Backup   Desktop   Clock   PowerOff   Robo   Files

👾 12Ghosts ProfileCopy

Save and Restore Windows User Settings, Automatically!

WinFiles "Get It!", ZDNet "5 Star"
SAS Institute Inc., NC, integrated 12-ProfileCopy into their backup strategy of 4500 workstations, and used it switch hundreds of users to new hardware.

With 12Ghosts ProfileCopy you can save and restore Windows user profiles. A profile includes all user defined settings in Windows like your, wallpaper, desktop settings, sound and cursor schemes, desktop icons and layout, start menu items, and so on. You can add files, folders, and even registry keys to backup yourself!

What's different from a normal backup program? Not only does it save the registry settings like a normal backup program, it **also copies the files referred** to by these settings. The wallpaper bitmap, the screen saver file, the sound and cursor files themselves are copied from different locations into a new folder. Then you need only to handle this one folder.

Use 12Ghosts ProfileCopy instead of a full backup. You no longer need to backup the complete Windows folder every time, but save only your personal settings. ProfileCopy has been greatly enhanced with this version to **work fully unattended** and integrates with 12-Zip to **compress** the profile folder after saving. It now supports wildcards to be added to the list of files and folders. And it runs completely silent for automatic backups.

New in this version

- Wildcards are now supported in the list. For example backup all *.INI files found in the Windows folder by entering "%WinDir%*.ini" to the list of files, folders, and registry keys.

- Advanced options to control automatic, unattended backups.

- Compression with 12-Zip integrated

Advanced Options

-Messages and Logging-

- **No confirmations and error messages, create error log** - Let ProfileCopy work fully unattended. If you regularly backup user settings with ProfileCopy you can now automate the whole process. Use the command line parameters /save and /restore to start ProfileCopy silently.

- **Overwrite existing error logs (no date)** - If you don't need to check previous error logs you can enable this option. Otherwise date and time information will be added to the error_log file name to make it unique.

-Save-

- **Before saving clear profile path (or delete zip file)** - The complete profile folder will be deleted before saving when you select this option. This includes all .zip files found in the folder.

- **Exclude file types in System Folders** - System Folders usually contain shortcuts. Some users might have documents on their desktop as well, or within subfolders of the desktop, that you don't want to backup. Just enter the file type extensions not to include. Write a new extension in the drop-down edit field and press Add. Select the extension and press Del to remove it from the list.

- **Don't copy files larger than ... MB** - Specify an upper limit in mega bytes of files to include. Use this option as a provision to not go beyond the scope of your backup media.

- **Copy ProfileCopy executables to profile path** - You may want to restore your profile on another PC or on a fresh installation of Windows. No need to install ProfileCopy again, it's already in your profile folder, ready to use.

- **After saving compress profile path with 12-Zip (if installed)** - Zip/unzip integrated with 12-Zip. 12-Zip needs to be installed for this option to work. See the next paragraph for further details.

-Restore-

- **Copy only working shortcuts** - It doesn't make sense to restore shortcuts that point to programs or documents not existing on the computer where you restore the profile. So you probably want to check this option. Shortcuts will not be checked, however, on removable disks.

- **Restore broken shortcuts to a new folder on desktop** - You might want to restore broken shortcuts to the new computer anyway but keep it in a separate folder.

- **Restore list items first, before restoring selected settings** - There may be situations where you add a registry key to the (lower) list manually that includes settings for some of the (upper) selected items. For example when your restore cursor files to a different machine the files may be restored to a different (local) drive or folder whereas the registry settings will be changed to point to these files. When you restore a registry key like "HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Control Panel", which contains the old settings for the cursor files, the new settings would have been overwritten. In this case select to restore list items first.

- **Do not replace files in the following list** - Enter a list of files that are not going to be replaced, for example, if a user already created a new "outlook.ost" file you can exclude the original empty one from being restored. Enter the file name (without path) into list and click "Add" to add it. Click on "Del" to remove the selected entry.

- **Exclude registry keys (including subkeys) from being restored** - For certain applications it might be favorable to keep the installation defaults instead of restoring settings of an older installation. Temporary or cached information can also be excluded here.

Compression integrated

ProfileCopy currently supports 12-Zip for compression. If you want to use any other compression utility you can start it before starting ProfileCopy. It is probably a good idea anyway to create a batch file to save and restore the profile with command line parameters, for example in a log on script for several networked computers. And if you have a batch file you can also start your compression tool after saving and before restoring from this batch file easily. Remember to store the profile locally first, and then compress and copy it to a network server, not the other way round. Otherwise the compression program would copy all files back through the network a second time and then store it through the network a third time. This way you also save time because only the smaller compressed file is copied to the network.

