Backing up Windows 7 to a flash drive
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Important - if you are using special programs like Quicken or QuickBooks, be sure they are backing up your data files somewhere in the documents folder so they will be included in this backup. Otherwise you will have to back those up thru the program itself.

1. Start at your desktop screen with no programs running.
    Insert your flash drive into a USB port.
    Figure out what letter your flash drive is using.
    This may show in a pop-up, otherwise you can find out in the File Explorer.
    Close down any pop-ups you don't understand.

2. Open the File Explorer. It may have opened automatically already.
    Otherwise click the yellow folder in the lower left., or click "Documents" in the Start Menu.

3. Format the flash drive to erase it.   (Warning - any existing files will be deleted)
    To do this find your flash drive letter on either side of the screen.
    Right click the drive, then choose "Format", insure "Quick" is checked, then click the Start button.
    Continue when the warning message shows.

4. When done formatting close it down, but stay in the File Explorer. If it closes open it up again.

5. Find the Documents folder along the left side in the "Libraries" section.
    Expand the Documents library with the small arrow along the left.
    Find the "My Documents" folder inside. That's the folder you want to back up.
    Do not try to backup the entire "Documents" library or use the folders using under "Favorites" section.

6. Optional step - find out how big the Documents or Pictures folders are.
    To do this fight click the "My Documents" or "My Pictures folder, then left click on Properties.
    Look for the "Size" line. You need to make sure you have a large enough flash drive.

7. Now it's time to backup.
    Right click the "My Documents" folder, choose "Send To", then click your flash drive.
    If you see any prompts like "Property Loss" just continue.

8. Repeat the steps for other folders like "My Pictures", "My Music", and "My Videos".

9. After everything has finished copying, find your flash drive along the left and click on it.
    You may have to click the small arrow to the left of "Computer" to see the drives.
    Look at the contents of the flash drive and make sure your folders and files made it there.

10. Get back at your desktop with no programs running, wait 15 seconds, then remove your flash drive.
    You can also use the system tray eject button.

Important - backing up "Desktop" and "Downloads" in the upper left of the File Explorer will not work. Instead you will need to use the small arrows along the far left to expand certain folders to find them. Expand drive "C", expand the "Users" folder, find your user folder and expand it. Find the folders in there.