



<http://www.backup4all.com>  
Reviewed December, 2006

### What Does It Do?

Backup4all Pro tracks file versions, selectively restores the previous state of a file directly from the main window, has a built-in CD/DVD burner, creates standard ZIP files, and is configurable to backup data files with full, differential, incremental, and mirror settings; and, has a built-in scheduler, command line support, and FTP backup.

### Does it Do What It Promises?

**Reviewer 1:** Yes, for the most part. However, though the program claims the ability to backup files via FTP, I was unable to get it to connect to my server, and thus I was unable to use the backup-to-FTP feature.

**Reviewer 2:** Yes. This is a full featured and feature rich backup program which is appropriate for both beginners and professionals. It makes both full and incremental backups that can be stored to DVD or CD as well to remote locations using FTP support.

**Reviewer 3:** Backup4all is a comprehensive, full-featured backup program. It allows you to gain complete control over your process of protecting the files on your computer.

**Reviewer 4:** Yes. This backup program is one of the most full-featured that I have yet seen, with a plethora of options and possibilities to meet a wide range of needs and levels of expertise. It is relatively easy to set up and run a backup of your important data files following the defaults. It supports a very wide range of options, such as four different backup types (full, mirror, incremental and differential), the possibility to back up to hard drives, to drives on a network, to various media such as CD/DVD drives or to USB drives and backup to FTP. You can set passwords, you can schedule backups, and you can back up files that you are working on. The program verifies the data that it has backed up, and you can manually choose backed-up files to test their integrity. When you wish to restore files that you have already backed up, you can have it put back in its original location, or you can restore it to a different location. I have tried out all of the above, except backing up to FTP, and they have all worked successfully.

**Reviewer 5:** Yes it does. It has proven to be a totally reliable backup tool in which the scheduling is so easy that periodic daily backup becomes a nearly-forgotten task. It effortlessly will do several types of backups: Full (regular or mirror), incremental, and differential, either as regular or mirror backups. (Mirror backups actually leave individual files exactly as they are in the source rather than in a single zip file - literally a duplicate of the originating source.) Within this program selection, files will not be zipped nor can they be passworded. This application met and exceeded the expectations I had for it. Directly backing up to and recalling from external drives or other media including CD/DVD media presented no problem, with complete fidelity of the data in

restoration. I also was able to forward backups in FTP format to another location. Since the program can use standard zip compression, data from another computer can be retrieved with ease, independent of the operating system. There is a lot of good planning, programming and architecture here, within an application size of under 8 MB - and not a memory hog!

### Was It Easy To Install?

**Reviewer 1:** Yes. Installation was quick and straightforward on both my desktop computer and my laptop.

**Reviewer 2:** Yes. The comparatively standard 7.64MB download of most similar backup programs installed easily using a very simple-to-follow installation wizard. Setting up the software after installation is slightly more difficult due to the myriad of options available.

**Reviewer 3:** Installation was fast and easy. Installation of updated versions ran smoothly over the existing installations without the need to uninstall the previous version.

**Reviewer 4:** Yes, the installation is straightforward, and allows you to choose the location of the program files and where the shortcuts will be placed. The EULA (End Users License Agreement) is also pretty standard. It also lists a series of license possibilities, from a single to a world-wide license. The single license, the one most of us would use, means that it only can be used on a single computer. Since during the registration process you have to go on-line, it is not possible to register a second copy on a different computer. I find this unfortunate, as I would prefer the license to refer to one user. I can see where I would work on one computer, and back up my files over a local network to the laptop. Then I would need to have a copy of the program on the laptop, so that I could restore the files on the laptop for use when I was away from my main computer. The same would occur in reverse when you wish to transfer your work back again to the "main machine." The 30-day trial version is fully functional, after which the program will no longer work until you obtain a license. Once you have licensed the program, you can use it as long as you like -- it is not time-limited. Since the original installation, I have downloaded and installed newer versions of the program. I was very pleased to see that the developers have paid attention to this detail. The new program can be installed right over the older version, and all your settings and preferences, backup jobs, and so forth are preserved from the one version to the next. It is done so slickly, that you can simply click your way through the installation wizard. Beware, though, that as a general principle you should read what is happening in each step-- just clicking rapidly through any installation is not a recommended practice.

