



## COLUMNISTS

### ChessBase Cafe

Steve Lopez



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## Backing Up Your Database

Over the last couple of months, I've received many requests to describe how Fritz or ChessBase users can backup data or move it from one computer to another. This month we'll take a general look at archiving data, as well as moving it between computers. Keep in mind that both ChessBase and Fritz use the same data format. We'll be referring to it as "ChessBase format data," but this includes the Fritz program as well.

The most important thing to remember is that ChessBase-format opening books and databases consist of *multiple files*. It's not the same as PGN format data, which is just a single text file with the contents in a specific data structure. If you're going to backup a ChessBase database or opening book, *you have to be sure to copy **all** of the files or else you'll be unhappy later.*

The reason the data is spread across multiple files is that it speeds up the search process. For example, when you perform a search using just the game header information, the only data file that needs to be searched by the program is the ".cbh" file; all the other files can be ignored. By splitting data in an organized manner across several files, the program's search time is decreased because only a portion of the total data needs to be accessed.

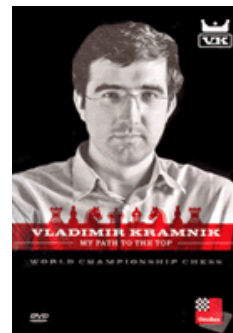
Consequently, though, when a user makes a backup copy of his data (or copies it to another machine), the user has to make sure that *all* of the files are copied or else risk damaging (or even destroying) a database.

The good news is that the process is quite simple, because all of the database files are contained in the same folder (with one occasional exception which we'll discuss shortly):

Name	Size
CB Light Database.html	
CB Light Database.cba	1 KB
CB Light Database.cbc	1 KB
CB Light Database.cbe	1 KB
CB Light Database.cbg	1,044 KB
CB Light Database.cbh	541 KB
CB Light Database.cbj	917 KB
CB Light Database.cbm	2 KB
CB Light Database.cbp	39 KB
CB Light Database.cbs	5 KB
CB Light Database.cbt	17 KB
CB Light Database.cib	318 KB
CB Light Database.cit	24 KB
CB Light Database.ck1	10 KB
CB Light Database.ck2	44 KB
CB Light Database.ck3	177 KB
CB Light Database.dkn	12 KB
CB Light Database.dko	162 KB
CB Light Database.cp1	2 KB
CB Light Database.cp2	26 KB
CB Light Database.cp3	105 KB
CB Light Database.cpn	3 KB
CB Light Database.cpo	168 KB
CB Light Database.ini	1 KB

Looking into the folder in which my "ChessBase Light" database is stored, we see **all** of the database's files in the same folder. This will always be the case with databases and opening books; you're not going to find the files scattered across multiple folders. All of the database files will share the same name (the letters before the "dot" in the filenames),

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[My Path to the Top \(DVD\)](#)  
 by Vladimir Kramnik



[How to Play the  
 Queen's Gambit \(DVD\)](#)  
 by Garry Kasparov

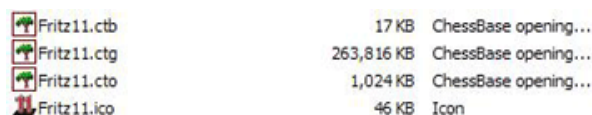


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but with different file extensions (the letters after the “dot” in the filenames).

However, you will sometimes find a sub-folder with the same name as the database’s files, as in the above illustration. This folder contains additional files; typically multimedia (audio/video/pictorial) content attached to database games or database text files.

As you can see from the illustration, a ChessBase format database can consist of more than twenty files. An opening book/tree will have far fewer files:

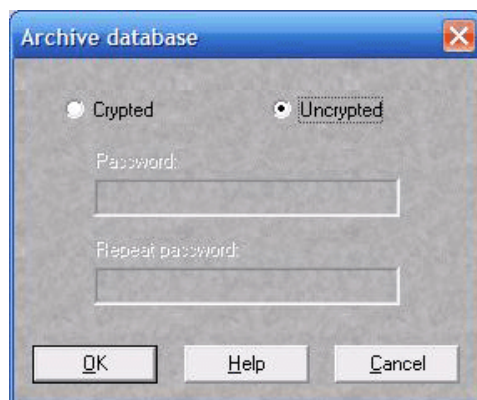


To archive a database or an opening book, you just have to be sure to copy **all** of a database’s files, as well as any subfolders (as in the above illustration) to whatever your target media might be (CD, DVD, Flash drive, etc). Then you can just store the CD or DVD, or use it to copy the data into a folder on another computer.

