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Driver Signing, Updating Drivers, Driver Rollback DRIVERS, DRIVERS, DRIVERS!!!



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You are not going to believe how many emails that I have already received, and only been out....how long? ... About drivers! Same crap...different day, oh dear! 'Isn't my sound card that I have used since Windows 95 not working?' 'The drive do I do?' 'Windows XP can't see my external device.' (We won't mention what could be, will we external Iomega Zip drive?) These are just a few of the lovely tidbits. So, we are going to go over driver signing, updating the drivers when you feel like a new feature, driver rollback!

We know that for a device to work...period...device drivers have to be loaded onto the software will enable the operating system to talk to the hardware device, it driver signing in the first place? A digitally signed driver has been tested by a software driver...the software, actually...has been designed for Windows XP and has been meaning that the product has been tested by Microsoft and that it has not been. By having passed these tests that Microsoft performs indicates that the device has been tested by Windows Hardware Quality Labs (WHQL) and has not been altered or overwritten during the program's installation process. And what is this called? (Reliability!!!)

1. To configure driver signing to control how Windows XP responds to unsigned drivers, right click My Computer.



2. Click Properties.



3. On the Hardware tab, click Driver Signing.



TIP: Choose one of the following options:

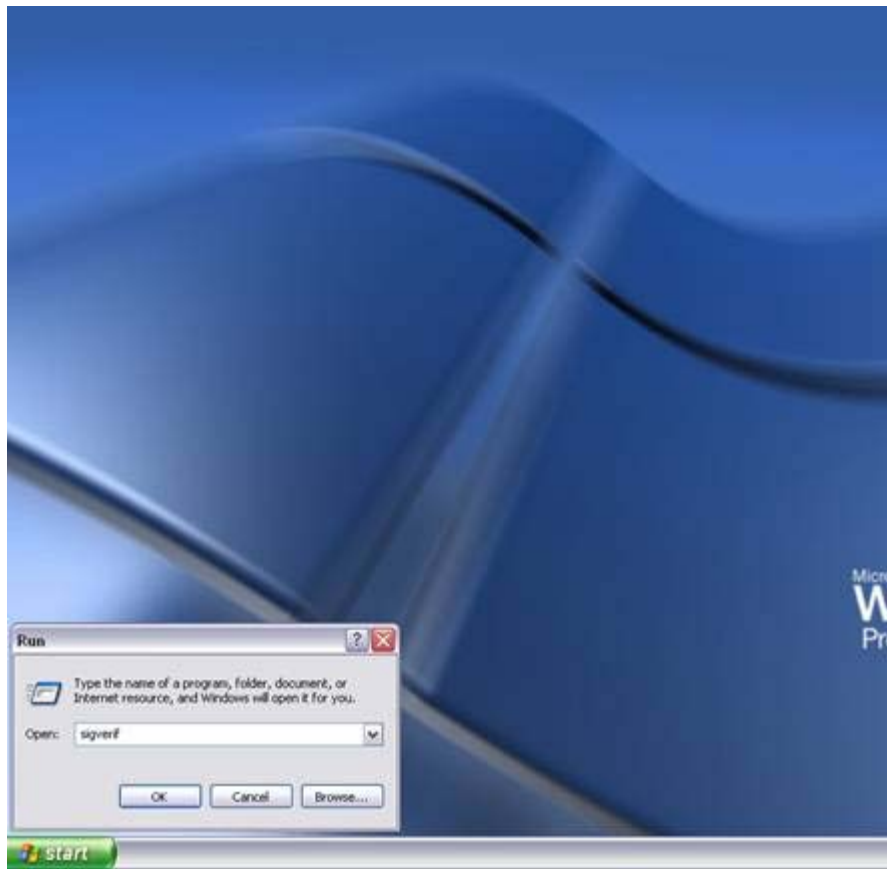
Ignore: This will install all drivers whether they are digitally signed or no

Warn: This will display a warning, telling you that it has detected a device digitally signed.

