

*"There are two types of computer users:
those who backup,
and those who WILL..."*

EVACopy

by

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Version 5.0

Quick Start using EVACopy

Follow this guide to quickly start using EVACopy, and practice it hands-on. This guide may seem a bit technical, but it delivers the basics you need to know to properly use EVACopy.

When you're done with this guide, and EVACopy is up and running, it is recommended you read the users manual. The manual gets you acquainted with some more features, advanced use and best practices.

Step 1 – Get EVACopy and take it for a test drive

EVACopy is basically a single executable program file (EVACopy.exe), which is the only file actually needed. The settings file (EVACopy.ini) is optional, but very useful. The rest are utilities, auxiliary and documentation files, in PDF format. One of them you're reading right now.

1. Download the archive from <http://evacopy.sourceforge.net> and extract to a folder of your choice, something like "C:\EVACopy\". Hint: the desktop is a BAD place for programs!
2. By contrast, the desktop is a good place to put shortcuts to programs. I assume you know how to do that, so create a shortcut to EVACopy.exe on your desktop.
3. Run EVACopy (Note the tray icon).
4. Observe the notice, telling you that the paths are undefined. That's because EVACopy doesn't know what to do. What to backup? Where to?
5. Click "Cancel". For this tryout, create a new folder, for example "C:\source\".
6. Copy some files and folders into "C:\source\".
7. Right-click the shortcut to EVACopy and select "Properties".
8. In the "Target" line, it says:
C:\EVACopy\EVACopy.exe
9. Modify it to:
C:\EVACopy\EVACopy.exe C:\source C:\dest
No need to create "c:\dest\", EVACopy will create the destination folder if necessary. If you chose a long file name for your tryout folders, enclose it in "" (double-quotes).
10. For the next steps, create a simple text file in the source folder, type some text in, and save it. We'll use it later on.
11. Run EVACopy. Now there shouldn't be any on-screen messages. Wait for it to end (that's when the tray icon disappears). The first backup may take several minutes, depending on the size of files and subfolders in the source. But if there are only few files there, most likely it would take seconds.

Step 2 – See what you've got

When EVACopy is done, browse the destination folder (C:\dest\). You should see an exact copy of the source folder (C:\source\).

So what's the point, you ask? Well, so far we haven't done anything other than file copying. You'll find the true power of EVACopy is unveiled in the following backup operations.

- 1) Make some modifications to the source folder: create a new file, edit or delete an existing file, create a subfolder and move some files into it, delete a subfolder, whatever. Also, add some text to the file you created in step 1.10 and save it.
- 2) Run EVACopy again. This time it should work much faster, because its focus is on the changes you made.
- 3) When EVACopy is done, browse the destination folder. You should see an exact copy of the source after the modifications. So?
- 4) This is where things get interesting. Enable "Show hidden files and folders" (in Windows Explorer, select **Tools**, then select **Folder Options...** and go to the **View** tab).
- 5) Browse the destination folder again. Now you see another subfolder named "_EVAC". Inside there's another folder, its name indicates the time EVACopy was run, in the format YYYY-MM-DD-hh-mm (year,month,day,hour,minute).
- 6) Browse this folder. Inside you'll see the files and folders you modified or deleted, in the same directory structure as they were in the source. Among them you'll see the text file you were working on. These are the files **as they were before you modified them**. this folder is the folder they were evacuated to, before being overwritten by their latest versions. This is why this folder is called *the evacuation folder*.

Step 3 – Keep up the good work

Let's see what happens when you keep working normally.

- 1) Open the file you modified in step 2.1, modify and save it again.
- 2) Run EVACopy.
- 3) Browse the evacuation folder. Note that another subfolder was created there, by a name corresponding to the time of the backup you just performed. In it there's only the text file (unless you made some other modifications while I wasn't looking).

So now, there are three versions of that text file: the latest is where it should be – directly in the destination folder – and the earlier are in the hidden evacuation folder. If you need to restore an earlier version of any file or folder, modified or deleted, **this is where it'll be**.

Step 4 – Back and forth

Now let's see an easier way to locate earlier versions of files and folders:

Let's assume that the last modification you made to the text file actually messed it up. In the destination – ignoring the evacuation folder – there is only the messed-up version of it (That would also be the result of using many common backup or synchronization programs).

