



How to Use Sysprep: An Introduction

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Sysprep is a tool designed for corporate system administrators, OEMs, and others who need to deploy the Windows® XP operating system on multiple computers. After performing the initial setup steps on a single system, you can run Sysprep to prepare the sample computer for cloning.

Sysprep assigns a unique security ID (SID) to each destination computer the first time the computer is restarted. Sysprep configures the operating system to use Windows Welcome or Mini-Setup to run the first time the end user restarts the computer. This shortened form of GUI-mode Setup takes 5 or 6 minutes instead of the usual 45 to 60 minutes, and it prompts the end user only for required and user-specific information, such as accepting the End-User License Agreement (EULA) and entering the Product Key, user name, and company name.

Sysprep is a valuable utility even if you do not use disk duplication. You can run Sysprep with the `-nosidgen` switch to configure Windows Welcome or Mini-Setup on a single computer. In this case, Sysprep allows for auditing that may have been done; automates the Mini-Setup portion of the process so that users can still enter user-specific information, such as regional options and TAPI information; and bypasses setting up unique SIDs, because the SIDs will already be unique when Setup is actually run on the computer.

The Sysprep utility can be used in three different contexts:

1. **Disk duplication.** Using Sysprep to prepare images for disk duplication allows you to copy fully installed systems onto similar hardware. Sysprep modifies the local computer Security ID (SID) so that it is unique to each computer. For more information, see [How to Use Sysprep to Prepare Images for Disk Duplication](#).
2. **Auditing.** When you use Sysprep after auditing the computer (using the `-nosidgen` command-line option), Sysprep will be ready for the end user to run Windows. For more information, see [How to Use Sysprep for Auditing Installations](#).
3. **Automating Mini-Setup.** Sysprep creates a shortened GUI-mode Setup that takes five or six minutes instead of the usual 45 to 60 minutes, and it prompts the end user only for required user-specific information, such as accepting the EULA, entering the Product Key, and entering the user name and company name. To use Sysprep in this mode, preinstall Windows XP on the local computer, and then run Sysprep with the `-nosidgen` parameter, using the steps below. For more information, see [How to Use Sysprep to Automate Mini-Setup](#).

Restoring the computer to an end-user-ready state

You can use Sysprep to restore the computer to an end-user-ready state. For more information, see [How to Use Sysprep to Restore the Computer to an End-User-Ready State](#).

Factory mode

The Factory mode of Sysprep is a method of preconfiguring installation options that can reduce the number of images an OEM needs to maintain. For more information, see [How to Use Sysprep in Factory Mode](#).

Related Links

- [How to Prepare Images for Disk Duplication with Sysprep](#)
- [How to Use Sysprep for Auditing Installations](#)
- [How to Use Sysprep to Automate Mini-Setup](#)
- [How to Use Sysprep to Restore the Computer to an End-User-Ready State](#)
- [How to Use Sysprep in Factory Mode](#)

