

Get IT Done: Manage service packs and hot fixes

by Ray Geroski | Jan 20, 2003 8:00:00 AM

TAGS: Operating systems, Ray Geroski, Get IT Done, service pack, Winver, Microsoft Windows

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 **Takeaway:** Managing and rolling out Windows updates

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Managing and rolling out Windows updates can take a significant amount of your time. Luckily, Windows includes features that can streamline installation, configure file locations, and quickly determine the currently installed OS version, thus reducing your Windows administrative burden.

The following tips explain how you can gain better control of your service packs and hot fixes by using slipstreaming and managing the file locations. You can use slipstreaming to automatically roll service packs into Windows installations so that every new install is automatically updated to the latest version. Configuring the locations of the files allows you to download updates to a single location and have Windows locate them automatically.

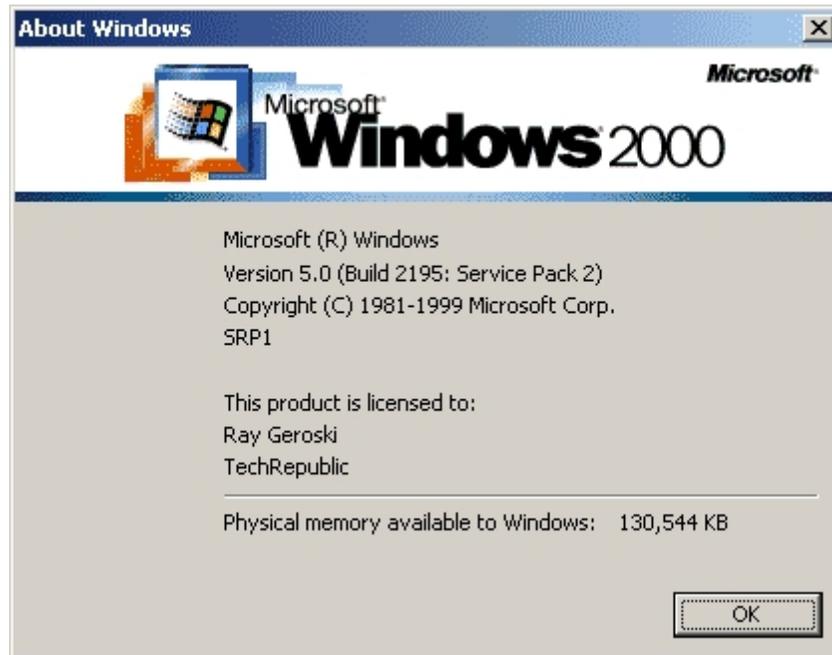
Which version?

Before updating a Windows system, you'll often need to know which service pack is currently installed. You can find this information in Windows in a number of ways.

In Windows 2000 and XP, the easiest way to determine which service pack is installed is to look on the System Properties General tab, which displays the build number as well as the service pack version.

Another option for finding this information is to run Winver. Winver displays the Windows build and service pack information in a pop-up window as shown in **Figure A**.

Figure A



Winver shows system information.

