

Windows 10 - Reset, the ability to Reinstall the OS

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I don't think any other Windows OS version has included a feature that would allow you to easily reinstall the Windows Operating System, without having the installation media available. Here is a quote from the Microsoft Windows Support website; "If your PC isn't running well, resetting it might fix the problem. Resetting reinstalls Windows 10, but gives you the option to keep your files." Doesn't that sound like a great feature? (By the way, it also indicates that "If your PC won't start, you can use installation media to do a clean install of Windows 10. Go to the Microsoft Software download website, download the media creation tool. Then use it to create an installation on a DVD or USB drive. (This sounds like a potentially great way to get out of some very messy malware created problems.)

Before Windows 10, if your computer had slowed down or you were experiencing poor or erratic performance, the possible corrective actions were: 1-Restore Points, which didn't seem to work for me most of the times; 2-Reload a System Image, which worked fairly well, but the Image was usually old and only slightly less trouble than a reinstallation; and finally, 3-Reinstallation of the Operating System. (The System Restore on previous Operating Systems was probably an early attempt at providing a way to reset and/or reinstall the OS.)

Windows 10 has improved the possible ways of solving some performance problems, and Microsoft has listed the ways you can improve your Windows 10 computing experience if you are having some of these problems. These are summarized on another page on the Windows Support website, as follows:

If you're having problems with your PC, the following table can help you decide which recovery option to use.

Problem	See this section
Your PC isn't working well and you recently installed an app, driver, or update.	Restore from a system restore point
Your PC isn't working well and it's been a while since you installed an app, driver, or update.	Reset your PC
Your PC won't start and you've created a recovery drive.	Use a recovery drive to restore or reset your PC
Your PC won't start and you haven't created a recovery drive.	Use installation media to restore or reset your PC
Your PC won't start, you haven't created a recovery drive, and resetting your PC didn't work.	Use installation media to reinstall Windows 10
You want to reinstall your previous operating system.	Go back to your previous version of Windows

(The last option is probably not advisable since older OSs are probably not as secure, and are probably not supported.)

Well, I was having some really annoying problems on one of my machines. The first problem was that I could not delete a folder using File Explorer. You know, just do a right-click on the folder and then in the menu, select Delete. As soon as I did a right-click, File Explorer would stop running and I would be back at the desktop.

Unfortunately, I didn't remember exactly when this problem started so I couldn't connect it with any activity that was going on, like a particular update or the introduction of a new software application. The second problem involved my Network and the same computer. After I updated another of my computers, this computer, the one with the File Explorer problem, would not show up on the network. (I don't think these two problems were related, but they may have been in some roundabout way.) In the Network and Sharing Center, certain changes that I made to the "All Networks" settings would not stay changed. After making a change, if I went back to see the status, it had for some unknown reason returned to its previous setting. I "Googled" both of these problems and found some possible solutions, but nothing seemed to work. So finally, I brought out the hard drive where I keep System Image backups, and sure enough, there was a system image from only 8 months ago. (I always recommend taking a system image every 6 months at a minimum, so I must have missed one, about two months ago.)

Unfortunately, when I attempted to restore the image, the system restore program reported that the image was corrupt. Argh! Thoughts of replacing the whole darned computer came to mind; but after cooler heads prevailed, I decided to look closer at the Recovery options, which are part of the Update & Security section of Settings. This is the area that also contains Windows Defender and Backup.

You get to Settings by clicking the Start button and then clicking the Settings gear right above the Power button. Once there, click Update & Security and then click Recovery in the list on the left. Recovery offers "Reset this PC", and "Advanced startup". Just click the "Get started" below the description. This is where you make the choice to "Remove everything" or "Keep my files." If you have everything of importance backed up, then click "Remove everything." If you don't want to take the chance of losing some data files, then click "Keep my files." (In either case, the apps that you have downloaded will be removed and your personal settings will be changed.) If you want to keep your files, a list of Apps that will be removed will be shown when you click "Keep my files." When you see this list of Apps that will be removed, click "Next" and you will have one last chance to change your mind. Finally, click "Reset" to start the reset. A message will be shown to indicate that "This will take a few minutes and the PC will restart". At this point, all you need to do is leave the computer plugged in, and take a possibly long coffee break. For a slow machine or an older machine, this may take quite a long time. (Remember the old saying, "A watched pot never boils".) My five-year-old laptop took about two hours to complete. While the OS is being reset, a percentage complete message is shown on the screen to give you an idea of the progress. Eventually, you will see the "Installing Windows" message. Once Windows is installed, you can go to Settings and personalize the operation of your computer. If your slowed-down computer has gotten you to the point where you think you might want to try this kind of Reset, before you start, make sure you have the phone number of someone you think can bail you out if things start to go amiss. Remember, the computer lab is not open on Sunday.

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