**Reviewer 5:** Installation was a snap. Subsequent installations for program updates have also been flawless and transparent - you simply install "over" the previous versions. As is to be expected, all data and settings are preserved.

### Good Points.

**Reviewer 1:** On the whole, I found Backup4all easy to use. Though it offers an impressive array of sophisticated features, it is easy enough for even a novice. The program's inherent ease of use is aided by an extensive User's Manual (a PDF file of ~200 pages) that is unusually clear and well-written. The program comes with its own built-in CD/DVD burning engine, so you don't have to have a separate CD burner on your computer. I liked the fact that the program creates backups as standard compressed ZIP files, so you can easily unzip and access them. Though I didn't have any need to restore files during the time I tested the software, I did unzip and examine some of the backup files, and they were fine. Using Backup4all's filters, you can pinpoint exactly which files from which dates in which formats you want to backup or restore. The program provides readily available statistics and other information about previous backups, and it will also calculate statistics for your next backup. Once you've made an initial backup, you can click on a button to

find out how many new, modified, unchanged, and excluded files there are since your last backup, how many will be backed up, and how much space the backup will require. The program offers a large number of options for where to store backups, including hard drive, network drive, CD/DVD, USB drive, and FTP site (though, as I've indicated, I couldn't get the program to work with my FTP server. As a result, the only option I tried was the CD backup.) All initial backups I performed extended over multiple CDs; they worked well, as did subsequent differential backups. There are many more good points-the ability to schedule automatic backups (full, differential, incremental, or mirror), select the level of compression and, if you wish, the degree of encryption, back up even open files (on WinXP), select which version of a file you wish to restore, etc.

**Reviewer 2:** While Backup4all provided all of the standard features one has come to expect from a full featured backup program, such as the ability to perform full or incremental or mirror backups, the ability to track file versions, standard zip file compression, disc spanning, command line support, backup scheduling, email notification as well as the ability to backup both locked and open files, it also stands above many of its competitors in its support of Zip64 allowing storage of up to 2GB of information. It uploads backup copies via LAN or to an FTP location and saves backups to a local hard drive or CD/DVD. Because of the Zip64 support, virtually any size backups can be made and files can be accessed with any standard zip compatible utility. Backup4all supports AES encryption to secure backups. While the software has its own built-in CD/DVD burning program, it allows the choice to use your own burning software if you prefer. Another nice touch not always found on similar software is its ability to play sounds to notify you when a backup is finished. Once I figured out the initial setup (see below), creating a backup was fast and easy using the New Backup Wizard which walked me through the source destination for my backup and helped me to determine which of the many options such as levels of compression, splitting of the backups at predetermined intervals (like CD sizes), filters, etc. Performance is more important to some than others. I find it relatively unimportant as I generally perform backups when my computer is not in use; however, I did run a couple of tests. On a folder that contained approximately 1.35GB of data primarily composed of a mixture of pictures and documents, and leaving all of the settings at default, the backup time to a local drive was approximately 6 minutes and the test (Backup4all tends to insist on testing each backup to make sure it is good) took an additional one minute. The resulting zip file was slightly less than 1GB. Backing up the same folder to a CD took longer. The initial backup took approximately the same amount of time; however, it then had to split the file to accommodate the 700MB limit of a CD. This took an addition 3 minutes. Then, once again, it tested the backups for an additional 2 minutes for a total of 11 minutes. Of course, speeds are directly related to and dependent on the speed of one's system. I was using a fairly powerful 3.2GB Pentium IV Dual Core with 2 GB RAM. The program overall has a small footprint, does incremental backups accurately (not always a guaranteed given with many backup programs), is affordable, well-designed, and offers email support through the program's interface. My sample question to support was answered within 24 hours and was accurate and easy to understand.

