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Windows XP  
Microsoft

## [XP SP3 Upgrades Kill OEM Pre-Activation](#)

### *Erasing custom Windows settings stored in the Oobeinfo.ini file*

The introduction of the third and final service pack for Windows XP failed to be as streamlined as possible. Microsoft provided a list of issues related to XP SP3 in the official documentation for the release, but the [notes](#) deal only with the major issues. There are additional problems, documented via Knowledge Base articles. Case in point: Windows XP SP3 upgrades which manage to erase custom settings stored in the Oobeinfo.ini file. And along with them, the OEM pre-activation information. "The Windows OEM Preinstallation Kit (OPK) tools can be used by an OEM customer to customize the settings for the Windows Welcome Screen. These custom settings are saved in the Oobeinfo.ini file, and they are loaded when Windows XP starts for the first time. After you upgrade a computer to Windows XP Service Pack 3 (SP3), these custom settings may be lost," Microsoft [informed](#). Original equipment manufacturers can use OPK not only to personalize the Windows Welcome page but also to create a collection of settings across the operating system. OPK permits the Windows Welcome page to be tweaked with unique content, include tutorials and additional information, or be branded. All are stored in the Oobeinfo.ini file. Additionally, the file in question can be used to store options related to "preventing the Out of Box Experience (OOBE) Wizard from changing the time zone; configuring settings for user registration; placing reminders on the desktop for registration and for the Internet service provider (ISP) sign-up offer and introducing the settings for dial-up networking that are used when the system collects user registration information," Microsoft revealed. At the same time, the custom settings associated with preserving the OEM Pre-Activation status are also a part of the Oobeinfo.ini file located in the %windir%\system32\oobe directory. XP SP3 simply replaces the file with a default, non-configured version, deleting all the custom settings, including the OEM Pre-Activation status. Computer builders have the option to pre-activate Windows XP software which is pre-installed on new machines, and spare any extra efforts on behalf of end users. The solution provided by Microsoft in order to preserve the OEM Pre-Activation status, as well as the custom settings, is to perform a backup of the Oobeinfo.ini file. Following the installation of SP3, Windows XP users can restore the custom Oobeinfo.ini file to its location, the %windir%\system32\oobe directory.