

# BACKUP ADVICE: "ACRONIS TRUE IMAGE HOME..", "MACRIUM REFLECT FREE", "CLONEZILLA", ETC.

## SUMMARY:

Backup of data files on hard drives is an activity that every computer user needs to do. It can take many forms and there is lots of good software for doing it. Here is some time and cost-saving advice for you to consider.

## ADVICE ABOUT "ACRONIS TRUE IMAGE..", ETC.

We love the not-free "Acronis True Image.." software product.

However, the nature of computer backups is that there are lots of "gotchas" and technical hurdles for you to surmount before you can succeed with it.

Gene Barlow's "[User Group Relations](#)" company provides members of computer user groups with deep discounts for the purchase of "Acronis.." products. His Web site is also a great source of technical information about these software products.

In "standalone" mode (when you boot up a computer with a "Rescue Media" CD), "Acronis True Image Home 2012" cannot access most models of external "USB 3" hard drives when they are connected with a "USB 3" cable to a "USB 3" port on your computer. The workaround for this problem is to use a "USB 2" cable to attach "USB 3" devices to your computer. When you use a "USB 2" cable to connect then to your computer, the "standalone mode" version of "Acronis.." can access "USB 3" devices without any problems.

# BACKWARD INCOMPATIBILITY WITH BACKUP IMAGES MADE BY PREVIOUS VERSIONS OF "ACRONIS.."

When we attempted to use backup images that were created with "Acronis True Image Home 2009" to perform restores with the bootable "Acronis True Image Home 2011" "Rescue Media" CD (or the "Acronis True Image 2012" "Rescue Media" CD), most of these restores failed.

Most of our attempts to back up USB flash drives (thumb drives) with "Acronis.." have failed. We now use the free "[Clonezilla](#)" LiveCD when we need to create a backup image of a USB flash drive: "Clonezilla" has always successfully backup up and restore USB flash drives for us.

## "ACRONIS.." INCOMPATIBILITY ISSUES WITH SPECIFIC COMPUTER HARDWARE

Francis stated that for any computer that he encounters (and he deals with computers up to 13 years old!), there is a 30 percent chance that he has to purchase and use an older version of "Acronis True Image Home.." instead of the current version, in order to successfully back up and restore the computer. He stated that Gene Barlow sells older versions of "Acronis True Image Home.." and so does Amazon.com and ebay.

When a specific version of "Acronis.." is incompatible with the motherboard of your computer, it can fail in various ways:

Failure to install into "Windows..".

Failure to complete a backup that is run from within "Windows..".

Failure to boot up from the "Rescue Media" disk

Failure to complete a restore that is run from within "Windows..".

Failure to complete a restore that is run from the bootable "Rescue Media" disk

In some cases, the Acronis company has issued a "patch" or "update" that resolves the problem so you can sometimes resolve the problem by logging into

your account at <http://acronis.com> and downloaded the "update" for your version of "Acronis True Image Home.."

## "ACRONIS.." INCOMPATIBILITY ISSUES WITH THE "KOUTECH" USB 3-TO-PCI ADAPTER

Francis also stated that the "Acronis True Image 2011" in "Standalone" ("Linux") mode cannot "see" his "Koutech" USB 3 PCI adapter so he has to "dumb down" any USB 3 external hard drives by connecting them with USB 2 cables to motherboard-based USB 2 ports when he restores a computer with an backup image that resides on an external USB 3 hard drive.

Francis stated that he will purchase and test "Acronis True Image 2012" soon to see if the above problem has been resolved in this new version of "Acronis.."

## CODE THE VERSION OF "ACRONIS.." THAT YOU ARE USING INTO THE NAME OF A BACKUP IMAGE FILE OR FILE SET IN "ACRONIS.."

Francis stated that when he creates a backup with any specific version of "Acronis..", he puts the name of the version of "Acronis.." that was utilized as follows:

If he is using "Acronis True Image 2009", the name of the backup would be -2011-11-23-Smith-Joe-Gateway-desktop-T2009.tib

This leaves no doubt as to which "Rescue Media" CD to use when you need to restore the original source computer (since each version of "Acronis.." has you made a difference "Rescue Media" CD).

