Installing Windows 7

Now that you have decided on the version of Win7 to use and have verified compatibility of hardware, it's time to install. The Windows 7 installation is more simplified than earlier versions of Windows. This section covers the steps involved in a "clean" local installation of Win7. This type of installation can remove any data currently stored on the computer's hard drive. The following steps detail an installation of Windows 7 Ultimate.

Step 1. Begin the installation from the DVD-ROM. There are two methods to perform a clean install of Windows 7 from DVD:

Install Windows 7 by running the Setup program from within the current version of Windows. (This is the recommended method.) Insert the Windows 7 DVD. The disc most likely autoruns and you see a setup screen. Otherwise, just go to the DVD drive in Windows Explorer, and double-click the setup.exe file to start the installation.

Boot the computer from the Windows 7 DVD. This is necessary if no operating system exists on the computer. If you choose this option, do the following:

Make sure the DVD drive is configured as the first boot device in the system BIOS.

Insert the Windows 7 DVD into the system's DVD drive. (If the drive won't open while in the BIOS, insert the disc immediately after saving the BIOS during the next step.)

Save the BIOS and restart the system.

The DVD should boot automatically and start the installation, but if you are prompted to boot from the DVD, press any key. There is only a small window of time for this, approximately 5 seconds. This prompt is a protective measure; if you get the prompt, it means that there is data of some sort on the drive. Startup of the installation might take a minute or two; then you see a GUI-based window asking for information. (There is no text portion.) Setup loads Windows files for several minutes and starts the installation within the Windows GUI.

Step 2. Input the Language to install, Time and currency format, and Keyboard or input method. At this time there is also an option to learn more about the installation by clicking the What to Know Before Installing Windows link. After you input your settings for step 2, you must click Next, and then on the next screen click Install Now. A few minutes or so will pass as files are copied and the installation is prepared.

Step 3. Accept the license terms.

Step 4. Select whether you are doing a custom install, which includes a clean installation or an upgrade. (These steps here do a clean installation.) If you install to a computer with no operating system, the Upgrade option will be disabled. For this exercise do a clean installation, so select Custom (advanced).

Step 5. Select where to install Windows 7. From here you can select the drive and administer partitions as you see fit. The proper disk preparation order when installing Windows 7 is to optionally load third-party drivers (SATA, SCSI, or RAID); then partition the drive, format the partition (or partitions), and start the installation (copy files). If you do click the option Load Driver and cannot supply a proper driver for Windows 7, or the computer cannot read the media in which the driver is stored, you need to exit the installation program. If a RAID array is not detected during installation, you must exit, check all hard drive and RAID adapter connections, and make sure that there are no other conflicting RAID devices that need to be disabled (for example, integrated into the motherboard.) If there are no problems, click Next, and the system automatically copies files from the DVD, expands those files, installs features and updates, and completes the installation. The system might need to restart several times during this installation process (for example, after it installs updates and when it completes the installation), but you can let the Windows 7 installation work its magic until you get to the next step.

Step 6. Type a username and a computer name.

Step 7. Type a password, confirm it, and type a password hint.

Step 8. Enter the Product key, and decide whether to automatically activate Windows (can be delayed up to 30 days).

Step 9. Configure Windows Update to Use Recommended Settings, Install important Updates Only, or Ask Me Later. For more information on Windows Update see Chapter 10, "Maintaining Windows."

Step 10. Set the time zone, time, and date.

Step 11. Set the computer's location: home, work, or public network. (This step may not be visible if the computer is not connected to a network.)

Now it's time to start Windows. Windows 7 checks the computer's performance (which might take a while), prepares the desktop, and then logs you in. Afterward, you can continue with initial tasks such as connecting to the Internet or transferring files and settings.