

Recovering the Vista Bootloader from the DVD

Mahmoud Al-Qudsi

Precursor

If your Windows Vista or Windows 7 bootloader has been damaged or corrupt in some way, you'll have to get it reset before you can use EasyBCD to configure a dual-boot.

Use this section only if you cannot boot into any version of Microsoft Windows. If you can boot into Windows, we highly recommend using our Recovering the Vista Bootloader with EasyBCD guide instead!

Repairing the Windows 7/Vista Bootloader

Step One: Booting from the Windows Vista DVD

Stop! Are you using an HP or Dell? Don't have a Vista DVD?

Many so-called "professional" computer vendors are too cheap to include a Windows Vista DVD with your PC. If you're unlucky enough to get a recovery partition or a recovery DVD without a stock Windows Vista DVD too, you have no way of accessing the repair center.

Put your Windows Vista DVD in the drive and restart your PC. Assuming you've properly configured your BIOS to boot from CDs/DVDs before hard drives (or you can press F12 if your PC supports it to boot from the CD), you should get a prompt asking you to "Press any key to boot from the CD/DVD..."

Press a key, and in a couple minute's time you should see a page like this:

Select "Repair your computer" to continue.

Step Two: Automated Repair

Proceed with the repair process by choosing "Startup Repair" from this list:

Windows Vista will attempt to repair its bootloader now. Assuming you haven't totally busted up your boot files too bad, this step should conclude with a "Issues resolved" message and prompt you to reboot.

It doesn't? Or maybe it claims its fixed the problem, but it hasn't, not really? Read on.

The automated repair only fixes one thing at a time, and you might need several things fixed (MBR, bootmgr, boot folder). So boot the DVD again and repeat the whole process. If it's still not working after repeating the automated repair several times, carry on with the following manual steps.

Step Three: Manually Repairing the Vista Bootloader

Desperate times call for desperate measures. This time, we're going to select the "Command Prompt" option and try to manually tell the Vista Recovery Console what needs to be fixed. Chances are, this is as far as you'll have to go; hopefully it'll get the job done.

Go ahead and select "Command Prompt" from that list, and you should get a window not dissimilar to the one you see when run cmd.exe from Windows.


Warning the instructions below assume that the program bootsect.exe is present on the booted Vista recovery disk. It was included on earlier distributions of Vista, but was subsequently omitted. If your DVD contains a copy in the boot folder, the instructions can be followed as listed. If not (and our downloadable CD images do not) you will need to pick up a copy elsewhere before proceeding.

Recovering the Vista Bootloader from the DVD

Mahmoud Al-Qudsi

You can find a copy in the Bin folder of the EasyBCD download, or in the HnS download if you already have either of those NST products. You can also find other web sources by use of a search engine. You will need to adjust the x:\boot path in the instructions to the appropriate path to locate bootsect.exe wherever you have stored a copy.

Let's start by telling the recovery console to fix our MBR and bootsectors:

 Replace x: in the commands below with the letter to your CD drive as detected by the Windows Recovery environment

```
bootrec.exe /fixmbr  
x:\boot\bootsect.exe /nt60 all /force
```

Then ask it (nicely!) to try and rebuild your BCD data from scratch:

```
del C:\boot\bcd  
bootrec.exe /rebuildbcd
```

If you're lucky, this'll work and you'll see a message telling you everything went OK.

Reboot your PC by typing in this command or by closing all the dialogs:

```
shutdown -r -t 0
```

Don't forget to remove your Windows Vista DVD or Recovery DVD from the drive!


Step Four: Nuclear Holocaust

Windows Vista doesn't have its share of haters for no reason: when the going gets tough, the tough gets going.

So Windows Vista can't even fix itself - god, that's what we love about EasyBCD! If you were in Windows Vista right now, you could have used EasyBCD's "Reset BCD Data" feature to have EasyBCD actively search for any and all discrepancies in your bootloader, zero out your old BCD data, and re-create it all from scratch. But you're not and it's no use lamenting what you could be doing with our super-cool app if you can't even use it in the first place now, is it?

Go ahead and select "Command Prompt" yet again from that list. Roll up your sleeves, and prepare to be tortured.

The first order of business is to make sure the MBR and bootsector contain the right references to the Vista bootloader:

 Replace x: in the commands below with the letter to your CD drive as detected by the Windows Recovery environment

```
bootrec.exe /fixmbr  
x:\boot\bootsect.exe /nt60 all /force
```

Recovering the Vista Bootloader from the DVD

Mahmoud Al-Qudsi

Now we get rid of the old BCD registry, and create a new one instead.

Note: We're assuming that the boot drive is drive C: below. If your computer is configured differently, be sure to use the appropriate drive letter here instead.

```
del C:\boot\bcd
bcdedit /createstore c:\boot\bcd.temp
bcdedit.exe /store c:\boot\bcd.temp /create {bootmgr}/d "Windows Boot Manager"
bcdedit.exe /import c:\boot\bcd.temp
bcdedit.exe /set {bootmgr} device partition=C:
bcdedit.exe /timeout 10
del c:\boot\bcd.temp
```

Now we have a clean, working Vista bootloader. But we need to add a Vista entry to it:

```
bcdedit.exe /create /d "Windows Vista" /application osloader
```

bcdedit.exe should return a message with a GUID for the newly-created entry, something like this:

The entry {c0dfc4fa-cb21-11dc-81bf-005056c00008} was successfully created.

You'll need to use the value that bcdedit.exe returned for you below, along with the drive letter for the drive that Windows Vista is installed to:

```
bcdedit.exe /set {c0dfc4fa-cb21-11dc-81bf-005056c00008} device partition=C:
bcdedit.exe /set {c0dfc4fa-cb21-11dc-81bf-005056c00008} osdevice partition=C:
bcdedit.exe /set {c0dfc4fa-cb21-11dc-81bf-005056c00008} path \Windows\system32\winload.exe
bcdedit.exe /set {c0dfc4fa-cb21-11dc-81bf-005056c00008} systemroot \Windows
```

And, last of all, tell the Vista bootloader to boot the new entry by default:

```
bcdedit.exe /displayorder {c0dfc4fa-cb21-11dc-81bf-005056c00008}
bcdedit.exe /default {c0dfc4fa-cb21-11dc-81bf-005056c00008}
```

Now the Vista bootloader has been nuked and rebuilt from scratch. If you got this to work, feel free to consider yourself one of the finest graduates of the NeoSmart Technologies Institute of BCD Learning.

At this point, you have a clean, untouched, and (hopefully) fully-working bootloader with one entry for Windows Vista. Go ahead and reboot your PC, get into Windows Vista, and use EasyBCD to further tweak the bootloader to your heart's content. We advise backing up the BCD registry immediately with EasyBCD before making any changes.