

WINDOWS ASR (AUTOMATED SYSTEM RECOVERY)

Mark E. Donaldson

Introduction

If you run a Windows XP Pro or Windows Server 2003 computer and you wish to backup the system you can use a new feature called Automated System Recovery (ASR). The ASR process allows to restore the system disk (usually the C: drive) including the Windows files, all Registry settings and all user programs and data, allowing to recover a completely crashed system. To use this procedure you must be able to boot the Windows XP Pro Setup-program from the installation CD-ROM. During the restore process all data previously found on the System partition (usually C:) will be **erased**, then XP/2003 will be reinstalled, and the data from the ASR backup will be restored.

Create ASR Backup

In order to use ASR you first need to create the ASR backup. Follow these steps:

1. Run NTBACKUP.EXE from the Run command or from the Program Files > Accessories > System Tools.
2. When the program starts click on the ASR button to invoke it's wizard.
3. The Wizard will start with a Welcome screen, advising that a Backup and the ASR disk will be created. Click Next.
4. Choose a destination and filename for the ASR backup. Make sure you do NOT select A: as the destination (duh...) nor C:, and that you have at least 2GB of free space on that partition.
5. The "Completing the ASR Preparation Wizard" will appear. When you click Finish, the Wizard creates a backup of your system files. You will then be asked to insert a floppy disk. You will later use this disk and the backup to restore your System in an event of a major failure.
6. To close this wizard and to begin the backup, click Finish".
7. The system will create a list of all files and then start the backup processes, creating a disk-backup-file. Once the disk-backup is done, you will be prompted for a floppy disk (blank, formatted) to store some ASR-data.

Use ASR to Recover System

In case all other methods to start the XP/2003 system fail, you can use the ASR backup and floppy disk to restore the system to the status as during the creation of the ASR backup.

1. Insert your Windows XP Professional Installation CD-ROM and boot from CD-ROM. If you get the message to "press any key to boot from CD...", press any key.
2. As soon as you see "Press F2 to run Automated System Recovery (ASR) ..." on the bottom line - press F2. You only have about 2 seconds to do so, so be prepared.
3. You will then be prompted to insert the ASR floppy disk. Do so. You have for a few seconds still the time to abort the ASR process by pressing ESC.
4. **Warning!** The system will now start to **format** your C: drive. When it's done it will start with a process very similar to the XP installation.
5. After the file copying is done, the system will reboot and continue with the installation process, but it will not continue a complete installation. It starts the Automated System Recovery Wizard. This screen will wait for 90 sec, then it will continue automatically.
6. A screen will appear, asking you to confirm the location of the disk backup-file.

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7. At the end of the ASR process, NTBACKUP.EXE is automatically used to restore the information on the C: drive.
8. After the process is over check to see if all data and settings have been restored properly.