

Slipstreaming Office 2003

The information in this article applies to:

- Microsoft Office 2003

Lots of people have used [my method](#) of slipstreaming Windows Service Packs into installation media so that their Windows XP RTM CD can be reborn into an Windows XP SP2 one. But Windows XP and Windows 2000 aren't the only Microsoft products you can slipstream - most of the newer versions of the ubiquitous Microsoft Office suite can also be slipstreamed too! In fact, slipstreaming Office is in many ways much easier than slipstreaming Windows. You don't need to worry about making the CD bootable, and the process for adding hotfixes is much easier with Office than Windows. However, there is one "gotcha" that I'll discuss very soon. But first, here's what you'll need:

A "Volume" or "Select" version of the Office 2003 CD (slipstreaming WILL NOT work with retail and/or OEM versions of Office)

"Administrative Installations" of any Office Service Packs

Any additional updates you might want to add to the installation media

WinRAR (or some other program that can unpack EXE files)

1 CD/DVD burner

1 blank CD or DVD disc

CD/DVD Burning Software

Jargon Alert!

Microsoft often makes "volume" or "select" versions of its software available to corporate users. These versions are exactly the same as the "retail" versions of the software in question, but with two important differences. First, these versions *do not* require the mandatory "product activation" that retail Microsoft products do. Secondly, "volume" versions typically use the same CD key across an entire company; "select" versions may have a single key or they may have individual keys, depending on the company's agreement with Microsoft.

The reason I'm bringing up the issue of CD keys is this: Microsoft has historically turned a blind eye to the various types of software installations out there as long as the user has the licenses to back it up. For example, Microsoft usually doesn't care if someone uses an retail Windows XP CD to reinstall Windows on a computer that has an OEM license... just as long as you have the licenses to back it up. However, "volume" and "select" CD keys are usually only issued to companies who are licensed to use them only

for the number of computers specified in their volume agreement. The company may then use the software for business purposes only.

Chances are that great any "volume" or "select" CD key you see floating around the 'Net is actually stolen from somewhere. And that's not cool. And even if you're greedy and don't care about using stolen property, be aware that most of the popular "warez" versions of Office contain CD keys that Microsoft can easily blacklist from being updated. In fact, Microsoft did just that with the popular "Devil's Own" version of Windows XP: users that tried to install SP1 received a nasty "invalid CD key" message and their XP installations suddenly stopped working. Having said all this, Microsoft *did* change their licensing model to allow for two installations - one for the office and one for the home - for each licensed user of Office 2003. So if your company offers free Office 2003 CDs for your home, they might be volume or select versions. Ask your IT guys if you have any questions.

"Administrative Installations" of Service Packs and hotfixes (now usually called "Full File Updates") require a much simpler explanation. They typically are much larger than the "standard" service packs and fixes, but they can update every version and every type of Office installation in question. Although this analogy isn't very accurate, it's similar to the way a typical Internet Explorer installation works - the installer scans your hard drive to see what files need to be updated and only downloads those files instead of downloading 75MB of stuff you don't need.

Summary

We're going to create an "Administrative Installation Point" (AIP) of Office, then update the files therein and then burn the whole mess to a blank CD or DVD disc.

Why?

In a typical corporate setting, a IT administrator will create an "administrative installation point" of Office on a *network share* (a folder on a computer whose contents are accessible to users across the network). The AIP can then be deployed to desktop PCs in a variety of ways: using Group Policy, SMS or even manually by having an IT support guy go to each computer and click on the setup.exe file in network share. There are many benefits to installing Office this way: first of all, it negates the need for IT personnel to carry CDs with them all the time. Secondly, it creates a single installation point that can be updated with service packs and hotfixes as needed, so that updated versions of Office can be deployed company-wide when necessary. Lastly, for companies that use fully automated methods of distributing Office (like Group Policy or SMS) it solves the

headache of how to install Office 2003 on the 5,000 individual computers the company may own.

