

## No re-format non-destructive Install.

Microsoft won't tell you this, but you can do a fast, no re-format, non-destructive, re-install of Windows7 or Vista, without damaging your user accounts, data, installed programs, or system drivers.

That means you may never have to do a full, from-scratch re-install again, even when your system is misbehaving so badly that a full re-format-and-re-install seems the only answer!

As I'm sure you know all too well, from-scratch re-installs are ordeals. They take hours and when a re-install is done, you still have to recreate all your settings, re-install all your software, and so on. It can take days to do a fully recovery.

Windows' little known, in-place re-install takes only a fraction of that time. When you're finished, your Windows installation is just as it was before, except that, all the system files are fully repaired.

This non-destructive re-install ability, has been in Windows since XP. But — for reasons unknown — Microsoft has never made non-destructive re-installs an official repair. In fact, it's not even listed in Win7 System Recovery Options.

Although the re-install process usually works reliably, it's not infallible. Deep-seated system errors, customizations, hardware trouble, or other variables may foil your re-install efforts. Having a complete and current backup is a sensible precaution.

**If you installed SP1 on your computer, it means your Upgrade DVD is without SP1, and the operation will fail, giving you 3 options.**

### Option 1

Download a copy of your OS in ISO format and burn to a DVD from:-

<http://www.w7forums.com/official-windows-7-sp1-iso-image-downloads-t12325.html>

### Option 2

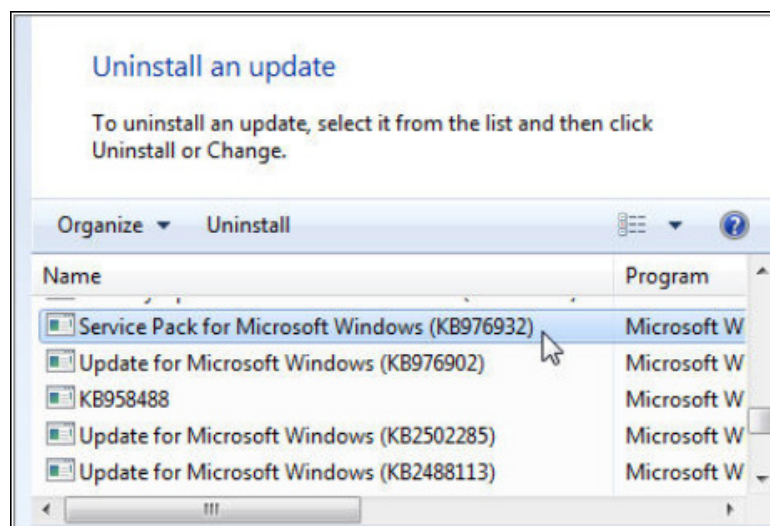
Borrow one, as long as it's the same 32 bit or 64 bit version as your installation.

A standard Win7 DVD actually contains all editions of Win7. For example, a Win7 DVD has all the files for both 32 bit or 64bit versions of Win7 Home Premium, Win7 Professional and Win7 Ultimate.

It's perfectly legitimate for you to use someone else's Win7 upgrade DVD to install Windows on your system, as long as you use your own, product key for activation.

### Option 3

Uninstall SP1 from your computer. As below.



**Win7's Uninstall an update feature makes deleting the SP1 files easy.**

Open the Control Panel's default view and click on Uninstall a program. In the left hand pane, select View installed updates. When the Uninstall an update dialog box opens, scroll down to SP1, listed as Service Pack for Microsoft Windows (KB976932) and select Uninstall.

The system will churn for a while, but when it's done, SP1 will be gone, and you'll be able to use your original Win7 setup DVD to repair your system.

## To start your Win7 in-place re-installation.

Insert the Win7 DVD. When the AutoPlay dialog box pops up, click to run setup.exe. Alternatively, you can run setup.exe manually by navigating to the DVD drive and selecting the setup file.



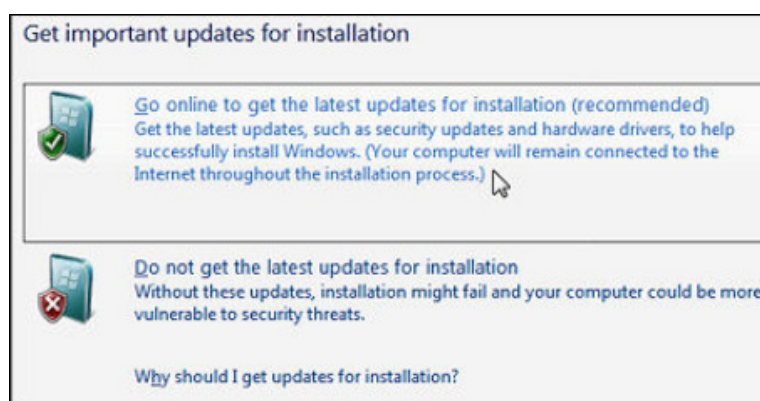
When setup starts to run, the User Account Control will ask whether you want to make changes to your PC. Answer Yes.

