

Evoting – Basic installation and hardening

Version 1.9 Date 2025-06-23

Windows image documentation

Prerequisites

To create the image, the technician PC needs the following applications

AnyPurn	https://www.anyburn.com/download.php
AnyBurn	nttps://www.anyburn.com/download.pnp
Rufus	https://rufus.ie/de/
Windows ADK	https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-hardware/get-started/adk-install
HP Image	https://ftp.ext.hp.com/pub/caps-softpaq/cmit/HPIA.html
Assistant	
Lenovo Update	https://support.lenovo.com/ch/en/solutions/ht037099-download-
Retriever	thinkvantage-technologies-administrator-tools

Create packages

Software

7zip

64-Bit MSI from https://www.7-zip.org/download.html

GMP

This installer is provided by the customer

KeePass

Version 2.xx Setup from https://keepass.info/download.html

KeyStore Explorer

On https://keystore-explorer.org/downloads.html download the newest Windows setup (including JRE)

Edge

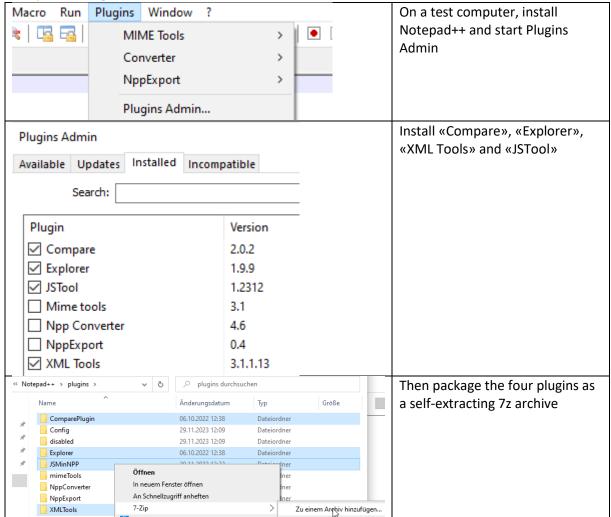


Notepad++

Newest 64-Bit installer from https://notepad-plus-plus.org/downloads/



Notepad++ Plugins



PowerShell 7

On https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/powershell/scripting/install/installing-powershell-on-windows?view=powershell-7.4 download the current LTSC channel x64 PowerShell 7.4.x MSI

OpenSSL

On https://wiki.overbyte.eu/wiki/index.php/ICS Download #Download OpenSSL Binaries download the latest Win-64 3.x version

OpenSSL Config

On https://github.com/openssl/openssl/tree/master/apps, download the following three files:

- openssl.cnf
- openssl-vms.cnf
- ct_log_list.cnf

Then add them to a self-extracting 7-Zip file

SDelete

Download from https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/downloads/sdelete and extract the 32-Bit and 64-Bit executable

TotalCommander

Download 64-Bit Installer from https://www.ghisler.com/download.htm

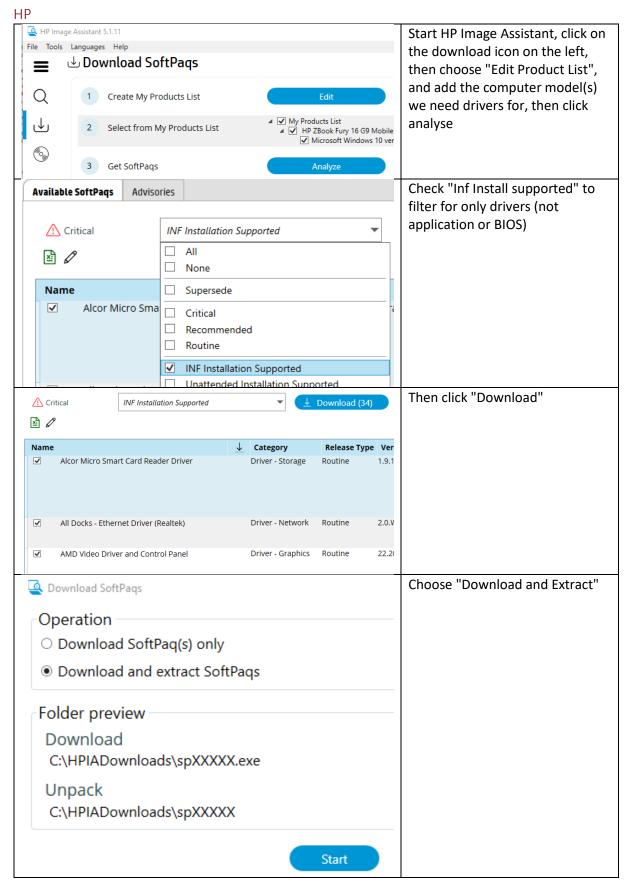
Drivers

Supported models

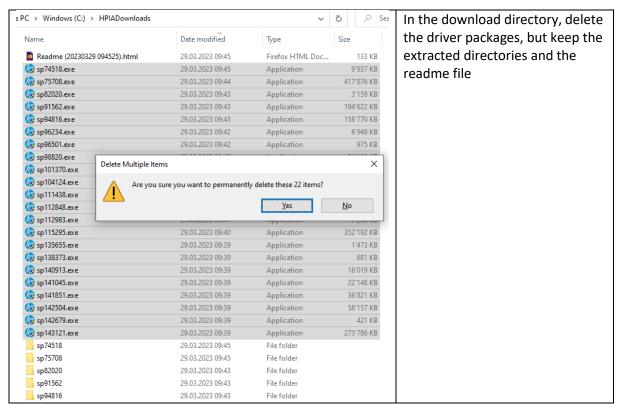
The following laptop models are supported, and have their drivers integrated in the image:



