Migrating from one LTU Laptop to another LTU Laptop
Some tips from Scott Schneider – July 3rd, 2003   (Updated slightly 07/17/07)

Based on my experiences in moving a great deal of data/settings from laptop to laptop, I've tried to keep track of where everything is, and how to make the transition as "painless" as possible. If I've missed anything, please let me know - I've tried to cover all the major topics. This may not be absolutely complete, but it should cover the most important issues. I welcome any comments/suggestions!

A) What kinds of files/settings should you move?

With the exception of files you have on the "M: drive", and emails that are stored on the server – you have to move any other data files/documents to the new laptop. You may have other settings that you might want to move also. Finally, there are things like the Favorites (bookmarks in Internet Explorer) and your Contacts list in Outlook Express (your Address Book) – these need to be moved also. So, the list would be:

- User-created documents/files
- Favorites (Internet Explorer bookmarks)
- Contacts list (Address book in Outlook Express)
- Locally stored email messages (if you have set up local folders – usually it is stored on the server).
- User settings (desktop shortcuts, etc.)

## B) Where can I find all the various items listed above?

Windows has a "My Documents" folder, and most of the windows-based (especially Microsoft products) default to this folder when you go to save files/documents – this is easy to find. Sometimes, programs have their own place where files are stored – these might be a little more difficult to find. You also might create your own folders in which to store your files – these should be easy, since you created them. As you start the migration process, you should write down a list of locations of the files (or move them to a central place as you find them … such as to the "My Documents" folder).

How do you find the non-"My Documents" and non-"I created the folder" files? Try opening all the various applications you use, and go to the File menu and select OPEN … see where the application points you on the hard drive … if it is NOT the "My Documents" folder, then write down that location, and go back and look there with the Windows Explorer and find any files you want to save. If you know the name of some of your files, you could search the hard drive by going to the Start menu, and selecting SEARCH then "For Files and Folders", and type in the search name.

There is a folder called "Documents and Settings", and within that folder, there are several "user" folders (one of them will have your username … such as S_SCHNEIDER in my case). Under that folder you will find some of the other pieces we need (along with some junk we don't want). Now, you SHOULD be using your username when you log into the machine (as opposed to using Administrator). [If you are using Administrator (or switching back and forth) – then you have to keep track of the "administrator" folder in the "Documents and Settings" folder also.]
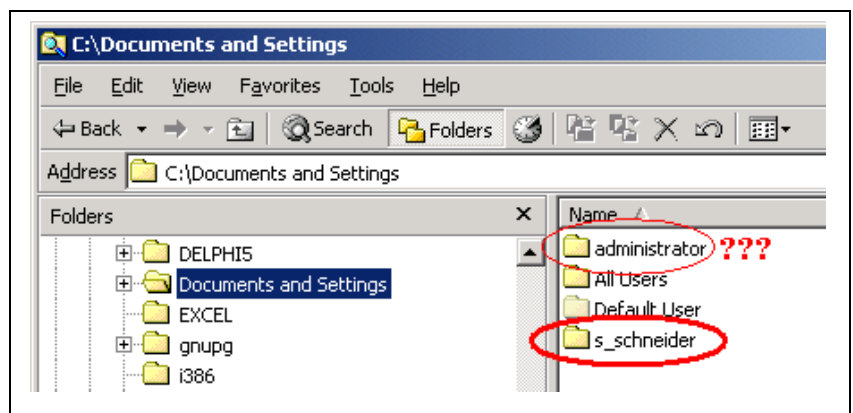
There are three important folders in this part of the hard drive, Address book, Favorites, and locally stored email folders from Outlook Express. Here are some images showing the locations of these folders:
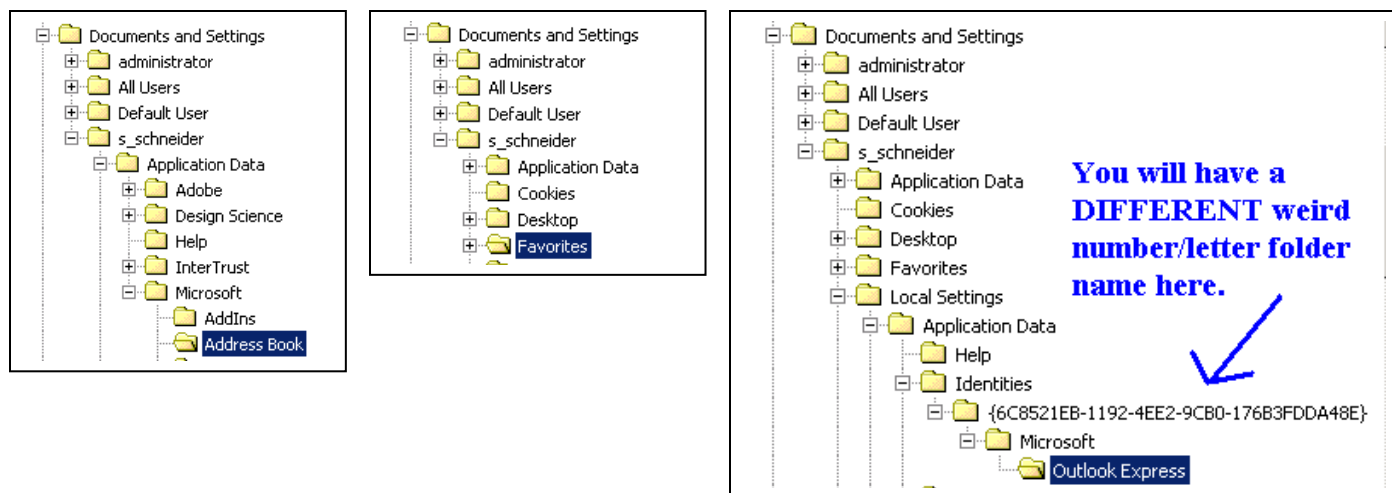
C) What things do I NOT need to backup?

