

THE COMPUTER CORNER

## No. 148. GoodSync

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I just love it when I come across program that does an elegant job of solving a computing problem for me. GoodSync is such a program. It might be a solution for you, too. It synchronizes files across my home network, and it does it amazingly quickly and without error. Let me give some background.

I have six permanent computers at my QTH, and each has a name for purposes of identification on my home network. Three computers live in our office on the top floor of my house. There is my main machine (named Main32) and a laptop (named DellLT), both of which are "mine", and my wife's (KC9FZK) machine (named Nancy). Three more live in the basement. One is dedicated to Winlink 2000 (named Wlink), another dedicated to general ham stuff such as PSK31 and the like (named Ham). A third machine is used in rebuilding computers for ARES/RACES (it always has its covers off and I often switch its hard drive temporarily with one I need to wipe or partition during the rebuilding process); that one is named Basementest.

Each computer has a C: drive (for Windows), a D: drive (this partition holds all the programs I install) and an E: drive that has nothing but my creations. For example, all six E: drives have a folder named CC (short for Computer Corner) containing articles I have written including this one. A Graphics folder holds pictures and drawings, and even a PowerPoint presentation with photographs taken when Nancy and I spent two weeks visiting Israel this fall. A Mydocs folder holds all miscellaneous letters and documents, and so on. All our "stuff" is on those E: drives, segregated from programs and operating system files. All six computers have an E: drive containing folders and files identical to all others, until we edit one.

Oh, by the way, the three machines in my office are all connected to a router via network cable, while the three in the basement connect via wireless. They all see each other, as well as the Internet, through the router. The router, by its nature, also provides a hardware firewall, isolating all six machines from probes coming from the Internet, and all machines also run a software firewall.

So this is how I used to do it. Before GoodSync, when I finished an article on Main32 such as the one you are now reading, I would copy it to each of the other 5 machines. It would require navigating to my CC folder on my E: drive on Main32, then connecting to one of the other machines and navigating to its CC folder on its E: drive, then a drag-n-drop of CC148.doc from one machine to the other. This had to be repeated five times until all machines were updated.

With GoodSync, there is a job I created called Main32 E: to DellLT E:, which does just what it says. Click Analyze and the program finds all differences between the entire Main32 E: drive and the E: drive on the laptop. It takes about 2 seconds to do the analysis! Then click Sync and it sends any updated or missing files to the laptop. That takes about 1 second. Repeat for the other computers, and I am done, in well under a minute. One can even click Analyze and Synch, which saves one step (though it is interesting and fun to watch each process).

Now, this is not all it will do. I set up my jobs to work in backup mode, which means they only go from my main machine to the other five. GoodSync can also be set up to work in the synchronize mode, which will copy updated or missing files in either direction. Moreover, any of these modes need not be used just over a network. GoodSync can send/receive files to and from a USB stick, or to an external hard drive, as well as to another computer on a network or two connected directly. And, there are dozens of options concerning which files, or whole folders, are to be synchronized, and in which direction(s) the files should

move, far too many options to describe here. The user interface is very intuitive once you learn what it is depicting, and the learning curve is easy. It is well written, safe, and consistently works like a charm. GoodSync is a very nice piece of software, indeed.

I don't purchase a lot of software, because almost invariably, there is a freeware program out there somewhere that will do what I need to do. However, I actually purchased GoodSync (\$29.95, Siber Systems, [www.goodsync.com](http://www.goodsync.com)) because it filled a need (I did search the freeware world but did not find anything that compares with it in ease of use or capabilities). Also, I wanted to support the author because he did such a good job with the program. It really is impressive.

On the other hand, you need not purchase GoodSync to use it. Ever! The completely free version lets you create and use an unlimited number of jobs and backup an unlimited number of files, for 30 days. After 30 days, you can still use it free of charge, but it is limited to three jobs and 100 files. That is pretty generous, and may well be sufficient for many users with small needs, such as a network with only two or three computers. Since I have more than three jobs with my six machines, it was necessary for me to purchase the software. Thirty bucks. Well worth the cost! Happy Computing!