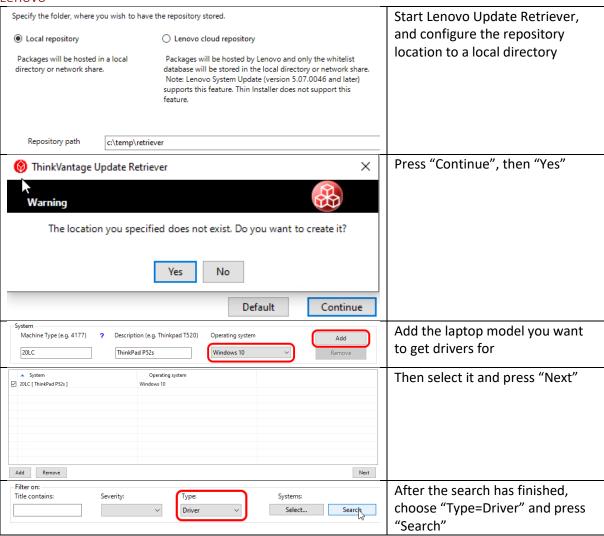
EliteBook 850 G5 (83B2), ZBook Fury 16 G9 (89C6), ZBook Fury 16 G10 (?), ZBook Fury 16 G11 (8CA7), ZBook Studio 16 G11 (8CF5), ThinkPad P52s (20LC), ThinkStation P8 (30HJ)



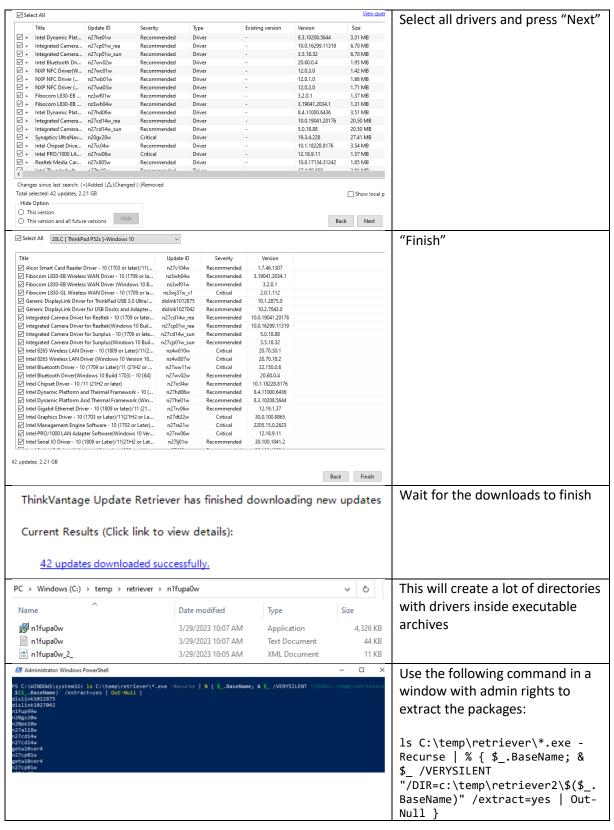




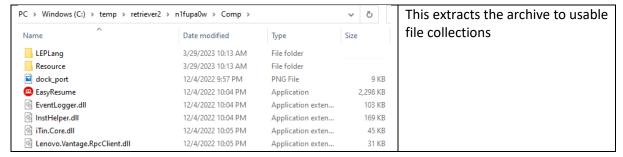
Lenovo











Driver package adjustments

Occasionally, HP Image Assistant downloads multiple drivers for the same device. Especially if this is for a large driver such as for the video card, the older duplicate should be deleted.

For some of the laptop models, not all drivers are needed, and some must be deleted before creating the packages.

HP 850 G5:

- Delete the driver for "Conexant HD Audio Driver" (currently SP140283)
- Delete the driver for "AMD Video Driver" (currently SP142415)

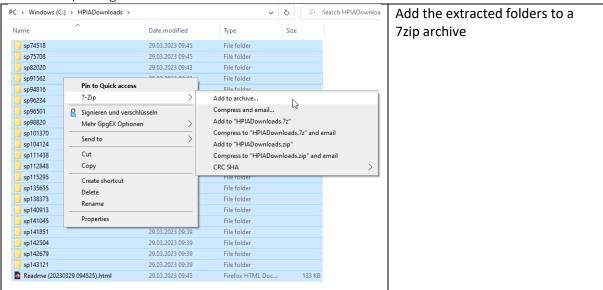
HP ZBook Fury 16 G9:

- Delete the driver for "AMD Video Driver" (currently SP156134)
- Delete the driver for "Realtek HD Audio" (currently SP156237)
- Delete the driver for "Intel XMM LTE" (currently SP145803)

