

## What exactly is a Reload?

Quite often, the easiest resolution to computer problems such as freezing, crashing, lock-ups, and slowness among other things, is to reload the Operating System. This process restores all of the systems original files to their original state and guarantees that they are in proper form.

The reason behind these files needing to be repaired can be from previous lock-ups which left the computer unable to close some of these files while they were open. When this happens, data within these files can be altered which can lead to further crashes. It is a perpetual downward spiral. Another common reason is that because Windows shares some of it's file among multiple programs, commonly referred to as DLL's (Dynamic Linked Library's), it is possible for a program to overwrite a shared file with one that is older and possibly not compatible with the other applications using it. The easiest way to understand this is in thinking of a dictionary used by your Word Processor and Email program. With Windows, the concept was born that a single dictionary could be used by both programs saving space on the machine AND valuable programming time when developing new applications. The problems with this concept is that many programs do not follow all of the rules set out by Microsoft (and I can't say that we blame them, have you ever tried to read an End User License Agreement for any of the software you own?) so files are mixed and matched and in the end, mayhem prevails.

In most cases, this reinstallation is on top of your existing installation and does not affect your system in any other way than correcting the problem. Then there are the more extreme cases which are slowly becoming more and more common where we are forced to reload the Operating System without overwriting the existing one. The end result is that your computer has an Operating System loaded that has no idea what Video Card, Modem, Sound Card, or even Programs are loaded up. This is where it starts to get tricky and where confusion comes in.

When placed in the position that we must perform a reload from scratch, we will attempt, mostly successfully, to restore proper operation to the system in all aspects of the hardware. This means that Windows will have all the necessary drivers (files provided by manufacturers of hardware so that Windows can communicate with their hardware) to work with your Video Card, Sound Card, Network Card, Modem, etc. What we can't do is program in devices we are unaware you have, such as printers, scanners, Palm Pilots, and the such. Even if you tell us, quite often we cannot install the software for them without physically connecting these items which means that you may bear the burden of installing and configuring these devices again.

The second step is the software. We delete nothing on your system when performing these reloads. The software you had installed before still resides on your computer, the problem being that Windows has NO IDEA it is there. Worse, because of the shared files concept, even if we tell Windows that the software is there, there are certain files which would have been installed in to the Windows Shared Folder directory which no longer exist and there is no record of what they are so we can't put them back. The end result is

that you need to reinstall these software programs. Programs such as Word, Excel, and Powerpoint just to name a few, will reinstall on top of the existing installation and in doing so, appear as though nothing has changed after the reinstallation. This is great because no additional configuration is needed. Unfortunately other programs such as AOL, Outlook Express, and Outlook, require some reconfiguration to get them running again. This reconfiguration is the same as you had done originally but is still required.

Because of software licensing agreement, TCS cannot provide the software you had on your machine for reloading purposes unless you purchased the software from TCS or provide us with the installation discs. We will make every attempt to identify and reinstall applications we think you use regularly to make this process as painless as possible but cannot always see every program you once used and quite often have no way to reinstall the program because we cannot find the original program installation files.

We at TCS hope this proves useful to you and ask that should you have troubles with the instruction provided, find that this information wasn't informative enough, or wish to request information on additional topics, that you contact us at any time.

Adam Egdall  
President, TCS<sup>3</sup>  
aegdall@tcs3.com