## "ACRONIS.." INCOMPATIBILITY ISSUES WITH HARD DRIVES THAT ARE GREATER THAN 2.9 TERABYTES

Francis also stated that the "Acronis True Image 2011" in "Standalone" ("Linux") mode cannot "see" hard drives that are greater than 2.9 Terabytes in size. In other words, "Acronis True Image 2011" cannot back up from or restore to hard

drive partitions that are larger than 2.9 Gigabytes. Franciss is currently testing "Acronis True Image 2012" to see if this problem has been resolved.

## "STANDALONE MODE" OF "ACRONIS" AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE "WINDOWS.." VERSION

Most users of "Acronis True Image..", use the "Rescue Media" CD for their specific version of "Acronis True Image.." only to perform restores of hard drives and hard drive partitions. However, you can use the "Rescue Media" CD for doing backups also. When you use the "Rescue Media" CD of your version of "Acronis True Image.." to boot up your computer, the Acronis company calls it running "Acronis True Image.." in "standalone mode". When do this, you are actually running the "Linux" version of "Acronis True Image..".

If you run "Acronis True Image.." in "standalone mode", you do not have to load the "Windows.." version of "Acronis True Image.." into your computer. This is a massive saving in terms of CPU cycles and RAM usage. This is an important capability for many TCS members since many of us run older Windows XP computers with humble "Pentium 4" microprocessors and minimum amounts of RAM. The disadvantage of using the "standalone mode" of "Acronis.." is that you do not get automatic backups of data files, which many TCS members find useful.

Some TCS members run another software utility such as "[Synchromat](#)" to do automatic backups of data files, so they do not need the automatic backup capability of "Acronis..". "Synchromat" is not free. It can be set up to "mirror" data files and folders in "native format" to any hard drive. Francis stated that he uses "Synchromat" to mirror data files from one external hard hard drive to another one. Whenever he saves the changes to any data file in his "My Documents" folder, the "Synchromat" software utility automatically saves the updated data file to an external USB hard drive.

If you do not need the wide functionality in "Acronis True Image Home 2012" or any earlier version of "Acronis True Image Home..", you can use the "Rescue Media" CD to back up your computer: Boot up your computer with the "Rescue Media" CD inserted and either set the BIOS to boot to your DVD/CD drive first or hit the key sequence to bring up a boot device menu. Then use "Acronis.." in the "standalone" (Linux) mode to back up your computer.

If you do not need the wide functionality in "Acronis True Image Home 2012" or earlier and the above method of backup up with the bootable "Rescue Media" CD is works for you, you can un-install "Acronis.." in order to save hard drive space and free up the RAM that is utilized by the memory-resident processes and services of "Acronis..".

## TRY "ACRONIS.." BEFORE YOU BUY IT!

Prior to purchasing "Acronis True Image Home..", you can and should try it for free: Go to <http://www.acronis.com/homecomputing/products/trueimage/> download a time-limited trial so that you can make sure that it works for you specific computer(s) and needs.

You should test this free trial of "Acronis.." in two ways:

### Test 1:

Install it into your "Windows.." computer and use it to make a full backup to an external USB hard drive.

### Test 2:

Use this copy of "Acronis.." from inside your "Windows.." to make a bootable "Rescue Media" CD. Then use the "Rescue Media" CD to boot up your computer in order to run Acronis' "Standalone Mode". While in "Standalone Mode", browse the backup image that you created in "Way 1" and make sure that you can access specific files in the backup image.

If either of "Test 1" or "Test 2" fails, you have various options:

## TRY "CLONEZILLA" OR "MACRIUM REFLECT FREE" BEFORE YOU START DEPENDING ON IT!

Use the free and open source "Clonezilla" or "Macrium Reflect Free" and attempt "Test 1" with it.

With "Clonezilla" or "Macrium Reflect Free", you cannot run "Test 2": instead of "Test 2", you can create a virtual machine and use "Clonezilla" to "restore" the backup image that you created in "Test 1" to a blank virtual hard drive in a virtual machine. Then, since this "restore" virtual hard drive will not be bootable (due to the differences in the "hardware abstraction layer" between the original real computer and that of the virtual machine), you will have to attach the "restored" virtual hard drive to an existing, running virtual machine to determine if the "Clonezilla" restore process succeeded.

## "MACRIUM REFLECT FREE" IS STILL THE BEST OF THE FREE BACKUP SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS

Of the 8+ free software applications for backing up (imaging) a computer, the "best of breed" is still "Macrium Reflect Free Edition".