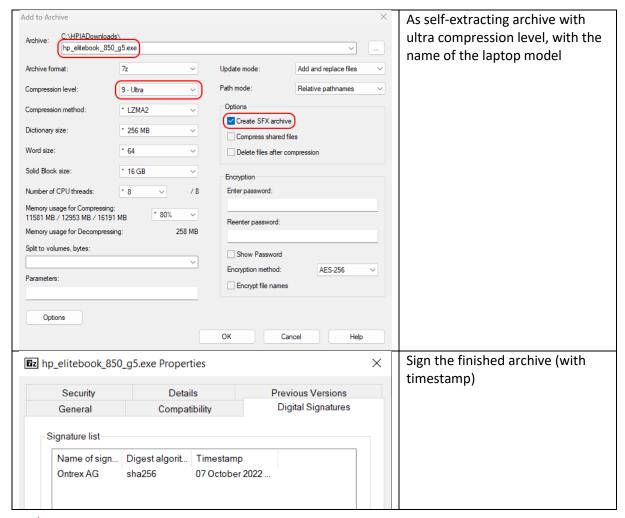
HP ZBook Fury 16 G10:

- Delete the driver for "Realtek HD Audio" (currently SP157063)
- Delete the driver for "Intel XMM" (currently SP155280)

Create the package





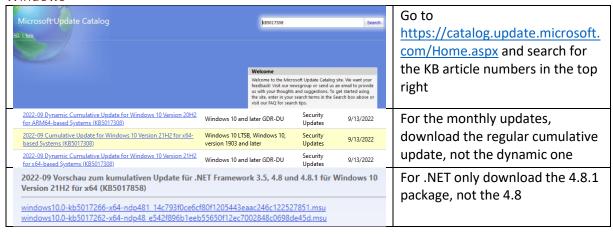


Updates

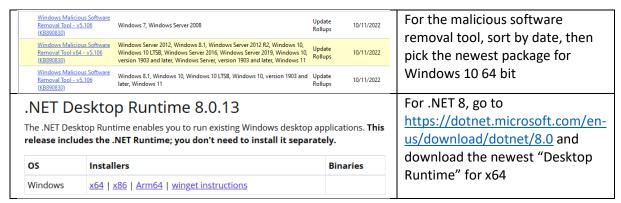
To identify which updates are needed, set up a computer with the last image version, enable networking on it, and let it automatically run Windows Update using Microsoft Update. Write down the KB numbers of any update it's installing, then download those updates separately and integrate them into the new image version.

Then, apply the image again, and repeat the above step until Windows Update reports that no updates need to be installed on a freshly applied image.

Windows



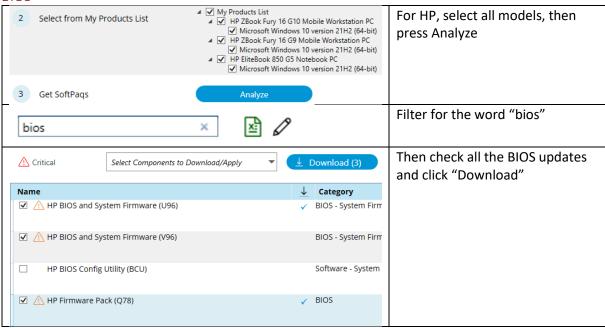




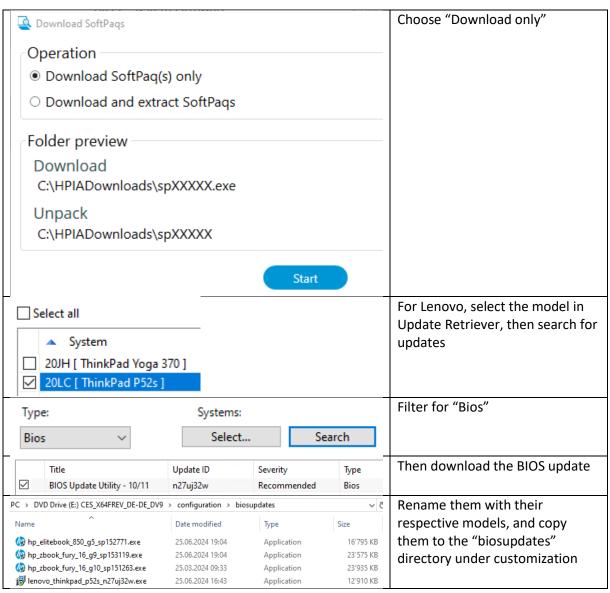
Microsoft Defender



BIOS







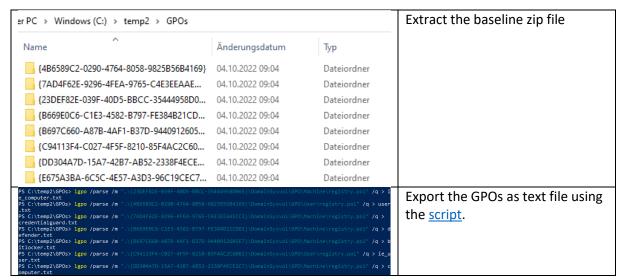
Hardening

To harden the OS installation, we are using settings sets from both Microsoft, the Swiss Post, and the CIS benchmark, as well as some settings from ourselves.