Any of the application programs that were pre-installed (or that you installed) don't need to be backed up. For example, maybe you installed Netscape – you'll have to just re-install it on the new machine, you can't copy the files over and put them in place – they need to be "installed". If you downloaded an application (like with a zip file, or an .exe file that installs itself), make sure you back up that file (or you will have to download it again for the new machine).

Most of us leave our email stored on the server itself (if we have created sub-folders in mail, they are all showing up under the IMAP.LTU.EDU location in Outlook Express). If that is the case, you need only "re-connect" to the server from the new machine, and all your mail will be there. [The exception is if you stored some mail locally ... that will be covered below.]

D) How can I backup my documents/files (excluding the Address book, Favorites, or mail)?

Assuming you have found them all, based on the ideas of the previous section, you need to copy them off the laptop, and then back down to the new laptop. Collecting them all to the My Documents folder is probably a great idea (all in one place). But, where should you copy that? If you have room on the M: drive, you could copy it over to there. The files might fit on a floppy disk (or several), but you might have files that are too big. If you have a zip drive connected to the laptop (or can borrow one) – that would be an ideal way – holds at least 100 megs per disk (or 250 megs, depending on the drive) – that should be more than sufficient.

Check with you friendly neighborhood Department Laptop Coordinator (Jim Nanny, Kevin Kelch, or myself) for more help in terms of "where to temporarily put all the stuff I want to backup".

E) How can I back up my Favorites (bookmarks in Internet Explorer)?

There are two ways to do this: a) export them to a file, and copy the file over to the new machine, and then re-import again, or b) copy the Favorites folder to the new machine. That second way is probably the easiest (just copy the whole folder – but, you lose the "order" of the favorites), but if you want to see how to do it through the export/import, you can see this webpage:
http://qbx6.ltu.edu/s_schneider/howto/ie_favorites.shtml

F) How can I back up my Address Book (Outlook Express contacts)?

Again, there is an easy way, or a more complicated (but feature-rich) method. The easy way is to find your address book (look in the Address Book directory shown above) – it will be a file with your username, and the extension ".WAB" {Windows Address Book}. Copy that file to the new machine (in the same location).