"Macrium.." has two disadvantages relative to "Acronis..":

### **Disadvantage 1:**

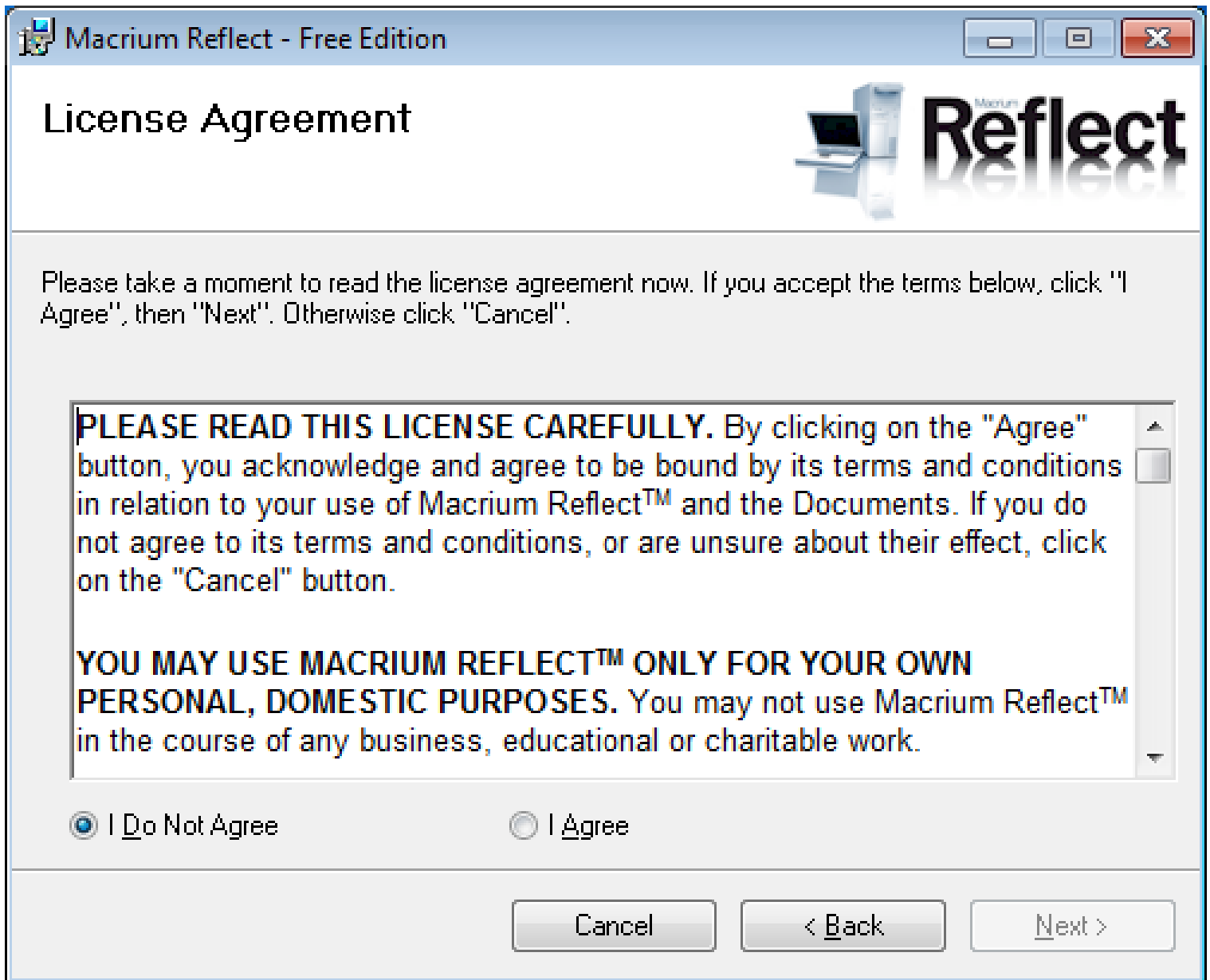
"Macrium.." does not back up "dynamic" or "GUID Partition Table"("GPT") disks.

### **Disadvantage 2:**

Macrium's bootable "Rescue CD" does not allow you to make backups--All backups have to be performed from the "Macrium Reflect Free" program that is installed inside "Windows..".

### **Disadvantage 3:**

"Macrium.." cannot be used by an organization or business:



If these three disadvantages are not a show-stopper for you, Macrium.." is a great free alternative to "Acronis..".