Microsoft security baselines





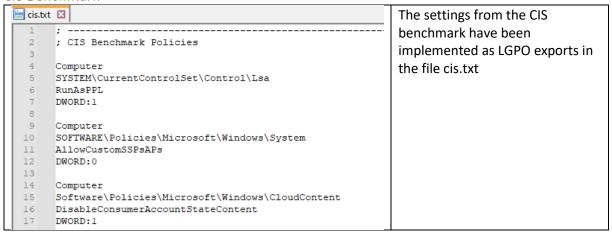


Swiss Post recommendations



The security settings from the Swiss Post have been implemented as PowerShell commands inside the customization.ps1

CIS Benchmark



Custom settings

In addition to the predefined hardening rules taken from other sources, we have implemented a few security settings of our own. These mostly deal with cloud integration, privacy, and data leakage prevention.

Setting	Set to	
Turn off the advertising ID	Enabled	
Allow telemetry	Disabled	
Do not show feedback notifications	Enabled	
Do not allow web search	Enabled	
Turn off Windows error reporting	Enabled	
Disable changing Automatic Configuration settings	Enabled	

There are also almost 100 privacy enhancing settings for the Edge browser that would be out of scope to document here in detail, but are listed in the text file "edge.txt" in the image.



Non-implemented security settings

The following security baseline settings recommended by either Microsoft or the Swiss Post haven't been implemented in the image. They are present in the configuration files but commented out and documented here with the respective reason why they weren't enabled.

Setting	Reason				
Disable Windows + R	It's a usability decrease without a clear security benefit				
Static DNS server	We didn't want to set a public DNS server like 8.8.8.8 due to				
	privacy issues, and the security risk from a DNS based MitM				
	attack seemed low considering we're using transport				
	encryption				
Configure Windows Defender	Because the offline laptops don't have network connectivity,				
SmartScreen: Block	this would cause queries to SmartScreen to not work, and				
	authorized E-Voting applications to be blocked				
Deny write access to removable	We need to save data to unencrypted USB drives during the e-				
drives not protected by	voting process				
BitLocker					
Block untrusted and unsigned	We need to be able to run executables from USB drives during				
processes that run from USB	the e-voting process				
Script execution policy: All	We need to be able to run unsigned scripts during the e-voting				
Signed	process				



Autounattend-File

To allow the setup to proceed without user choices, we use an unattend file to automatically configure various settings and actions during Windows Setup. The unattend file is copied to the root file of the boot media under the name autounattend.xml.

Following are the settings that are implemented in the file, separated by the steps they are happening in.

WindowsPE

- OS Language is set to German
- User locale and system locale are set to Swiss German
- Keyboard layout is set to Swiss German
- Windows EULA is automatically accepted
- Registration organization of Windows is set to "Evoting"
- Disk is partitioned into 3 partitions:
 - o 500 MB EFI partition for BitLocker
 - o 16 MB MSR partition for disk metadata
 - Rest of the disk as a primary partition for the OS
- Partitions are formatted:
 - o EFI partition as FAT32 and labelled "System"
 - OS partition as NTFS and labelled "Windows"
- The Windows installation is applied from the "Windows 10 Enterprise N LTSC" image

OOBESystem

- WLAN setup is skipped
- EULA is skipped
- Privacy settings are skipped
- Time zone is set to Western Europe Standard Time
- An administrator account is configured with a default password
- OS Language is set to German
- User locale and system locale are set to Swiss German
- Keyboard layout is set to Swiss German

Specialize

- · Auto logon is configured for the administrator account
- Six PowerShell commands are started in sequence
 - PowerShell script execution policy is set to "RemoteSigned"
 - The drive letter of the boot media is retrieved from WMI
 - o Drivers are installed
 - o Applications are installed
 - Policies and other settings are applied
 - o The updates are staged to the computer hard disk to later be installed

Checklist for image update

When a new version of the image is created, the following steps need to be executed:

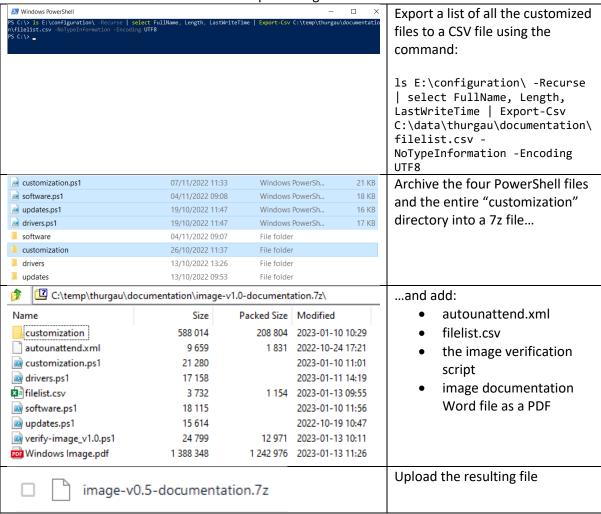
- Check for <u>every application</u> whether a new version is available and replace those. For some of them, the customer might have to be contacted since the downloads aren't public. For some applications, an update might not be allowed due to compatibility issues.
- Create a new driver package for each <u>supported model</u>. Make sure to <u>exclude the drivers</u> that have caused issues in the past.
- Download current BIOS update packages for every model, and update the script "check-biosupdatestatus.ps1" to the current versions
- Check with the customer if any security settings need to be adjusted.