After a few moments, the Win7 installation process starts.

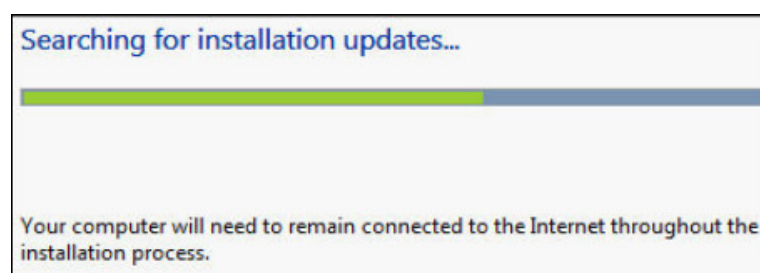


**Click Install now.**

After several moments, you'll be asked whether you want to check online for updates related to the installation process. I recommend that you allow this.

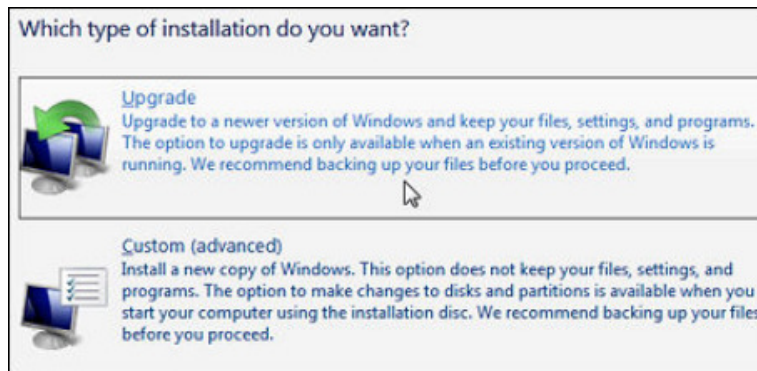


**Windows will then go online to find any essential updates.**



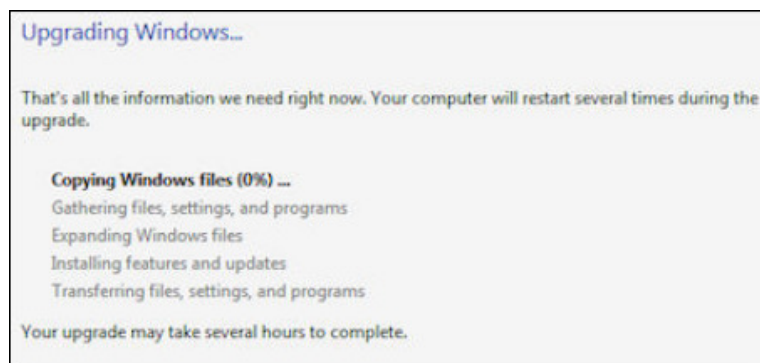
**It normally takes only a few moments.**

Windows will ask you Which type of installation do you want?



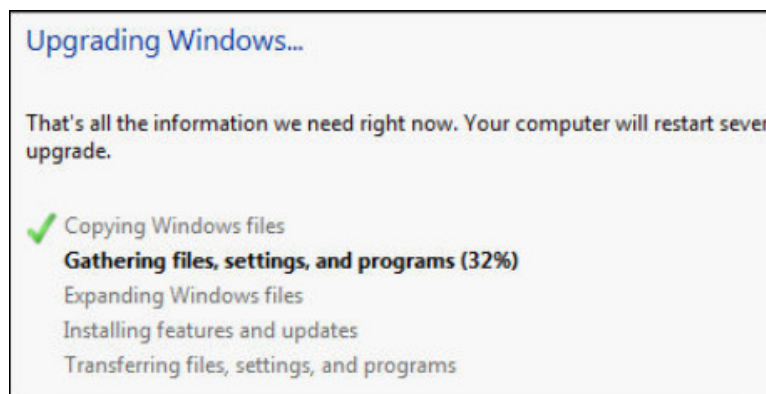
**Select Upgrade.**

You're not really upgrading; you're re-installing the same version of the OS that's already on the PC, and will leave your files, settings, and programs in place.



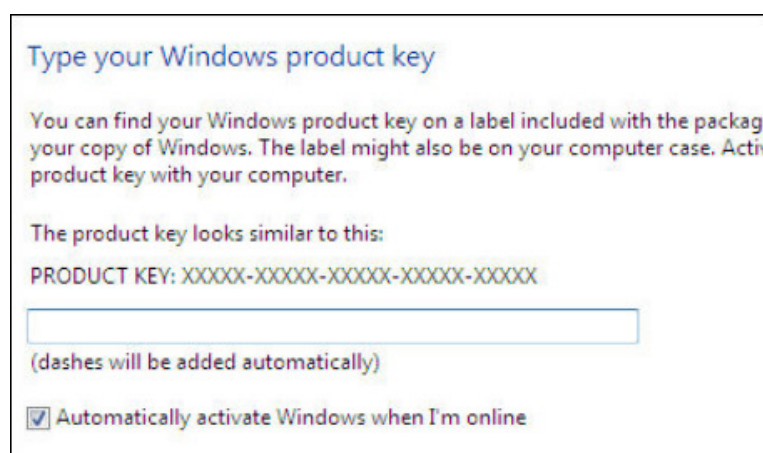
**Depending on the complexity of your setup and speed of your Hardware, re-installation could take several hours**

No user input is required until near the end.

