

Re: Start-up problem

Source:

<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.general/2004-09/16871.html>

From: Malke (*malke_at_nospoonnotreally.com*)

Date: 09/13/04

Date: Mon, 13 Sep 2004 10:01:07 -0700

Sean Power wrote:

- > HI,
- >
- > *I know its a week later, but ...*

That's OK, Sean. See my comments inline:

- >
- > *I can successfully boot into safe mode and create a new account.*
- > *However, when i shutdown and start agina, log into this new account,*
- > *it still restarts the PC after the log-in screen. I have tried both*
- > *the traditional log-in and the XP user selection screen, with the same*
- > *result. One error I have noticed – both the autoexec.bat and*
- > *config.sys files are empty. They exist on the C:\ root but do not have*
- > *any data in (either as a size indicator when viewing under the command*
- > *prompt or when editing). There is another file in there called*
- > *autoexectuted.bat which shows commands for deleting both the*
- > *autoexec.bat and config.sys files.*

Windows XP does not use autoexec.bat or config.sys for itself. Those files are there for backwards compatibility with older programs. Based on what you've written above, I would say that you have malware on your computer.

- >
- > *My experience of XP is somewhat limited (as you might have guessed)*
- > *but this does seem strange. The PC does not have virus protection on –*
- > *could we have picked up a virus from somewhere? Since this does seem a*
- > *possibility, I will install an anti-virus system anyway as a safeguard.*
- > *Can you suggest anything else it could be?*

If you do not have a current (no earlier than 2003 version) antivirus installed using updated definitions, then the probability that you have a virus on your computer is high. You should get a full-featured antivirus immediately. If you have trouble installing it, then your system is definitely infected. Post back for help then.

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The probability that you have other malware not strictly viral in nature is also high. Here are some general troubleshooting steps:

Scan with a current antivirus program (meaning a version not earlier than 2003 using updated virus definitions). Also, remove spyware with Spybot Search & Destroy from www.safer-networking.org and Ad-aware from www.lavasoftusa.com. Be sure to update these programs before running them. These programs are free, so run them both since they complement each other. It is best to run antivirus and spyware removal tools in Safe Mode. You may also want to run CWS shredder and HijackThis from <http://aumha.org/freeware.htm>. Although CWS shredder is no longer being updated, it will still clean older variants of the CoolWebSearch malware. A combination of HijackThis and About:Buster (<http://www.majorgeeks.com>) works well in removing homepage hijackers. Please read the instructions carefully. Make sure you are able to see all hidden files and extensions (View tab in Folder Options). Also, make sure you've visited Windows Update and applied all security patches. Do not install driver updates from Windows Update. Make sure you are running a firewall.

If all of this is overwhelming – and it's perfectly OK to admit if it is – take the machine to a good local computer repair shop (not a BestBuy or CompUSA type of store) for cleaning.

Good luck,

Malke

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