**Reviewer 3:** The process of establishing and customizing a backup process with Backup4all is very straightforward. This program allows you to establish single or groups of backups to run with a high level of control. It allows you to schedule backups to run automatically either by their proprietary scheduler, or by Windows' scheduler. If you wish, you can backup your entire system, specific drives, specific folders, or even specific files. The user interface was a bit confusing when I first opened it, but the underlying logic is sound and once you achieve orientation, the controls are generally clear and placed in an order which facilitates your workflow and your ability to fully customize your backup processes. The help document is clearly written and it describes the general backup process, the strategies and reasoning behind the Backup4all options, and the specifics of how to execute specific tasks. Backup files are saved in the .ZIP format so your data can alternatively be restored using commonly available decompression programs. This is a nice alternative to other backup programs that use a proprietary format and thus tie you to their program. The program starts for the first time with backups already configured for "My Documents", "My Pictures", and "IE Favorites" which are some of the more difficult areas for a Windows novice to find. You can create your own backup protocols from scratch or you can

customize the existing ones. You can save your backup files to a robust assortment of destinations including internal and external hard drives, CD, DVD, across a local network, or to a remote location via FTP. Backup4all allows you to do a full backup, a mirrored backup, an incremental backup (only files which have changed since your last backup), a differential backup (all files which have changed since the last full backup). Advantages and disadvantages of each method are clearly explained, with emphasis on the time, the space, and the convenience involved. You have the option to encrypt the files and set passwords. Most backup programs keep track of which files have been backed up by changing an "archive bit". Backup4all can change the archive bit, but by default, it keeps track of which programs it has backed up in its own catalog system. They claim that this is faster, but to me the biggest advantage is that it allows concurrent use of another backup program without confusion.

**Reviewer 4:** I used the scheduled backup function for several months, with varying types of schedules. In most cases, I was backing up to a hard drive that is in its own case, with its own power supply and connected to the computer through a USB port. This way, I can "set it and forget it", and know that if the computer itself crashed, all of my data would be fairly up-to-date. I usually let the program run itself at night. Sometimes, I would forget to turn on the power supply to the backup drive, and when I arrived the next day, there would be a message on the screen, explaining that the data had not been backed up, as the drive was not available. The Backup4all icon in the system tray was also flashing, to indicate that a scheduled process had not completed properly. There is extensive documentation with the program. If you use the F1 key to access Help, it will bring you to the section of the documentation that is relevant to the function or process that you are currently working on. You can go directly to the Web site from a number of places: from a button in the Help file itself, from the Help Menu, and from the About screen (under Help). If you need to contact support, you can click on Help > Support Request ... and your email program will be called up with the address already filled in. This all suggests that support is easily available, and I found that to be so. I contacted them a number of times, and received a response each time within a day. There is also a large PDF file that you can download, which explains the program extensively. The Web site also has a lot of information, which I found to be particularly useful in terms of explaining things that I was not too sure about. For example, many backup programs offer different kinds of backups. I found the explanation of "full", "incremental", "differential" and "mirror" to be well explained there, with examples that helped me to decide how I wanted to structure each of my backup jobs. Access to support is an important feature of any software product that I purchase. I found Backup4all to be very good in this respect. The built-in link to support by email indicates that the developers not only believe in their product, but that they are also ready to listen to the users. In fact, at the bottom of the Feature Matrix on the Web site, there is a link that will start an email message to them, titled "Request New Feature." The program keeps log files about its activities. Each time that something does not work as it should, there is a log file created. Not only does the log describe the events that were taking place, it also includes some basic information about the hardware that your computer was using in attempting to do that particular function. You can include the log when you contact the support people. The backed-up data is stored in a .zip file, unlike others that use a proprietary format to store the files. This means that you do not have to have the Backup4all program itself in order to get to your data. Any compression program that can handle .zip files can open the files for you.

