

Clean Installation of Windows Xp

Doing a clean install of Windows is a two step process:

- Preparing for the install
- Performing install

Doing the Backup & Preparing for Install:

- Perform an inventory of all applications loaded or required. Look in the control panel and note all installed programs in “Add and Remove Programs”. Also note any additional programs found in Start / All Programs.
- Determine how you plan to backup your software and data. The quickest way I have found is to have two PCs with a network mapped drive between them. This is kind of tricky but if you can figure this out it makes the process easier. After you have created a mapped drive you can setup a file on the remote PC and copy all of your data to that device. Later, after you reinstall Windows, you remap the drive and copy all the files back – over Ethernet which is faster and more reliable than wireless.
- Another very reliable method is to use the software that came with your DVD-RW or CDROM-RW. DVD is preferable if you can record on it. If you have Roxio or a similar product you can perform backups across multiple disks which is great and then you will always have digital backups in case something happens to your PC like you lose it or a virus destroys everything. Otherwise, just backup on to separate disks as need be.
- Most free software can be downloaded directly from the internet once you have a connection: Java, Adobe Acrobat, Winzip, Yahoo/AOL/MSN IM, Ad-Aware, Spyware Blaster, Kitco, Apple iTunes, Roxio, etc. – all of these should be on your inventory listing.
- Collect all licensed software copies which you need reinstall: Windows Xp Service Pack 2, Microsoft Outlook, Quicken, Antivirus, Photoshop, etc.
- Drivers: This software controls the hardware – such as drivers for video, sound, CDROM, DVD, camera, scanner, printer, network & wireless cards, touch pad, etc. Go to the manufacture’s website, lookup your PC’s model number and download all of the drivers that came with your PC. You probably have CDROMs that shipped with your laptop/desktop, but the software is probably outdated by now and the most update versions can be found on your mfg’s website. Download all this software before you install Xp and have it readily available – like on a flash drive.
- Organization is important when saving your data. I try to save all my data, files (documents, pictures, music, email, etc.) in one location. I put everything in “My Documents” to make backing up my data easy. You need to track down where all of your data that you would like to save is currently located. Some things are easy to figure based up defaults like where MS Word saves it files. Other things like MS Outlook files (*.pst) are more hidden and require some digging in the programs options – and using the file explorer to figure it out. When in doubt, save it. You need to go through your list of installed programs and if they save

documents or files to your PC, you need to make sure you know where those are saved so that you can back those up and don't lose it.

- Here are some more tricky things which I make sure to try to save:
 - Favorites: click on My Computer / Local Disk (C:) / Documents and Settings / Soee / Favorites. Soee = the username of your current installation when you log onto Windows.
 - Make sure hidden files is turned off so that you can see everything. When you are in File Explorer, you choose: Tools / Folder Options... / click on "View" tab. Under 'advanced settings' make sure the radio button 'Show hidden files and folders' is selected.
 - MS Outlook mail files are saved in My Computer / Local Disk (C:) / Documents and Settings / Soee / Local Settings / Application Data / Microsoft / Outlook. Note: this is a hidden folder which you will need to unhide. Also, by default Outlook saves mail archives to this folder too. Make sure to copy all these files onto backups. When I reinstall Outlook, I make sure to redirect the default mail folder to one that saved within My Documents – so that in the future all data files are saved in one central location.
 - MS Word dictionary settings. I like to copy over my old Word custom dictionary settings. In Word, select: Tools / Options... / Spelling & Grammer tab, click "Custom Dictionary" button, then select "New" button. A window will appear with your custom dictionary in it. Drag that file to your desktop and then cancel out of all windows. Backup that file and reinstall it later to the location where the default file is located once you install Office if required.
 - Save any files that sit on your desktop
 - Using File Explorer – check the C: drive (root) folder to make sure there isn't any odd files there that you may have overlooked.
 - Make sure to note all of your pertinent email settings – such as POP servers, SMTP, etc. – anything which you will need to know to configure these settings again.
 - Make a note of any printer paths or mapped network drives that you may have currently setup between other devices.
- Once I have done all the ABOVE, I wait for a couple of days before I do the install in case I come across some files or settings that I have forget to include during the initial backup process. If you ever need a larger hard drive, it's good upgrade when your pc is working well, by following this process. Also, hold on to the hard drive as a permanent backup and fall back disk in case your newer one crashes.