- Set up a VM with the last image, then update it from the Microsoft servers, note the KB numbers of the updates that are being installed, and integrate them into the image.
- Check if any Notepad++ plugins have been updated by launching the application and looking at the update tab in Plugins Admin
- Create a Release Candidate ISO file, then modify the image verification script until it returns the correct results.
- Image a computer using the ISO file and doublecheck whether all Windows Updates are counted as installed.
- Sign the image verification script.
- Create a zip file with the <u>documentation</u>.
- Upload the iso file, the documentation, and the image verification script to the sharing platform
- Archive the image components onto the project network server

Create documentation to publish

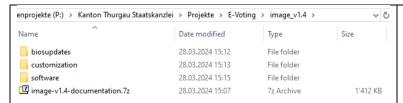
We need to make available a collection of files to the public to document what we've done and allow some transparency to the voters. We create an archive of script and documentation files and provide that to the customer who takes care of the publishing itself.



Archival

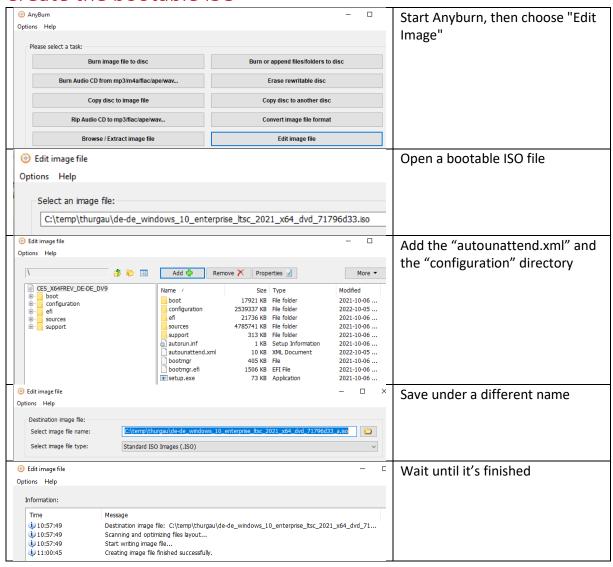
While we don't archive the full ISO files due to space issues, we want to archive the most important files for future reference.



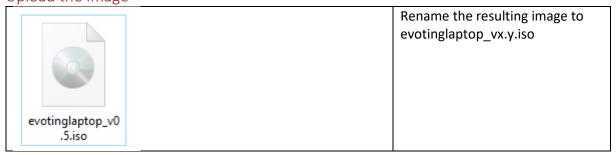


Create a subdirectory for the current image version, and copy the documentation 7z, as well as the directories: *customization*, *software* and *biosupdates*

Create the bootable ISO



Upload the image



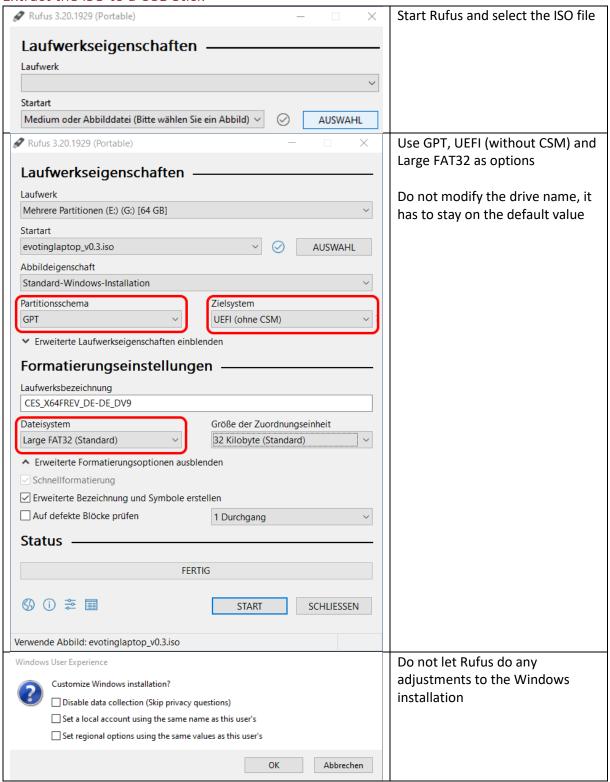


All Files > Kiteworks > Kanton Thurgau	And upload it to the Kiteworks share
□ Name ^	https://kiteworks.ontrex.ch/#/fol
Upload	der/8666a49b-a3d7-4831-9d02- 45666f755d19
evotinglaptop_v0.5.iso	