**Reviewer 5:** Backup4all has one of the best User's Manual I've ever seen, clearly written, well-illustrated, and well-organized. And that's a good thing because the program is so feature-laden, there is definitely a learning curve involved in order to use the program to its fullest potential. A wizard made life quite easy, even for the timid amongst us. Storage spanning is a snap. An easily-accessible log keeps track of what did or didn't happen, files/folders to be stored can easily be added by drag/drop, instructions by command line, and mirror backups. I appreciated the built-in scheduler, ability to restore from or to CD and DVD drives (both very handy storage media), sound alerts at completion or for events needing my attention (this only happened once, and was my error), the ability to select which version of a file to select, and once having selected instructions for backup(s), shortcuts are established so I could choose a past configuration rather than starting from scratch each time; and, I liked the ability to password files and select the

compression level when zipping them. Other good features include the ability to make incremental backups of varying versions, backing up to FTP with the ability to test that backup and email notification to addressee(s) of choice showing results after a session (particularly of value if you are not in attendance and are waiting for results).

### Weak Points.

**Reviewer 1:** The only substantial weak point I found in the program is its apparent inability to FTP to sites that require SSH, a security program used by many FTP sites to secure communication to and from the site. Backup4all does work with SSL, a different security program. (I'm not absolutely sure that my server's requiring SSH is the problem; I only know that Backup4all could not connect to my FTP server no matter what settings I tried, and that Backup4all does not offer an SSH option (unlike, say, WS\_FTP).) Backup4all consistently reported "No disk in drive D" when the disk was there. This didn't affect performance in any way, though it did give me some uneasy moments at the start. One backup job was completed with no errors, but the program's subsequent test of the backup found five errors. The explanation said: "CRC stored in catalog is 0, destination CRC is 0." I have no idea what this statement means. This should be explained in the User's Manual for those without a technical background. It would be very helpful if Backup4all provided some suggestions concerning which critical system files it would be most useful to back up. Though the time required for an initial backup will obviously vary enormously with the number and size of the files to be backed up and the speed of the computer, I'd have found it very useful to have even some rough guidelines. I had no idea whether I'd need to be present for one hour, five hours, or twenty hours. (Since I was backing up to CD, and the backup was going to span multiple CDs, I needed to be physically present.) I found no way to stop and resume later where I'd left off. I wish the User's Manual had come in a printed version. It's hard to try to consult an online manual while at the same time trying to use the software. And I think it's unreasonable to expect a user to print out a 200-page manual. The Help menu on the user interface includes an entry "Support Request...." However, nothing happened when I selected that entry (I expected that it would launch my email program or my web browser set to send a request for support).

**Backup4all responds:** *Indeed Backup4all doesn't support sftp (ftp using ssh), but only ftps (ftp using ssl). We plan to add support for sftp in a future version, but I cannot tell exactly when that will be available. Meanwhile, we suggest to our users that need SSH to install a 3rd party application called NetDrive (freeware) from <http://www.loyola.edu/5555/netdrive/installingnetdrive> This will allow configuring an sftp connection as a network drive. After that you just point Backup4all to back up to that network drive generated by NetDrive. Note that Backup4all is not designed for complete system backups. It should be used mainly for data files (images, documents, ...). Backup4all comes with a help file. When a window in Backup4all is opened if you press F1 the help file for that section will be displayed. This help file contains the basic information about using it, thus has less pages. The user manual is more detailed and you can print only sections of it (like the Getting Started one). The Support Request indeed opens the default email program. I cannot tell why it didn't open in this case.*

