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Prepare a snapshot of the PC: Generalize and capture Windows images

In this section of the [OEM Windows Deployment and Imaging Walkthrough](#), you can create a snapshot of the Windows files, including any customizations that you've already added. We use the term *thin image* to describe this image, because these customizations should be minimal. We'll add drivers, languages, and apps later.

Capture an image



Generalize the PC

1. Click **Start**, type **command prompt**, right-click **Command Prompt**, and select **Run as administrator**.
2. Generalize the PC:

```
C:\Windows\System32\Sysprep\sysprep /generalize /oobe /shutdown
```

Sysprep removes PC-specific information from the Windows installation, so that you can capture an image that you can deploy to other PCs. This process can take several minutes. After the process completes, the PC shuts down automatically.

Capture the Windows image

1. Connect the USB flash drive to the reference PC.
2. Turn on the PC and press the key that opens the boot-device selection menu for the PC. (for example, the **Esc** key).

Select the option in the firmware menus to boot the PC to the USB flash drive that is labeled Windows PE.

Warning

If Windows begins booting instead of Windows PE, you must generalize the PC again before capturing the image:

- a. After Windows boots, press **Ctrl+Shift+F3** to enter audit mode. The PC will reboot.
- b. Generalize the PC again by using the instructions in the **Generalize the PC** section.

3. Connect a storage drive, such as an external USB hard drive, to the reference PC.
4. At the Windows PE command prompt, use the DiskPart command to list the current drive letters:

```
diskpart
list volume
exit
```

For example, the drives can be lettered like this: C = Windows; E = External hard drive; F = USB flash drive. Note that some partitions might not receive a drive letter.

5. Capture the image of the Windows partition:

```
dism /Capture-Image /CaptureDir:C:\ /ImageFile:"C:\ThinImage.wim" /Name:"Fabrikam" /NoRpFix
```

where C is the drive letter of the Windows partition and *Fabrikam* is the image name.

The DISM tool captures the Windows partition into a new image file. This process can take several minutes.

Note

Although you can capture the image directly to the external USB hard drive, it is usually faster to capture the image onto a hard drive, and later copy the image file to the USB flash drive.

6. Create an **Images** folder on the external USB hard drive and then copy the image file into it:

```
md E:\Images
copy C:\*.wim E:\Images\
```

where C: is the drive letter for Windows, and E: is the drive letter for the external USB hard drive.

This process can take several minutes because the image file is several gigabytes.

Note

Troubleshooting: If you receive an "A parameter is incorrect" error message when you try to copy the file, the file might be too large for the destination file system. Copy the file to a drive that is formatted as NTFS.

7. Leave the PC booted to Windows PE.

See Also

Concepts

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