

How To Make A USB Installation Disk For Windows 7 Without Extra Software



I recently bought a nice new setup for my media centre, but I didn't want to splash out on another DVD drive when physical media is basically dead – and swapping out a DVD drive from another machine just to install Windows seems like such a waste of time when I could be eating Christmas pudding. While Windows 8 is slated to allow media-less upgrade, today I'll outline a relatively easy way to make a bootable Windows installation USB drive, without having to download additional software. If your Christmas PC budget didn't quite stretch to a DVD drive, this is the tutorial for you.

We described a [similar method \(http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/install-windows-7-netbook-from-usb-flash-drive/\)](http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/install-windows-7-netbook-from-usb-flash-drive/) before, but it required a few external utilities. This time I'll assume you have a working Windows 7 computer with an existing DVD drive somewhere – and a working installation DVD to go with it. You'll use this machine to format, set up, and copy over the relevant files to a USB stick. You could also do this without a DVD drive from the ISO, but in that case your job would be a whole lot simpler because you could use the official ISO -> USB creator.

Note: You cannot use this method to install to a Parallels virtual machine. Your only option in that case is to use either a physical DVD or an ISO download and connect to that to the VM instead.

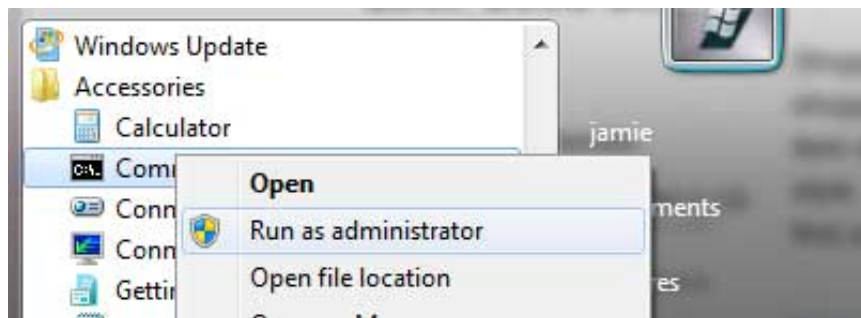
You'll need:

- A working Windows 7 system with a DVD drive and administrator rights.
- A Windows 7 installation DVD.
- 4GB USB drive or larger.

This will also work with larger external hard drives instead of a USB thumbdisk, but be aware that all the data on the drive will be formatted and deleted.

> Open An Elevated Command Prompt

Click *Start -> All Programs -> Accessories* and right-click on *Command Prompt*. Select *Run As Administrator*. Of course, you need to be able to authenticate as the administrator on the PC you're using.



> Partitioning The Disk

Type:

```
DISKPART
```

```
Administrator: Command Prompt - DISKPART
Microsoft Windows [Version 6.1.7601]
Copyright (c) 2009 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Windows\system32>DISKPART

Microsoft DiskPart version 6.1.7601
Copyright (C) 1999-2008 Microsoft Corporation.
On computer: MEDIACENTER

DISKPART> _
```

This will open up the partitioning application. Next, type:

```
LIST DISK
```

Figure out which of the drives listed is your USB drive, and note the number. It's crucial you get this right, or you're going to end up losing data on other drives.

```
DISKPART> LIST DISK
```

Disk ###	Status	Size	Free	Dyn	Gpt
Disk 0	Online	64 GB	0 B		
Disk 1	Online	7712 MB	0 B		

```
DISKPART>
```

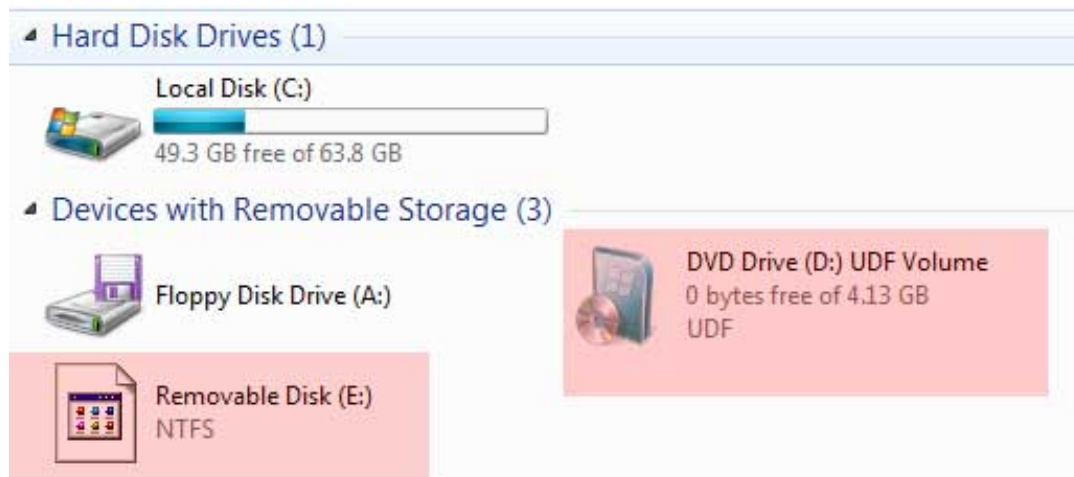
Next, type the following series of commands, but replace the *DISK* number in the first line with the appropriate number from the above list. Here, my disk is number 1. Don't confuse this with *PARTITION 1*. That number should not change, even if your disk is 3.

```
SELECT DISK 1
CLEAN
CREATE PARTITION PRIMARY
SELECT PARTITION 1
ACTIVE
FORMAT FS=NTFS
ASSIGN
EXIT
```

```
DISKPART> SELECT DISK 1
Disk 1 is now the selected disk.
DISKPART> CLEAN
DiskPart succeeded in cleaning the disk.
DISKPART> CREATE PARTITION PRIMARY
DiskPart succeeded in creating the specified partition.
DISKPART> SELECT PARTITION 1
Partition 1 is now the selected partition.
DISKPART> ACTIVE
DiskPart marked the current partition as active.
DISKPART> FORMAT FS=NTFS
    0 percent completed
```