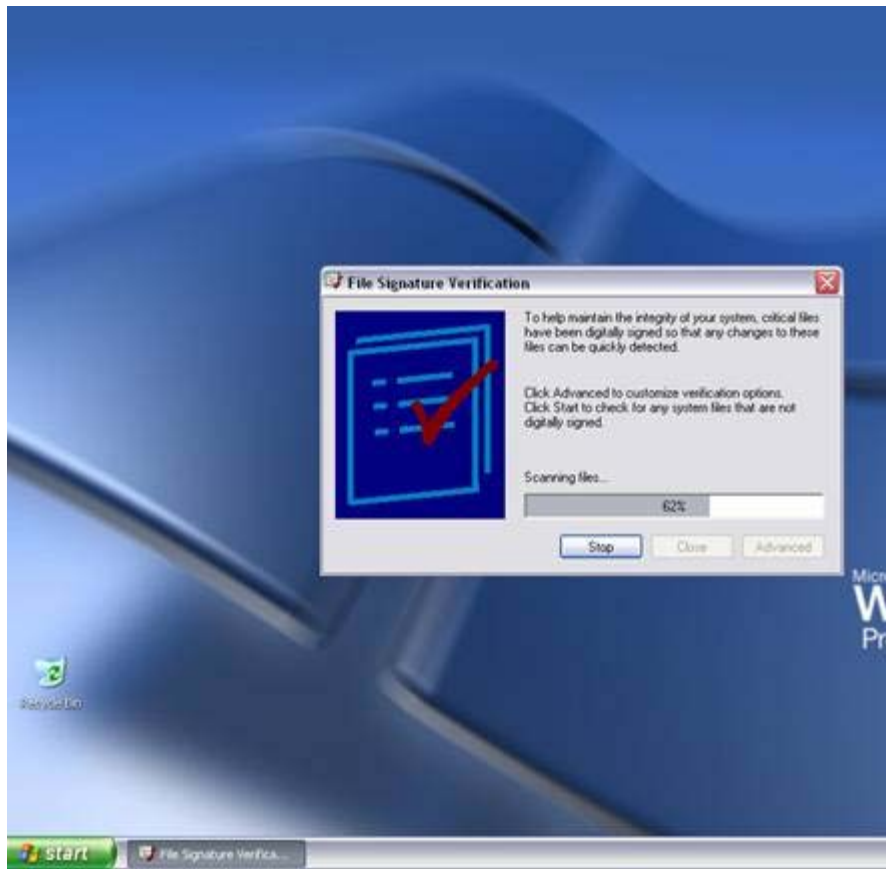
Block: This will prevent the user from installing any device driver that is

To identify any unsigned files that may be on your computer, run the sig tool.

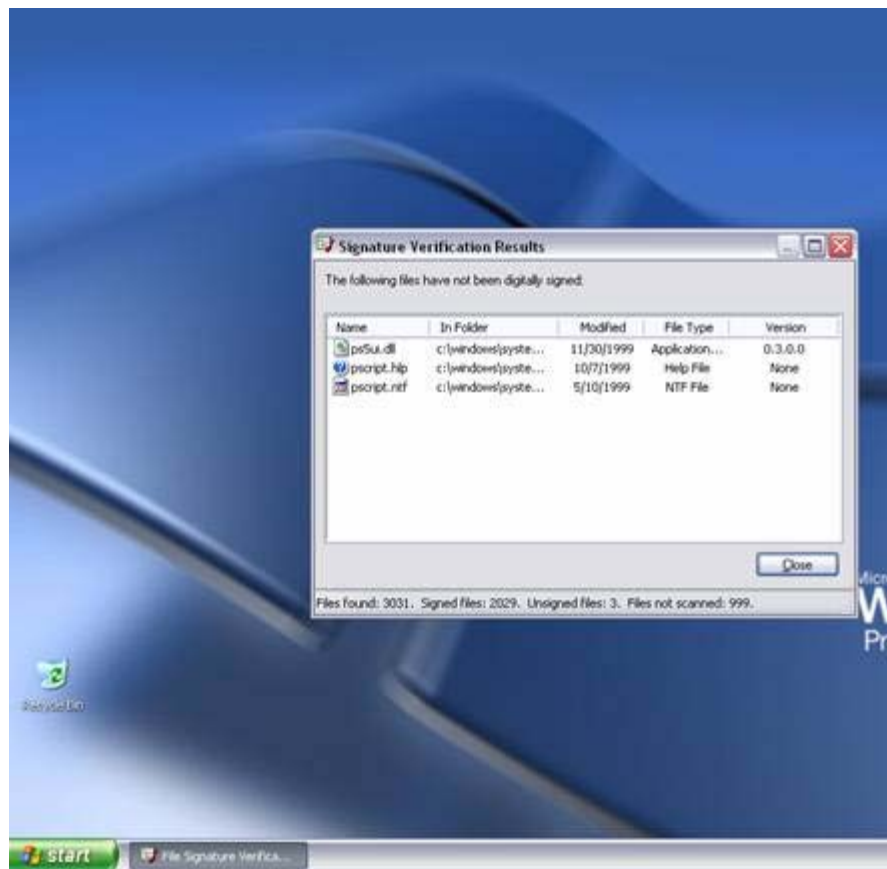
1. Click Start->Run and type SigVerif



2. Click OK. Click Start



3. If you have any unsigned drivers on the system, the Signature Verification will notify you of the files and the path to those files.