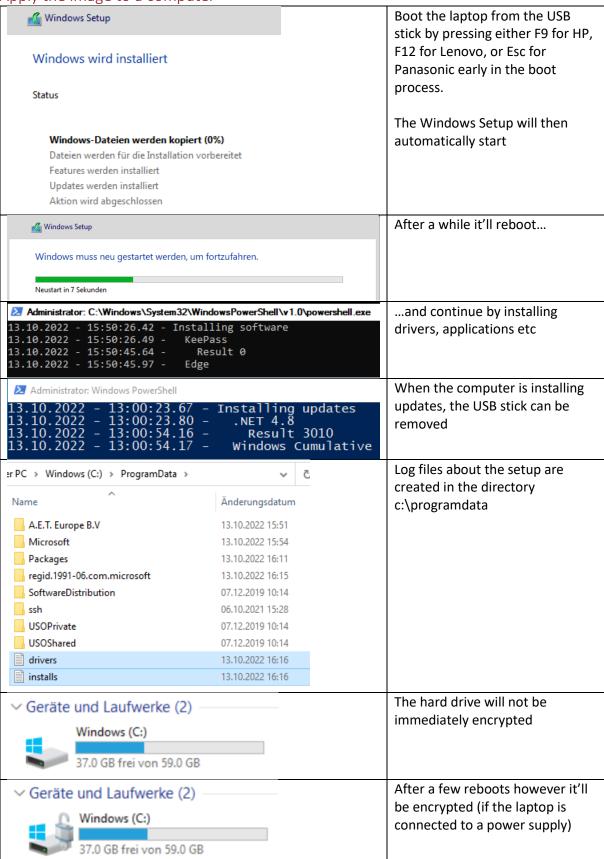
User Guide

Extract the ISO to a USB Stick





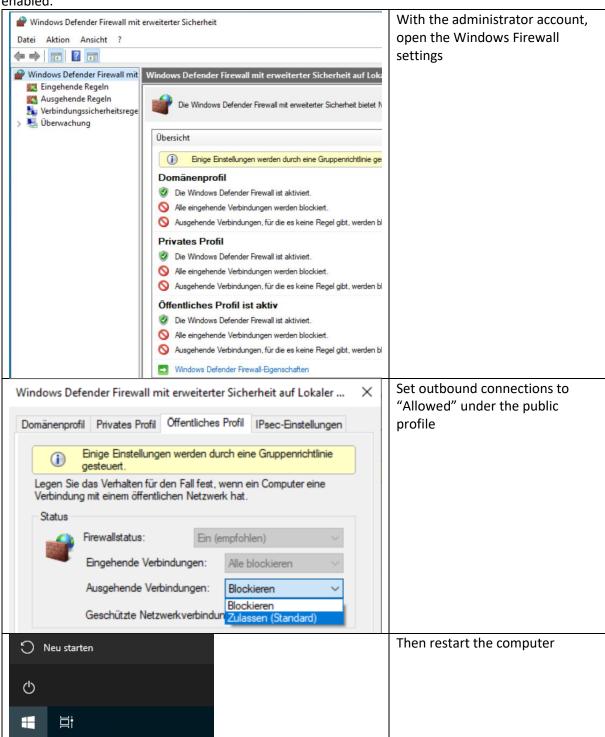
Apply the image to a computer





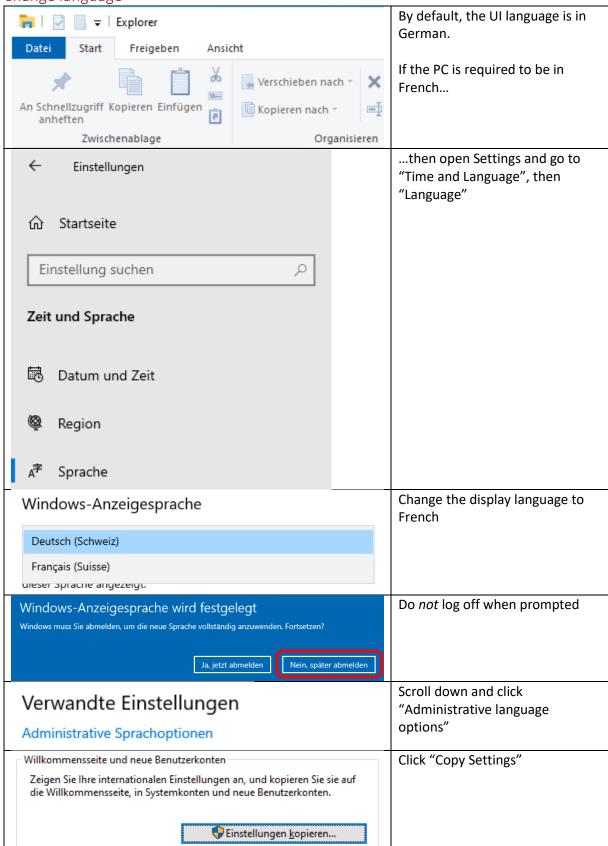
Enable network connectivity

By default, both incoming and outgoing network connections are blocked. If the specific laptop that is being set up needs to have Internet connectivity, outgoing connections have to be manually enabled.

