Microsoft Windows - How To Clone A Hard Drive

Cloning hard drive is a process in which all files and programs from a computer hard drive are copied to another . This an alternative to running a new instance of operating system installation and installing software on the new disk one by one . Suppose you wish to clone hard disk A that has already contained an operating system and programs to an empty drive B with no installed **OS** or program. You can do this by cloning hard drive.

This method is often used by computer owners who have just bought a new computer or those having a network of more than one computers. By performing hard drive cloning you don't need to install operating system or install each program one by one on a new hard drive thus you can save time and energy.
You can use cloning software available on the market such as **DriveImage XML** (**DIX**), **Norton Ghost** etc. to do the job of transferring all files and program from one computer to another. But for Windows users who have been accustomed to and familiar with **Windows Explorer**, this whole process can actually be performed using **Windows Explorer**.

This however should be done with extra care since the whole processes are done in exact sequence, though not take as much time as installing new operating system.

Here is a step-by-step guide on **how to clone a hard drive** using **Windows Explorer Menu** :

1. Format and partition the new hard drive. First of all, you need to create partition and format the hard drive which is a mandatory before using a new hard drive.
2. Set hard drive status. Hard drives that will be copied (*source hard drive*) and a new target hard drive must both be readable by the [gs computer]. You need to adjust the jumper settings located on the back of both hard drives or you can do that by connecting both hard drives with the computer mainboard. Hard drive Source will then act as master hard drive while the new hard drive will act as slave hard drive (target hard drive)

Hard Drive Cloning process

After you complete the two steps above you can now proceed to the main job of cloning the hard drive.

1. Start **Windows Explorer**.
   Go to **Windows explorer** and Show all hidden files by clicking the **Tools** menu and select **Folder Options**, and then click on the **View** button. Check the **Show hidden files and folders option**, then click the **Apply** button, then click the **OK** button.
2. Select all the files and the entire folders on your source hard drive except the **Windows** folder.
   Then click the **Copy** option on the **Edit** Menubar.
   Click the *Paste* option on the menubar Edit on the second target hard drive then create new folders in the root directory and rename it with "Windows"
3. Click the **Windows** folder on the source hard disk then select all files and all folders except **Win386.swp** file.
   Then click the **Copy** option on the **Edit** menubar.
4. Click the **Paste** option on the menubar on **Edit** to the **Windows** folder on the target hard drive.

Alternatively you can use the following a quite easy method using Windows built-in command.

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1. Install **Windows** and all the programs you wish to clone on the hard drive that will be used as source drive and put it on the **Primary IDE Master**.
   Boot your computer from the mater hard drive carriers, make sure you have configured the new hard drive as IDE Slave
2. Go to Windows command prompt by clicking **Start> Run > CMD** (In _Windows XP_)
3. Perform quick formatting of the new hard disk by typing following command format **_d: / q / u_**
   When finished, exit the _Windows directory_ then press enter
   Type the following command: **xcopy / h / e / r / y / s / c / kc: d:** press **Enter** to start the hard drive cloning process.

This way, we will get a clone of hard drive which contains exactly the same content as the original hard drive.

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