

Total Confusion--Please help!

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I have a new system that I put together as follows: Motherboard is NF7-S V2.0; Processor is Althalon 1.8 2500+; Video card is Diamond Stealth S80 Radeon 9200SE 128mb DDR DVI/TV-Out AGP 8X; Hard Drive is Western Digital 120GB; DVD R,RW drive is I/O Magic Dual 4XMax.

I have hard drive connected to Primary Controller set as Cable Select, DVD is on Secondary set as Master. Also have floppy drive installed.

When I loaded XP Professional, and went to load the chipset drivers from the CD, it asked if I wanted to install the ATA Serial GUI (takes place of PCI Controller) and I said yes. It then recognized my hard drive as a SCSI device and my system ran really slow. My DVD driver however, ran fine. I then disabled the onboard ATA Serial Controller and Boot Rom in the Bios per someones advice. Installed a floppy drive, and Reloaded XP and downloaded the newest Nforce drivers from NVIDIA website. When asked if I wanted to enable ATA Serial GUI I answered no this time. Then loaded ATI videodivers from disk. My system is running faster and video seems to be working correctly now, but my DVD won't write to a blank DVD anymore. Also, the speed shown in system properties for the DVD drive is only 1/2 of what it was previously for the DVD Drive when I had the Serial ATA drivers loaded.

Does this system require the ATA serial drivers loaded to recognize my hard drive and DVD Rom at Ultra ATA100 speed even though I do not have either connected to the ATA Serial controller? Should I re-enable the ATA Controller and just not select the Boot Rom portion and then reload the motherboard drivers with the ATA Serial GUI? I thought that the ATA Serial interface was only to enable RAID 0 and RAID 1? Since I only have the one hard drive and DVD Drive, I did not think the serial ATA drivers were even applicable although they are loaded if I switch the BIOS settings to defaults. It says in the motherboard manual that I should disable the onboard floppy controller if I install a high speed controller--does this mean that I need to disable the floppy if I install the ATA Serial drivers?

Also, I cannot access the DVD drive before XP loads with my USB keyboard--is this normal? The keyboard is older, but it is suppose to run on USB.

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The next time I reload XP, should I shut down the system and boot directly from the DVD drive? I just put the CD in and then restarted the system the last time. I may have had a problem when I originally loaded XP since the BIOS needed to be updated to properly recognize my Western Digital drive—which I have done now. Also, I only formatted one partition when I loaded XP—should I format all of them and then just select which I want to put XP on? Now when I put a blank DVD in the drive and select properties, it shows the file system as RAW?

Could the fact that I left the hard drive set to Cable Select (the way it was set from the manufacturer) and had the DVD drive set to Master cause problems—even though they were on separate cables?

In summary, what drivers do I need to load, what should my boot sequence be when reloading XP, and do I need to shut down the PC before loading and boot directly to DVD drive? I will need to plug my keyboard into PS2 in order to do this. Can I change it back to PS2 later, or is it better to run it as PS2 since it seems to work OK that way. I currently have mouse on USB and that seems to be fine.