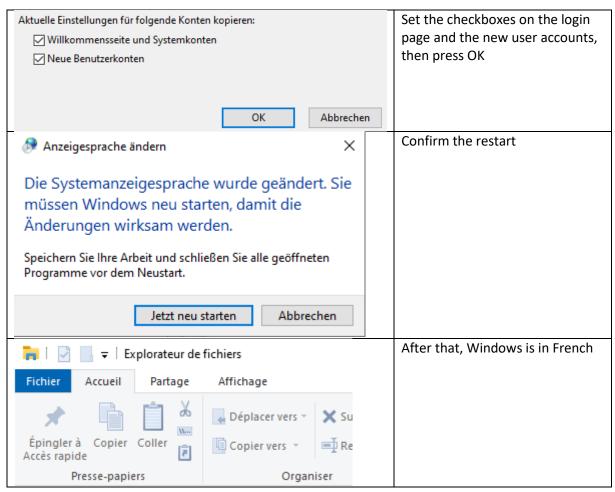




Change language

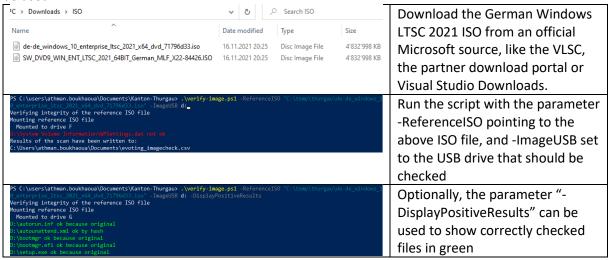






Verify image authenticity

To verify that a USB stick hasn't been tampered with and contains only either official Microsoft files or files that have been put there as part of the image customization, the script "verify-image.ps1" can be used.





Α	В	C	D	Е	F	G	Н	The script	will outpu
Info	Reason	Result	FileName					•	•
33787230	original	ok	D:\autorur	n.inf				report in th	
E803F131	/ hash	ok	D:\autoun	attend.xml				directory t	hat shov
4EEAC11E	original	ok	D:\bootmg	gr				results for	all files
96B7EE39	original	ok	D:\bootmg	gr.efi					
30043368	(original	ok	D:\setup.e	xe					
A6FB0A49	hash	failed	D:\System	Volume Info	ormation\	WPSettings	s.dat		
16327144	original	ok	D:\boot\be	cd					
CD2C00CI	original	ok	D:\boot\b	oot.sdi					
2F9C2428	original	ok	D:\boot\b	ootfix.bin					
55A47316	original	ok	D:\boot\b	ootsect.exe					
F425E135	original	ok	D:\boot\e	fsboot.com	ı				
BF8A9CC6	original	ok	D:\boot\m	emtest.exe					
C89CDA7	original	ok	D:\boot\de	e-de\bootse	ct.exe.mi	ui .			



Version History

v0.1

- Initial Version
- Includes 8 applications, drivers for 4 models and initial hardening rules from both Swiss Post and Microsoft
- Includes updates for October 2022

v0.2

- Add 7-Zip application
- Add Total Commander configuration, license, and shortcut in Start Menu
- Enable display of hidden files and file extensions in Explorer
- Remove camera driver from 850 G3 driver package
- Fix driver install logic for both 850 G3 and 850 G5
- Downgrade Smart Screen policy in Explorer from Block to Warn

v0.3

- UAC is now set to highest level
- PowerShell execution policy set to allow unsigned scripts
- Changed username for admin login to "EvotingAdmin"

v0.4

- Blocking all outgoing ICMP packets
- Blocking all outgoing network connections by default
- Blocking cameras and audio devices in with device installation restrictions
- Update Total Commander to version 10.52
- Installing Total Commander to c:\totalcmd
- Installing OpenSSL to c:\openssl

v0.5

- Updated OpenSSL to 1.1.1s
- Enabled the hardening rule "Disable new DMA devices when the PC is locked"

v1.0

- Disabled all Bluetooth devices
- Disabled automatic Windows Updates
- Disabled 31 Windows services for additional hardening
- Added support for laptop model HP ZBook Fury 16 G9
- Added almost 100 privacy hardening rules for Edge Browser
- Updates to Windows for December 2022
- Updates to applications: Notepad++ 8.4.8, STunnel 5.67

v1.1

- Added .NET 6 Runtime
- Disabled Sleep Mode
- Added a barcode and OCR font
- Increased local account password expiration to 120 days
- Split setup logs into two files to make them more readable
- Updates to Windows for March 2023
- Updates to applications: KeePass 2.53.1, Notepad++ 8.5.1, OpenSSL 1.1.1t, STunnel 5.69

v1.1.1

- Removed SafeSign
- Installed GMP to c:\vmgj
- Updates to applications: KeePass 2.54, Notepad++ 8.5.3, OpenSSL 3.1.1



v1.2

- Added 63 new hardening rules from CIS benchmarks
- Disabled Hibernate Mode
- Assigned text files to open with Notepad++
- Customized task bar
- Removed support for HP EliteBook 850 G3
- Updates to Windows and drivers for July 2023
- Updates to applications: 7-Zip 23.01, Notepad++ 8.5.4, STunnel 5.70

v1.3

- Uninstalled Windows Experience Pack
- Allowed standard users to change the system time
- Added the font "Roboto Mono"
- Added the Notepad++ Plugin "JSTool"
- Updates to Windows and drivers for November 2023
- Updates to applications: KeePass 2.55, Notepad++ 8.6, OpenSSL 3.2.0, SDelete 2.05, STunnel 5.71, TotalCommander 11.02

