



## TECHNOLOGY INSIGHTS

### Time Machines For Windows

#### New products for always-on Windows version backup

With OSX 10.5 Leopard, Apple introduced Time Machine, a new back-up concept that allows you to retrieve older versions of documents which traditional backup programs tend to overwrite. This can be useful if you've edited out some vital detail in a current version that you want to restore from an older one.

At least as useful was the fact that Time Machine made it a cinch to set up a fully automated backup routine, unlike most current file back-up programs. It soon became a boasting point for Mac users – 'see what I can do and you can't.'

#### Genie Timeline

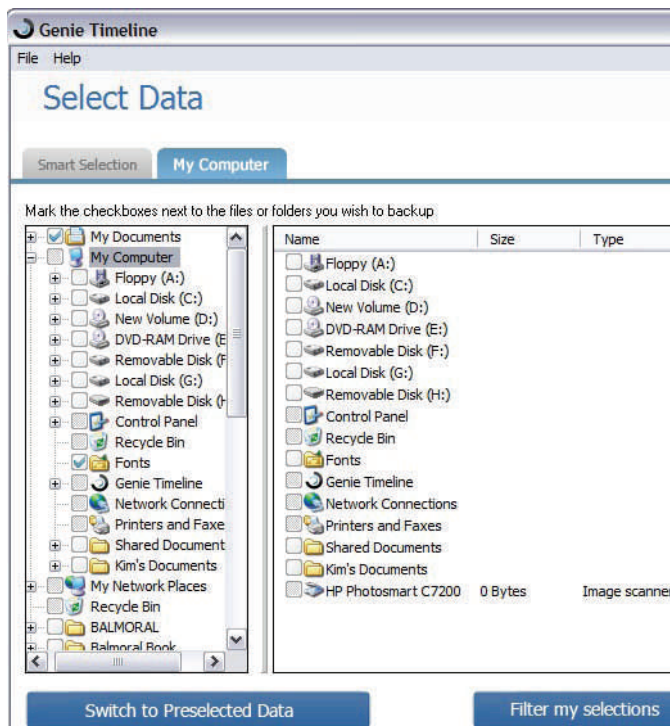
Now Geniesoft, maker of the excellent Genie Backup Manager, has released a product called **Timeline** - [www.genie-soft.com/](http://www.genie-soft.com/).

Timeline is about as easy as it gets. The 'smart' selection lets you choose major groups like Email or My Documents, My Music etc. Or you can just tick everything, then move on and select your backup drive.

Genie's data selection also gives users the option to select the folders and sub-folders they want to keep backups of, and this is pretty straightforward as well.



You can skip step 3 a (see diagram) unless you want to encrypt your data, which Genie will happily do for you. There are stern warnings, as there should be, that losing your password will make it impossible to retrieve your encrypted data.



Timeline is designed to operate in the background without impacting on the work you're doing. This means it takes hours to do the initial backup on a PC, but from here on updating the Timeline folder every half hour should be fast.

Travelling back in time is nowhere near as slick as it is on a Mac – it opens a Windows Explorer-like panel with a timeline slide added on the right. It sure lacks Leopard's 3D appeal.

What works well is the search function, which usually finds all the records that have the key words in their titles. In a pinch, that's probably the thing you want most.

These are our own opinions.

We have no commercial arrangements with vendors.

For more reviews, please contact TECHNOLEDGE.

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On the practical side, you can unplug the backup drive anytime, as you would do with a laptop, and Timeline simply picks up where it left off when you connect back up. It's a little too eager, though: when your USB drive is unplugged and you connect your camera, Timeline will jump on it thinking it's the backup drive. That took a while to work out.

Timeline is utterly simple to set up, but it throws a spanner in the works when it's update time (you can set the interval). It commandeers every last cpu cycle on the test machine, a new Intel Core 2 Duo 7400 with 2gb of RAM running Windows XP 3. Windows simply freezes over, for minutes at a time.

