

Re: Recovery Console Perplexations and Woes

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From: Bart Marks (yee.ha_at_yippie.kye.yay)

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Bart Marks <yee.ha@yippie.kye.yay> wrote in
news:Xns95E29156FABAEeXiGeNT@216.143.170.12:

>
>> *Boo to Mr. Microsoft's Recovery Console access procedures!*
>>
>> *Seems I lost my MBR, (that other PC) and when I boot from XP*
>> *Professional SP2 installation disk, it gives me the option to goto*
>> *Recovery Console,*
>> *then the dialog, then enter my admin password... No way, Jose! I have*
>> *verified that I have the Administrator Password correct, so why does*
>> *it do that to me?*
>>
>> *OK, another factor, that I thought I'd check is that I use TweakUI to*
>> *log me on ordinarily – could that be the issue, or is there some super*
>> *secret default PW for XP's Recovery Console on a fubarred HDD???*
>>
>> *Many thanks for assistance!*
>>
>> *PS: Not to be rude, but I *have* been all over Google and*
>> *microsoft.com – it all dead-ends at "enter the PW" and/or "if it won't*
>> *accept the PW you just be SOL," or words to that effect in slightly*
>> *more technical jargon.*

Malke <malke@nospoonnotreally.com> wrote in news:#kxPGIa\$EHA.1524
@TK2MSFTNGP09.phx.gbl:

>
> *I understand that you are upset, but let's go over exactly what you've*
> *actually done (since you haven't specified). You start the Recovery*
> *Console and you input the Administrator password that you created at*
> *the installation or setup of XP Pro. This is not supposed to be the*
> *password for your regular account. If you have XP Home and it came*
> *preinstalled, the default Administrator password is a blank. Have you*
> *tried that? Please post back and tell us exactly what you are doing.*
> *Again, I understand that you are upset but you need to communicate what*
> *you've done so we can help you. There are ways of dealing with the*
> *problem if you have run into the sysprep problem.*
>

> *Malke*
> --
> *MS MVP – Windows Shell/User*
> *Elephant Boy Computers*
> *www.elephantboycomputers.com*
> *"Don't Panic!"*

Hello, Malke, and thank you very much for your response!

Let me deal with the "upset" part first, because that facet apparently shined through my attempts at coping with this pestulance using levity:

< fair warning: snippable drivel ensues >

"Recovery Console" by its denotation says that an ordinary user, like myself would not avail oneself to it unless one needed to recover, eh?

What horror if a user had but one computer in their house with WinXPpro?

OK – Now, when I *need* to recover, I try to pop into that program provided ostensibly for that reason, and what do you know? I got them 'Recovery Console Blues' because the dialog won't accept my Administrator password established at previous install and setup.

Now, I understand that the geniuses (geniui?) at Microsoft, under the constant influence of the hum and whir of machinery and effects of the famous Seattle coffee recipes, up in the air at Redmond Hills so close to 7th Heaven wanted to build in security measures so that just any old body could not go popping into systems and making dangerous or malicious changes --- but for heavens' sake, you guys, who in the world could picture a scenario wherein someone with ill intentions would just happen to have the Windows XP Professional SP2 installation CD, with the appropriate Key, etc., handy, and decide to go pop into someone else's machine with it, and recover from a lost MBR???

OK, OK, let's just postulate that there *could* exist such a far fetched *plausibility,* and out of an abundance of caution, Microsoft software engineers decided to build-in a password protection sequence for specifically the Recovery Console, aside from, and in addition to, the Administrator Password with which we are all so familiar, with the initial steps after having installed Windows XP Pro... I ponder this: Why in the world would they not inform you of this clearly in the install dialog???

