

## Re: OEM Windows XP Pro thru VMWare requires activation ???

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<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.general/2006-06/msg00604.html>

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- *From:* [xp\\_newbie@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:xp_newbie@xxxxxxxxxx)
  - *Date:* 2 Jun 2006 08:02:40 -0700
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Ron, I think that you are right: The "system" seen by Windows XP Pro running in my VMWare session is significantly different from the one seen by Windows XP Pro when it was installed standalone.

I already said that at least the size of memory seen by the two different XPs is different (256MB vs. 1GB) but actually there are many more differences, the most noticeable one is the BIOS manufacturer and version.

Since you said that my "OEM version is BIOS locked to the motherboard BIOS used by the laptop manufacturer", this means that I have to use the product key on the bottom of my laptop in order to activate WXP – right?

Thanks,  
Alex

Ron Martell wrote:

xp\_newbie@xxxxxxxxxx wrote:

I recently purchased a new laptop with Windows XP Professional pre-installed (came with nice and shiny COA sticker affixed to the bottom). Unfortunately, it came pre-loaded with promotionware and other bloatware that I really don't want on my computer, so I used the excellent instructions provided on the following web site:

[http://www.4saad.com/WhatsNew/Fresh\\_XP\\_Install](http://www.4saad.com/WhatsNew/Fresh_XP_Install)

to create a clean-install CD and use it to perform a clean install. According to that web site I should use the original key on the hard drive, not the one on the sticker. I did just that (when prompted for a key) and all went well, not asking for activation (it is OEM pre-activated after all).

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Then I realized that what I really want to do is use Windows XP for web access only (using things that require the unsafe ActiveX, Internet Explorer, Macromedia Flash and other entertainment oriented technologies) and use Linux for productive work — using Linux to host VMWare (because Linux is more robust and runs VMWare faster than Windows anyway).

I did just that: Wiped out the hard disk (again), then installed Linux, then installed VMWare and then installed Windows XP (single copy!) inside a VMWare virtual machine.

All went well – but now Windows XP asks for activation (which is strange because the same exact OEM CD used for installing it on same exact hardware first time did not ask for activation).

What is the explanation for this inconsistent behavior of Windows?

Is it possible that the OEM CD is simply tied to the exact original hardware configuration (un-virtualized) and that by introducing a slightly different hardware config (256MB RAM instead of 1GB physically installed on the laptop), the OEM pre-activation no longer works?

Thanks,  
Alex

Because VMWare isolates your virtual machine from the actual physical hardware in your computer. Look at the hardware components listed in Device Manager for your virtual install and compare these to the ones actually installed in the machine.

The critical component in your instance is probably the motherboard BIOS. If the VM install is not getting the proper motherboard BIOS signature (the one from the actual laptop manufacturer) then you will have the type of problems you are encountering.

Your OEM version is BIOS locked to the motherboard BIOS used by the laptop manufacturer.

Good luck

Ron Martell Duncan B.C. Canada

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Microsoft MVP (1997 – 2006)  
On-Line Help Computer Service  
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"Anyone who thinks that they are too small to make a difference has never been in bed with a mosquito."

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