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How to use the backup feature in picasa?

It is critical to do backups of your photos. Simply installing Picasa on your computer does not create extra copies of your photos. Picasa doesn't automatically back up photos to other disks or to any Google or Picasa web servers.

There are a thousand ways to backup data... this article just explains how you can take backups using Picasa.

Here's the basic, official Picasa Backup documentation.   What follows here is a more in-depth tutorial-like discussion of backing up and restoring.

In Picasa, you define **Backup Sets**. A Backup Set is a thing you define when you want to back up your photos. A Backup Set definition specifies the destination of a backup (CD/DVD, external disk, networked disk, or local disk). When you "do a backup," you select a particular backup set.   Picasa keeps track of what photos have already been backed up using that backup set.

If the Backup Set you select to use is "new" (a just-created backup set, or a backup set that hasn't been used before), the backup you're now doing will be a **full backup** - that is, all photos will be backed up.

If the Backup Set you select to use has been previously used for a backup, the backup you're doing right now will be an **incremental** backup - that is, photos that are new or edited since the last backup using the selected backup set will be backed up.

Cautions when using Picasa Backup:

- Remember that the Picasa Backup tool only backs up the Photos and Picasa data files, so if the photo folders contain documents or anything else besides photos, those files will not be backed up by Picasa, and if you want them on the new computer you should copy and restore them after the Picasa Restore.
- The Picasa Backup tool will NOT backup folders which are set to "Remove from Picasa" nor will it back up hidden photos or folders.
- Picasa arranges it's left column into "Collections" such as Albums, People, and Folders. These collections can be Open for viewing or Closed.
  - A collection is Open if it has a green triangle to the left of the collection, or a red triangle indicates it is closed.
  - In Flat Folder View there can be user defined collections and all should be open for a complete backup.
  - When backing up, the Albums collection should be open and all selected so Album definitions will be retained.
  - When Backing up, the People album should be open and all selected to be sure face names are defined if faces are defined in the metadata.
  - If you want to back up Hidden Folders, it can only be done in Flat Folder view by opening the Hidden Folders collection and selecting the folders.
- If you want to back up Hidden pictures, they are backed up if View menu -> Hidden Pictures is checked.
- If you want to back up Small pictures, they are backed up if View menu -> Small Pictures is checked.

Using Picasa Backup
The scenario below shows how to use Picasa Backup

Let's say you have 5 folders, each containing 10 photos. You want do do a backup.

1. Do a Tools -> "Backup Pictures..." menu choice
2. Define a new Backup Set - you will be making a new full backup.
3. In the left column of Picasa make sure that ALL Collections

are OPEN (Have a green triangle to the left of the name)
4. Click the "Select All" button.
5. Click the "Burn" button.

This is the first backup using that backup set. And the default backup set writes to CD or DVD.
So this backup writes 50 photos to a new, blank CD (5 folders of 10 photos each). The initial full backup is done.

A few days later, you import a new folder of 20 new photos. And you crop one of the photos from an older folder.
Now, you want to get everything backed up - in particular, the new and changed photos.
Do another backup using the same backup set as before.

1. Do a Tools -> "Backup Pictures..." menu choice.
2. Select the same backup set you used above for the full backup.
3. In the left column of Picasa make sure that ALL Collections are OPEN (Have a green triangle to the left of the name)
4. Click the "Select All" button.
5. Click the "Burn" button.

Because you're using the same backup set as the original backup, this backup is "incremental" - it will back up only the new folder of 20 photos plus the one recently-cropped photo.   The incremental backup writes to a new CD/DVD. Your backup now consists of the original "full backup" CD(s) plus all of the "incremental backup" CDs.

To restore the photos, go to a new computer, then run the PicasaRestore.exe program from the full backup (the first backup). This restores the original backup - so you'd have 5 folders of 10 photos each.

Then, you would run the PicasaRestore.exe from the incremental backup on that same computer.
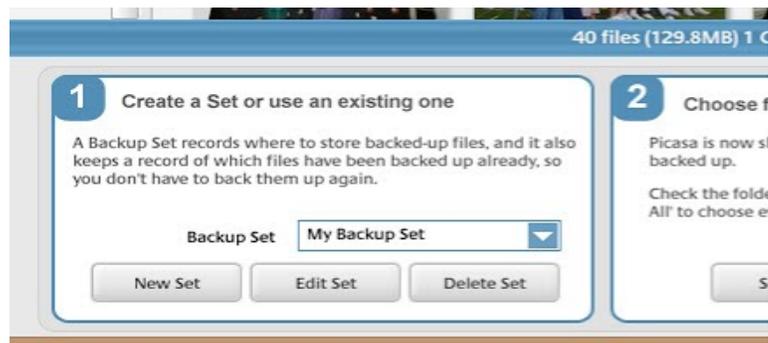
- This restores the sixth folder of 20 photos and restores the cropped photo in the older folder.
- Now the restored photos are "up to date."
- If you had more incremental backup CDs, you'd restore each of them, in order.

