

Acronis True Image Home 2009  
By Stuart Dreifus

Acronis True Image Home 2009 is an all in one drive image and file backup and restore program for XP and Vista computers. Using this software you can create backup images of your drives, as well as incremental image backups of your drives, clone your drives, and back up files and folders.

I installed the program on an XP SP2 system with an AMD Athlon 4400 64x2 processor, 1GB of RAM, and two 60GB drives. I formatted the second drive, but otherwise did not specially prepare it. All of my OS and data were on Drive 0 (C drive) and Drive 1 was set as the "E" drive.

Once installed, I created a full backup image of my C drive on the empty E drive. This went well, and was completed in only a short time. I then proceeded to use the "mount image" tool in the Acronis console to mount the new image as a new drive. This was done flawlessly, and within seconds I was able to view the entire image as my "F" drive. This is very useful, as you can retrieve a file or two from the image without having to first restore the image to a hard drive .

I then attempted to do a full disc clone of my C drive to the E drive. I went through the wizard and was properly warned that all data and formatting on the E drive would be lost. This is understood and was no problem. The clone operation can be done in different modes depending whether you wish a complete identical clone or a proportional clone. This is helpful if you need to clone to a smaller drive (but the drive must be big enough to hold all your data).

The cloning went quickly. In about 10 minutes it was all done. The system re-started to an Acronis screen and the software did what was needed. When done the system re-started again and I was greeted with the Windows prompt. I now had two drives with identical information on each. This is the way to go if you need to upgrade your system from a smaller drive to a newer larger drive but don't want to install all your programs again. Remember, that you cannot use both drives to boot to (in separate systems) as this will violate the Windows licensing. But you can clone your system and then use the new cloned drive, keeping the old drive as a backup or formatting it to use as a spare drive.

I then used the other backup functions of Acronis True Image Home 2009 and ran a backup of my "My Documents" folder and a backup of system state. The Wizard was well laid out and all necessary options are easy to see. Acronis True Image Home 2009 offers the option of full backups as well as incremental backups. Depending on your backup storage space this can be helpful as with incremental backups you only backup the changes. All file backups are stored in the same image format as the drive image so using the image mounting tool you can look at them as a drive letter. This is much easier than other backup programs that force you to restore an image prior to accessing files.

All of the above operations can be scheduled to run at various intervals. You can have them run when you are not using the system heavily or run after hours.

One of the main reasons in purchasing a backup or clone program is the need to restore if your system crashes. With Acronis you are covered. You have a few options for data protection. First, but not my recommended method, is to use the system volume backup to create a hidden partition on your drive to store recovery data. This is useful for those systems that are used by many people and the administrator needs a way to quickly restore the system to its previous state. But this is no help if the one and only drive is damaged. To be completely covered you would need to create this on a second

drive. If you are then going to use a second drive I would recommend a clone operation as then you can just mount the cloned drive if the first one fails. But if you do use a full backup/recover partition use an external drive. Once this is done use the bootable media wizard to create a bootable Acronis recovery CD. If you then need to restore your system you boot with the CD and chose your recovery source and new hard drive target. Oh! Keep this CD handy and make many copies, as this is your lifeline.

OK, so you now have a complete backup and image program installed on your system. What other useful things can you do? If you wanted to try out some new software but were not sure how it would affect your system you could do a complete backup or clone, install the software, run it, and then if you were not satisfied with it you could simply go through the process of restoring your system from your previous backup or clone. But what if all of this could be automated, well Acronis has a wizard called "Try & Decide". With this you are able to try new software without risk to your system. Acronis will build a "secure Zone" and create a replica of your operating system. You then go ahead and install the new software, run it, and if you are not happy just go to the Acronis wizard and go back to the previous settings. One caveat is that if you run other programs or download items such as updates, Email, or anti-virus definitions, they will be lost when you roll back to the previous version.

There are many other useful tools bundled with Acronis True Image Home 2009 but I wanted to focus on its backup, clone, and restore abilities as this is the core of the software.

In summary, I highly recommend Acronis True Image Home 2009 for any and all who have a personal computer as there is no reason not to have a solid backup with a program like this available.

Acronis True Image Home 2009 is available from the Acronis web site ([www.acronis.com](http://www.acronis.com)) for \$49.99 but I have seen it as low as \$37.99 at Amazon.com. A special discount price of \$29 is available from the User Group Store at [www.ugr.com](http://www.ugr.com) for user group members.

The minimum install requirements are Windows® Vista, Windows® XP Professional x64 Edition, Windows® XP SP 2 with a Pentium processor or higher, 256 MB RAM, CD-RW drive for bootable media creation. Supported hardware includes Internal and external hard disks, Networked storage devices, CD-R(W), DVD+R, DVD+RW, DVD-RAM, BD-R (Blu-ray, NEW!), ZIP® Jazz® and other removable media, P-ATA (IDE), S-ATA, SCSI, IEEE1394 (Fire wire) and USB 1.0 / 2.0 drives, PC card storage devices. Supported file systems are FAT16/32, NTFS, Linux Ext2, Ext3, ReiserFS, and Linux SWAP.

Acronis offers a free online knowledge base as well as a 30 days from date of purchase on-line chat support for all current versions as well as one version back. Paid phone support is available after the 30 days on a per incident basis.