

# Won't boot past Windows XP splash screen

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This will be long-winded, but I'm going to try to be as specific as possible. I'm a network administrator for a company and we started a process of upgrading all of our off-site computers. All of our existing clients are old Windows 98 and 2000 Pro that were cranked out assembly-line style with images I created with Symantec (Norton) Ghost years ago. Starting with this current "upgrade" project, I started with 10 brand new Dell Vostro 200 machines – Intel Duo Core, 1-Gig Ram, 80-gig hard drives, etc. (if that matters). I took the first Dell Vostro out of the box and fired it up and let the Windows XP Pro install and did all the updates – including Service Pack 2. I installed a serial card (no serial port on board and I need one), I removed the junk software that isn't needed, put on things that are needed (like Adobe Reader, OpenOffice, etc.), put on the software, links, and settings needed for the clients to access our backoffice systems and tested everything fine.

Then I started creating policies (user policies via the Win 2000 POLEDIT, not group policies), testing all the way. After I did all the fixes, changes, updates, script changes, and all that, I hooked it up to a "live" test lab hooked to one of our POS systems (sales registers – did I mention I work for a convenience store chain?). I tested it for a couple of weeks, ironing out all the wrinkles and getting it working just as I wanted it. At that point, I made a new image of it with Norton Ghost and took the original computer to one of our stores and set it up.

I let it in the live location for a week, checking on it daily for anything wrong or needing attention. Other than a few simple bugs, the machine worked fine. At that point I opened the other 9 Vostros and imaged them all and started having the techs put them in stores and placed an order for another batch. Here's where it gets weird.

I had four machines installed on Thursday, three on Friday, for a total of eight (counting the one original). Things were fine for a day or two, and then over the weekend they started dropping like flies. When the machine would start up, either from a cold boot or reboot, it would post thru the BIOS, get the Windows XP splash screen, and at the point where the splash screen should disappear and display the

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"loading windows" display box the machine just dies. It won't continue past that, it won't reboot, it won't beep/whistle/churn, or anything. I let it sit for hours and it never does anything. Nothing will work except for ho