

Re: Format and Clean Install of XP

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<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.general/2004-08/8429.html>

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Date: 08/08/04

Date: Sun, 8 Aug 2004 12:39:15 -0700

In news:225b01c47ceb\$731e7070\$a601280a@phx.gbl,
Jacksonian <anonymous@discussions.microsoft.com> typed:

> *Need to reformat my parents hard drive a reinstall*
> *Windows XP. Does anyone have a list of the steps.*

Just boot from the Windows XP CD (change the BIOS boot order if necessary to accomplish this) and follow the prompts for a clean installation. It will do the reformat for you.

You can find detailed instructions here:

<http://michaelstevensstech.com/cleanxpinstall.html>

However why do you want to do this? In my view, it's almost always a mistake. With a modicum of care, it should never be necessary to reinstall Windows (XP or any other version). I've run Windows 3.0, 3.1, WFWG 3.11, Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows 2000, and Windows XP, each for the period of time before the next version came out, and each on two machines here. I never reinstalled any of them, and I have never had anything more than an occasional minor problem.

It's my belief that this mistaken notion stems from the technical support people at many of the larger OEMs. Their solution to almost any problem they don't quickly know the answer to is "reformat and reinstall." That's the perfect solution for them. It gets you off the phone quickly, it almost always works, and it doesn't require them to do any real troubleshooting (a skill that most of them obviously don't possess in any great degree).

But it leaves you with all the work and all the problems. You have to restore all your data backups, you have to reinstall all your programs, you have to reinstall all the Windows and application updates, you have to locate and install all the needed drivers for your system, you have to recustomize Windows and all your apps to work the way you're comfortable with.

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Besides all those things being time-consuming and troublesome, you may have trouble with some of them: can you find all your application CDs? Can you find all the needed installation codes? Do you have data backups to restore? Do you even remember all the customizations and tweaks you may have installed to make everything work the way you like?

Occasionally there are problems that are so difficult to solve that Windows should be reinstalled cleanly. But they are few and far between; reinstallation should not be a substitute for troubleshooting; it should be a last resort, to be done only after all other attempts at troubleshooting by a qualified person have failed.

If you have problems, post them here, it's likely that someone can help you and a reinstallation won't be required.

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Ken Blake - Microsoft MVP Windows: Shell/User
Please reply to the newsgroup