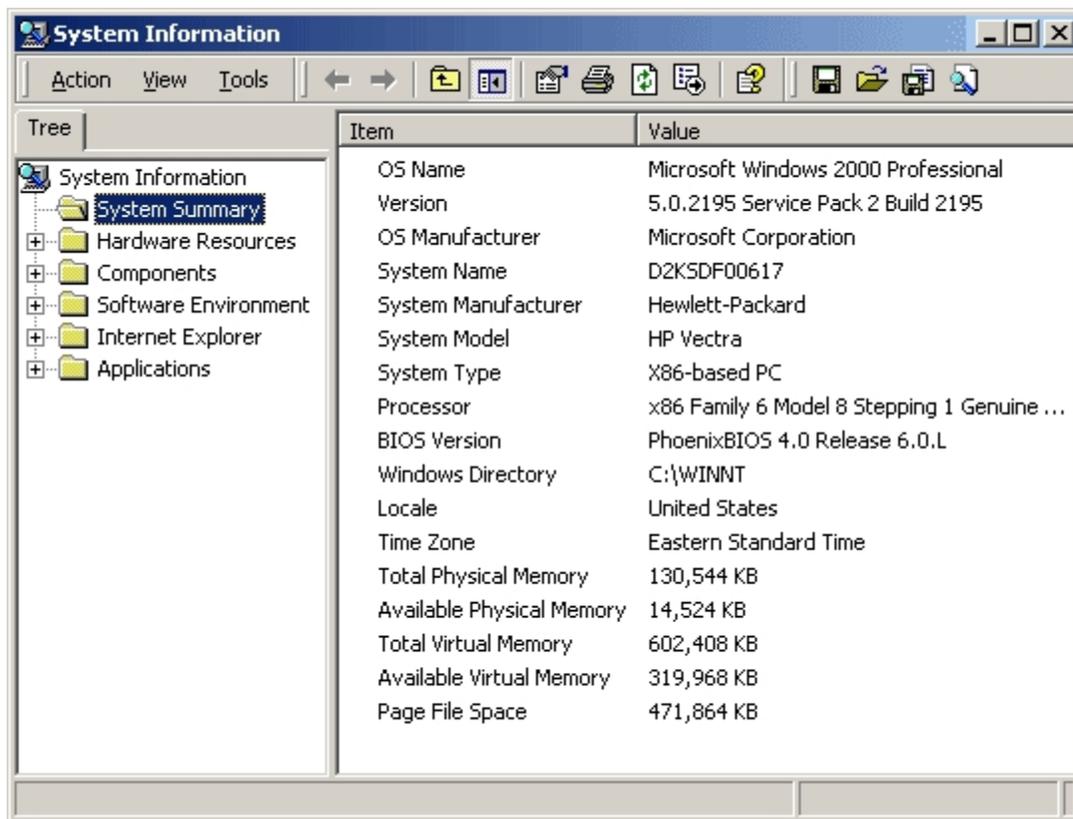
Perform the following steps to run Winver:

1. Click Start | Run.
2. In the Open box, type *Winver*.
3. Click OK or press Enter.

You can also access this dialog box in Windows Explorer by choosing Help | About Windows from the menu bar.

Winmsd.exe will also report this information (see **Figure B**). Follow the steps listed above, but type *Winmsd* to view system data. Notice that Winmsd displays more detailed information about your system but reports the same version data.

Figure B



Winmsd displays more detailed system information.

You can also obtain this information from the command prompt if you have the Reg.exe utility from Supplement 2 of the Windows 2000 Resource Kit. Reg.exe can pull service pack information from the registry. The version data is stored in the registry key HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\CSDVersion. You can query this value with Reg.exe to find out exactly which service pack version is installed. It can also reveal whether the installed service pack is a beta or release candidate and display that version information as well.

Slipstreaming

Slipstreaming allows you to integrate service packs into your initial Windows installations. This can save you a lot of time and hassle because you won't have to manually install the service packs after installing Windows. All you need to do is apply them to the distribution folder; when you install Windows on your clients from that location, they will have all of the updates.

Note

You can also just copy the I386 folder, CD-ROMxx.5, i.e., CDROM_IP or CDROM_IS, for example, and

CDROM_NT.5. It's better to copy the entire CD, however, because this will include files that are updated to reflect new service pack installs.

Follow these steps to slipstream your service packs:

1. Copy the Windows 2000 CD to your distribution folder.
2. Download and extract the latest service pack to a location on the drive.
3. Run Update.exe with the `-s` switch from the `i386\Update` subfolder in the Service Pack 1 location, specifying the location of your install share as shown in the following example:

```
Update.exe -s:H:\Win2K\Installation
```

Note

If the path to your install share includes spaces, you must use quotation marks around the path statement, as shown in the following example:

```
Update.exe -s:"H:\Windows 2000\Install Share".
```

You can now install Windows 2000 from the distribution folder with the full updates. You can also use this install share to create a bootable CD from which to install Windows with the service packs. Slipstreaming allows you to ensure that client installs contain all of the necessary updates without manual intervention.

Changing the service pack location

When you install a service pack, Windows 2000 remembers the location from which it was installed and automatically looks to that location for updated files when new components are added. If you want to change the service pack location without disrupting Windows 2000's update process, you must modify the registry to point to the new service pack location.

Perform the following steps to move the residence of your Windows 2000 service packs:

1. Run Regedit.
2. Open the following registry folder:
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Setup
3. Double-click ServicePackSourcePath.
4. In the Value Data field, type the new path location of the service packfiles.
5. Click OK.
6. Close Regedit.

Use these tips to keep up with Windows 2000 updates and ensure that all installations of Windows

automatically have the latest service pack. They can help keep your Windows installations running smoothly and securely.