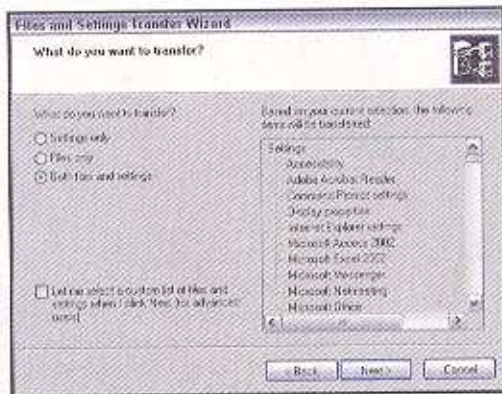


MIGRATE YOUR FILES

UPGRADING TO AN ENTIRELY NEW PC? HERE'S HOW TO MOVE EVERYTHING OVER. BY RUSSELL SHAW

→ Windows XP's File and Settings Transfer Wizard can make short work of easing your transition to a new computer.



The euphoria that comes with replacing your old PC with a newer, faster model quickly dissolves when you realize you need to move all your critical data from the old machine to the new. We have an easy cure for that potential buzz-kill.

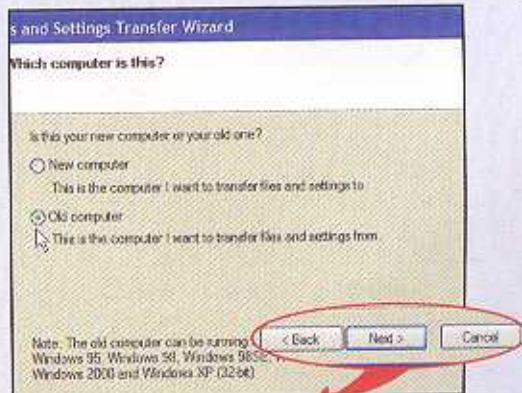
One way to approach this task is to simply copy all your files onto a recordable CD, drop the CD in your new computer's CD or DVD drive, and copy them onto the new hard drive. This solution is perfectly fine for simple documents (word processing and spreadsheets) and digital photos, but it's not a very good approach for most

USING THE FILES AND SETTINGS TRANSFER WIZARD

Windows XP's Files and Settings Transfer Wizard is designed to ease the transition from your old PC to your new one by moving not only your important files, but also by copying your preferences settings (including your display properties, folder and taskbar options, and even your favorite Websites). This way, your new PC will behave much like the one you're familiar with—except that it'll be a lot faster.



1 Launch the Files and Settings Transfer Wizard on your old computer by clicking on the Start menu and pointing to All Programs, Accessories, and then System Tools. Next, click on Files and Settings Transfer Wizard.



2 Once you've launched the Wizard, it will ask which computer you're working on. If you're copying files from this PC, choose the "Old Computer" option and then click on the Next button. (Note: If you need to transfer files from an older PC that's running an operating system earlier than Windows XP, see the sidebar "Moving From an Old OS.")

other types of files. Email messages and attachments are particularly problematic, because email clients (Microsoft Outlook and Outlook Express, for instance) store individual messages as components of much larger files. If you don't have the same email client on your new computer that you were using on your old machine, you'll encounter difficulty getting the new email client to recognize individual messages from the In-box you've copied over.

Copying individual application programs, such as Microsoft Word or Excel, is even more problematic. When you install a program on a PC, it makes changes to Windows Registry. The Registry is a database-like program that you as the end user don't normally interact with, but Windows XP and every program running on it depends heavily on the Registry. If you simply copy a program from one computer to another without using that program's installation routine, the software is unlikely to work properly.

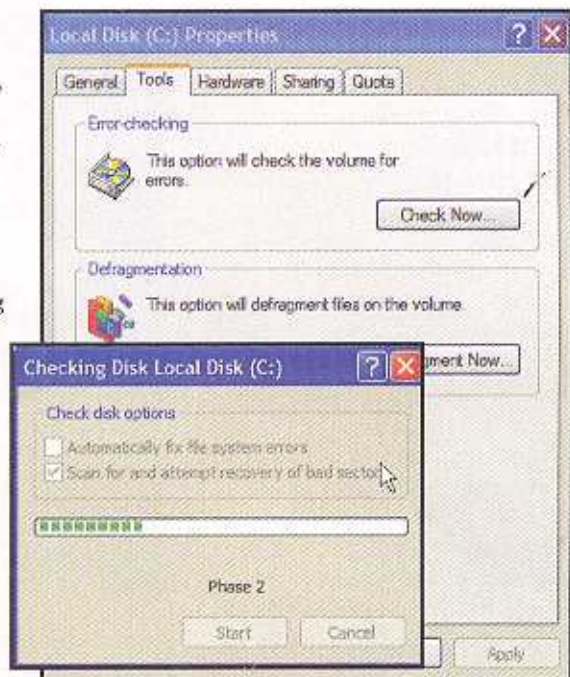
What's more, some programs have copy-protection schemes designed to

deter software piracy. Copy protection can make it very difficult to reinstall the software on a second computer. There is a better way.