It also makes sense to apply the ProfileCopy settings before saving, to make sure the client has the correct settings. Below you find an example of how to do this automatically. Note the switch /s for silent in the first line, and the "start /wait" sequence that you need on Windows NT for each step to finish before executing the next.

```
REM save profile
start /wait C:\Program Files\12Ghosts ProfileCopy\12profilecopy.exe /s "c:\data\ProfileCopy
Settings.12g"
start /wait C:\Program Files\12Ghosts ProfileCopy\12profilecopy.exe /save
REM set current dir
cd c:\data\profile
REM this is ProfileCopy's internal command when compression is enabled
C:\Program Files\12Ghosts Zip\12zip.exe zip -qS7Rm "c:\data\profile.zip" *.*
------------------------
REM to restore the profile
start /wait C:\Program Files\12Ghosts Zip\12zip.exe unzip -qq "c:\data\profile.zip" -d "c:
\data\profile"
C:\Program Files\12Ghosts ProfileCopy\12profilecopy.exe /restore
```

Things you Should Know

IMPORTANT: Please read the following paragraphs and the ”Not Yet Implemented” paragraph below before using ProfileCopy. The FAQ also contains many helpful explanations.

General Issues

• Verify the system folder settings (click the System Folders Tweak button) before saving the folders created by 12Ghosts ProfileCopy. For example, if one of the system folders is set to "C:\", your complete disk would be copied.

• After changing system folder settings it is necessary to log off and then back on before saving or restoring system folders. Windows needs to recognize the new settings.

• Windows 95: The icons for My Computer, Network, Recycle, etc. will only be restored on Windows 95 if Microsoft Plus! is installed.

• Shortcuts are not adjusted. If the target path does not exist on the restore platform, the shortcut will not work. This is the nature of shortcuts. In the "Misc. Settings", however, you'll find the option **Copy only working shortcuts** which will verify if the path the shortcut refers to exists and only then copy the shortcut.

• Sound and Cursor files will always be restored to %WinDir%\Sounds or %WinDir%\Media. This is intentional because the paths should be "relative" and exist on every Windows installation (95, 98, NT, and 2000). - To backup a folder and restore it to the exact same "absolute" path, add it to the list of "Files, Folders and Registry Keys".

• For certain screen savers additional files might be necessary. For example, the popular Boogie Baby screen saver would need baby.avi and baby.mid. You need to add these files in the lower list box to have them copied. This is also necessary for screen saver settings that you wish to save. For example, if you use the Marquee screen saver, you'd have to add the registry key HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Control Panel\Screen Saver.Marquee.

• Profile.ini is not a Windows system file. It is created new and used only by ProfileCopy.

• Don't forget to log off and then back on after restoring so that the restored settings take effect.

Items in the List

• You can add your own registry keys to be copied in the list box. Make sure, however, that you know what you are doing. These keys will not be checked but just copied and restored.

• Folders and Registry Keys will always be restored according to the entry in profile.ini, regardless of whether or not they appear in the list box (because on another PC they would not). To deselect certain entries, delete them manually in profile.ini.

• Files referred to by registry keys in the list box will not be copied, only the keys themselves.

• It is not recommended to save/restore the complete HKEY_CURRENT_USER registry key (nor any of the other main hives), except for backup purposes for one single machine. See the FAQ for more detailed information.

We constantly enhance our software to give you the most powerful tools available. Please contact us if you encounter any difficulties not listed here. Thank you!

FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions

What is a profile?

All user defined settings in Windows are stored in a special database, called the registry. Settings included are your selected wallpaper, current sound and cursor schemes, desktop colors, mouse and keyboard settings. Also stored in the Registry are the contents of the Start and Programs menu, the Desktop and Favorites folder, and more.

It's tedious to set up all parameters and copy all pertinent files each time you install a fresh version of Windows, be it for updating purposes, cleaning up, beta testing, or whatever! Transferring all settings, for example, to a new computer or between a PC and a notebook is almost impossible. Your administrator may assign a new user account to you with a fresh profile; in this case, all your settings would be gone. With ProfileCopy you can now save and restore your profile easily.

You may also include several settings for applications and even your own documents.

Why not just backup the whole (nt)user.dat, that is, HKEY_CURRENT_USER?

You should backup your registry regularly, but ProfileCopy does more:

1) ProfileCopy has been designed to be able to copy settings between Windows 95 and Windows NT and between different PCs. Many settings are different in Windows 95 and Windows NT. You can not copy the whole (nt)user.dat to another installation because it may render your system unusable.

2) ProfileCopy also copies files referred to by registry keys, for example, your wallpaper bitmap or sound and cursor files. The keys and files are restored correctly on another machine, even if the Windows folder has another name.

3) The contents of system folders (Start Menu, Desktop, etc.) are copied from and restored to their respective paths. That is, their relative, not absolute, paths. ProfileCopy uses %WinDir%, for example, not C:\Windows to restore files.

