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[Install Windows XP on SATA without a Floppy \(F6\)](#)

No Floppy...no Windows on SATA? Wrong!

SATA hard drives have become more and more appreciated tending to substitute the IDE drives due to the increasing speed they offer. Motherboard manufacturers started to implement the new standard years ago, when the technology was young and expensive. Now, as the SATA HDD prices have lowered to a level where anybody can afford to choose a SATA enabled HDD instead of an IDE one, a great migration has been observed among the common computer users. They choose to install Windows and applications on SATA drives because they provide more speed which determines the system to run smoother. Thus, for those owning older mainboards with SATA support an extra step is required while attempting to install Windows XP. Windows XP does not provide drivers for all the SATA controllers, therefore, during the installation procedure, the user must insert a floppy with the drivers that came in the package along with the motherboard. Not a big deal, not much effort, but the funny thing is that a great number of people passed on their floppy drives. Under these circumstances, no floppy means the impossibility to install Windows XP on SATA (on some mainboards). The result? The installation guide simply won't detect the SATA HDD. People that were happy they got rid of the old removable drive have now motives to worry. Some may reconsider buying new floppy drives for their computers. Even if I wrote in a precedent article about the utility of the floppy drive, I do not encourage spending your money buying back an obsolete piece of hardware. I will present you a method to avoid this inconvenient by doing a software trick. Let's take it slow. Where is the problem? We have a driver problem strictly because the SATA driver we need does not come embedded in the Windows XP installation package. What if we add the driver by ourselves before installing Windows? What ingredients are involved in this operation? The original Windows XP Installation CD, a freeware application named [NLite](#) and a blank CD. Moreover, we need the drivers for the SATA controller provided by the manufacturer. In case you did not find any floppy inside the motherboard package or you cannot locate them on the mainboard installation CD, you can consult the manufacturer's website to download the latest versions. To do the trick I have been talking about, it is assumed that you already have a Windows installed on an IDE drive. In case you don't, pay a visit to a friend and ask him to let you use his computer. It won't take too much time, I guarantee. So, download the drivers and unzip them (in case they come archived) in a desired location. Then download and install the Nlite application. When you start the Nlite application, you will be asked to provide the location for the Windows installation package. Insert the genuine Windows Installation CD into the CD drive and, inside the application, select the CD drive letter. To insert the SATA drivers within the installation package, you need to have it saved on the HDD. Hence, when the warning window appears click OK and select the destination folder for the files to be saved. Make sure that the destination partition / HDD has enough space to store the contents of the installation CD. I tested a Windows XP Home Edition and it seems that it required about 566 MB. Immediately after you have chosen the destination folder, the application will start copying the Windows installation files. When finished, it will display some version information regarding the newly copied Windows Installation Package. Now, click next twice until you get to a screen where you get options sorted in 4 categories: Integrate, Remove, Setup, Create. We are interested in the integration procedure, therefore select the Drivers button and click next. From the next menu window, click Insert and select multiple drive folder option from the drop down menu. This option permits you to browse to the location where the downloaded drivers are found. Select the containing directory and click next. You will get a list with the available drivers (in case there are more than one) or

simply one driver. Select it (them) and click next. Now the application will ask for the permission to start the integration procedure. Choose Yes and wait for the drivers to be inserted into the installation package. With problematic driver being included in the installation package you can install Windows XP on your SATA HDD...but...the installation package is on the HDD. You need a bootable CD in order to start an installation. Don't worry, once the installation package has been adorned with additional user selected drivers it can be transformed into a bootable disk image and later burned on a CD. To encapsulate the installation into a ISO image use the same Nlite application. Open it, make sure the HDD installation folder is selected and click next. Select "Last session" preset and click next again. Now from the options menu choose Bootable ISO and click next. In the following window, make sure that the mode is set to "Create Image" and click Make ISO. A destination folder is required where the resulting ISO image will be saved. Once the image saving process finished you have the freedom to burn it on a blank CD with whatever you favorite CD burner software may be. The new CD will be the twin copy of the Windows Installation CD but with one difference, it includes the SATA driver.