MIGRATION PREPARATIONS

Before you do anything else, you should check on the general health of your old computer's hard drive. If it has problems, you don't want to spread the malady to your new machine.

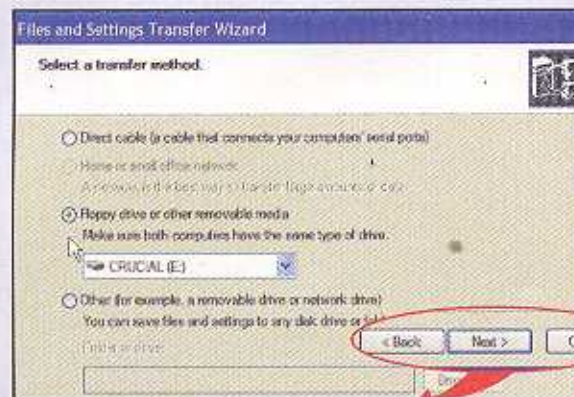
Perform a bottom-up scan using your favorite anti-virus software to make sure there's nothing infecting it. We'd also recommend running an anti-spyware program to make sure none of that garbage is on your old drive. (Spybot Search & Destroy is one of our favorites, and



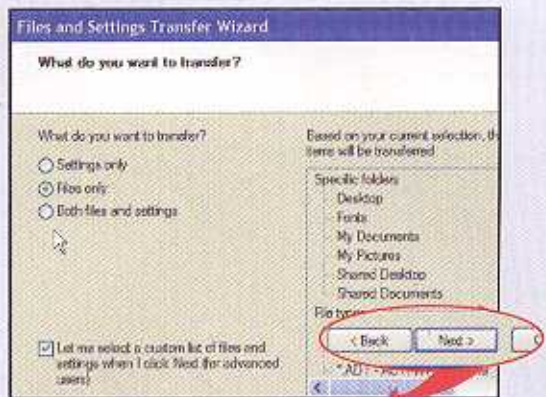
→ Use Windows XP's Scan Disk utility to make sure the disk drive in your old computer is healthy before you copy its files and settings.

you'll find a copy of it on the disc accompanying this issue.)

After you've performed these steps, run Windows XP's ScanDisk utility



3 Choose which method you want to use to transfer the files. The best way to accomplish this task is via a wired or wireless Local Area Network (LAN), but you can also use removable media (floppy disks or a USB flash-memory device, for example), or you can physically connect the two computers using a special cable connected to each of their serial ports. Click the Next button when you're ready.



4 Tell the Wizard whether you want it to transfer Settings only (the options that make Windows XP and related programs behave the way they do), Files only (letters, spreadsheets, and similar data files), or both Files and Settings. If you want to leave some files and settings behind, place a checkmark next to the item that reads "Let me select a custom list...." Click the Next button.

to check for and repair damaged or lost "clusters" on your hard drive. A cluster is a logical unit of file storage. Depending on the size of a file, it could be stored in numerous clusters spread throughout the hard drive. If clusters become damaged or "lost," meaning that the operating system can no longer find them, the file associated with those clusters will become unusable.

Here's how to run ScanDisk:

- 1 Click on the Start menu and select My Computer.
- 2 Right-click on the local disk you want to examine (this is typically your C:\ drive) and choose Properties from the pop-out menu.
- 3 Click on the Tools tab and then click on the Check Now button under Error Checking.
- 4 When the Check Local Disk window appears, place a checkmark next to "Scan for and attempt recovery of bad sectors" and then click on the Start button.

TRANSFER METHODS

These tips will help you decide which method to use for transferring files and settings from your old PC to your new one.

- **Direct cable:** This is a good choice if you don't have a network, but it requires a special cable (known as a null modem cable) to connect the legacy serial ports (not the USB ports) on both your PCs.
- **Home Or Small Office Network:** This is the absolute best

solution, but it requires that both computers be installed on a wired or wireless network.

- **Floppy drive or Other Removable Media:** This is the idea solution for most of us, because it requires little in the way of infrastructure. Since there might be a large volume of files to transfer, you'll want to use a high-capacity medium: recordable CD is good, but a recordable DVD is even better. A high-capacity flash-memory USB device will work, too.
- **If your removable drive doesn't appear in the drop-down menu** described above, select it using the menu option provided.

Once the scan has been completed, you'll be presented with a list of any fixes that were made to your computer's hard disk. Refer to the sidebar "Using the Files and Settings Transfer Wizard" for a hands-on guide to using that solution.

OTHER MOVING EXPERIENCES

Whenever you encounter a computer

problem that you know thousands of other people must have also run into, you can bet your bottom dollar that somebody has come up with solution that they'd be happy to sell you.

When it comes to Microsoft's operating systems, a third-party usually figures it out first; and then Microsoft eventually integrates a solution into some future version of the Windows.



5 The Wizard will display the files and settings it's prepared to transfer for you. If there are any you *don't* want transferred, or if there are any missing from this list, use the buttons on the right-hand side to customize the list. Click the Next button.



