

Computer Bits by Mark Eggert of Raad One Network Solutions, Inc.

Welcome to Computer Bits, a series of articles on computers and network information. This month we have a question is: Can I use a flash/jump drive for backing up my computer?

The direct answer to this question is yes. But there are some limitations which I'd like to cover. First, I'd like to clarify that we're talking about those little USB Flash Drives that are so popular these days. I have a couple of them that I use to transfer data from one computer to another, which is the main purpose of these drives.

The first limitation is size. Yes, you can get these devices in sizes up to 2GBs but you should check the data on your computer to see how much you're going to want to backup. You may be surprised! On my computer I have about 4GBs of data that I backup, so I use other backup systems.

The second limitation is speed. While these devices use the newer USB 2.0 standard, it will take a good amount of time to do a full backup of your data. It estimated to take up to 20 minutes to copy 2GBs of files to a USB Flash Drive. While this isn't really a long time, how do you know you have a good copy?

The last limitation is physical size. You say, that's the appeal of these devices, there so small and convenient! Yes, that are but they're also easily lost or just misplaced! I know I wouldn't want my personal or business data to possibly land in someone else hands.

Whether you use USN Flash Drives or some other type of backup device, it is important to backup your data on a regular schedule. I would recommend using a proper backup application which verifies and catalogs your backups.

If you have a computer or network question you'd like answered and you think others would like to know the answer too, please forward them to me. My email address is meggert@wi.rr.com, my phone number is 262-679-7704 and my fax number is 262-679-7664.