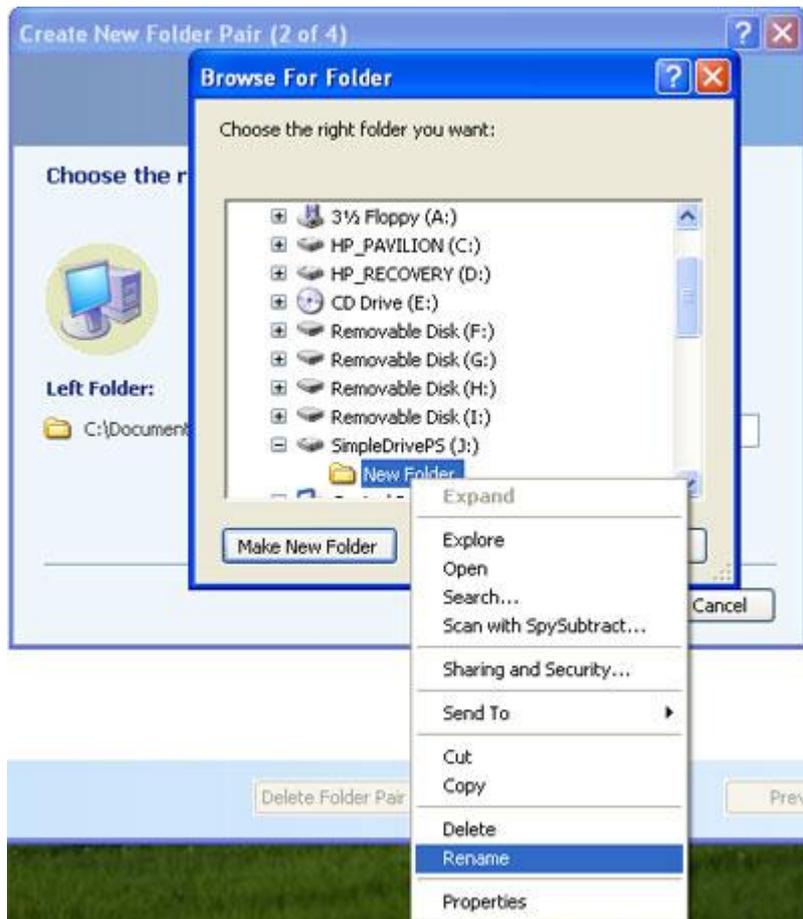
In this example, we'll make another folder under Backups for the Favorites List. Remember to Right-click on the Folder and rename it to Favorites (or whatever data you are backing up).
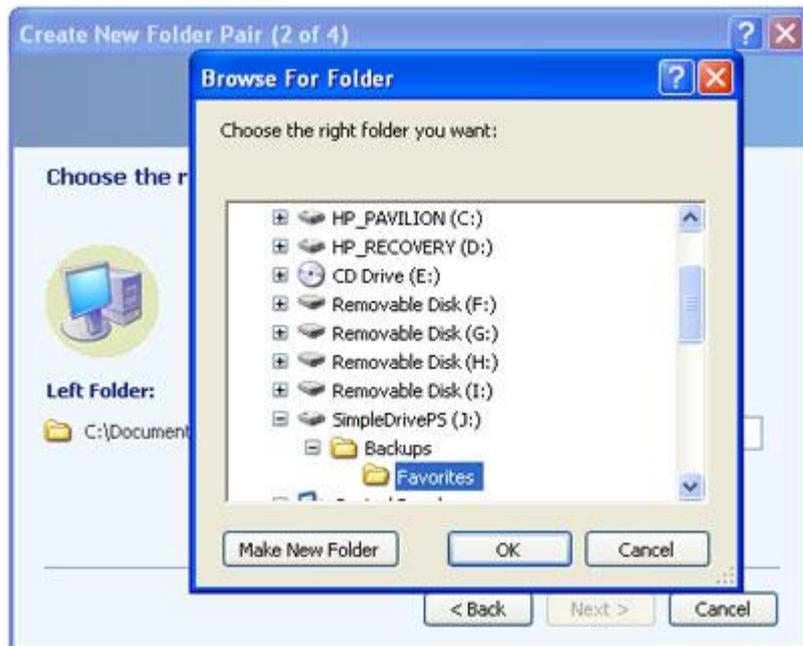
After Clicking OK, your screen should look similar to the one below. Click Next to continue.