PERFORMING THE NEW INSTALL

- Locate the Windows Xp Installation Disk – Service Pack 2. If you have SP1 or earlier it will work, but the installation will be longer as all the service packs and updates are downloaded and installed. Make sure you have your Xp installation serial number. Usually this is saved onto the bottom of you laptop on the

- certificate that comes with your software. During the process it will ask you for your serial “key” which you will enter yours at that point in time to continue by verifying your windows copy. You may need to talk to MS and just tell them you are doing a reinstallation of your operating system – curse them – just kidding.
- Before you go any further, there is NO TURNING BACK. Once you reformat your hard drive all is lost – unless you are installing on a new hard disk of greater size (cautious route, but a great idea if you have critical data and can’t afford to screw up).
 - Now you have all known backups of data, drivers, settings, etc. – confirm this.
 - OK,< you will need to boot from the CDROM drive. Place the XP disc in and boot from it. You may be asked to press the space bar to do so. If the PC just boots up as normal, you will need to restart it and upon startup – you will need to press a key (such as F10 or Delete) to enter the BIOS. Here you will find an option to change the boot sequence so that it starts from the CDROM drive with the disk in.
 - Windows Setup will start and it will inspect your PC’s hardware.
 - Next it will load the startup files in memory from the CDROM. This takes awhile.
 - Upon the next option you can: quit, attempt to repair your current installation or I choose ENTER to set up XP.
 - F8 – I agree
 - Here you can attempt to ‘R’ Repair your current installation. I want a fresh install so I go for “installing a fresh copy” or ESC.
 - Here you will see how your hard drive is configured. I recommend creating two separate partitions – one is at least a couple of GB. You will see either one or multiple partitions currently where your O/S is installed. Selection the partition(s) you want to delete – it’ll probably say [NTFS next to it], so that you can reformat it fresh. Press D.
 - Windows will warn you that you are about to delete an active system partition. Press enter only if you want to toast what you currently have – THERE IS NO TURNING BACK beyond this point – say a prayer and choose ‘Enter’.
 - It will ask you to press L (lose data) and then complete give you a clean swipe of the hard drive.
 - Next, you will hopefully see one partition. It will say ‘Unpartitioned Space’ next to it. Select it and press ‘C’ to create a new partition.
 - You will be asked how big you want to make the partition. Like I said, I recommend that you reserve part of your disc to a separation unformatted partition at least a couple of GB (1 GB = 1000 MB). Later if you have a serious error with your Windows installation, you can use this small partition to install a shareware O/S that can read your corrupted Windows installation and probably be able to recover all of your data, including using your drive to make backups to CDROM.
 - Once you’ve set aside the small, unformatted partition – you will create a new partition for the new XP installation. The size will be the rest of the space, the maximum. Input size, press ENTER.
 - Select the partition, [New], and select ‘ENTER’ to begin the new installation.

- Doing this from memory the installation part is fairly straight forward. Setup will copy the setup files to your PC and begin the installation. You will need to input your XP serial number. Choose your timezone and some basic settings. The process takes awhile and it requires a couple of reboots
- Have a good Ethernet network connection – do not use wireless as it won't work yet.
- It will ask you put in an administrator password - a strong one is my recommendation. You can create multiple logins for different users or just use one. I make sure to turn on my login password.
- It should ask you to log into Windows Xp. Do so; make sure you have a good internet connection. Windows should begin to download various patches and installation software – go through all this and when it is done downloading the this software (you will see it on the right lower toolbar) install all of it. May need to reboot.
- The first software to install is your Antivirus (A/V) product. I recommend Trend Micro – Internet Security but there are others. Do this and it will require a reboot. It will connect and start to install the more up-to-date installation files from the website. MS will be doing the same. Several reboots will be required.
- Install your PC manufacturer's updated drivers. I have these on a flash drive. This will require many reboots and you install the latest drivers. It's time consuming, but you are almost finished.
- Install freeware: Webroot SpySweeper, Ad-Aware and similar programs. Get the latest software and definitions. Enable all settings / security measures, scan the system if it makes you feel better.
- It's a good idea to scan all of your back files with the fresh, up-to-date version of A/V to ensure no virus was on that installation and the files are 'clean'.
- Install additional software from CDROM/DVD copies or a flash drives.
- If you decided to save your files on a shared logical drive on your network, you will need to remap this drive on both sides and copy all the files back into 'My Documents' on the new installation. This takes awhile and you want to make sure you do it over wire, not wirelessly.
- It really comes down to how organized you are and prepared to pull this off pretty flawlessly and you refine the process as you go.
- You will need to setup your mail accounts (following the directions you took earlier!), printer settings, scanners, etc. You made a list earlier, work off of it to finish installing all the latest versions of the software that you need.
- Copy your old favorites into the new folder where they are currently saved. Work through the list you made to complete your installation to your satisfaction. Usually, as you need something – like Java – it prompts you to install this software and you continue on.
- If you find something that you forget, stop and add it to your Installation Checklist, so its soother next time.

GOOD LUCK AND MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU...

DON'T BE TICKED AT ME IF THIS DOESN'T WORK AS EXPECTED (OR AT ALL!!)

CHEERS!
/SOEE

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