

## Backing up Windows Live Mail

Windows Live Mail backup instructions always describe backing up by using the Export functions for Messages, Accounts, and Contacts. Backing up by this method does indeed prevent complete loss of messages, accounts, and contacts; and I recommend you do this as a fail-safe. But unfortunately that method does not back up Categories (groups) you have created; nor does it provide a one-step recovery of messages and e-mail accounts. Restoring requires reversing the process and using Import for messages, accounts, and contacts. This can prove tedious and less than perfect. If you have created folders and stored messages, those folders may be lost, and messages all retained in one folder.

Windows Live Mail accounts and messages are stored by default in the system folder:

**C:\Users\User\_name\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows Live Mail**

Within this **Windows Live Mail folder** are several subfolders. Besides having folders for Windows Calendar, Storage Folders, etc., there is a named folder for each e-mail account. Inside each named e-mail account folder is yet another series of subfolders, folders corresponding to each primary folder, such as Inbox, Sent Items, Deleted Items, etc. plus any folder you have created under the primary folder column. Again, inside each of these folders is a sub-folder representing any folder created within that primary folder. For example if you created a folder labeled **Niece** within the Inbox folder, correspondingly, under the Account folder when you open Inbox, there will be a folder labeled Niece.

Each message is kept as an independent **.eml** file, but unfortunately not a file named by the message subject, but rather by a cryptic number given randomly by Windows Live Mail.

Also within each named account folder is an account file.

If you **save** the entire **Windows Live Mail** folder from the location just described, you can **copy** it as example in the My Documents folder, then tell Windows Live Mail to change the Store folder to that new location. When you do so, Windows Live Mail not only views all message and folders just the way you had them, but it also reproduces the e-mail accounts. The only thing you will need to do, is the first time checking for mail, it will ask for the account password (the ID will still be there). By this method, you can simply reinstall Windows Live Mail; you do not need or want to create any accounts; then change the Store folder to your saved and just copied Windows Live Mail folder. See step by step instructions on the following page.

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Step by step instructions for backup and restoration of Windows Live Mail (WLM):

1. First confirm where your mail store is located by going within WLM to File|Options|Mail| and then the Advanced tab|Maintenance|Store Folder.
2. Navigate to that Windows Live Mail folder, such as:  
**C:\Users\User\_name\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows Live Mail.**
3. Select the Windows Live Mail folder
4. Copy the selected Windows Live Mail folder by either right-clicking to choose Copy, or by using the CTRL-C keyboard shortcut.
5. Go to your backup location and Paste the Windows Live Mail folder you just copied.

You have now successfully copied all the Windows Live Mail messages and accounts just the way you were using them. Caution, because you have not yet backed up your contacts with groups.

**Hint:** If desired, and for easier navigation, you can change the Windows Live Mail Store Folder to one contained within My Documents before performing the Copy and Paste.

1. First create an empty folder under My Documents labeled Windows Live Mail (or similar label).
2. Use the Primary WLM drop-down menu | Options | Mail | Advanced tab | Maintenance button | Store folder button, then click Change and navigate to the newly created folder.
3. When you click OK, your entire contents will be moved to the new folder, and from then on WLM will use it instead of the more deeply buried site.

Restoring the Messages and Accounts merely uses this same method of changing the Store folder.

When you first reinstall Windows Live Mail, WLM will use that

**C:\Users\User\_name\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows Live Mail** site.

1. First reinstall Windows Live Mail
2. Copy and Paste your previously backed up folder into the restored My Documents folder.
3. Now again go to the Primary WLM drop-down menu | Options | Mail | Advanced tab | Maintenance button | Store folder button, then click Change and navigate to the My Documents Windows Live Mail folder you just created (by pasting).
4. When you click OK, a dialog box will open telling you there is a mail store found and asking if you want to start using that store. Say "Yes", and WLM mail will start using all those messages and accounts THE NEXT TIME YOU OPEN Windows Live Mail. Yes, you must first close WLM.

Windows Live Mail is now Restored with all your previously saved messages and accounts. The first time you attempt to receive mail, you will need to provide the password for any account, but the User ID should already be provided.

Windows Live Mail does not store your Contact list or Categories within this primary folder. And unfortunately Windows Live Mail does not allow you to change the store folder for Contacts or Categories. It remains in a quite obscure and involved location.

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Windows Live Mail Contacts and Categories are stored in a file labeled **contacts.edb** located within the folder labeled:

**C:\Users\User\_name\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows Live\Contacts\default\15.5\DBStore.**

There are several DBStore folders, but only the one within the 15.5 folder is the correct one.

**Note:** If you are still using Windows Live Mail prior to 2011, there may only be a 15.4 folder. You will need to first upgrade to Windows Live Mail 2012 for the 15.5 folder to exist.

**When you save** (by copying) the ...\**Windows Live\Contacts\ default\15.5** folder, you will be copying all the necessary components. However you will not be able to see any contents beyond the 15.5 folder unless you follow the below instructions.

- The DBStore folder is protected and hidden
- Just "Showing All Files" will not display DBStore
- You must also display "Protected Operating System Files"
- If you back up (copy then paste in the backup location) the **contacts.edb** file you will have backed up both contacts and categories. But it is usually simpler to copy either the Default or the Default\15.5 folder...because you can see them without changing views.

So to back up your contacts with categories:

1. Navigate to **C:\Users\Jim\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows Live\Contacts\default\15.5**
2. Select either the folder labeled "Default", or the one labeled "15.5".
3. Copy the selected folder.
4. Now Paste that folder into your backup location.

Your contacts with categories should now be backed up successfully.

**Restoring** the contacts and categories is a bit more complicated:

- First you must configure the computer to see the file you need for restoration.
  1. Open a Windows Explorer window (for instance, open My Documents).
  2. Click on Organize and choose Folders and Search Options.
  3. Click on the View tab of the next window which opens.
  4. Look down the Advanced list for "Show Hidden Files, folders, and drives", and place the dot.
  5. Now, in the same list, remove the check from "Hide protected operating system files"
  6. When you do so, Windows will warn against this. Click Yes.

- Now you are ready to restore the **contacts.edb** file.

1. Navigate to your backed up **15.4** folder and open it.
2. You will now see the DBStore folder. Open the folder.
3. Find the file labeled **contacts.edb**, select and copy it.
4. Similarly, navigate to

**C:\Users\Jim\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows Live\Contacts\default\15.5**, right-click and choose Paste.

5. It will ask if you want to replace it. Again the answer is Yes.

Once you open Windows Live Mail, your contacts and categories should reappear.

**Remember** to reverse the instructions and **hide** the Protected System files (replace the check).