v1.3.1

Added support for laptop model HP ZBook Fury 16 G10

v1.4

- Disabled Windows Recovery Partition
- Added two applications: PowerShell 7 and KeyStore Explorer 5.5.3
- Added BIOS updates to the image for every supported model
- Added a script that notifies if the installed BIOS version is too old
- Updates to Windows and drivers for March 2024
- Updates to applications: KeePass 2.56, Notepad++ 8.6.4, OpenSSL 3.2.1, STunnel 5.72, TotalCommander 11.03

v1.5

- Removed an application: STunnel
- Updates to BIOS, Windows and drivers for June 2024
- Updates to applications: KeePass 2.57, Notepad++ 8.6.8, OpenSSL 3.3.1, 7-Zip 24.07, PowerShell 7.4.3

v1.6

- Added French language pack
- Updates to BIOS, Windows and drivers for September 2024
- Updates to applications: Notepad++ 8.6.9, OpenSSL 3.3.2, 7-Zip 24.08, PowerShell 7.4.5

v1.7

- Updates to BIOS, Windows and drivers for November 2024
- Updates to applications: KeePass 2.57.1, Notepad++ 8.7.1, OpenSSL 3.4.0, PowerShell 7.4.6

v1.8

- Replaced .NET 6 Runtime with .NET 8 Runtime
- Updates to BIOS, Windows and drivers for February 2025
- Updates to applications: 7-Zip 24.09, Notepad++ 8.7.7, PowerShell 7.4.7, TotalCommander 11.5

v1.9

- Added support for ZBook Fury G11, ZBook Studio G11 and ThinkStation P8
- Removed support for ThinkPad P52s
- Added default configuration files for OpenSSL
- Updates to BIOS, Windows and drivers for June 2025



Updates to applications: KeePass 2.58, KeyStore Explorer 5.60, Notepad++ 8.8.1, OpenSSL 3.5.0, PowerShell 7.4.10, TotalCommander 11.51

Image Authenticity

The authenticity of files in the image is guaranteed through a few different ways:

- Microsoft files are either signed by Microsoft or contained in an ISO file that has a well-known hash published on the official Microsoft website as well as third party websites.
- Driver files from hardware manufacturers are signed by the manufacturers. Windows would display a warning popup when a driver installation with an invalid signature is attempted, so any unsigned driver would be visible during imaging.
- Application executables are signed by their respective developers.
- Application add-ins that we deploy for Notepad++ or Total Commander are not signed.
 However, they are downloaded from inside their signed parent executable over an HTTPS connection.
- Ontrex custom developed files are either signed by Ontrex, or a hash of the file is stored in a signed script.

This reduces the risk that any malicious files are present in the image, at least to the degree that we can trust the respective developers.

Lessons learned

- 1. Windows updates cannot be installed during the "specialize" step. Probably due to provisioning mode. They instead need to be installed in a RunOnce key.
- 2. Scheduled tasks also cannot be added during Windows Setup because the task service isn't running yet.
- 3. BitLocker encryption cannot start if there is a DVD inserted in the optical drive, or the laptop is not connected to a power supply.
- 4. There is no way to block USB network adapters only. If using the DenyDeviceClasses GPO, it blocks every network adapter including internal ones.
- 5. You cannot define power settings by registry keys. You need to use the powercfg.exe commands.

Scripts

export-gpos.cmd

```
lgpo /parse /m ".\{23DEF82E-039F-40D5-BBCC-
35444958D065}\DomainSysvol\GPO\Machine\registry.pol" /q > ie_computer.txt
lgpo /parse /m ".\{4B6589C2-0290-4764-8058-
9825B56B4169}\DomainSysvol\GPO\User\registry.pol" /q > user.txt
lgpo /parse /m ".\{7AD4F62E-9296-4FEA-9765-
C4E3EEAAECC1}\DomainSysvol\GPO\Machine\registry.pol" /q > credentialguard.txt
lgpo /parse /m ".\{B669E0C6-C1E3-4582-B797-
FE384B21CDD1}\DomainSysvol\GPO\Machine\registry.pol" /q > defender.txt
lgpo /parse /m ".\{B697C660-A87B-4AF1-B37D-
9440912605E7}\DomainSysvol\GPO\Machine\registry.pol" /q > bitlocker.txt
lgpo /parse /m ".\{C94113F4-C027-4F5F-8210-
85F4AC2C6082}\DomainSysvol\GPO\User\registry.pol" /q > ie_user.txt
lgpo /parse /m ".\{DD304A7D-15A7-42B7-AB52-
2338F4ECE2C7}\DomainSysvol\GPO\Machine\registry.pol" /q > computer.txt
```

Sources

https://winaero.com/create-bootable-usb-for-windows-10-install-wim-larger-than-4gb/https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/client-management/manage-device-installation-with-group-policy



 $\underline{https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-hardware/drivers/install/system-defined-device-setup-classes-available-to-vendors$

https://github.com/wormeyman/FindFonts/blob/master/Add-Font.ps1

https://www.alkanesolutions.co.uk/2021/12/06/installing-fonts-with-powershell/