

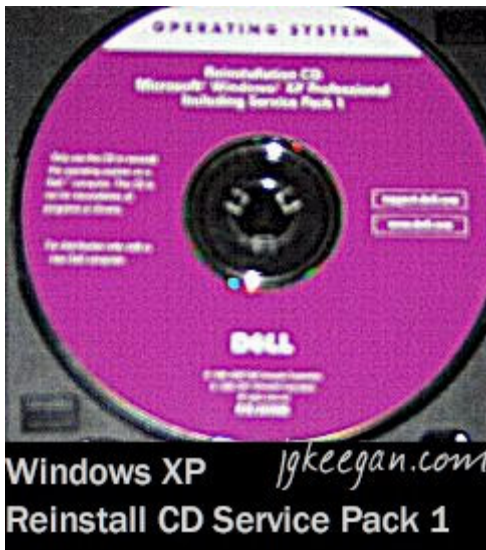
Reinstalling Windows^{XP}



I

There are times when a hard drive running Windows^{XP} reaches a point where things start to go wrong. Programs open slowly or not at all. The computer takes forever to startup and load the Desktop, or is missing important files the user does not know about. He could have turned off Windows Automatic Update six month ago, and recently turned it on again, or the new printer he bought will not install. Whatever the reason, from time to time Windows^{XP} needs to be reinstalled. Recently, I had to reinstall Windows^{XP}— a complete reinstallation involving reformatting the hard drive partition that contained Windows^{XP}. There are many ways to setup for a reinstallation, in this article I explain the process I used.

II



My computer is a Dell laptop with a 27 GB hard drive running Windows^{XP} Professional (Windows^{XP}); it was top of the line about three years ago. Over time, it slowed down and lost files. However, problems started last December when I bought a Brother laser printer. Windows^{XP} would not let me install the printer driver. There were other problems too, but I learned to live with them. Having a new printer that cannot be used is a major problem. So, I ran the Windows^{XP} Repair Utility from the Operating System CD that came with my computer. Then installed the printer driver, but during the process, some how, [Windows^{XP} Service Pack 2](#) (SP2) was lost. The printer worked, and I could live without SP2, so I thought. Time

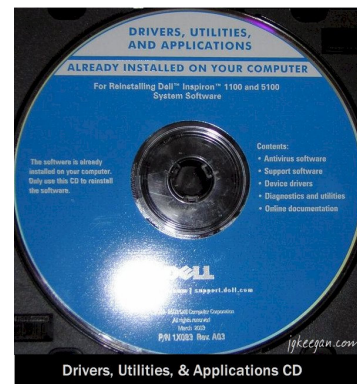
passed; the computer worked, but I found I could not install or use a lot of software without SP2 installed on my computer.

I decided to download and install [SP2](#). I started the installation process; about 30 minutes in it stopped. After two weeks of trying everything I could think of, read about on the Internet, running the Windows^{XP} Repair Utility, and trying ideas I received from friends SP2 still would not install. The more I read about Windows^{XP} and SP2 the more I came to realize; a complete reinstallation including reformatting the hard drive partition that contained Windows^{XP} was necessary.



Once the above decision was made, I formulated a plan, for my system was accessible, and I did not want to lose my most important files. I am not the type of person that knows all there is to know about the latest backup programs, I know nothing about imaging my hard drive, nor slipstreaming. I am a teacher that did not want to lose my most important files. So before I reformatted the hard drive partition that contained Windows^{XP} I went out and bought about 20 CD-Rs; and used about three to backup my files. First, I downloaded and placed on CD [Windows^{XP} Service Pack 2 Network Installation Package for IT Professionals and Developers](#)^{*}, for I would need it later. Second, I copied font files that I downloaded from the Internet, but do not remember from which site. Third, I copied my [Outlook PST](#)[†] file, and put my email settings into a [Notepad](#)[‡] file. Lastly, I copied all program files I wanted to save such as tests and worksheets created in Microsoft Word, Excel Workbooks, PowerPoint presentations, and Access Data Bases; in addition, any images, web projects, and other files I wanted. There were some files I missed; I did not copy my Internet favorites folder, thus all those shortcuts were lost. The backup phase complete, I gathered all program CDs and backups together and placed them in the same spot along with the Operating System, Drivers and Applications, and Brother Printer driver CDs.

