

DEALING WITH YOUR PC'S DNA

Like humans, computers are all unique. Just as our DNA defines our differences, so does a computer's "DNA." By modifying or even simply using your PC as suits your needs, job, and personality, you make your PC's DNA unique.

What Makes Up Your PC's DNA?

Your computer's DNA consists of settings and files such as:

- System and application settings, things like your dial-up and network settings, and your time zone
- Desktop settings, such as background, mouse, screen saver, and taskbar
- Custom templates or macros used in applications such as Microsoft Word or Excel
- Address books
- Web page bookmarks and favorites
- Data files and folders like My Documents, My Music, or My Pictures

Issues with Performing Manual PC Upgrades

Getting a new PC or upgrading your existing one is great! What is not so great is trying to manually move your PC's DNA to the new or upgraded PC without the help of an application — as discussed later in this book.

Without your old PC's DNA, you will spend hours, maybe days, relearning how to set up the numerous settings and preferences on your new PC.

However, if you choose not to use a DNA or file transfer application, such as discussed later in this book, when moving to a new or upgraded PC you'll run into many problems, such as:

- **Wasted Time**

Locating and transferring your files and documents to your new or upgraded PC will likely take much more time when done manually. After you've scoured through and gathered all your files and documents, you'll have to somehow get them to your PC. With the manual method, this means burning the data on countless CDs and then loading them onto the new or upgraded PC.

- **Lost Productivity**

As discussed, you'll likely spend a great deal of time manually transferring your files and documents, so you might be without a PC, or at least certain applications, for some period of time. This can prevent you from getting work done, paying bills with your computer, accessing personal files and documents, and more until the transfer has been completed.

- **Missing Settings and Files**

Very few users have the time or knowledge to locate all the files and settings that comprise a PC's DNA, which can account for much more than your personal files, documents, and applications. Remember your PC's DNA is also comprised of system settings and preferences, such your desktop icons, printer and network settings, folder preferences, and more.

It is extremely difficult to manually match the settings and preferences (or PC DNA) of a new or upgraded PC to the

computing environment that you are accustomed to on your old PC. The manual method might also actually result in mistakes and system errors, resulting in more time and money spent trying to fix the problems.

Performing Backups Is Essential

In order to preserve your PC's DNA and protect your personal files and documents, you should perform periodic backups of your PC. Receiving malware, such as viruses and spyware, can infect and destroy files, settings, and programs. You may even experience a system crash, destroying all the data. Therefore, you should be prepared by having recent backups of your PC's DNA and your files and documents, just in case the unexpected happens.

Issues with Performing Manual Backups

If you don't use a streamlined back-up application, as discussed later in this book, and you try to manually back up your computer, you'll encounter many issues, such as:

- **Wasted Time**

If you manually back up your computer, it will take a great deal of time. You will have to think of all the settings, files, and information you want to back up. Then, you have to go to each application or folder and find out how to properly back up that particular data.

For example, most address book applications, such as Microsoft Outlook, allow you to export the information; however, it will likely take time to learn how to do it and how to import the information if needed later.

- **Missing Settings and Files**

You'll likely forget about many settings and files when manually backing up your PC. In addition, it may be impossible to manually save, export, or back up some settings and preferences of your PC.

For example, it isn't really possible to save or back up settings, such as for printer and network settings, and icons and shortcuts on your Windows desktop and taskbar.

