

How can I get Detailed System Information about my computer?

Sometimes, despite all efforts, it seems impossible to find a particular piece of information about your computer. This is especially frustrating when you're attempting to resolve a problem, and a support technician asks you to provide a simple piece of data. Wouldn't life be a little easier if information about your operating system, hardware resources and components, and software settings was all in one place? Microsoft System Information, which is included with almost all Windows systems, may be just what you need. To check out Microsoft System Information:

1. Go to Start > Run
2. Type "msinfo32" into the Open field
3. Click "OK"

Note: If "msinfo32" doesn't work, try "msinfo".

How do I change the screen resolution of my computer?

Go to Control Panel > Display > Settings and adjust the resolution there.

Or

Right click on an empty place on the desktop, choose "Properties" from the menu and then Settings.

4. If that doesn't resolve it, you may need to hire a technicians to trouble shoot the problem.

What does OEM mean?

Original Equipment Manufacturer.

Is there a simple way to create a boot disk for various

operating systems? You can download a boot disk from www.bootdisk.com When you open the file, have a formatted floppy in the floppy drive, because it copies the files over automatically. With this disk, it will allow you to boot to dos mode.

How can I get rid of the noises when my modem makes a connection?

1. First choose Start, Settings, and then Control Panel to open the Control Panel.
2. Choose Modems.
3. Select the entry for your modem, and choose the Properties button to open the Modem Properties dialog box.
4. Choose the Connection tab, and then the Advanced tab button to open the Advanced Connection Settings dialog box.
5. The Extra Settings text box in the dialog box may already have some text in it. This text is actually a set of commands for the modem. Modem commands vary from one modem to the next, but most use the command MO - that's a zero, not a capital O - to tell the modem to keep the speaker off at all times. First make sure that the text box does not already have a command beginning with M. (And note that &MO, /MO, and MO are three different commands.) If there is an M command already, replace it with an MO command. If there is not an existing M command, simply type MO in the text box. (It's okay to add it at the end of other commands that are already there.) Choose OK, and Windows will send the command to the modem every time it dials a connection. If this does not work, you'll need to check your modem manual to see if the modem has an oddball command for controlling the speaker.

Can a FAT32 drive be converted to NTFS without losing data?

Yes it can. To do so go to "Accessories" in the Start Menu and select "Command Prompt". You'll see a DOS-like box open to a command prompt. At the prompt, type the following command and hit enter:

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Convert c: /FS:NTFS
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The conversion won't start until you restart Windows. At that point, you'll see a strange screen on next startup. It will convert the file system and then reboot. Then you're done.

What steps should I take to replace the bios battery.

It is better if you go to the BIOS first and copy the settings and have them before you try to replace the battery, in case your system does not

use the default settings. Once this is done then you can safely replace the battery and if necessary duplicate the BIOS settings you had before.

What do the letters, CD-R, CD-RW, DVD-R, DVD-RW mean?

CD-R stands for compact disk recordable. CD-R disks can best be thought of as "write once" disks. You can copy or burn to them once and cannot add any more data later.

CD-RW stands for compact disk re-writable. Because CD-RWs are re-writable, you can copy some files to a disk today; add more files tomorrow; erase some of the files the day after tomorrow and write over existing files.

DVD stands for stand digital video disk

DVD-R stands for digital video recordable disk. Like the CD-R, a DVD-R is considered a "write once" disk.

DVD-RW is a rewritable DVD and works much like a CD-RW disk.

Based on the above discussion, CD-RW or DVD-RW disks are the best choice, right?

If you are using a CD or DVD to back up data, a CD-R or DVD-R may be a better choice because the data is more permanent. Also, if you are creating music CDs or DVD movie disks that will be used on a CD or DVD player, the RW variety disks may not work on these players. Lastly, if you are creating disks to give to someone else, remember that not everyone has a CD or DVD burner in their computer. The R disks have the widest compatibility.

What is the difference between CD and DVD disks?

DVD disks can hold many times the data that a CD can. CDs can hold around 650 megabytes (MB). DVDs can hold 4.7 gigabytes (GB) or about 4,700 MB. Put another way, DVD disks can hold about two hours of video. New technologies are pushing the capacities of DVD disks even further. Dual layer DVDs can hold roughly twice the data of a conventional single layer disk. Blu-ray disks, which are now being pushed by a number of manufacturers, can hold 27 GB in the single layer format and 50 GB in dual layer. A competing disk type, HD DVD, can hold around 15 GB. These newer standard DVD disks can only be used in drives designed to handle them.

What do I need to burn a CD or DVD?

First, you need drive that can do the burning. A CD-ROM drive will not do the job. A CD-RW drive will burn and read CDs but not DVDs. What gets confusing is many computers come with a CD-RW/DVD-ROM drive. These drives can burn CDs but can only read DVDs. A DVD-RW drive can burn or read both CDs and DVDs. To create dual layer, Blu-ray or HD DVDs, a drive designed to specifically to handle these disks is required.

In addition to the drive, you may need disk burning software to actually burn the disks. Windows XP knows how to burn CDs without any special software. Older versions of Windows require disk burning (or authoring) software in order to burn CDs or DVDs.

Common examples of disk burning software include Nero, Roxio Easy CD and DVD Creator, and Sonic RecordNow! Like the drives, some disk burning software can only burn CDs. Other software programs can burn both CDs and DVDs.