6 The Wizard will proceed to collect the files and settings you've indicated you wish to have transferred.

In this case, there are a number of third-party solutions. We'll look at three in particular: Eisenworld's Alohabob PC Relocator (\$29.95), Eisenworld's Alohabob PC Relocator Ultra Control (\$69.95), and Spearit's Move Me (\$39.95).

Alohabob PC Relocator will move most programs and all your personal preferences using either a PC-to-PC transfer cable (which is included in the box) or via a USB cable. The software compares the two PCs and determines which files need to be transferred. When the process is finished, Alohabob restarts the new machine and you're all set.

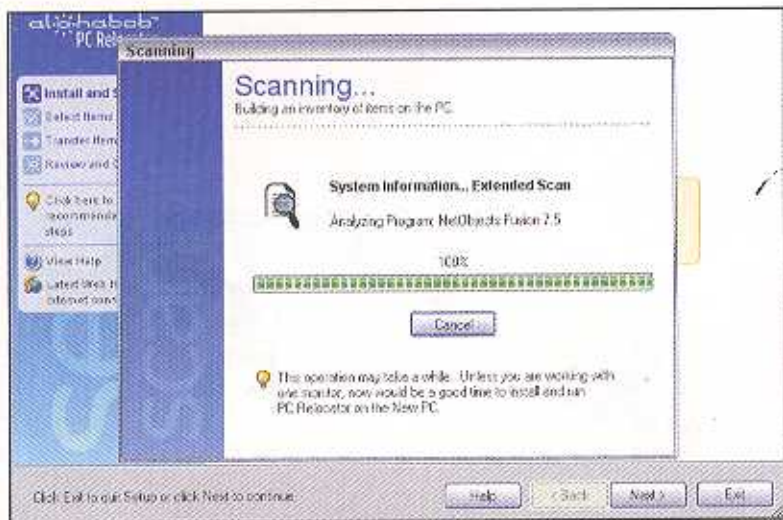
If you want more control over which programs and files are transferred, take a look at the Ultra Control version of Alohabob PC Relocator. Rather than automatically moving everything over, this program lets you pick and choose. This version is also much faster, because it uses the network connections on your PCs—even if the machines are not part of a network. Here again, Alohabob comes with a special cable for this purpose.

Spearit's Move Me (get it?) offers both automatic and selective-migration modes in the same box. Most people will find the standard wizard interface to be just the ticket, but if you want to keep a close eye on what's going on, you can use the program's Control Center feature.

We wouldn't recommend that a beginning user fiddle with the Control Center, but advanced users will appreciate the ability to write "rules" governing which files and applications get migrated and which are left behind.

If you don't want to buy anything extra, stick with Windows XP's Files and Settings Transfer Wizard.

No matter which solution you use, be aware that migration can take hours and will require tremendous amounts of storage space. Don't embark on this process if you anticipate needing to use your computer for other applications within a few hours. ■



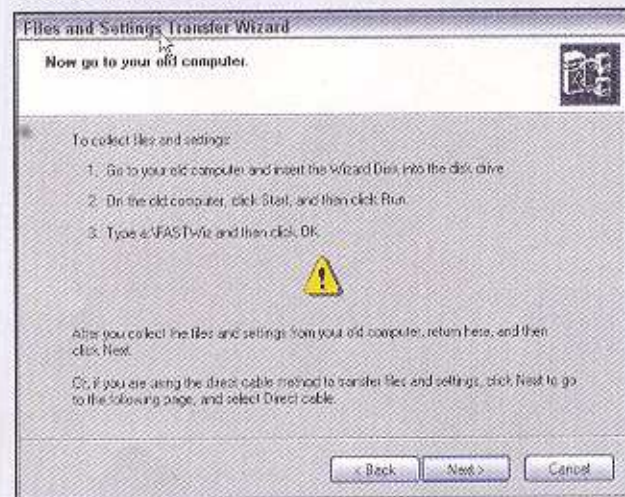
→ If you don't like Microsoft's approach, take a look at Alohabob PC Relocator, from Eisenworld.

MOVING FROM AN OLD OS?

If you're transferring files from a PC using a version of Windows that predates XP, you'll need to create a Wizard Disk as your first step. Launch the Files and Settings Transfer Wizard on your new PC. When the Wizard asks "Which computer is this?" indicate that it's the new computer and then click on the Next button.

Select the option that reads "I want to create a Wizard Disk in the following drive," and choose one of your removable media drives (floppy, USB, CD-R, etc.) and click on the Next button. Note: this process will reformat (erase) whichever disk you choose, so you should use a blank floppy if at all possible.

Once you've created the Wizard disk, insert it into one of your old PC's drives. Click on the Start menu and choose Run. When the Run window appears, type the appropriate drive letter where the Wizard disk is located (if it's a floppy disk, for instance, the drive letter would be A:) and then type the command "fastwiz." Click on the OK button to launch the Files And Settings Transfer Wizard.



→ Moving files from a Windows 95 PC is easy, too.