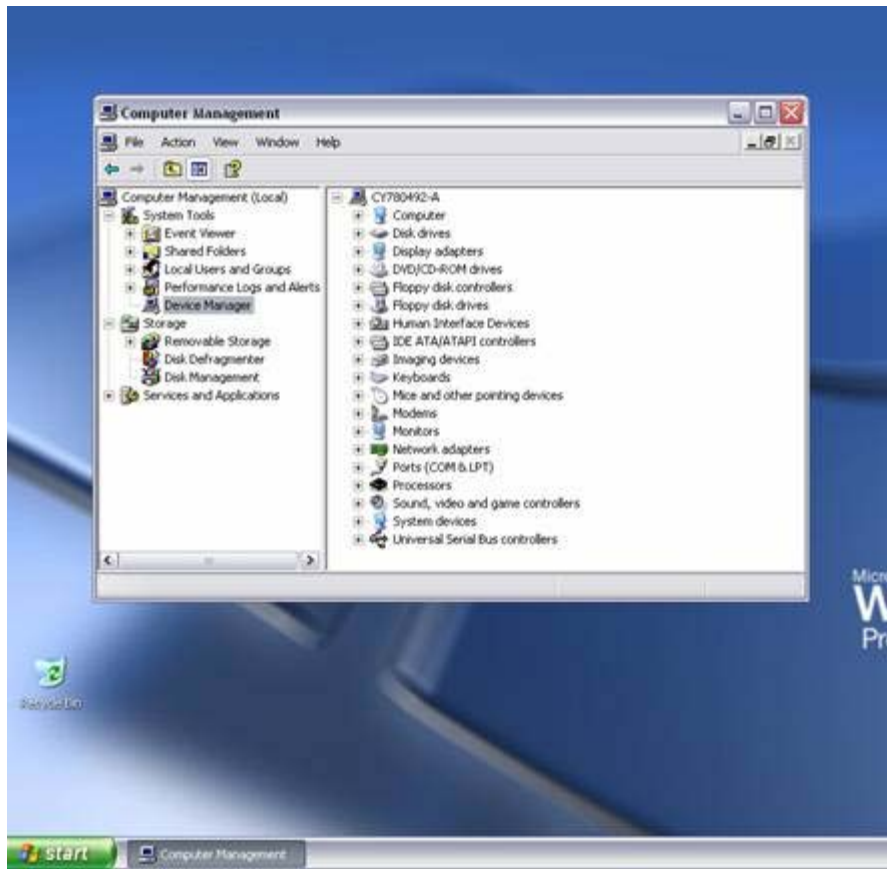


NOTE: Yeah, yeah, yeah.....I placed unsigned files on my computer to see what happens when you don't use hardware that doesn't use digitally signed code.

1. To update a device driver (like I will do once I finish writing this Tip and where I once was and where I should always be) Click Start->right click then click Manage.



2. Under the System Tools node, click Device Manager



3. On the right side of the Device Manager, open a node by clicking on the and then right click on a device.



4. Click Properties and then click the Driver tab.



5. Click the Update Driver button. This will open the Hardware Update Wizard instructions to update your driver!



TIP: Administrative rights to the system are not required to update a device driver using Windows Update. Why? Because no user interaction is required! So, if you use the automatic update feature, then you can configure the system to download updates when they become available to the user. Oh, where is Simple Simon when you need him?

And lastly, we have the new Driver Rollback feature! This is a system recovery feature only available in Windows XP Professional. This is not available in the Windows XP Home Edition. It will allow you to reinstall the last device driver that was functioning before you installed the current driver. It will only allow you to restore the driver; the tool does not affect any other system setting on the machine.

1. Open the Device Manager and click on the Driver tab as we did for updating drivers.



2. Click the Roll Back Driver button.



TIP: If you haven't had any driver installation problems, then you will receive a message in the graphic. This is a good sign! This can be interpreted to mean that all drivers installed for this device are digitally signed and that there is no need to update.

TIP: And one, last, little thing! Just in case you would like to restore a driver from a backup? Well, Windows XP stores the original driver files in the folder structure: %systemroot%\system32\reinstallbackups

There is some stuff for you on using digitally signed drivers, updating the device back to a previous driver if there has been a problem. If you have any problem email me at: clevek@microsoft.com and I will do my best to clear things up.

Happy Thanksgiving to all of you, my friends, and I majorly thank you for all your support this year. It is you guys that keep me at Microsoft.

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