Now, you need to choose how you want to backup the information. You can perform the following tasks between two folders:

- **Synchronize**: New and updated files are copied both ways. Renames and deletes in one folder is repeated on the other.
- **Echo**: New and updated files are copied left to right. Renames and deletes on the left are repeated on the right.
- **Subscribe**: Updated files on the right are copied to the left is the file name already exists on the left.
- **Contribute**: New and updated files are copied left to right. Renames on the left are repeated on the right. Similar to Echo, except there are no deletions.
- **Combine**: New and updated files are copied both ways. Renamed and deleted files are ignored.

I would recommend using Echo for most tasks, so that your data is backed up to your device and changes on your hard drive are "echoed" on your backup.
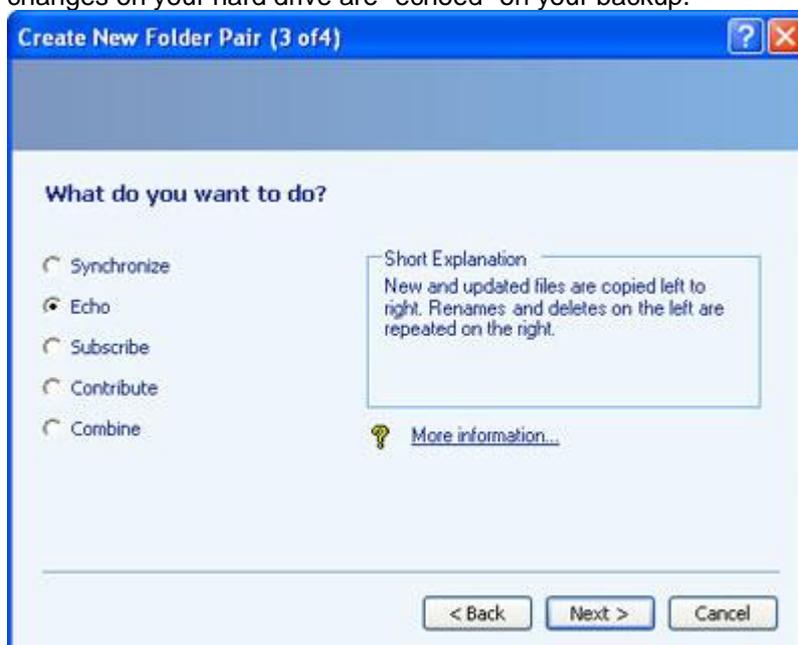
After choosing how to backup, you'll need to name the folder pair. In this case, we'll call it Favorites.
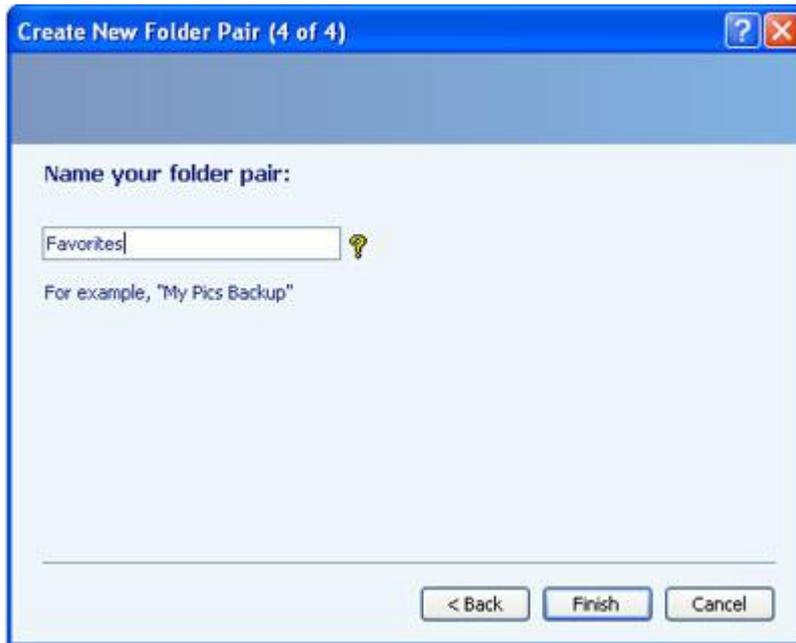
After clicking on Finish, your screen should resemble the one below. You can continue to create Folder Pairs in this same manner for each type of data you want backed up.


