

Re: Major systems change and XP

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From: Robert Moir (*bofh_at_mvps.org*)

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PaulT wrote:

- > *Hi all. My first time on here. I have a problem and I guess I need*
- > *to explain it all.*
- >
- > *I have a home-built system. It was our main computer for quite a*
- > *while. I used a Gigabyte motherboard and the AMD 1700XP processor in*
- > *it.*
- >
- > *We have purchased a new Dell on line and so now we have two*
- > *computers. The Dell will be our main "communications" computer and*
- > *the home-built will be almost strictly for video editing and some*
- > *other "productivity" uses.*
- >
- > *My Gigabyte motherboard was limiting the speed of my processors. In*
- > *video editing, the faster the processor, the more productive you can*
- > *be. So I purchased an Asus motherboard with all kinds of*
- > *possibilities in my processes of upgrading. I pulled the Gigabyte*
- > *motherboard and installed the Asus motherboard, turned it on and got*
- > *the error that there is a major system change and asked if I wanted*
- > *to boot from CD. Well, a quick call to my retailer and I was saying*
- > *"duh".... Oh yeah, the newer MS OS won't let you just open up your*
- > *old system without telling it who you are and resetting everything.*
- > *And this is where my problems are right now.*
- >
- > *I allowed the system to read the XP Pro CD and reinstalled it.*
- > *Woops! There went my "my documents" files. Woops! There went all*
- > *of our emails and address book and tax files and lots of other stuff.*
- > *So now it is a "double-duh" on me.*
- >
- > *My question(s): 1. Can I recover any of those "lost" files without*
- > *going back to original Gigabyte motherboard? 2. If I have to go*
- > *back to the Gigabyte motherboard, will I be able to recover those*
- > *files even though I told the new installation to overwrite those*
- > *files? 3. How the heck do I do it?*

Assuming you didn't format the drive concerned (if you did format the drive then you might as well stop reading now, and consider if the data is

valuable enough to speak to a professional data recovery firm) then:

Each time you install windows, you create a new Windows installation ("Duh!" I hear you cry, but stay with me, I'm going somewhere with this). These different installations are unique, and so are the accounts that you create on them. I currently have, for example, a guest account on this machine called "Visitor" that I give to any visitors who wish to use the internet or whatever while they are visiting me.

If I re-install Windows on the machine I'm using right now and then create an account named "Visitor" then this account will not be the same as the original account created, even though the name is the same.

Because each account is unique, two things happen if you install a new copy of windows on top of an old copy:

1) The newly installed machine's accounts get the name [your username.new machine name] in the documents and settings folder, so as to avoid overwriting your old install's account data.

e.g. in my example above of visitor, when i create the account "visitor" on my new install of windows onto my machine named "Homer", Windows goes to create a folder for it in 'documents and settings' and finds a folder named 'visitor' already there. Rather than mess with this, it will create a folder called 'visitor.homer'.

2) If you are using NTFS security then you may need to 'take ownership' of the old account folders

So..

- * Open up "Documents and Settings"
- * Examine the list of accounts. You may, if you are lucky, see old account names listed along side the accounts you are using now.
- * Try to open the old folders. If you get access denied errors then use the computer's help to walk you through the process of taking ownership of files and folders.
- * Hopefully inside each user's old folder, you should be able to find the old account's documents file, desktop, and in the hidden local settings type folders you should find the old mail data too (the exact location where for mail, and the best process for getting this mail back into your new accounts varies depending on what mail package you use).

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Website - <http://www.robertmoir.co.uk>

Virtual PC 2004 FAQ - <http://www.robertmoir.co.uk/win/VirtualPC2004FAQ.html>

Kazaa - Software update services for your Viruses and Spyware.