

## **HOW to FORMAT YOUR HARD DRIVE and REINSTALL WINDOWS**

How - To Guide on How to Reformat Your XP Computer and Reinstall Windows.

For the computer operator who may have never formatted a hard drive and installed an operating system before, this process can be a little intimidating.

Using the Windows XP installation disk to format the hard drive and then install the operating system is a process that an average computer user can handle but if it is the first time doing so there are a few things that need to be explained.

Before proceeding, ensure that you have the original packaging that came with your copy of Windows. To perform an installation you will need the license key that is usually affixed to the packaging that came with the Windows installation disks. Do not proceed with this procedure until you are certain that you have the proper license key to perform the install. You will not be able to install Windows without the license key.

Before doing anything at all determine if there is any data on the computer system that needs to be backed up first. Formatting the hard drive is going to completely wipe out any data that is currently on the system. It would be a good idea to look through the 'All Programs' menu in Windows (if it is currently installed and running) to see if there are any programs or applications that will need to be reinstalled after the format and Windows installation.

The original installation disks for any installed software or hardware will all be necessary once the Windows installation has been completed. Formatting completely and permanently erases all information on the entire hard drive. Any programs or applications will have to be completely reinstalled once you complete the installation of the Windows operating system.

It would also be advisable to take a look at the 'My Documents' folder as this is the most common place for personal information to be stored in Windows. It would not be a bad idea to back this folder up to an external storage drive, flash drive, or CD/DVD.

Another thing that will need to be confirmed before starting the format and install is the boot order of the computer system. The CD/DVD drive will need to be assigned as the first boot device to allow the computer to boot directly from the Windows installation disk. To change the boot order it may be necessary to enter the BIOS settings page to do so.

Depending on the manufacturer of the computer system or the motherboard, exactly which key is used to enter the BIOS can vary. Typically on Dell computers it will be the F2 or Del key, for HP it is usually the F1 or F2, Toshiba Esc or F1, and Sony F2 or F3. Rebooting the computer and paying close attention to the messages displayed during the POST can also usually provide the correct key to enter the BIOS.

After entering the BIOS use the arrow keys to navigate through the various menus until the 'boot order' is located. If the Hard Drive is the first boot device then the boot order will have to be changed to assign the CD/DVD as the first device. Be sure to save the changes when exiting the BIOS.

Place the Windows XP installation disk into the CD/DVD drive and then restart or power up the computer system with the disk in the drive. If the CD/DVD drive is the first boot device Windows XP Setup should start at this time.

- At the 'Welcome to Setup' page press 'Enter'.
- Press F8 to accept the Windows Licensing Agreement.
- You may be prompted with a 'repair' option if you already had windows installed on the machine before now.
- To bypass the repair press 'Esc'.
- A list of all existing partitions and non-partitioned spaces will be presented.

Remove any existing partition(s) by using the arrow keys to highlight each existing partition and then pressing the 'D' to delete and then pressing 'L' to confirm the deletion. Do this for any other partitions that may be present. Once all of the partitions have been removed select the remaining non-partitioned space and press 'Enter'.

Select the format option that is desired. Formatting using the NTFS file system (quick) will normally work well.

Format the partition by using the NTFS file system (Quick).

Depending on the size of the Hard Drive, the speed and the age, formatting could take anywhere from a few minutes to several hours. Be patient and DO NOT power the system off during the format process, doing so can physically damage the hard drive.

Once the format process has completed, follow the on screen instructions to install Windows XP.

Allow up to 2 hours for this process to finish, be patient and congratulations you have successfully formatted your Hard Drive and installed Windows XP.

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