I would recommend backing up the following data for starters in Windows XP. The usual location of these items on your hard drive is shown in parentheses.

- Windows Address Book (C:\Documents and Settings\User Name\Application Data\Microsoft\Address Book)
- Favorites (C:\Documents and Settings\User Name\Favorites)
- My Documents Folder (C:\Documents and Settings\User Name\My Documents)
- Email - Outlook Express, MS Outlook, or other mail program
  - To Find the location of your Outlook Express email, open Outlook Express, click on Tools, Options, and Maintenance (See the image below for a screenshot of this

page). Then click on the Store Folder button to show you the path where your emails are located. The normal location is C:\Documents and Settings\User Name\Local Settings\Application Data\Identities\Identity Number\Microsoft\Outlook Express.

o To Find the location of your MS Outlook email, click on Start, Search, All Files and Folders, and search for the wildcard *.pst   Backup the location where this .pst file is located, usually this is located at C:\Documents and Settings\User Name\Local Settings\Application Data\Microsoft\Outlook
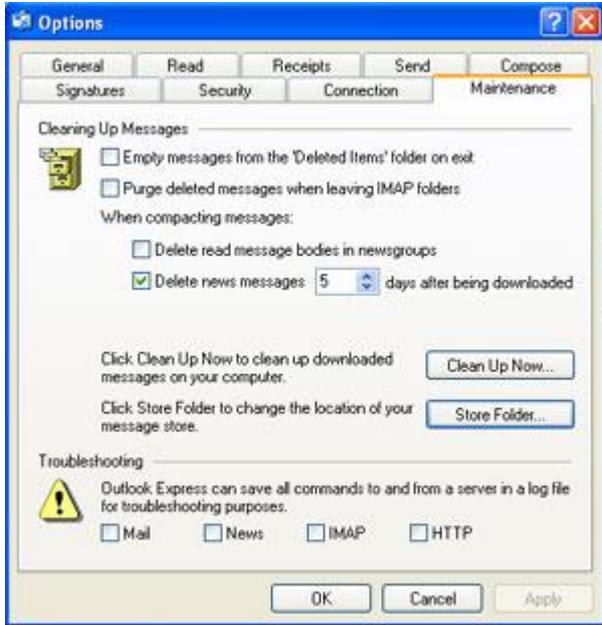
Once you have designated all your folder pairs to back, you can choose Run All to perform the backup.
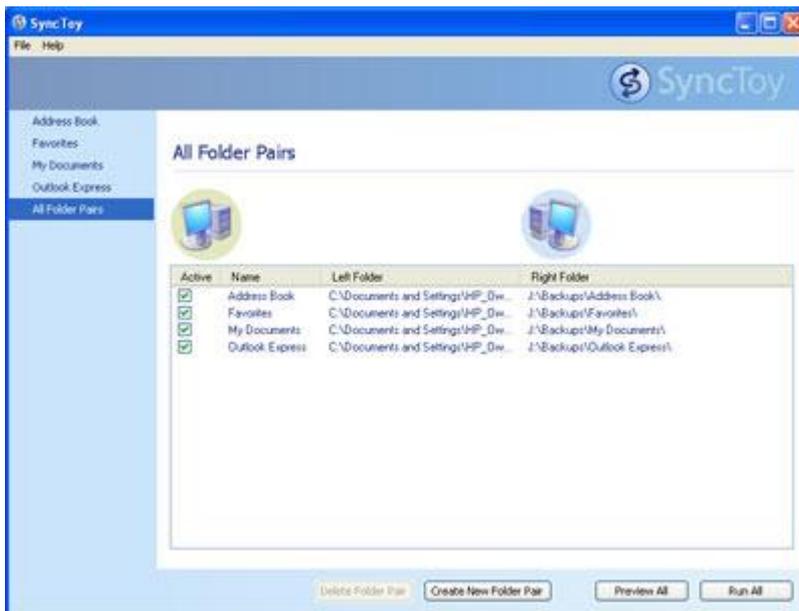
After backing up the data, you will be shown a summary screen displaying how many files were backed up successfully and if any failed to be backed up.
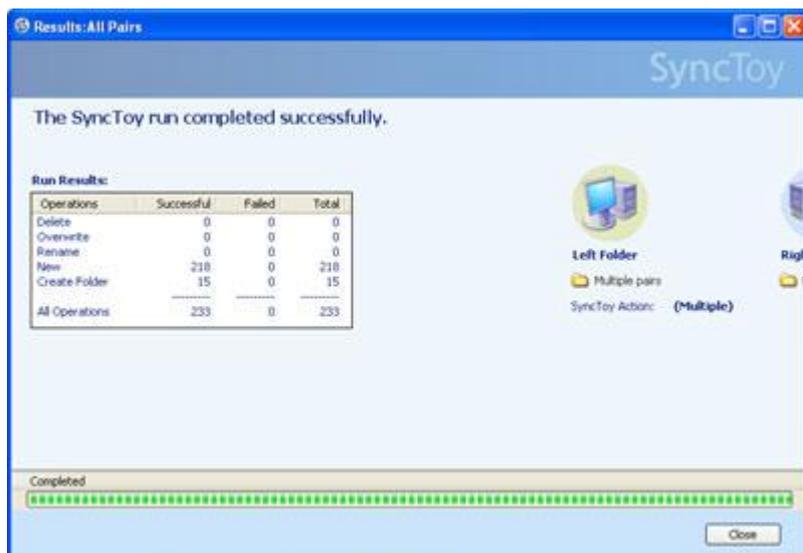
Ok, that's it we have backed up your important data, however we are missing one important step. Scheduling the backup so we wont forget to do it.

Open Task Scheduler and Schedule SyncToy to Run Daily

1) Click on Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Scheduled Tasks to open up Task Scheduler

2) Click on Add Scheduled Task, Click on Next

3) Scroll down and click on the SyncToy option, click on Next

4) Under "Perform this Task" choose Daily and click Next

5) Now choose a start time, I would recommend either a time when you first turn on your computer or late in the evening when you are done for the day. Choose Daily again for when to perform this task and choose the current date then click Next.

6) Here's the tricky part, in order for the task to be scheduled, you'll need to tell the scheduler which user to perform the task for and the username for that profile. Enter the username and password for this profile in this section and click Next.

7) On the next screen check the box for "Open advanced properties for this task when I click Finish" and then click Finish

8) When the Advanced Properties box opens, look under the Task tab for the Run line. It should look similar to the one below.

"C:\Program Files\Microsoft\SyncToy\SyncToy.exe"

Make the Run command look like the following to allow SyncToy to run all the folder pairs.

"C:\Program Files\Microsoft\SyncToy\SyncToy.exe" -R

9) Click Ok and close the Scheduled Tasks window.

Congratulations! You have now setup your computer to backup important information like your email, favorites, address book and My Documents directory to your removable or external backup device on a daily basis using Microsoft SyncToy.