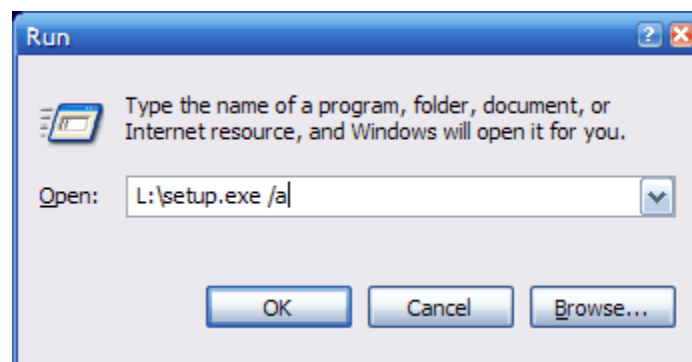
Step By Step:

1) Figure out what update(s) you need. The easiest way to do this is to install your copy of Office 2003 onto a spare system or virtual machine, then go to Office Update or Microsoft Update and download the files there (don't "install" the updates; click on the "details" link for each hotfix and download the patches to a network share or drive on your system). You can also install Office on a spare (or virtual) machine and run the Office Inventory Tool (more trouble than it's worth, IMHO) or run the Microsoft Baseline Security Analyzer against the installation. Or you can find a list of hotfixes on the Internet. It's up to you, really. This would also be the time to talk to others in your IT department and see if there are any patches that might break some homemade apps or forms. It's better to skip them now that break some vital part of your company's systems, no?

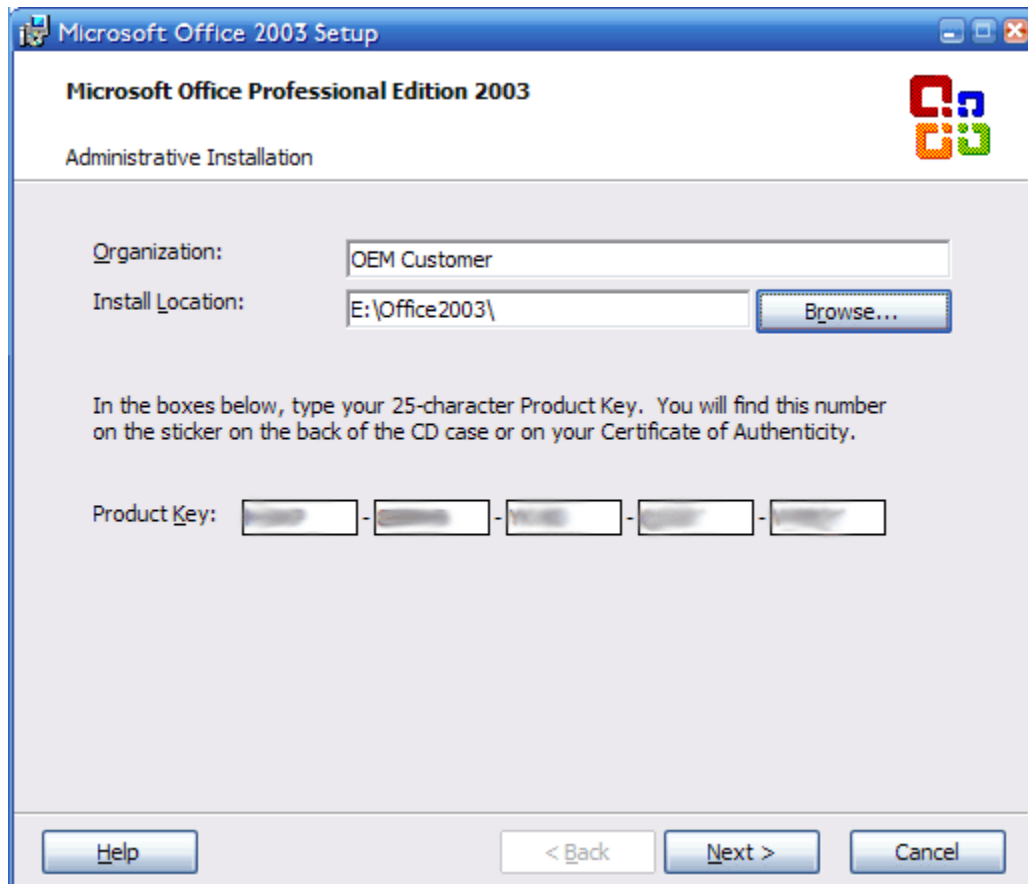
2) Create 2 folders on a hard drive with at least 800MB of free space. These folders may be located anywhere on the drive and may have any name, although for ease of typing out their paths I suggest following my example and using "Office2003" and "SP2".