Perhaps they did, but it was in the teeny-tiny small print and disclaimers that only a way-experienced NT/2000 and now XP user – whose eyes weren't in need of reading glasses to function in front of the glare of data being rendered faster than the speed of light – would read. But then, in the midst of exigent circumstances and the need to recover, where's the Microsoft support dialog when you search for "recovery console access password" or such? "You need 'the' password; if you don't have it: too bad!" is the universally accepted standard response, in essence?

microsoft.public.windowsxp.general: Re: Recovery Console Perplexations and Woes

<announcement: snippable drivel completed – whoo whoo>

Here's the history of the situation:

I installed Windows XP Pro basic on the [not yet] crashed workstation some time ago, and have since sequentially updated through SP1 and now SP2.

I believe the root of the problem is that I installed a 3rd party system lock between the SP1 and SP2 era, which works by locking out the MBR unless an appropriate password is entered at a boot screen dialog, between the BIOS screen and the OSLOGON. Now this worked fine for quite some time. Being aware of the circumstances, for purposes of drive image backups and other huge updates which required a series of reboots, I simply entered the password, temporarily entered the unlocked system mode, rebooted, and moved forward without the requirement to lock the system, and did what I had to do attended, until such time as the task(s) were complete, and then, when all was stable, resumed and locked the system again.

It came to pass on 17JAN that there was some sort of buffer overload during normal multi-tasking operations, with the system [MBR] lock in place but with the system up and running. The overload, or whatever was the causation, induced a crash, with a "Blue Screen" which stated "... hardware error... if first time... restart system... if not call your administrator..." Esc or Ctrl–Alt–Del does not work there.

Only way out of that situation was the cold boot – hold start button for 4 seconds > shut down > wait 30 seconds or so > restart.

I did so, entered the 3rd party System lock sequence, entered password to unlock thereby accessing the MBR, and successfully rebooted into Windows...

The system restarted, and after some vasillation into the OSLOGON screen and back to black screen, rebooted on into Windows – but probably reverted automatically to some last-known-good-configuration; without specific notice thereto.

Now here's the latest Microsoft security procedures at work: I was inundated with Microsoft auto-update dialogs, M\$ AntiSpyware, M\$ Windows auto-update, M\$ Firewall, including a small grey system dialog window which stated "Your system has recovered from a serios error... Please send to Microsoft..."

At this point, I had physically pulled the workstation's connection to the internet (don't want to spread viruses, or allow a hijack to consummate). In any case, I have long since stopped allowing the dialog "to send the information to Microsoft" because it's usually in conflict with other urgent operations/issues ongoing, and *they* never return acknowledgments. When the dialogs subsided, because of the "system error" information provided by the M\$ dialog, I decided to access Windows XP's version of chkdisk, via My Computer > C:\ > Properties > Tools tab > Error checking [Auto-fix & Scan-recover] > requires reboot on C:\ (because of Windows in

use) > and once again, on reboot I got the OSLOGON screen, but only black screen after that, and my monitor's hardware dialog informs me "no signal" thereby suggesting/hinting damaged MBR.

< this is going long...
sorry, but want to provide enough info this time >

Well, I had imaged the drive only 5 days prior, so I booted via floppy recovery disks into my drive image recovery system and restored the drive back to the 12th [from the 17th]. System seemed to work OK, so I still wanted to do the chkdisk procedure; went through the above; and again got nearly the same error as above, only this time with no OSLOGON screen.

That's the point where I decided to try the Recovery Console > fixmbr via install disk with no joy, because the only password requirement I had inferred from all the information available was that I would need my "Administrator's Password" as it is constantly and consistently denoted!

Thus, was/am/is not able to figure out how to use this magnificent tool so generously provided by the brain-trust at Microsoft Concepts Breakfast Tea and Fashion Show, INC. LOL! JK. I'm not really mad at Microsoft, it's just that they can't anticipate *every* possible situation, like an MBR getting damaged and needing a quick and easy recovery by an ordinary home user.

Whew! So, there's the history!

I take it from your response that there must be some procedure at OS installation to establish some entry password indigenous only to the Recovery Console for each [system][installation][installation disk][time zone][religious preference][political affiliation][favorite color]???

Please, pray tell. Or write ye yon book; because, if the information be true, would I that make said purchase in haste forthwith and be joyous in abundance therefrom? Yea, I say unto ye: ideedy do dah do dah day-o!

