
Supplementary Notes 5: Installing Windows '95 on a blank hard drive

NOTE: the instructions in this file are general in nature, and they only cover what to do if everything goes right. If you find that these instructions, as lengthy as they are, do not suffice for your system, then you know why we charge at least an hour's labor for this procedure!

If someone else tells you a different method, don't panic- This file only describes one of the many ways to install Windows '95.

Steps

1. Create an active partition, if none exists
 2. Format the partition
 3. Make drive bootable and set up cdrom support
 4. "Copy the .cabs" ('95 installation files)
 5. Remove & store '95 CD; Switch to c:\win95; Type "setup" and install '95 normally
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Step ONE - Create an active partition, if none exists

Up to this class, we would assume that there is only one active partition. [Tan]

Step TWO: format the partition

1. This is where you will use the DOS command, "format." Remember, you don't format a hard drive; you format a partition on that hard drive.
2. Assuming you have created a partition, you must now format it. Type the command

format c: /s /v:cccc

command: format tells the system to high-level format drive c:

Switches: /s /v:cccc tells the system to load "system" (basic boot) files on the drive after formatting, and to label the drive volume "cccc". You can label the drive volume almost anything you want, up to 11 characters.

Destination: c: tells the system which drive to format. You want to be sure when you format a drive! Make sure you are formatting the correct one! NOTE: Format erases the drive. Format erases the drive. I said that twice because it bears repeating - when you format a drive, all the data on it, including your programs and the pictures of your kids, is GONE.

If there are two partitions on the hard drive, the first one is drive c: and the second one is usually drive D: - there are a few exceptions to this.

Step THREE: make the drive bootable and set up cdrom support:

1. You already made the drive "bootable" - after a fashion - when you formatted it. But you can't do anything with the system yet, and the cdrom drive doesn't work yet.
2. Step 3 consists of some rather complicated procedures: Create an "autoexec.bat" file and a "config.sys" file, along with a "DOS" directory containing himem.sys and mscdex.exe files. Then you install cdrom drivers using the cdrom driver installation disk that came with your cdrom drive. ("directory" is another word for a "folder.")
3. If you made the changes correctly, and if the driver file supports the cdrom, and if the cdrom is installed correctly, the cdrom will be supported as drive d: the next time you start the system.
4. Insert a Compact Disc (CD) into the cdrom drive; Move to the cdrom drive by typing d: . (assuming d: is the drive letter of the cdrom drive) ; Wait a moment for the drive to detect the cd •Type dir to see if the drive can read the cd

Step Four: "Copy the .cabs" ('95 installation files) to c:\win95

1. Most people install Windows '95 directly from the cdrom drive. There is one serious problem with this approach: the system might lose contact with the cdrom during the installation. When this happens, the installation will stop, with many error messages, often resulting in a big mess.
2. To avoid this problem, copy the installation files from the cdrom disk onto the hard drive, and then install from the hard drive. Copy them from the CD to the c:\win95 directory.

Step Five. Installing Windows 95

1. Remove & store '95 CD •Move to c:\win95 •Type "setup" and install '95 normally
2. Now that you have verified all the files copied from d:\win95 to c:\win95, you can remove the CD from the drive and put it back in the jewel case. You will not need it for the installation.
3. If your system loses contact with the cdrom drive during installation, it will not matter: you already copied all the files needed to complete Windows '95 installation to the c:\win95 directory.

Frequently Asked Questions

"What is a "batch file?"

A batch file is a set of DOS commands all stacked up and ready to run in sequence. You simply type the name of the batch file and they will run in order, without you having to type them individually. Most computers start up with a batch file, called the "autoexec.bat." You can create batch files easily using any text editor and name them anything you want (within normal file naming conventions.)

What is a ".cab file?"

.cab is short for "cabinet," which is an enclosure where you keep many smaller objects. Microsoft, in its infinite nerdy wisdom, calls most of the Windows '95 installation files ".cab" files because they are a compressed archive of many smaller files.

What is a "config.sys" file?

When you turn on your computer, the BIOS goes hunting for a bootable drive, and first loads the config.sys file. This file configures the system for operation by loading certain hardware drivers and memory configurations into active memory.

Sample CONFIG.SYS File:

```
device=c:\himem.sys
device=c:\cdrom.sys
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What is an "autoexec.bat" file?

After the config.sys file loads, the BIOS loads a file called command.com, which immediately goes looking for a batch file full of commands to finish configuring the system. The autoexec.bat file loads different hardware drivers, sets path and temp variables, and starts any desired program running.

What is the BIOS?

Basic Input Output System - BIOS is the hardware personality of your computer. It is contained in a small chip on the main board, and does not change even when you load a different operating system (such as '95 or UNIX) into the system.

What is himem.sys?

A memory manager that allows DOS to access memory above the first 640K.

What is cdrom.sys?

This is a generic name for any of a large number of cdrom hardware drivers. This driver finds a cdrom drive and loads a marker for it into memory for mscdex.exe to find

What is mscdex.exe?

This is an extension program that allows DOS to talk to a cdrom drive - since such support is not built into DOS.

-----The End ☺ -----

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