3) Insert your Office 2003 CD into an optical drive. If you have autorun enabled on the drive, Office setup may begin. If it does, cancel out of it; otherwise skip to the next step.

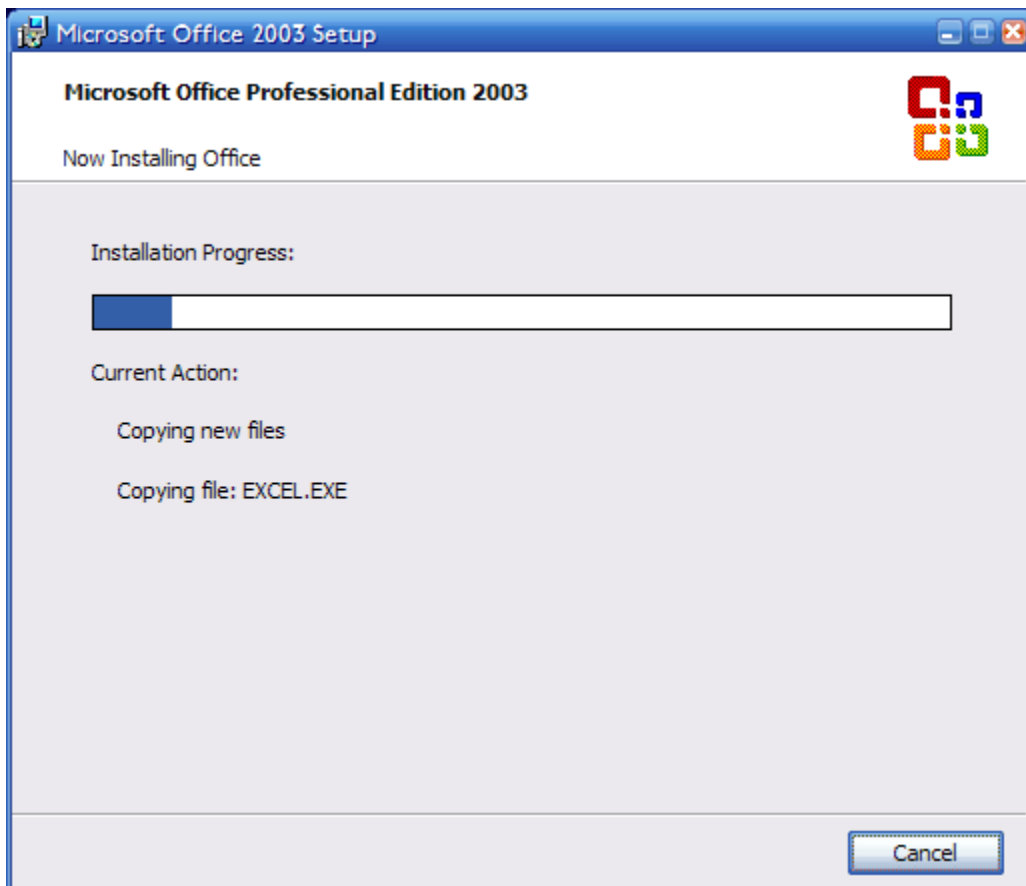
4) Click on Start > Run and type "x:\setup.exe /a" (without the quotes), where x: is the letter of the optical drive that contains the Office 2003 disc:



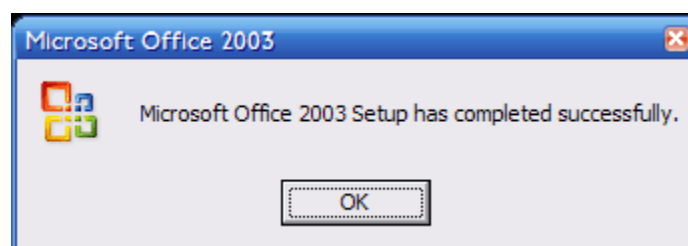
5) Office 2003 setup will appear to begin. *Don't worry, it's not installing it on your computer!* Click "Next" and then enter your company or organization name and CD key. You will also need to click the "Browse" button and locate the "Office2003" folder you created in step 2:



6) Your computer will now create a compressed CD image of the Office 2003 installation. On your screen, it will look exactly as if you were installing Office 2003 on the local machine:



7) When setup is complete, you will receive the standard "installation complete" window:



8) Find the SP2 installation file you downloaded in step 1. Office 2003's SP2 file is named **Office2003SP2-KB887616-FullFile-ENU.exe**, so make sure you've found the correct file. Right-click on it and select WinRAR > Extract to... and choose to unpack it to the "SP2" folder you created in step 2.

