

## Re: Installation: doesn't see setup files on hard drive?

**Source:**

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**From:** Bruce Sanderson (*bsanders\_at\_junk.junk*)

**Date:** 02/13/05

Date: Sat, 12 Feb 2005 16:27:28 -0800

This message is from your computer's BIOS and means that the physical disk it has been instructed to boot from does not have a Master Boot Record, a Partition Boot Record in the "Active" partition or a file system in the "Active" partition with anything that looks like an operating system to it.

Some BIOS's can only boot from the "Active" partition on the first hard disk. In these BIOS's, this partition is often referred to as "C" in the BIOS startup settings. Other BIOS's can be configured to boot from the "Active" partition on other than the first hard disk. Whichever physical disk the BIOS is set to boot from must have an appropriate Master Boot Record and Partition Boot Record in the first partition plus an "OS" in that partition; the message you are getting says, that whatever disk the BIOS is attempting to boot from does not have appropriate information in the Master Boot Record or the "Active" partition. In this context, the Windows Boot Manager is an "OS". Windows setup will write the required information in the "Active" partition on the first physical disk. If you change the BIOS settings to actually boot from a different physical disk, Windows setup won't know that and won't write the Master Boot record etc. on that disk.

The usual way that the Windows multi-boot works is to have ntldr, ntdetect.com and boot.ini are in the root of the file system in the "Active" partition of whatever disk the BIOS is set to boot from. Most often, but not always, this is the first partition on the first physical disk. Then, when you choose the particular OS installation you actually want to run, the Windows Boot Manager loads and executes that OS.

The drive letter to partition association is an artifact of the operating system, not your computer's BIOS. Windows Setup enumerates the disks and partitions and associates drive letters with the partitions in a fixed way. If the physical arrangement of disks is modified, then Windows setup run again, it will almost certainly show a different drive letter to partition association.

To go further, it is necessary to understand exactly the physical disk configuration in your computer and the corresponding BIOS settings.

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So, what physical disks do you have installed? Please list them in the sequence that your BIOS reports them.

Which physical disk are you attempting to install Windows on to?

In the Windows setup, what physical disks and partitions are reported? Please give the details including the drive letters shown in the setup panel. Which of these are you attempting to install into?

You mention something you see in Computer Management, System Info. This implies you have an operational OS on this computer. Please list the partitions shown in Computer Management, Disk Management, including the "Status" column and indicate which partition you are attempting to install the second Windows OS into.

During the OS installation process – e.g. between booting from the CD and the restart after the first part of the setup, are you physically re-arranging the disks or their cabling?

If you have an operational Windows operating system, you can prepare a boot floppy that is sometimes useful to bypass the problem you are seeing. To create a boot floppy:

1. logon to a Windows NT 4, 2000, XP or 2003 computer
2. put a floppy disk into the floppy disk drive
3. in Windows Explorer, right click on the floppy drive (A) and select Format
4. DO NOT add a check mark to "Create an MS-DOS startup disk"
5. a check mark in "Quick Format" is optional, but I suggest not adding one
6. click Start
7. when the Format is complete, copy the following files from the root of the "System Partition" (usually C, but not necessarily)
  - ntldr
  - ntdetect.com
  - boot.ini

Now, the boot.ini is specific to the particular computer's hard disk configuration and OS installations, so you may need to adjust it. Open it in Notepad.

You should see something like this:

```
[boot loader]
timeout=10
default=multi(0)disk(0)rdisk(1)partition(1)\WINDOWS
[operating systems]
multi(0)disk(0)rdisk(1)partition(1)\WINDOWS="Operational XP D1P1"
/fastdetect /NoExecute=OptIn
multi(0)disk(0)rdisk(0)partition(3)\WINDOWS="2003 Ent R2" /noexecute=optout
/fastdetect
```

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For normal X86 type computers with IDE drives, the multi and disk parts are not relevant; leave them as they are.

The rdisk(n) specifies the physical disk number as enumerated by the computer's BIOS – your BIOS will normally display the disks in the enumeration order during POST. You should also be able to see this in the BIOS's configuration panels. Only actual hard disks are counted, CD/DVD drives etc. don't get a number. The numbering starts at 0. The Windows Computer Management, Disk Management will also show the drive numbers. In the bottom pane that shows the disks and partitions, the left most partition on each drive is number 1.

The partition(n) refers to the partition number. Partition numbering starts at 1. The name after the "\" (e.g. WINDOWS in the above sample) is the name of the folder in the root of the partition's file system that holds the OS. On Windows NT 4 systems, this was typically WINNT. On Windows 2000 and later it is typically WINDOWS.

The part inside the quote marks is the human readable stuff displayed by the Windows Boot Manager – you can make this whatever you like.

The other strings (e.g. /fastdetect) are boot options. If in doubt, you can usually do without any of these.

If you boot from a floppy built in this way, you will get the Windows Boot Manager menu showing the items in the [operating system] section of the boot.ini. The content of the boot.ini is not validated by the Boot Manager – it assumes it is correct.

You can then select the OS you want to start. Naturally, if the info (e.g. multi(0)... ) is not correct, the selected OS won't load, but you will get a specific message for this situation (e.g. "ntoskrnl.exe is missing or invalid" means either there is no such file in the System32 folder in the partition\folder specified by the boot.ini record or its corrupted).

One other possible thing – you mention you have a new hard drive; the newer faster IDE drivers might not work correctly unless you use an 80 conductor cable, instead of the older 40 conductor cables.

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Bruce Sanderson MVP Printing

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It is perfectly useless to know the right answer to the wrong question.

"Frank W." <reply\_to\_newsgroup@please.ccom> wrote in message news:376sioF5apvlnU1@individual.net...

>I should mention that the exact error message when the system reboots after >copying files to the hard

> drive is:

> DISK BOOT FAILURE. INSERT SYSTEM DISK AND PRESS ENTER.

>

>> Also I noticed in Computer Management, System Information,

>> Conflicts/Sharing that my Matrox Millennium

>> G450 video card and Creative SB Live! Basic (WDM) are both mentioned on

>> IRQ 11. And my Intel

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> 82371AB/EB
>> PCI to USB Universal Host Controller and Adaptec AHA-2940U2/U2W PCI SCSI
>> Controlller are both mentioned
>> on IRQ 5.
>>
>> I can't find any info in W2K about the motherboard. On the mb itself, it
>> just says Asus P2B rev.1.04.
> I
>> went to Asus.com (I wonder what brain surgeon designed that website) and
>> there are lots of P2B models
>> (P2B98-XV, P2B-B, P2B-D2, etc) but only one that is P2B.
>>
>> I tried an old 6 gig drive - same thing.
>>
>> > There are 12 different model manuals for P2B. Do you know which one?
>> > No, the
>> > drive shouldn't matter.
>>
>> > | ASUS P2B rev 1.04
>> > | Award Modular Bios v4.51 PG ACPI Bios Revision 1006
>> > 10/09/98
>> > i440BX
>> > |
>> > | I am using a much newer hard drive than the motherboard. Is it
>> > possible
>> > that there is some
>> > | incompatibility between the old motherboard and newer hard drive that
>> > only
>> > arises when installing an
>> > | operating system? (But then I did also have that strange "E: is not
>> > accessible. The parameter is
>> > | incorrect" message on 2 newer hard drives after moving them around.
>>
>>
>
>
```