

Paragon Hard Disk Manager 2011 Suite

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I downloaded this excellent digital “Swiss Army Knife” for your hard drive in three parts:

- a manual in PDF format
- an .exe file for generating a rescue boot disk
- an .msi file for installing the program.

I installed *Paragon* first onto my *Windows 7* desktop, then onto my *Vista* laptop without any unexpected incidents. The website byline boasts that this suite is the solution to “completely protect, maintain and manage your PC!”

Since it was time to back up my hard drive to an external source (a 1T USB/eSata external hard drive), I immediately gave the program a try. Using the USB 2.0 connection, backing up 137GB of data from a 450GB partition on my hard drive took less than an hour.

Many of us have had the opportunity to appreciate the true value of a backup tool by needing to restore a complete hard drive image, a folder, or individual files. So I checked out just how user-friendly



and effective *Paragon* would prove to be in this scenario. Email appears to be at the top of the “lost data” list and the most requested in the “help, where the #@%#@# are my messages” category.

I copied the folder with my backup onto my C: drive from the external drive to increase communication speed and reduce any USB glitches.

I knew where *Thunderbird* stored my data but thought I would double-check with the path indicated by the program in **Tools > Account Settings > Local Folders > Local Directory**. I made a note of the location.

Then I fired up *Paragon* and started the File Transfer Wizard to restore just my *Thunderbird* profile folder with subfolders and files. I located my *Paragon* backup copy on my C: drive in the Source window (right side of the dialog), and expanded the nesting folders to find a series of archived files.

Double-clicking the file ending in .PBF enabled a folder structure view that reflected my C: drive. I followed the path I had recorded to locate the *Thunderbird* profile folder with my data. In the dual pane dialog box I highlighted and moved the files and folders to the clipboard area for copying.

Clicking **Next**, I had three options for where to save the data from the clipboard. In the following screen I created a temporary folder off the C: drive as the destination location for the data saved to the clipboard. I had the choice to overwrite any existing files of the same name in the destination folder. New folder, no worries, and a click on **Next**.

Details of the operation to be executed were displayed. I clicked **Next** to complete the process. And success! I stopped at this point, not copying over my email data – “if it’s not broken, don’t fix it.”

This program has features for tasks that I never even considered or realized could necessitate special handling, such as migrating to a solid state drive. So, what else can I do with it?

A double-click on the desktop icon starts up the interface. In the left column is a list of categories to choose from: Partitioning, Backup and Recovery, Copying and Migration, Security and Optimization, Boot Management, and lastly Support Contacts. Partitioning is selected by default. The right column lists the available tools for the selected category.

Partitioning: Create Partition, Format Partition, Delete Partition, Resize Partitions, Merge Partitions, and Log Saver.

Backup and Recovery: Smart Backup, Restore, Transfer Files, and Burn Recovery Media.

Copying and Migration: Copy Partition, Hard Disk Migration, P2P Adjust OS, and Migrate OS to SSD.

Security and Optimization: Defragment Partition and Wipe. This wipe is used to avoid unwanted retrieval of your personal data on hard drive free space, partitions, or the entire disk.

Boot management: Boot Manager and Install New OS.

Help does a nice job of covering the technologies associated with the software, how to get started and the basic concepts *Paragon* works with.

I'd experienced one instance of "the blue screen of ... Windows did not shut down properly," so I thought it time to test out defrag and do a surface scan of my disk.

The defrag utility actually reboots into a DOS-style interface after doing an analysis in *Windows*. I left it to work overnight and woke up to a **Caution** screen informing me of surface errors found, and instructing me to press any key to continue. This went into a reboot and *Windows Scan*. Disk errors were apparently repaired or isolated and the system once again rebooted. After *Windows* loaded, *Paragon* started up with the defrag screen loaded.

Once again I clicked the **Analyze** button to re-assess how fragmented the disk still was and to locate any disk surface errors. The report indicated that my free space was fragmented, 305GB out of 445. My used space, files and folders, looked good and no disk errors were found.

So I clicked the **Defragment** button and up popped the dialog asking me to restart the computer in order to disengage running files or ask the program to try to shut down the running files and then proceed. This time I tried Option 2. After a minute or two the defrag process began.

This second pass took about five minutes, leaving my volume 99% defragged. On reboot I found a noticeable improvement in my laptop's performance. Programs started faster than they had. In an application, response times to commands were much improved. With routine application of the maintenance tools, I'm expecting improved performance and hoping for no more unpleasant "blue screen" surprises.

Paragon Hard Disk Manager 2011 Suite has the features I was looking for, plus some and performed as promised. At \$49.95, this seems to be a very attractive deal.

About: *Paragon Hard Disk Manager 2011 Suite*

Vendor: Paragon Software Group
www.Paragon-software.com

Price: \$49

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