9) When the unpacking is complete, you will find three files with the .msp extension inside the SP2 folder. These files are **MAINSP1ff.msp**, **OWC11SP1ff.msp** and **OWC102003SP1ff.msp**. We are only concerned with the first two files. Click on Start > Run and enter the following into the "Run:" box. Note that you might need to change the paths to reflect the locations of both the Office 2003 setup files as well as the .msp file:

```
msiexec /p E:\SP2\MAINSP1ff.msp /a E:\Office2003\PRO11.msi  
SHORTFILENAMES=TRUE /qb /L* E:\SP2\PRO11.log
```

10) You will not receive any completion dialog boxes, so to make sure the service pack application is complete, navigate to your SP2 folder and look for a file named PRO11.log that is referenced at the end of the command-line in step 9. You should see the following two lines near the end of the file:

```
MSI (s) (60:A8) [14:35:43:740]: Product: Microsoft Office Professional  
Edition 2003 - Update 'Office 2003 Service Pack 2' installed successfully.  
MSI (s) (60:A8) [14:35:43:756]: Product: Microsoft Office Professional  
Edition 2003 -- Installation operation completed successfully.
```

11) If you do have the "success" message at the end of the log, continue to step 12. If not, use the log as a troubleshooting guide and repeat the process.

12) We still need to update the Office Web Components to SP2. Click on Start > Run and type the following command. Just like step 9, you might need to alter the paths to reflect the locations of the Office 2003 setup files and the .msp file:

```
msiexec /p E:\SP2\OWC11SP1ff.msp /a E:\Office2003\OWC11.MSI  
SHORTFILENAMES=TRUE /qb /L* E:\SP2\OWC11.log
```

13) Just as you did in step 10, check the OWC11.log file to make you you see the following lines near the end of the log file:

```
MSI (s) (D0:0C) [14:43:37:569]: Product: Microsoft Office 2003 Web Components  
- Update 'Office 2003 Service Pack 1 for Office 2003 Web Components'  
installed successfully.  
MSI (s) (D0:0C) [14:43:37:585]: Product: Microsoft Office 2003 Web Components  
-- Installation operation completed successfully.
```

Congratulations! You have now upgraded your Office 2003 installation to SP2! All you need to do at this point is burn the contents of the "Office2003" folder to a CD or DVD!

Adding Hotfixes

Before burning the SP2 media to CD/DVD, you might want to add any (or all) of the post-SP2 updates to the image. The good news is that installing updates works exactly the same way as for service packs. All you need to do is download each individual hotfix (make sure the filename contains the phrase "full file") and save it in a directory. Then unpack the update(s) and run the following command-line from the Start > Run box:

```
msiexec.exe /p E:\office2003-kb870765-fullfile-enu\OUTLFLTR.msp /a  
E:\Office2003\PRO11.MSI /qb /lv* e:\outfltr.log
```

As always, check the log after the update is run to ensure that the update has been applied to the installation media, then burn it to CD or DVD if you wish. You can use the above command-line with any future updates, as long as you have the correct paths to the installation media and .msp file in question. What's even better is that you may update your slipstreamed image with future updates if you wish by simply copying the updated CD to your hard drive and repeating the process above with the newer service packs or updates!

UPDATE: Hold The Phone, Dora!

I am currently working on a project that requires a fully-updated copy of Office 2003. Since my Office CD is from April 2006, I fired up a virtual machine (with a base install of Windows XP), installed Office on it, and then went to Microsoft Update to see what Office updates I needed. I then downloaded and slipstreamed those updates into my installation point, reinstalled Office using the **REINSTALL=all /qb** switch and went back to Microsoft Update... only to see that it wanted to install those same updates all over again!

I tried various things to fix the slipstream, such as changing some of the switches used in the command-line example above. When that didn't work, I tried starting over completely from scratch using an RTM CD. Alas, no dice - Microsoft Update still said that I needed to install those 13 updates. It wasn't until I tried applying the hotfixes using OHOTFIX.EXE that I realized that something wasn't wrong with *me*, but with Microsoft's website.