See

<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,76071-order,3-page,1/description.html>

and

<http://www.howtogeek.com/howto/7363/macrium-reflect-is-a-free-and-easy-to-use-backup-utility/>

You can download this great freebie at <http://www.macrium.com/reflectfree.asp>

After you install "Macrium" into your Windows computer, you can use it to back up any and/or all hard drives or hard drive partitions. At a future point in time, the image files that "Macrium" creates can be used to restore your computer's entire Windows hard drive including the registry and any data that resides on the drive.

Detailed instructions for installing "Macrium" are available at [http://www.aztcs.org/meeting\\_notes/winhardsig/macrium/1/1\\_installing.html](http://www.aztcs.org/meeting_notes/winhardsig/macrium/1/1_installing.html)

Detailed instructions for creating a Macrium "Rescue CD" are available at [http://www.aztcs.org/meeting\\_notes/winhardsig/macrium/2/2\\_makingrescuecd.html](http://www.aztcs.org/meeting_notes/winhardsig/macrium/2/2_makingrescuecd.html)

Detailed instructions for using "Macrium" to back up (image) a Windows computer are available at [http://www.aztcs.org/meeting\\_notes/winhardsig/macrium/3/3\\_backingup.html](http://www.aztcs.org/meeting_notes/winhardsig/macrium/3/3_backingup.html)

Detailed instructions for using the Macrium "Rescue CD" to restore the hard drive(s) or hard drive partitions of a Windows computer are available at [http://www.aztcs.org/meeting\\_notes/winhardsig/macrium/4/4\\_restoring.html](http://www.aztcs.org/meeting_notes/winhardsig/macrium/4/4_restoring.html)

A comparison between "Macrium" and "Acronis True Image Home 2010" can be found at [http://www.aztcs.org/meeting\\_notes/winhardsig/macrium/5/5\\_comparison.html](http://www.aztcs.org/meeting_notes/winhardsig/macrium/5/5_comparison.html)

## "CLONEZILLA" IS STILL THE BEST OF THE FREE BACKUP SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS FOR USE BY A BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION

"Clonezilla" is available as a downloadable .ISO file from <http://clonezilla.org>

"Clonezilla" is licensed under the [GNU General Public License \(GPL\) Version 2](#). You or your business or organization can download and run "Clonezilla" as a bootable "LiveCD".

A comparison between "Macrium" and "Clonezilla" can be found at [http://www.aztcs.org/meeting\\_notes/winhardsig/macrium/6/6\\_comparison2.html](http://www.aztcs.org/meeting_notes/winhardsig/macrium/6/6_comparison2.html)

Francis and the other volunteers at "Tucson Oasis" have used "Clonezilla" exclusively to back up and restore the "Windows.." computers. The use of

"Clonezilla" is part of their near-zero budget information technology strategy that is detailed at

[http://aztcs.org/meeting\\_notes/winhardsig/nonprofits/nonprofits.pdf](http://aztcs.org/meeting_notes/winhardsig/nonprofits/nonprofits.pdf)

## "CLONEZILLA" IS THE BEST FREE BACKUP SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS FOR BACKING UP A USB FLASH DRIVE DEVICE

Once in a while, you might need to back up a USB flash drive ("thumb drive") device. For example, when we finally succeeded in making a bootable "Windows To Go" USB flash drive device and we knew that this "Windows 8 Pre-beta" will fail after booting up different computers with it, we immediately used "Clonezilla" to back it up so that we can restore this USB flash drive device without going through the 1+ hour procedure from creating a "Windows To Go" bootable drive.

We have had unreliable results with "Acronis True Image Home.." and "Macrium Reflect Free". We have had 100 percent success with "Clonezilla". For example, we have been using "Clonezilla" to back up the bootable "Windows To Go" ("Portable Desktop") USB flash drives that we have been creating with "Windows 8 Developers Preview" Pre-beta of "Windows 8" that was released to the public on September 14, 2011.

## MORE ADVICE ABOUT FREE BACKUP SOFTWARE

See

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-drive-imaging-program.htm>

and

[http://howto.cnet.com/8301-11310\\_39-10469489-285/free-backup-utility-outshines-windows-7s-built-in-disk-imager/](http://howto.cnet.com/8301-11310_39-10469489-285/free-backup-utility-outshines-windows-7s-built-in-disk-imager/)

and

<http://www.mytechguide.org/152/backup-your-pc-with-paragon-drive-backup-9-0-free-edition/>

and

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/paragon-drive-backup-express-free.htm>