Because Windows XP knows nothing about burning DVDs, DVD burning software is required to burn DVDs.

While Windows XP is able to burn CDs on its own, many people find commercial disk burning software easier to use. These software packages often have features not available in Windows. In addition to simply copying data to disks, commercial disk burning software also has the ability to do specialized things like create music CDs and DVD movie disks. Because of these features, many name brand computers come with disk burning software already installed.

The commercial software programs may include a utility that does packet writing. Nero calls its packet writing utility InCD. Roxio calls theirs

DirectCD. Packet writing allows writing (i.e. saving or burning) data to a CD-RW or DVD-RW disk numerous times.

One thing that gets many people into trouble is they may attempt to install, for example, both Nero and Roxio on their computers. They might do this because they like features in both programs but neither has all the features they want. Having two different packet writing programs on the same computer usually does not work. The two programs will fight with each other over who gets to control the disk writing process.

What is the difference between DVD-R and DVD+R disks?

Up until about 2003, the pluses and minuses (true geeks call it a dash) made a big difference. Drives that could burn DVD-R disks could not handle DVD+R disks and vice versa. Any computer or DVD burner made after 2003 should be able to handle either type of disk. From a performance standpoint, the two disk types are considered comparable. An important point to remember is some applications require one type of DVD disk or the other. Because of this, it is good idea to check your application's documentation to make sure what kind of disk you should be using.

How do I copy records to CD's?

Copying records to your PC does come up often. Here is my condensed version of how to make good digital recordings from your records. (I still have a box full of 1/2 speed master and direct to disk vinyl albums in the closet) I put some of the albums on eBay last year and a few sold for as much as \$80.00 each!

If you have a record player AND it is attached to an receiver you can take a line level output from the receiver and go directly into the audio input of your PC. You will probably need an adapter cable with the red and white RCA jacks on one end and stereo mini plug on the other for your PC.

If you don't have a receiver and want to go directly from the Turntable to the PC you will need a phono pre-amp to PC (\$30.00 to \$50.00(www.phonopreamps.com) Records are recorded with a RIAA curve and will sound very tinny if you don't use a pre-amp.

Next you'll want some software convert the audio input from the albums into mp3 or wma files and help break the album sides into individual song tracks.

It also can help remove pops and hisses. Magix, Microsoft's Plus Analog Recorder, Pinnacle Systems, vinylstudio, and some shareware/freeware programs will help you.

If you don't have a turntable, there are even some new USB turntables and ones with built in pre-amps that plug directly into your PC \$100.00 and up. You'll want to experiment with the volume levels to make sure you keep the input level from being too loud. Adjust the input source and/or the windows sound settings.

You can then burn the music to CDs using Nero, Roxio or some of the other CD burning programs.

Jim Roach

What is special about the start menu in Windows XP?

The Start menu has always been one of Microsoft's trademarks. But since it debuted in Windows 95, little has changed--until now. Windows XP completely revamps the Start menu, offering useful new features and design.

The Start menu is now bigger, and it sports two divided sections. The left part is the so-called dynamic list, which the operating system automatically populates. Windows XP monitors which applications you run and manages the left part accordingly. You'll find the applications you use more frequently higher on the list. Applications that you don't use as often are at the bottom of the list, and running new programs replaces them.

The right part of the new Start menu is static. It includes shortcuts to system folders such as My Documents, My Computer, Control Panel, Help And Support, and others. While many users might not like the menu's new look at first, give it some time to get used to--you shouldn't be disappointed. But if you are, you can still use the old Start menu. Just right-click the taskbar and select Properties. On the Start Menu tab, select Classic Start Menu and click OK.

The odds are good that you won't want to revert to the classic version. But you might want to customize it for your needs. You can make changes to the look and feel of the new Start menu by right-clicking the taskbar and selecting Properties. On the Start Menu tab, click Customize. You can change the icons' sizes, specify the number of programs on the dynamic list, and hide or show items on the static side.

How do I locate Windows XP troubleshooting tools?

To view these troubleshooting tools, open the Help And Support Center and then click Use Tools To View Your Computer Information And Diagnose Problems under the Pick A Task section. You'll receive a complete list of tools that ship with Windows XP.

Can you upgrade to Windows XP with only an upgrade disc?

Yes, you can use the upgrade disc to do a clean installation if you have the appropriate original Windows CD available. When you use the upgrade disc to do a clean installation, it requires that you insert your original Windows 98 or Me CD to verify that you originally owned the previous version.

We strongly recommend the following:

- (1) Verify that all of the software and/or hardware will work with Windows XP.
- (2) Verify that all of the peripherals (printers, scanners, etc.) will work with XP.
- (3) Expect to have to pay for other upgrades in software such as anti-virus.
- (4) Do a clean installation. (reformat the hard drive and start from scratch)

It is far better to be well-informed before just jumping into an upgrade.

How can I find out if my computer can run Windows XP?

The Windows XP Upgrade Advisor is a freeware utility that inspects both the software and hardware on your workstation. It checks to make sure that your workstation is Windows XP-ready and tells you what issues you'll face before you start to install XP.

You can get the Windows XP Upgrade Advisor by downloading it from Microsoft's Windows XP Web site. Microsoft first tells you that you should

check its Eligibility List to make sure the version of Windows you're upgrading from is eligible to upgrade to Windows XP Professional.