

No. 205. Starting the Win 7 Installation

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Last time I suggested you install a fresh copy of 64-bit Windows 7 Home Premium, OEM version, using a **clean install**. So, if you have not already done so, next copy all your creations to a CD, DVD or external hard drive. That means all the letters (.doc), photos (.jpg, bmp, gif,) and other documents (.txt, .pdf) that you cannot do without. Don't forget any databases (.mdb), Powerpoint presentations (.ppt) and Excel (.xls) spreadsheets. Now, with your backups stored safely on the shelf and a new Win 7 CD in hand, you are almost ready to begin.

The next step is to completely and irrevocably erase everything on the hard drive platters. This is a **Good Thing** to do. It removes any viruses and rootkits, no matter if they are hidden or not. It also removes any partitions and boot sectors. You must understand that the hard drive will not boot after you are done with this step (until you install the new copy of Windows), and all data will be gone forever – it cannot be restored. For this daunting task, I use a simple, bootable, free CD that is no longer available called Webroot System Eraser (there are lots of Webroot programs out there, but I don't believe any are what I am talking about). This program goes to the very first bit on the drive, changes it to a 1, then zero. Then it goes to the second bit and does the same. Then the eighth, thus finishing the first byte. When it has done all 500 million bytes (or whatever size the hard drive is), it starts again. When it has done every single bit on the drive three times, it is done. Not even the FBI can recover data from the drive after that. For members of the ORC, I will supply you with a bootable CD with Webroot System Eraser on it, on request. Then, you need only turn off the machine and boot with this CD, pick the 3-pass option and answer repeated "Do you really want to do this?" questions. Then go away for several hours until it is done. This is guaranteed to leave you with a clean hard drive! By the way, make sure you have no thumb drives or external hard drives attached when you do this. Lets keep this irreversible wipe to the drive intended!

Remove the CD and turn off the machine. Boot into the BIOS (F2 on Dell machines). Examine the settings to make sure they permit booting from a CD/DVD. Save any changes you made and turn the computer off and on again. Now you have a machine that won't boot ("Boot Sector Not Found!" or similar message) and no data is on the hard drive. Good! Turn it off and back on again with the Windows DVD in the drive. Windows will boot itself from the DVD after you answer YES to the "Boot from CD?" question and begin to ask you questions about partitioning the hard drive.

This is a great time to make 3 partitions. You can make a C: partition for Windows, a D: partition for programs and an E: partition for your creations (this is what I recommend). In this case, make C: about 40% of the space, D: about 50% and E: about 10%. If you tend to have a lot of pictures on your machine, you can kick the E: drive up to 20% and reduce D: to about 40%. At the very least, make a C: for Windows and programs and a D: for your creations (documents, databases, etc.), each about 50% of the space on the drive. Then continue to install Win 7 and enjoy!

If you get stuck or don't know how to respond to a question, call me. I will help. That is why my phone number is on the header of this article. Happy Computing!

"A cookie store is a bad idea. Besides, the market research reports say America likes crispy cookies, not soft and chewy cookies like you make".

-Response to Debbi Fields idea of starting Mrs. Fields' Cookies.