There’s a second method that works only with databases (not opening books) and is available to ChessBase users (the Fritz program doesn’t contain this function): it’s called “Backup database.” It has a couple of advantages over copying a group of individual files:

- It gathers all of the database files (including multimedia content) into a single file (with the .cbz extension);
- This .cbz file is a compressed file (similar to a .zip or .rar file) and, since the data is compressed, the file size will be less than the combined size of the original group of files.

To run “Backup database” in ChessBase 9, start at the database window (containing icons for all of your various databases). Single-click on the icon for the database you wish to archive, then go to the Tools menu, select “Database” and then “Backup database” from the submenu. You’ll see the following dialogue appear:



You have two options “Crypted” (meaning “password-protected”) and “Uncrypted”; obviously the password entry boxes will be unavailable unless “Crypted” is selected.

I’m going to give you a straight-up warning here: **don’t** use “Crypted” unless you have a **very** good reason for password-protecting your data (for instance, if you’re a world championship contender who wants to protect his “secret” opening analysis). I say this because if you password-protect your file, and you later *forget or lose* your own password, you’re truly out of luck – neither I nor anyone connected with ChessBase can retrieve your data. I’m not saying that the data is completely irretrievable (there’s no such thing as “perfect” encryption), but no one affiliated with

ChessBase will be able to bail you out.

So I'll warn you (with emphasis): ***If you encrypt your ChessBase data, do not forget or lose your password.***

Seriously. For 99% of ChessBase users, there's really no earthly reason to encrypt your data. So just take it from me, choose "Unencrypted" in this dialogue.

In either case, after you click "OK," you'll see the standard Windows file select dialogue appear that allows you to name your compressed .cbz file and choose a folder in which to store it. The default folder in this dialogue will be the same folder in which the original database is located.

Here's another tip: it's a good idea to store your compressed .cbz file in some other folder than the one containing the original database. This will prevent you from accidentally overwriting the original database with an older archived copy. Let's say, for example, that you compress the original database into a .cbz file stored in the same folder as the original files. You then spend a week adding games and annotations to the original copy. But if you happen to uncompress the .cbz file, it will uncompress into the same folder in which it's stored and overwrite the newer version – effectively erasing a week's worth of your hard work.

After you've created a .cbz file, you can transfer it to a removable medium (CD, DVD, Flash drive, etc.) or to another computer. To uncompress a .cbz file, just open it in ChessBase 9 using the File/Open/Open Database command.

The File/Open/Open Database command is also how you open a database you've copied to a new machine; you just need to know which folder the files are located in on the hard drive. Navigate to that folder using the Windows file select dialogue and double-click on the database's filename to open it.

Regardless of which method you choose (compressing databases into .cbz files or copying the myriad individual files), you're just copying ChessBase files the same as you would any other kind of computer file. The main thing you'll need to remember is to copy *all* of the database's files and to make sure all the files end up in the same folder on your new machine.

Here are a couple of common questions and answers:

**Question** I'm backing up a database onto a CD and I can't get all the files onto a single disk? What do I do?

**Answer** It's OK to copy some of the files onto one CD, and the rest of the files onto another. Backing a database up onto multiple disks doesn't hurt anything. But for the database to be usable later, all of the database's files have to be copied into the same folder on the destination hard drive. You also won't be able to use a database directly from a CD unless all of the database files are on the same disk.

**Question** I'm trying to back up a database, but one of the files is too large to fit on a single CD. What can I do?

**Answer** There are a few remedies. The obvious one is to use a storage medium with a larger capacity, like a DVD or a large Flash drive. The less obvious one is to copy your database's games sequentially into smaller numbered databases, creating multiple smaller databases. You can then back these up onto disks, copy them onto a new machine, then use "drag and drop" to recombine the smaller databases into a large one again. There are several issues involved in the latter case (which we won't go into here), so we'll just say that the former method (a medium with larger storage capacity) is easier.

A third alternative is to use a compression program (such as WinZip) to compress the large file. Many file compression utilities can also split a large file across multiple disks, and recombine them on the target computer or drive.

Until next month, have fun!

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All the software described in this column, as well as many more programs, are available in the [USCFSales Online Catalog](#).

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**ChessBase Cafe** welcomes readers' questions. Send one along and perhaps it will be answered in an upcoming column. Please include your name and country of residence.

*[Yes, I have a question for Steve!](#)*

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