

Business Computing

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A free monthly publication for small business. Over 20 years experience providing computer and network solutions.

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The Learning Center

Changing the boot order in the system BIOS:

Many computers are not initially configured to boot from the CDROM. If you cannot start-up from the CD ROM, this is probably due to the boot order of your devices being incorrect. You can change this in the system setup or BIOS. You will need to consult your operating manual to locate the access key to change the BIOS setting. By entering an access key on boot-up such as DEL or F1 you can make basic adjustments to your computers operation. One of these modifications is about how your computer responds when you apply power. Does it in the first instance search for a floppy drive or hunt for a CD ROM drive? By selecting the CD drive as the first device you will be able to boot and repair your PC.



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When Your PC Fails to Boot: a User's Guide to Repairing Windows XP

In the real world of computing there maybe a time when Windows fails to boot-up your computer. For the do-it-yourself person here is a boot problem solution that may come in handy one day. Although, it must be stressed there is an element of danger in the process and should not be attempted without a proper data backup on hand. If you haven't backed up your data recently, call in a pro to do the job. Occasionally Windows fails to start-up due to corrupted files but can, in some cases be easily rectified while retaining all your existing setups and data. A quick overview reveals a two step procedure that may work with your machine. Attempt the first stage and then if unsuccessful proceed to the second or final stage.

The first stage is to endeavour to use the Restore feature. Have you ever wanted to turn back the clock and return your computer to the original setup? With System Restore, you can accomplish this feat. System Restore works like an undo command that is found in most word processing software. You can maybe use the System Restore to repair your computer. One way to restore your computer is by accessing the "Safe Mode" on boot up. By interrupting your computer at start-up by hitting the F8 key you trigger a Windows menu which gives the option of booting your PC in the Safe Mode.

The Safe Mode is a basic troubleshooting mode where only an absolute minimum of software is loaded in the computer. By selecting the Safe Mode from the menu you may be able to proceed to the Windows desktop display. From here you can operate the System Restore feature and hopefully

get fully operational again. After successfully booting in the Safe Mode there is a menu option which gives the choice of going directly to the System Restore feature. With the Restore a calendar is displayed where you can back track to a previous date when your computer operated normally. Windows Restore won't delete your data, installed programs, personal information, or settings. It just repairs the operating system!

Unfortunately the Safe Mode route may be inaccessible due to the necessary start-up files being damaged. The next and final step in this basic repair procedure is to use your Windows system disk to start your computer and automatically repair the necessary files. In some cases this may be impossible due to the configuration of your Windows system disk. At times a Windows restore disk is supplied which will only turn back the clock and delete all your data, settings and return your PC to its original state. On this occasion call a tech as the repair job now needs expert attention.

The last step in the repair process is to get your PC started by the Windows system disk. By inserting the disk and turning on the computer it enables sufficient software to load to begin the repair process. For more details proceed to the adjacent articles.

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How to Work Remotely at Home Using Your Office Desktop Computer... Part 3

Last month we talked about connecting to your office computer via Windows XP Professional operating system. This month we will explain how to use free third party software to access your computer at work and get the same results. The Virtual Network Computing (VNC) software was developed by the famous AT&T Labs in Cambridge University. It is remote control software which allows you to view and interact with one computer (the "server") using a simple program (the "viewer") on another computer anywhere on the Internet. This must be one of the best freeware programs available to-day. Downloads are available at www.uk.research.att.com Also VNC is compact, easy to use and fits onto a floppy disk.

VNC comes in two versions: server and viewer and works on all editions of Windows. To get started download the software and install it on your work

computer and run the server feature of the software. If this is the first time you've used a VNC server on your machine you'll be prompted to set a password. The password is required when connecting to the machine from a remote location. A small icon will appear in the system tray, and by right-clicking on this you can control most aspects of the server.

Run your mouse pointer over the icon and this will give you a 12digit readout of the IP number or address. You need to connect to this address from your home computer. One problem is every time you reconnect to the Internet this number or address changes. One way around this challenge is use an external modem or router that is never switched off. A fast or broadband connection to the Internet which is always switched on is a prerequisite. You can also specify a static IP address (you are assigned a permanent number.) from your Internet provider. A

static IP connection costs extra.

Next you need to install the software on your home computer. Copy the download on to a floppy disk and load it on to your home computer. You only need the viewer feature installed. When connected to the Internet enter the IP address of your work computer and bingo you will have a connection and control over your office computer. If for security reasons you operate a firewall or a router on your office computer you will need to allow for this to get a link. Firewalls typically operate by only allowing connections to computers via specific ports. For a VNC server it will accept incoming connections on port 5900. Configuring your firewall and router for connections to this port will allow VNC to work.

If you need a copy of the previous articles in the newsletters to match-up this article, please send us an email. Also go to the VNC website for extra info.

Fixing Your Computer with the Windows Disk

To boot from your Windows XP disk insert the CD into your computer's drive and then restart. When the "Press any key to boot from CD" message appears, press a key to start your computer from the Windows XP CD. Sometimes there is a problem and the Windows CD is not recognised as the computer jumps immediately to the hard drive and attempts to load in the conventional manner. Refer to the Learning Center for problem solving in this case. In the loading process Windows Setup will find the existing Windows XP installation and you will be prompted a couple of times.

The first prompt asks you to setup Windows XP or press R for repair via the Recovery Console. DO NOT access the Recovery Console but continue with the Windows setup. Accept the license agreement and Windows will search for existing Windows installations. From the next prompt select "R" to repair your existing Windows setup. Do not boot from the CD when the computer restarts a second time. A repair install will replace the existing system files with files from the XP CD. It will leave your applications and settings intact and should get you up and running again. Remember to switch on the Automatic Updates from Control Panel to reinstall all the new updates.

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