But you want the earlier version of that file!

You can browse the evacuation folder, like you just did. However, after many backup operations, there will be many folders and subfolders to browse through... Instead, use Windows built-in search:

- 1) Right-click "_EVAC" and select "Search...". Fill in the file name (or part of it), and click "Search".
- 2) In the results pane, you get a list of all earlier versions of this file. In addition, it tells you where they are located. Recall that the name of the folder is actually the date and time at which the files inside were evacuated.
- 3) Double-click the file in the folder corresponding to the date and time you prefer, and open the file. You can open the files directly from the evacuation folder **without the need of an elaborate restore operation!**
- 4) If that file is not the one you were looking for, select another one from the list of results. Once you've found your file, **simply copy it back to the source.**

Note: The same procedure applies in case you want to restore an earlier version of an entire folder.

Note: Searching for folders rather than files is also useful in case you deleted a file and you want it back, but you can't remember its name. If you remember, even roughly, in which folder that file was, search for that folder within the evacuation folder.

Step 5 – What have I done ?

Mainly for troubleshooting purposes, EVACopy produces a log file. This is a simple text file, located in the evacuation folder, named "EVACopy-log-YYYY-MM-DD-hh-mm.txt". Needless to say, the file name corresponds to the time of the backup.

You can open the file in Notepad (or any other text editor). Take a minute to study it.

By default, it only tells you what files were evacuated and/or copied. As a starting point for troubleshooting, that's enough. If so happens and you need a more detailed log, you can change the logging mode via the settings file. In any case, if the phrase ERROR! Appears in the log file, something went wrong. Look for that phrase in the log file.

For more details about the log file, see the manual.

Step 6 – Get real

Now you are ready to use EVACopy on your own files. To do that, you can either change the parameters in the shortcut to EVACopy located on your desktop, like you just did. But there is a better way.

Let's assume your documents are located in "C:\My Documents" and you want to backup this folder to your disk-on-key that is using drive letter F:, in a subfolder called "backup".

1. Right-click the shortcut to EVACopy and select "Properties".
2. Modify the "Target" line back to:
C:\EVACopy\EVACopy.exe
(Erase the parameters you typed earlier).
3. Click "OK".
4. Run EVACopy. Again, you'll see the notice about the undefined paths.
5. This time, click "No". You are presented with a dialog box to select your source path, and another one follows, to select your destination. Answer the following questions (if unsure, select "No").
6. Once you've selected your folders, EVACopy gets to work. Next time, it will use the same paths. These paths are stored in the file EVACopy.ini, which holds settings for EVACopy.
7. Open EVACopy.ini with any text editor (like Notepad), scroll down to the section [PathsX], and then down to the ;ACTUAL VALUES line.
8. Just below that line you'll see a line with the paths you selected, separated by a vertical line character.
9. Here you can add more lines with source|destination pairs, as well as exclusion rules. Read the manual for details.
10. Other sections in this file have their own uses. They are all fully described in the manual.
11. Note: Just in case you may need it, the original settings file was saved by the name EVACopy-ORG.ini

In EVACopy, almost everything is configurable, and almost everything is preconfigured for the most common scenarios.

Step 7 – Go automatic

EVACopy has a Resident feature, which allows it to remain resident (as a tray icon) and to automatically initiate a backup job when the user is idle for some time (by default it's one minute). Via the tray icon menu you can also initiate a backup job manually, browse folders, review and restore earlier versions of files, change program settings, etc.

To start the Resident feature – in case you didn't reply with "Yes" to the question about remaining resident – edit the settings file (EVACopy.ini). Add ||idle:y to the end of the source|destination line (That's two vertical lines, the word "idle" followed by a colon, and the letter "y"). Save the file.

From now on, you need to start EVACopy just once, and it will remain resident. If you wish to make EVACopy start automatically when Windows starts, move EVACopy shortcut from the desktop (or from wherever it is) to the Startup folder in the Windows Start Menu.

From the tray menu you can configure the program settings and restore files via a friendlier graphic user interface. Read the manual for details.

Step 8 – Go manual

The manual has in-depth explanations and examples about how EVACopy works, the settings file, command-line parameters and exit codes, batch file integration, log file, best practices, and plenty more very neat stuff indeed!