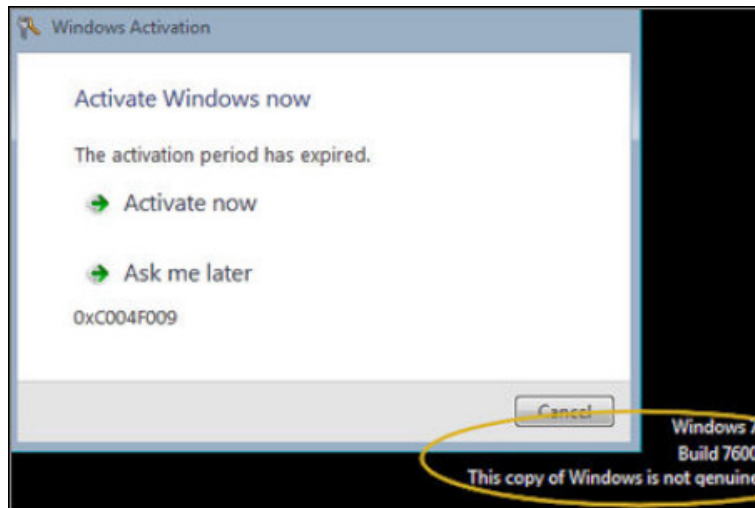


Windows will reboot several times during the installation.

At the very end of the installation process, you'll be asked to enter the product key from your original Upgrade Win7 DVD.

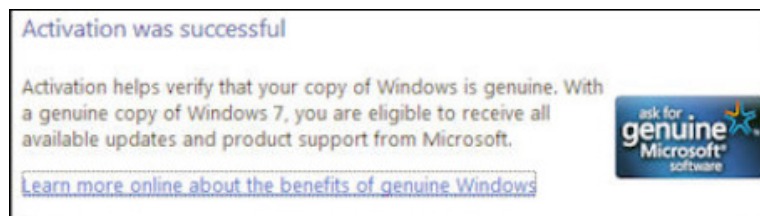


You can also elect to either Activate immediately or wait. Unactivated copy's of Windows get only limited access to Windows Updates and related services. I recommend activating without delay so you have immediate access to all Windows Update services.



If you delay activation, you'll see an Activation nag screens, as above.

Personally, I think it's better to just activate and get it over with.

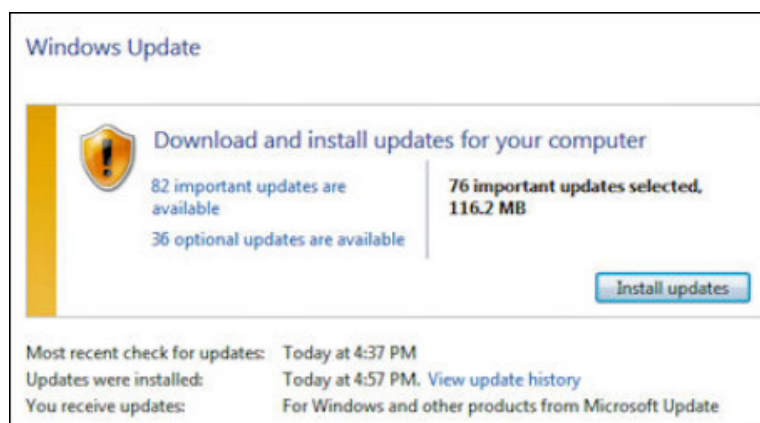


**Once activated, no further activation nags will appear.**

By the way, activation is not a one-time-only thing, Microsoft allows for periodic reactivations of a given product key. Unless you've done several reactivations in a relatively short time, you should have no trouble. But if you do, just follow the remedies listed in the Activation Failed dialog box. As long as your product key is legit, Microsoft will work with you to resolve an activation mishap.

### **Your Win7 re-install is almost done!**

Your Win7 setup now has fresh copies of all the original system files. All that's left is to bring the installation up to date. This generally takes several runnings of Windows Update and reboots. Repeat until WU reports that no further updates are available.



**Don't put off this step!**

When done, you'll have a fully refreshed, up-to-date copy of Windows, with all your files, settings, and programs intact and working. If all has gone as planned, the only significant change you'll notice is that the original problem is gone!

With just a smidgen of luck and this article, you'll never again have to face a dreaded, start-over-from-scratch re-format / re-install of Win7!

Compliments of