Backups to CDs or DVDs are relatively painful. You're using up blank CDs or DVDs and having to buy more. You've got your sharpie handy to make sure you know which CD or DVD is which. And, you've got to sit there, feeding new the blank discs while the backup is going on. Not too much fun.
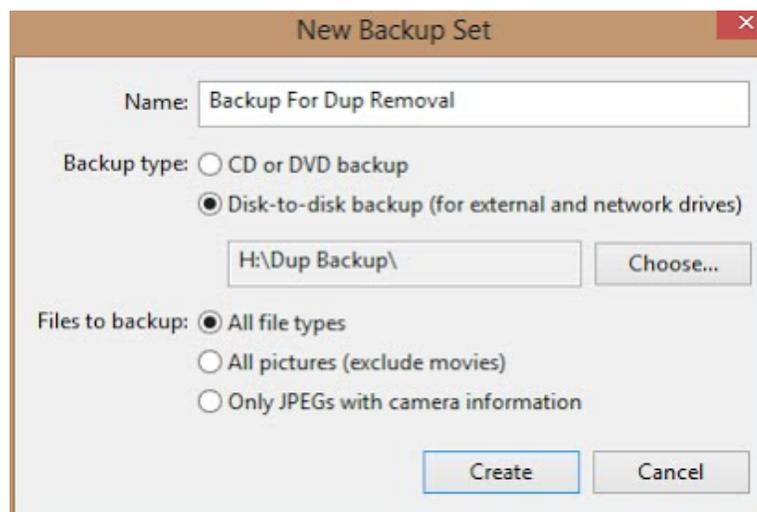
Backups to an external USB disk are much easier.

Back up Pictures* to an external hard drive or a networked drive *Using the Picasa Backup tool:

1. *Plug in your external drive or make sure your networked drive is mapped with a drive letter.*
2. *In the left column of Picasa make sure that ALL Collections are OPEN (Have a green triangle to the left of the name)*
3. *Collections include Albums, People, Folders, and depending on options may include Projects, Exported Folders, and any Collections you have named*
4. *Go to the Tools menu and select "Back Up Pictures".*
5. *In the Backup tool box 1 select New Set So you will create a new complete backup, not an Incremental backup.*

6. *In the New Backup Set box that comes up, Name the backup set and select Disk-to-disk backup.*
7. *You will need a hard disk or external hard disk with enough free space to contain your complete photo collection.*
8. *Select the Backup drive and folder to contain the backup set, and select all file types to be backed up.*
9. *Then click the Create button to create the new backup set.*

> *10. In the Backup tool box 2, click "Select All", then click the "Backup" Button to create the backup set.*

Picasa will then do a full backup to that external drive. This will take a little time... Maybe an hour for 20K photos; it depends on the size of the images and the speeds of your disks and other things. You should see the little "bar graph" in the lower right corner, showing the progress of the backup. Go have a bowl of cereal or something. Come back later; it'll run just fine without you watching it.

Now, your full backup is done. A few days later, let's say you import a new folder of 20 photos, and you crop one of the photos from an older folder. You want to bring your backup "up to date." Do another backup using the same backup set as before.

1. Do a Tools -> "Backup Pictures…" menu choice.
2. Select the same backup set you used above for the full backup
3. In the left column of Picasa make sure that ALL Collections are OPEN (Have a green triangle to the left of the name)
4. Click the "Select All" button.
5. Click the "Backup" button.

This backup is "incremental" because you're using the same backup set as before. This backup will back up only the new folder of 20 photos plus the one recently-cropped photo. The incremental backup simply writes the new and modified photos into the already-existing backup data on the external drive. You can do incremental backups as often as you like. They all just update the original backup.

To Restore all Photos and Data to the Original Locations on the New Computer:

1. Connect the external hard disk to the new computer.
2. *Browse to the backup folder in the external hard disk, and double-click the PicasaRestore.exe program.*
3. Select Restore to Original Locations, and start the restore.

The Photos will be restored to the same locations on the new computer as they were on the previous computer. There is no separate restore for the incremental backup because the incremental backup on a disk-to-disk backup set simply updates the info in the original backup to add any new or modified photos.

Notes on Restore:

1. Original Location means restore to the same folders and paths on the new computer as they were on the original computer
2. When backing up and restoring from an XP computer to a Vista, Windows7 or 8.1 computer, the user path is updated to accommodate the user data path change for My Pictures on the new computer.
   (on Windows XP the user path is C:\Documents and Settings\<User name>\ while on newer Windows versions it is C:\Users\<user name>\ ).

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