**Reviewer 2:** There are no serious glitches or "bugs" that I found in the program itself but there were several items that I found either inconvenient, annoying, or troublesome. First, the GUI (Graphic User Interface) is not intuitive and not easy to navigate. The explorer-like pane is confusing with its side-by-side plus signs. Many options were buried in menus and thus difficult to locate. The button bar was of special annoyance to me. There are several buttons but no text, forcing me to use my mouse to hover over each button and then wait for the text to appear. This is reminiscent of those stupid XP balloon tips that most of us disabled within days of first installing Windows XP. There is no way to get the text to appear or further customize this tool bar. I would urge the developer(s) to give the user an option to allow text to always appear as well as to possibly being able to customize the size of the buttons. Additionally, there really needs to be a

pause option or a way to resume a backup after canceling. Restarting a backup from the beginning can be a real annoyance if the backup must be interrupted. It would also be valuable if, rather than just showing the percentage of the backup completed, Backup4all could show total files, total size (MB), necessary or estimated splits (disc spanning), estimated end time, and so on. Finally, on a program as critical and potentially damaging as backup software, I would really prefer to see some type of 24 hour telephone support-even if it were a paid-per-call option. Most backups occur during the middle of the night and if something goes wrong, it is not always practical to be able to rely on email and then wait 24 hours for a response. I would prefer to pay a little higher price for better support. Those software developers who are in tune with the increasing demands and needs and expectations of their customers, are offering not only 24-hour support, but live online chat support as well. Those who do not may find themselves left behind the competition.

**Backup4all responds:** *The toolbar icons can be set to include or not text and also to be small/medium/large. This can be done by either right-clicking on the toolbar buttons or by setting these in the Options menu. Here are more details*  
[http://www.backup4all.com/templates/online-help/options\\_toolbar.htm](http://www.backup4all.com/templates/online-help/options_toolbar.htm) *The pause/resume option will be included in a future release as it was requested by other customers as well. There is also an option to show statistics for last backup or calculate them for the next one, but the estimated end time is not displayed (due to the many factors affecting the speed).*

**Reviewer 3:** I aborted one of my backups prematurely. After the confirmation window asking whether I wanted to terminate the backup job was affirmed, a message reported that "backup of "my drive" was successful". I would strongly suggest to the developers that they change the termination message to show "successful" only when the entire designated data set was backed up.

**Backup4all responds:** *When you click the Cancel button a confirmation window is displayed asking if you really want to abort the backup or not. Until the Yes button is pressed, the backup job continues in the background (we don't pause it). So what must have happened in this case is that the backup started, user pressed Cancel and before pressing Yes to confirm the abort the backup finished so the success message was displayed.*

**Reviewer 4:** Although the program is well-designed, its many options could be confusing to a real novice. Although the program does offer predefined backups, such as My Documents, My Pictures or the Outlook Express mail folders, the strength of the program (its wide range of options) is in this case its weakness. The scheduler was unable to complete a scheduled backup. If I did not tell the program not to bother with that particular task today, the computer would later be unable to shut down. When I eventually was able to identify the Backup4all scheduler as the culprit, I contacted the support people about this quirk. I was asked to download and install the most recent version of the software. I have just installed the latest update, which seems to have taken care of that particular issue. I would appreciate a "Check for Updates" feature. Many programs now include this either as an automatic function or as a choice in one of the Menu items (mostly under the Help Menu, but sometimes in one of the other Menus, such as File or Tools). The only place I saw that this could be done was by subscribing to their newsletter: there is a link on the Web site for that purpose.

**Reviewer 5:** The only "difficulty" I had was in discovering all of the potential of the program. There is a lot to learn, but to grasp the basic functions takes only a very few minutes.

#### **Other Comments.**

**Reviewer 1:** I found the EULA a little puzzling. It says repeatedly that the program may be used

on one "desktop computer," and if you want to use it on "multiple desktop computers," you need to purchase separate desktop licenses for each one. No mention is made of whether a single license entitles you to install the software on your laptop as well as your desktop. I would hope that this is the case.