The reformat and reinstallation phase took about three to four hours to complete. At the end of that time, Windows^{XP} SP2, the video driver, and Comcast High Speed Internet were installed. The process started by writing down the Windows^{XP} Product Key from the bottom of my computer; I thought I would need it. I was finally ready to reformat my hard drive all the program, backup, and driver CDs were at



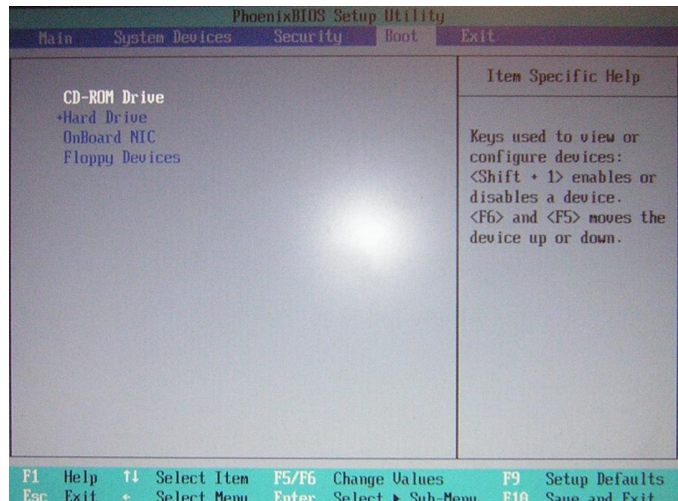
my side; I had written down the Product Key just in case. Then took up the Operating System CD that came with my computer and placed it in the CD-ROM drive a window popped up. I clicked Install Windows ^{XP} and I received an error message. Although flawed the version of Windows ^{XP} the computer was running was newer than the one on



the CD.

Though I ran the Windows ^{XP} Repair Utility some time before I overlooked an important fact, the computer must boot from the CD-ROM in order for Windows ^{XP} Repair Utility or Windows ^{XP} Setup to work. In order for the computer to boot from CD-ROM that drive must be first in the boot line, that is, the drive must be the first device the computer

checks for. To set the CD-ROM drive as the first device in the boot line it was necessary to open System Utilities. That is done by restarting the computer, and following the instructions to open System Utilities, also call the Bios, in my case pressing F2 during startup. The Bios opens on the Main tab; it contains the time, date, and other information. Going to the Boot tab, I followed the instructions on the right-hand side of the screen for selecting and moving the CD-ROM drive to the top of the list. Then saved the settings, and took up the Operating System CD that came with my computer and placed it in the CD-ROM drive, and exited the Bios thus restarting the computer.



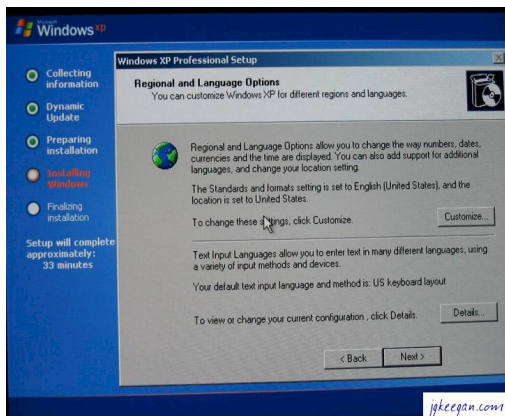
IV

The screen showed the following message “Press any key to boot from CD....” The next message that came up was “Setup is inspecting your computer’s hardware configuration...” then the screen went blue, and Windows ^{XP} checked for basic drivers. The first important screen came up, the first one where a decision needed to be made.

On that screen there were three choices. “To setup Windows^{XP} now, press Enter” was the choice made, then the End User Agreement came up on screen and F8 was pressed.

It was at that point, I found my hard drive of 27 GB had partitions. So to keep it simple, I deleted the hard drive partition containing Windows^{XP} and created a new raw hard drive partition by following the on screen instructions. Here the system gave a choice of file systems and format speeds. Windows^{XP} runs best on NTFS, and with a full format not (Quick); having made those choices Enter was pressed and the partition formatted. After the partition was formatted Setup copied files, and the computer restarted.

At this point there was 39 minutes left in the process; I followed the on screen instructions for the setup of preferences letting the system choose the computer name and the name of the Administrative account. Windows^{XP} completed installation, and the computer restarted; I had a foundation on top of which I could install [SP2](#). I placed the



CD it was on into the CD-ROM drive, and double clicked the EXE file. With nothing to interfere with it, SP2 installed. The video driver was next, so I could work with a full screen. Then, the other drivers, first of which was the printer. I ended the day by installing Comcast High Speed Internet, and making sure it worked. The next day I installed my other programs.

V

Now my computer is running Windows^{XP} Professional SP2 with no problems at all. Windows Update works and I can download any software I want. Reinstalling Windows^{XP} was tedious and time-consuming, but a necessary part of computer system maintenance that anyone can perform, and should from time to time.

Keegan

* <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=049C9DBE-3B8E-4F30-8245-9E368D3CDB5A&displaylang=en>

† <http://email.about.com/cs/outlooktips/qt/et102102.htm>

‡ http://www.microsoft.com/resources/documentation/windows/xp/all/proddocs/en-us/app_notepad.mspx?mfr=true