Now, if you want a more detailed view of the address book (and sharing contacts/groups with other people via the address book), take a look here: http://qbx6.ltu.edu/s_schneider/howto/oe_addbook.shtml

G) How can I back up any locally-stored email messages?

Most people have their email stored on the server (and probably most of it in the "Inbox"). But, in case you have created local folders and stored mail there, you will want to copy them over. [It wouldn't hurt to copy this mail folder anyway, just in case.] But, unlike the Favorites/Address book, we can't just copy the folder over to the new machine (we have to "import" the files), but we can copy it up from the old one. There are some directions on how to do this here: http://qbx6.ltu.edu/s_schneider/howto/oe_import.shtml

H) What about other miscellaneous settings – can I store them, just in case?   (Optional!)

There are some settings that get stored all over the hard drive (and in the registry) – it would take a book to explain all of it … but, just so we don't lose anything we might need later, we can at least make a copy of the Documents and Settings folder. Now, this could be quite large, but there are ways to shrink it.

When we browse on the Internet, there is a lot of junk that gets accumulated in temporary files, we should delete all this junk first – it will create a much smaller total size of the Documents and Settings folder. We can do most of it within the Internet Options (one way to reach it is through Internet Explorer).

Launch Internet Explorer,
  Go to the Tools menu, select Internet Options.
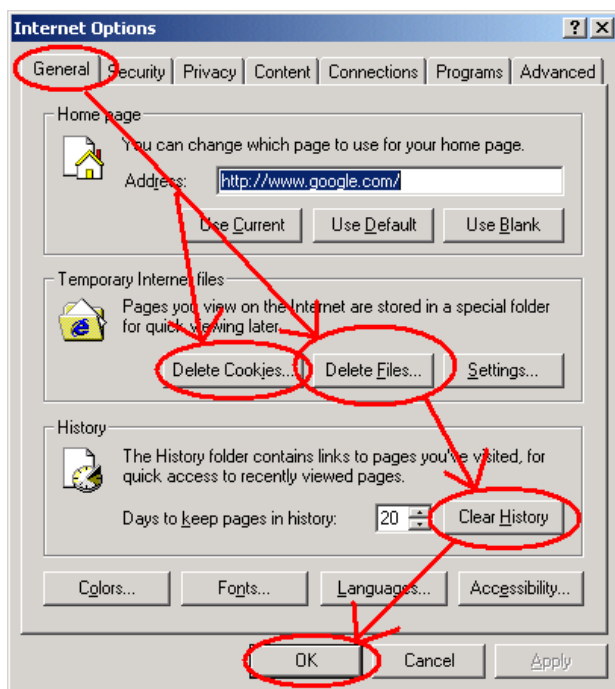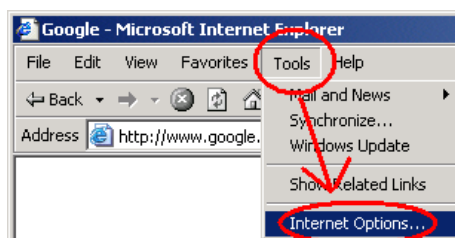
Select the GENERAL tab, and follow the directions shown to the left. You may get other dialog boxes popping up – choose the most logical answer.

This technique clears out a lot of the junk, and is also the way to preserve some privacy (so people can't see where you have been on the Internet).

There is also a TEMP folder located here: C:\Documents and Settings\USERNAME\Local Settings\TEMP (Obviously look for your username.) You can delete all the files in that Temp directory. Then, assuming you have space, you could copy the entire Documents and Settings folder for safekeeping (you would probably never need the settings there, but wouldn't hurt to have a backup copy).

I) Conclusion

I've tried to outline some of the major issues in migrating from one laptop to another. If you find mistakes, or have suggestions, please send them to me at s_schneider@ltu.edu.

Many other laptop-related tips are located here: http://qbx6.ltu.edu/s_schneider/laptop.htm