

Black Screen of Death

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Background

On a Thursday evening in May Windows 10 was doing a large automatic update on my desktop computer, probably to version 1803. I know I can let it run and it will turn the computer off when finished. The next morning when I turned the PC on it continued updating then gave an error message from explorer.exe saying: c:\windows\system32\config\systemprofile\desktop is unavailable. I should make it available.

Of course it didn't say how to make it available.

My only option was to click on OK.

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OK Is Not OK

Clicking on OK gave me what I call
“The Black Screen of Death”

- The entire screen was black
- There were two icons in the upper left
 - Empty Recycle Bin
 - An empty file folder
- I did have the mouse pointer arrow it moved, but did not function
- Nothing else!

PS: I wasn't smart enough at the time to take a photo so you could see it.

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Bad Timing

I was able to try a couple of fast things. Nothing worked. I talked to my son, then emailed (using my laptop) a couple of friends looking for help.

The problem is we were leaving town for a few days in the early afternoon. I left the problem behind.

It did give me the opportunity to research the problem. I did a Google search on the error message, black screen and missing Start button.

I came up with an action plan of 18 items to try when we got home.

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Results

- Spent six hours trying various items on the list
- Gave up and reinstalled Windows 10 saving data (No. 18)
 - Took a little less than an hour
 - Saved almost all data
 - Gave me a list of all uninstalled apps
 - Lost only
 - Firefox bookmarks
 - Thunderbird address books

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Next Steps

- Reinstall Apps
 - MS Office
 - WordPerfect
- Download Apps
 - Firefox
 - Thunderbird
 - Ccleaner
 - AVG Free
 - Malware Bytes
- Reinstall Printer (Officejet 6700)

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Next Steps

- Customize Apps
- Turn on System Restore (Control Panel>System and Security>System>System Protection)
- Pin To Taskbar
- Restore address book backups
- Install Scanner on Network

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Recommendations

- Don't fight it accept that you are dead, the sooner the better.
- From the black screen press ctrl+alt+del to get the power button.
- Hold down the shift key and click on Restart to get to the trouble shooting options.
- From there you can get to Reset this PC and choose the option to keep your data files.
- It only took an hour!

Remember: Resistance is futile!
I hope you never encounter it.

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