

THE COMPUTER CORNER

## **No. 116. Install Those Programs Correctly**

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Number 115 told you how to uninstall a program correctly. Now it is time to consider a few factors in program installation. Today, that usually goes pretty smoothly, because software companies bundle an installation wizard with their product, typically invoked with SETUP.EXE, a file commonly found on installation diskettes or CD-ROMs. The executable program SETUP.EXE is usually invoked when you put a new program CD in your drive. All versions of Windows since 95 look at CDs that are inserted in the drive, and if there is a file on it named AUTORUN.INF, Windows gets the information in it and starts based on that information. For example, here are the main contents of an actual AUTORUN.INF file from a CD:

```
[autorun]  
open = setup.exe
```

The comment in brackets [autorun] is ignored. The next line says, "open setup.exe". There are a couple of other lines, not shown here, that give temporary control of the system to the installation wizard inside setup.exe, and another line that tells where the icon file is located. .

If you have the autorun features of Windows shut off, the automatic start based on the contents of AUTORUN.INF will not occur. To manually start installation, just find SETUP.EXE on the CD and double-click it.

During the installation procedure, you may be asked if you want an icon on the desktop, an entry in the START, PROGRAMS menu and other choices that are fairly self-evident. Just select your preference and continue. There is one choice screen, however, that is not quite so self-evident, and almost all installation wizards make a default choice for you that you may want to alter. That choice is where the program folder resides.

Let me take up a side issue, for a moment. In the past, I have extolled the virtues of having at least three partitions on a hard drive, a C:, D:, and E: (see #76 in the series, or search the First 100 CD-ROM for the word: partition). C: is for Windows, and perhaps tightly integrated suites such as Microsoft Office (Word, PowerPoint, Access, Excel, etc.). D: is for programs – other application programs such as graphics and drawing programs, multimedia programs that play music or show videos, CD-ROM burner programs, scanning files, utility programs of all sorts, and so on. E: is just for stuff you create. Letters, photos, scanned files, database data files – anything that you create or modify in the course of the work you do on your machine. That way, when you do a backup, you only need to backup the contents of drive E:, which often will fit on less than a quarter of the space available on a single CD. Thus, backups are quick and painless, which means you can do them more often. Once a month is not out of the question.

Now back to the main issue. If your programs are to be installed on drive D:, you must override the default (C:) that the installation wizard usually sets up. One of the wizard screens will show, for example, that it intends to put the program files in C:\Program Files\DeLormeStreets and Trips. Edit that screen (you CAN do it!) to read D:\DeLormeStreets and Trips. Forget the \Program Files part of it – that is not necessary. There is no need to make more subfolders than

are necessary. Indeed, if you think of the program as DeLorme rather than Streets and Trips, you can do away with the \Streets and Trips subfolder, too. Just edit it to read: D:\DeLorme.

Most installations will now go smoothly, and the program will work fine. But what if it does not? What if you spend a week trying to get it to work, and you cannot. What if you have called the company, and their helpdesk geeks tell you to uninstall the program and try installation again?

Now it is time to re-read the last column on uninstalling programs. Do it correctly, using the Control Panel's Add/Remove Programs feature. When you have done that, do not fail to take one more step: reboot! Rebooting gives Windows a chance to update the Registry, a critical step when either installing or uninstalling programs. I have had reinstallations fail because I did not first reboot after uninstalling a program, and later succeed when I did reboot the machine. Rebooting can make a really big difference! Happy computing!