4) To transfer settings between PCs, the same applications need to be installed on both PCs. This is, however, usually not the case. You can add specific registry keys for installed applications if you know that the application is installed on the restore platform.

5) The paths saved/restored and referred to by registry keys are probably different on different machines and on different installations of Windows. You would need to search and replace all paths in the Registry after copying HKEY_CURRENT_USER. Not so with settings copied with ProfileCopy.

6) All keys in (nt)user.dat need to be closed to save or restore the file. This is hardly ever the case, except before booting or logging on. For example, Windows NT allows restoring the Last Known Good only before loading the system, and a roaming profile is copied before log on, etc. Restoring HKEY_CURRENT_USER completely may not work because the keys are locked.

7) There are better utilities for just backing up the complete registry if you like: the Windows Backup, or REGSAVE and REGREST from the Windows Resource Kit, and among others.

What is the difference between a "Profile" and a Microsoft Plus "Theme"?

You can only install a theme, that is, "put settings in". With ProfileCopy you can "get settings out". When you change settings or add files, these changes will not change the theme, but the profile. In other words, you can not *save* settings by using a theme. With ProfileCopy you can.

How should I test ProfileCopy on my computer?

Make sure you have a full backup of your complete system before using ProfileCopy! You should also test if ProfileCopy works on your system: (1) Save the profile, (2) then create a new, temporary "test user" on your computer. Log on as that user, start ProfileCopy, (3) and restore the profile. Again, log off and then back on after restoring and check if all settings were copied as expected.

Does ProfileCopy support command line parameters?

Absolutely. You can specify the command line options **/save** for save or **/restore** for restore. ProfileCopy will not display any message when started with /save or /restore. Instead it will continue on all confirmation questions automatically. Should errors occur

ProfileCopy will create an **error log** in the same path where the profile.ini is (or in the .exe path should the profile-path not be writable.) You can test this behavior for example by producing a simple overwrite message. Just save the profile with /save to the same folder twice and you will find an "error_log<date>.txt" file.

Why should I copy "ProfileCopy.exe" to the profile path?

You may want to restore your profile on another PC or on a fresh installation of Windows. No need to install ProfileCopy again, it's already in your profile folder, ready to use.

A common problem with backup programs is that the backup program must be available in order to be able to restore. Not only the program, but probably the correct version, too. One day there may be an updated version of ProfileCopy and we can't guarantee backward compatibility over the next 50 years. The profile.ini format might change. But for you this is not a problem if the appropriate version of ProfileCopy.exe was copied into the backup path!

Do you recommend including HKEY_CURRENT_USER completely?

Just for backup purposes, yes. To transfer profiles between PCs, no. To transfer profiles between users on the same machine, not really, but this depends really on the applications installed. (See question "Why not just backup the whole (nt)user.dat...?" above.)

What's different from a full backup?

Not all Windows settings are saved by default. The main purpose for using ProfileCopy is to copy profiles from one user or PC to another, as well as between Windows 95/98 and NT/2000. Application settings are not saved by default, but you can add as many registry settings, documents and folders as you need. To backup your complete data, please use a full featured "first" backup program regularly.

Can I backup the whole registry?

You can backup every registry key by adding it to the list box. But it doesn't make sense necessarily. For example, keys below HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE are only used by applications installed on the machine. If those applications are not installed on the other machine, why would you need those settings? Different users on the *same* machine all access the same HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE. There is no need to copy it.

As mentioned above, we would recommend that you backup all data and the complete registry regularly with your preferred backup program. Many backup programs today come free with Windows or a new hard drive, that's why ProfileCopy was not designed to imitate a full backup program.

How long has ProfileCopy been tested?

The first version came out in May, 1998. We use ProfileCopy on our own machines extensively, while developing ProfileCopy and while we're at our daily work. Never have we lost any settings. The developers themselves would have been quite upset loosing any files or settings, just as you would be.

12Ghosts ProfileCopy is in use by several larger companies integrating 12Ghosts ProfileCopy to the backup strategy of several thousand computers.

ProfileCopy is downloaded by about 1000 people per month. The only problem reported so far occurred on some machines with version 98.5 Beta 2.0 during the end of May, 1998. Although quite disturbing, no data were lost. The responsible routine had been pulled out of the next update, which was published two days later.

However, please take all reasonable precautions, read the FAQ and the Known Issues carefully. Test ProfileCopy on "test user" profiles, always save the current profile before you restore a new one. Backup your data regularly and make sure you have a recent full backup before trying new software, including ProfileCopy. Better safe than sorry.

12Ghosts - The "Seven Dwarves" for Windows.®

A l l   t h e   T o o l s   Y o u   N e e d !