OHOTFIX.EXE is a small executable that comes with every "full file" update. To use it to install a hotfix, you first open OHOTFIX.INI with Notepad. Here you will need to change two things: in the section marked **[OHotfix]**, change the value of "IsNormalUpdate=1" from 1 to 0 to specify that you're updating an Administrative Install Point instead of the local computer. Secondly, you need to type the path to your Office MSI file in the

section marked "AdminPath=" (so that, for instance, it says "AdminPath=c:\office2003\pro11.msi"). Note that you *can* skip this second step - if you choose to do so, Ohotfix ask you to locate the AIP when you first run the patch. If you're installing several patches, I find that it's just easier to copy the AdminPath line to the clipboard and paste it in, rather than clicking about in a Save\Open dialog box. But that's just me.

Once you've edited (and saved!) the INI file, just double-click on OHOTFIX.EXE. The ensuing dialog boxes you see will be *exactly* the same as what you see when updating an AIP using the msixexec command (displayed above), but with one crucial difference: the msixexec command will allow you to install a patch as many times as you like; on the other hand, OHOTFIX will immediately give you a "this patch has already been applied" error dialog if you attempt to run the same patch twice. And that's exactly what I got when I started installing random hotfixes using OHOTFIX. I *knew* I had a fully updated AIP, but Microsoft Update said otherwise.

It turns out that there's a *significant* bug in the way Microsoft Update looks for updates for post-SP2 Office installations. The site simply scans your "Add\Remove Programs" list and adds any hotfixes that it doesn't see there to your download queue. But if you use a slipstreamed CD, those hotfixes won't be listed there because they weren't "installed" *per se*, but included in the installation media. Microsoft's original [Office Update](#) site apparently uses a different method for determining which updates you need, and it's almost always accurate. I went back to the base install of the virtual machine, reinstalled Office, and then went to Office Update... which scanned my computer and said that my Office products were up to date!

All this wouldn't be too much of a problem, except that Microsoft is doing everything it can to hide the old Office Update site and push people into using Microsoft Update instead. Which is fine, but with Microsoft Update badgering you to install updates you don't need, I just don't trust it. Thankfully, I found a [post](#) over at MSFN.ORG that gives you a rock-solid (if roundabout) fix:

- 1) Slipstream all of the available hotfixes for Office using any method you like.
- 2) Fire up a virtual machine and install Office onto it from the AIP.
- 3) Go to [Office Update](#) to verify that your Office products are up to date. If they are, skip to the next step; if not, install the needed patches then go to step 4.
- 4) Go to Microsoft Update. Download and install *only* the Office patches it says that you need (that is, uncheck any Windows-related updates).

5) Once the Office Updates are done, open Regedit. Export the following Registry key to a network drive or removable media:

```
[HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Installer\UserData\S-1-5-18\Products\9040110900063D11C8EF10054038389C\Patches]
```

6) Install Office into a fresh desktop PC using your AIP, then merge the .reg file into the local Registry.

7) Go to Microsoft Update to verify that the new installation doesn't need any of the updates.

Yes, it's a *huge* pain in the ass. And yes, you'll have to do this monthly until Microsoft fixes the Microsoft Update website. But what are you gonna do?

By the way, if you're a big fan of the Office Resource Kit, you can create an MST (transform) file that includes the .reg file and run setup that way. The project I'm doing all this for is only around a dozen desktops, though, so that's a bit of overkill for me.

ONE LAST THING: If you slipstream the post-SP2 updates and burn the thing to a CD, you might get an error message about Infopath when you run setup. If you do, please check out [this thread](#) at MSFN.org for a fix. It's a bit of work - you have to download and install the Windows Installer SDK, then install Orca (from the SDK) and then open your MSI file with Orca and change a couple of entries. It's easy, but given the extra work MS is putting us through just to get Microsoft Update to recognize the post-SP2 hotfixes, I can't say that I blame you for skipping it!

A million thanks to MSFN member Overflow, who not only explained the problem clearly and provided a simple solution, he (or she) also provided some GREAT automation tools for working with Office hotfixes! I salute you sir, and will buy you a beer if you're ever in Charlotte!

(02/15/2007)