Timeline's folder on the external hard drive tends to swell rapidly and double in size every few weeks which is curious. It's not a such big problem these days when 1TB usb hard drives are cheap. And, when Genie Timeline runs out of room, it starts to delete the oldest versions of your documents to make room for new ones.

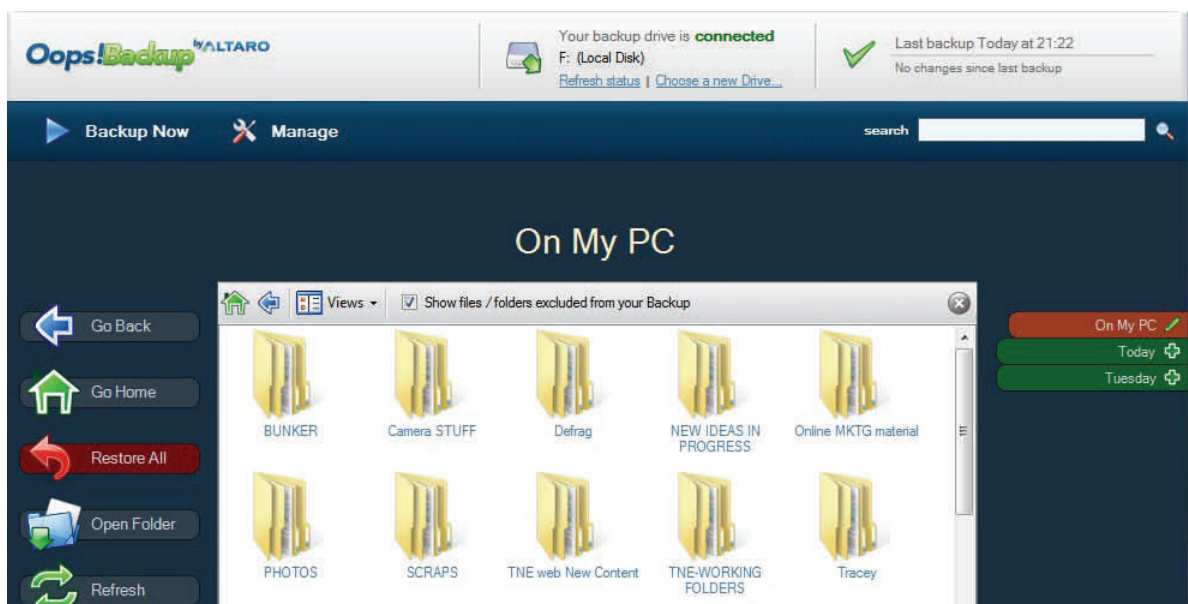
In sum, this is the easiest backup software we've ever installed and set up for automated backup. And a price per PC of US\$40 is pretty reasonable for such a slick product, but Genie needs to teach this thing to behave instead of hurling itself across your PC like a boa constrictor.

### OOPS! Backup

Altaro is a new company based in Malta that has produced an alternative to Genie's. It's just as easy to set up in the same three steps, and has a more Mac-like interface when you want to use the time machine facility. The main difference to Genie Timeline is that it takes two scheduled updates, one for ordinary files and a second for email like Outlook .pst files.

On the surface, when monitoring CPU and disk usage during the update cycles, OOPS! Backup seemed to use less brute force than Genie Timeline during updates. This proved to be an illusion, since the PC froze over almost as badly as it had with Genie in practice. The two update cycles probably added to that impression, and the pop-up panels were a bit on the intrusive side (but can be disabled with some fiddling).

OOPS! Backup also used more than a 100mb of RAM compared with less than 50 for Genie so it will be more noticeable running on marginal hardware. Pricing is much the same.



The good news is that we have two new solutions for easy always-on version backup. The bad news is that their makers have neglected to fine-tune these products not to hijack our PCs when we work.

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