**Backup4all responds:** *Our EULA says this "Upon issuance of a valid REGISTRATION KEY for DESKTOP LICENSE by SOFTLAND to you, this EULA grants you the right to store, load, install, execute or display one copy of the SOFTWARE on one of your computers ("DESKTOP COMPUTER)". So in the definition of desktop computer we consider included the laptop too (confusing but we did this to differentiate more the desktop and network licenses).*

Also, on one occasion with Backup4all open but inactive, my Sygate firewall warned that "The application: C:\Program Files\Softland\Backup4all 3\Backup4all.exe is trying to launch another application: C:\Program Files\Mozilla Firefox\firefox.exe to go to remote host [www.neatnettricks.com](http://www.neatnettricks.com) ." This occurred twice within less than a minute. A half hour earlier, Sygate had reported that Backup4all was trying to launch Firefox to go to [www.Backup4all.com](http://www.Backup4all.com).

**Backup4all responds:** *When the installation of Backup4all is finished, we give the option to "Launch [www.backup4all.com](http://www.backup4all.com) " (a box ticked by default) that will launch the browser and open our site. But once the installation is finished we don't launch the browser - so the error reported is strange, not to mention that the reviewer says it tried to launch [www.neatnettricks.com](http://www.neatnettricks.com) - I would incline to say that it's wrongfully reported by Sygate.*

**Reviewer 2:** While this review is based primarily on version 3.6, there was an update to version 3.7242 in the last two weeks. This update did offer some needed improvements. It now allows for all settings to be available for the current user or all users; it provides an option to change the location of the settings folder; and, best of all, all settings are now kept in .ini files rather than in the registry where they were previously stored. It should also be noted that the developer of Backup4all, Softland Development, has been around since 1999-a lifetime in the world of software developers-and has been conscientiously improving this program since 2003. The latest version (3.7) is the 73rd build in the past three years of the program's existence-an average of over two new builds a month! This is an indication to me of the conscientiousness and professionalism of a developer who is continually striving to improve his or her product and is something to be applauded. There may be other backup programs on the market if money is no object; however, for a very reasonable price, Backup4all is a very good and full-featured program that should satisfy even the professional. I have no reservation in giving it my full recommendation.

**Reviewer 3:** Backup4all has the ability to lock and then backup open files. While the process they describe should and seems to allow backup of files that are opened by running programs, I would personally not rely on it to do a backup and restore of the Windows operating system. Windows is a dynamic process and files are being modified in the background all the time that it is running. An imaging program that runs in an alternative operating system while Windows is shut down is the only reliable way I personally know of to capture a stable backup of Windows. Other methods may work, but they are riskier. To their credit, I could not find any claims on the Backup4all Web site for protecting the operating system,, but on the other hand, they did not see to address the issue at all. [Ed note: The following reply was received from Backup4all regarding this question: "Backup4all was not designed for system backup, so you won't be able to restore the operating system. You should use Backup4all for data files backup only."] Backup4all does not support back up to tape. To me this is a positive since tape, while once popular, is the most unreliable of the available backup media.

**Reviewer 4:** Use the Web site's "Feature Matrix" to determine which of the three versions and prices that would best fit your own needs.

**Reviewer 5:** You may sense I like this program a lot. I do. It's well documented, is reliable, fast, small and has been very user-friendly. There have been no problems whatsoever to date after two months of use.

### **Will You Continue To Use It?**

**Reviewer 1:** Yes. Several years ago, I bought a different backup program. Unfortunately, I found it very confusing to use, and after making several backups, I simply stopped. Backup4all, by contrast, is very easy to use while also offering a wealth of powerful features. I will continue to use it unless it persists in trying to launch Firefox inappropriately.

**Reviewer 2:** Yes, as an addition or alternate to my primary backup program and disc imaging program.

**Reviewer 3:** Yes. It is the easiest and most robust program I have found to backup data. I will continue to use an imaging program to backup my operating system and programs but will stay with Backup4all to safeguard my data.

**Reviewer 4:** Yes, I will.

**Reviewer 5:** Yes, I love it!

### **OPERATING SYSTEMS USED IN THIS REVIEW Windows XP Pro, XP Home, XP Media Center**

Neat Net Tricks Homepage ( <http://www.neatnettricks.com> )