➤ Make It Bootable!

The format step may take a little while (it actually took about 30 minutes on my machine). When you're done, put in your installation DVD if you haven't already. Note down which drive letter your USB disk and Windows installation DVD are located at.



Go back to your command prompt and type – assuming D: is your DVD drive with the install DVD, and U: is your USB drive:

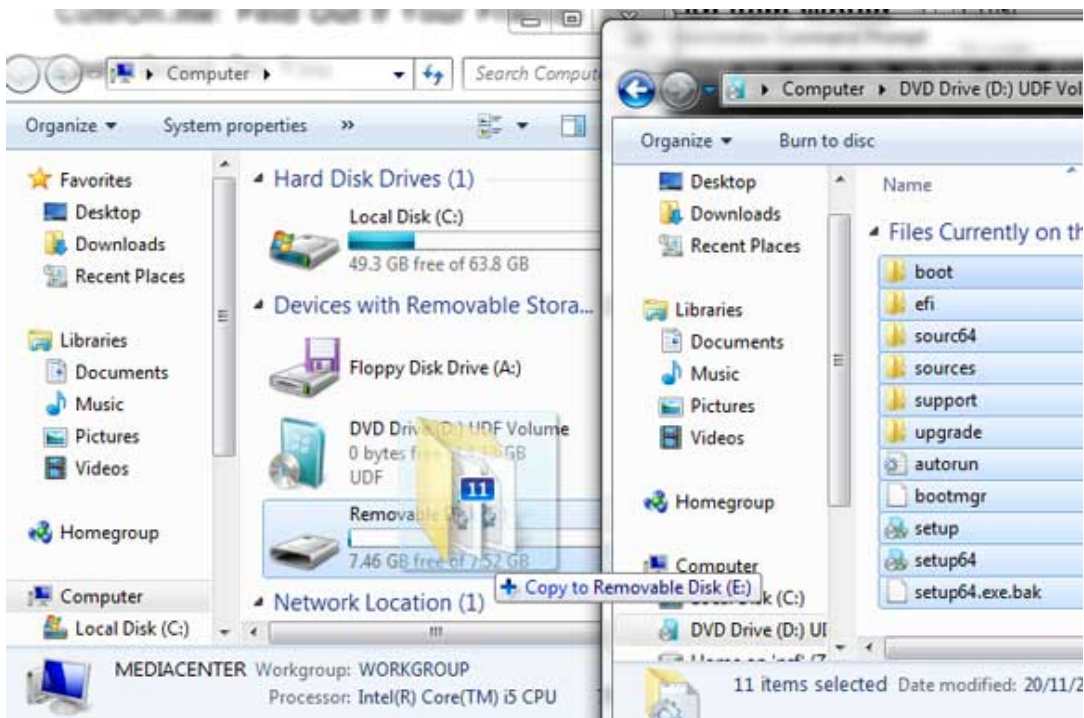
```
D: /BOOT/BOOTSECT.EXE /NT60 U:
```

This will basically make your USB drive bootable.

```
C:\Windows\system32>D:/BOOT/BOOTSECT.EXE /NT60 E:
Target volumes will be updated with BOOTMGR compatible bootcode.
E: <\\?\Volume{dc898ed1-e81d-11e0-ad91-001c42105677}>
    Successfully updated NTFS filesystem bootcode.
Bootcode was successfully updated on all targeted volumes.
C:\Windows\system32>
```

➤ Copy Everything

The final step can be done from *My Computer*. Just open up the installation DVD, highlight everything, and drag it over to your USB drive.



This will also take a while.



Now you should be all set – just insert the USB disk into your new PC, and enter the BIOS to adjust the boot order, or choose the option during start up which says *Choose Boot Device*.

Let's hear it for computers with no noisy and clunky DVD drives! *Death to physical media!* Or not – what do you think? Are you ready to go DVD-less?

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From the Web

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