Incidentally, I have since <fingers crossed> <knocking on solid resin simulated wood covered real wood particle board> recoverd from the maliase itself, all but for want of the knowledge how most efficiently to a) install the Recovery Console procedures correctly from the onset, in prudent and judicious cautionary anticipation and preparation; and/or, b) how to effect the Recovery Console access from this point onward. It seems it may be a viable option to have available; seems to be setting there waiting for anyone with the installation disk to use it; but yet, seems to have some super-secret set of rituals to avail oneself to it?

PS: Just can't get it off my mind: Does anyone seriously think that a hamburger, or the like, is running around randomly out there with a bona-fide Windows XP Professional installation disk – with a unique License key at some \$300 or so, randomly seeking a defenseless Windows XP Professional workstation, so that he/she/they may access the dreaded Recovery Console and... and... and... and what exactly? LOL! Well, I guess it could

happen. Strange world we're living in anymore, eh?

Want to know how I recovered the workstation? It was quite accidental, not altogether random, and dependent upon a set of serendipitous procedural oddities that happened to be lying around.

First, I used the GRC SpinRite floppy. I hear there's a v6 out there now that is considerably faster, but after several hours, it determined that there was no problem with the HDD hardware itself – thankfully.

Then, I broke out my newer, from another machine, WinXPpro–SP2 disk, booted into it, chose to install, elected to format the drive [in case the crash and loss of MBR was malware related]... After all that, I booted into the drive image recovery disk system and restored by the fully scanned, fully functional, then–to–date updated, 12JAN05 backup, and then reinstalled the last 6 days of various updates – and so it all goes well, or so it seems.

Well, pitiful though it may be, that's all the feedback I have. And it's been fraught with desperation and anxiety, all for want of access to what I already have, save the procedure to simply get to it. Maybe this problem will help someone else by way of insuring Recovery Console's easy access, because intuitively I'm thinking here: **"fixmbr"** sure would have been a lot quicker – and definately easier on my sanity, which is becoming tentative at best these days.

<feindish laughter ensues>

Thank you in abundance of excess
for any information in order to access
and/or regarding that darned ole'
Microsoft's Super–Secret 'covery Console

</end country music verse>

It just seems like it would be so simple:

>*From Microsoft: "Dear DoughDough, Thanks for buying this copy of Windows XP Professional SP2 with your years' of saved up lunch money. (Sorry, policy dictates that we cannot return your first–born child or the rights thereto; or rightful title to your soul or ancestry, etc.)"*

"Please be informed that prior to actually installing this very expensive software on your hard–earned–or–built computer, you may need to have chosen and available a few passwords to fully access all the features available which you paid so very dearly for":

"An Administrator's Password, for Administration accounts

Perhaps some Limited Admin Passwords, if you choose to deploy limited Administrator accounts

microsoft.public.windowsxp.general: Re: Recovery Console Perplexations and Woes

Some User's Passwords for your User accounts"

"And, oh yeah, a Super Secret Recovery Console account in case you need to fix some common problems which computer users frequently encounter."

Or, alternatively:

Warning: If you didn't start computing back in the daze of ARPNET and WinDoS/311, you need to return this disc to Best Buy and buy yourself a TV, Stereo or maybe even a brand new car.

Well, again, thanks for your response.

I have Windows XP Professional installed all around. Only one is a WinXPpro-SP2 disc. They were all installed with no additional provision for access to Recovery Console – because I was not forewarned of any requirement thereto. I have access to friend's Windows XP Home [Basic, no SP's] disc, but I'm not sure because of the licensing and activation procedures if I should ever attempt to use that to access another Recovery Console, and on a WinXPpro system?

Is there a short or simple way to pave the way so that access to the Recovery Console is painless in case of future need?

Also, is there a short, simple procedure during install of Windows XP Pro to establish that password for access to Recovery Console (in the unforeseeable future at the point of installation)?

Thank you again.

Best regards.

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