THIRD-PARTY IMAGING/CLONING PROGRAMS THAT ARE HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

EASEUS TODO BACKUP FREE (this is a hyperlink) is widely touted as a top choice for free backup software. Aimed at Windows home users, and designed for ease of use, Todo Backup Free offers "one-click backup and restore" to protect your files and help you recover in the event of a data disaster. The software backs up your entire hard drive including the operating system and installed software. You can schedule your complete backups to run automatically, or backup only selected files and folders on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

MACRIUM REFLECT FREE (this is a hyperlink) is best known as a tool to make system images, but it's also an excellent backup software option. It can clone a hard drive (make an exact file-for-file copy) or create a backup image with optional incremental updates. Computer guru Bob Rankin uses Macrium Reflect to create a weekly backup image and daily incrementals, so that his backup is never more than one day old. You can also use it to backup just selected files or folders. The scheduling feature lets you automate your backups. For even the novice or intermediate user, the program is quite intuitive and offers outstanding flexibility in making both clones and images.

ACRONIS TRUE IMAGE (this is a hyperlink) is probably the "Cadillac" of the cloning/imaging/backup industry. The cloning operation copies the entire contents of one disk drive to another to get two identical drives with the same file structure. The "Disk Clone" tool effectively copies all of the contents (including the operating system and installed programs) of one hard disk drive onto another hard disk drive. Therefore, you don't have to reinstall and reconfigure all of your software.