



UNIVERSAL IMAGING UTILITY AND WINDOWS 7

What is the Universal Imaging Utility (UIU)?

Developed in 2004, the Universal Imaging Utility (UIU) remains the only software application that can create one hardware-independent hard drive image (Windows® XP, Vista, 7) that can be easily deployed to any laptop or desktop regardless of manufacturer or model.

When used in conjunction with any existing imaging application such as Symantec Ghost, Altiris, Acronis, ImageX, etc., the UIU creates a single master Windows image that can be easily deployed to all hardware platforms. This eliminates the problems usually associated with multi-platform imaging—specifically, no more blue screens of death. In addition, the UIU incorporates a substantial driver database, continuously maintained by Big Bang LLC. Simply put, this allows Windows to recognize even the latest hardware, using the most current drivers available.

Big Bang LLC has been monitoring the progress and implementation of the latest Microsoft operating systems since the introduction of Windows Vista, particularly 64-bit. Although the innate functionality of imaging continues to grow, as evidenced by Windows 7 and the latest version of ImageX, there remains the same flaws which continue to prevent true cross-platform deployment.

Why Buy the UIU when Free Tools are available?

Some ask why they should purchase the UIU when there are free tools available. In addition to the programmatic features of the UIU which help enable cross-platform deployment, driver management remains the most common challenge when considering free tools. Windows 7 now provides some level of driver management as do many existing retail imaging solutions, but the challenge with using the Windows 7 or imaging solution add-ons alone for driver management is threefold:

- The administrator must take the time to locate the necessary drivers for all existing and future hardware. This process is extremely arduous and ongoing.
- A mass driver repository presents additional problems because of the reality of multiple drivers of varying quality standards can be recognized by the same hardware.
- Updating and maintaining the ever-growing driver database is extremely time-consuming.

The Driver Reality

Some drivers are designed to match a variety of hardware. These drivers are problematic if included in a universal driver repository, as Windows cannot differentiate between the hardware the driver is designated for and other hardware for which the driver might be a match. It is also possible that laptop drivers may be installed on desktops and vice versa. All indications will be that the driver successfully installed. However, the successful installation of the driver does not mean it will work with the hardware or provide full functionality.



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This problem becomes even more significant when including a large driver database with a variety of hardware manufacturers that construct drivers with different standards. Audio drivers in particular are a significant challenge from this perspective. The UIU resolves the problems associated with these drivers by employing a specific driver reference system, and ensures only the appropriate drivers are selected and installed for each machine that receives a UIU-prepared image. Not only are the appropriate drivers installed, but the UIU hardware scanner ensures that the drivers are installed in the correct order (think Parent/Child hardware hierarchy or certain Broadcom NIC drivers incompatible with certain NVIDIA Graphics card drivers).

To facilitate true hardware-independent hard drive imaging, a store of drivers must be continuously maintained to keep up with new devices. Big Bang LLC releases a new driver database approximately six times per year to stay current with the constantly evolving hardware market.

With each update, the full UIU driver database of over 32,000 PNP IDs is examined to determine if drivers have been updated or replaced, and any unnecessary drivers are discarded as new ones are added. This allows for a full business-class driver database without the added bulk of outdated drivers.

What does this mean for you?

While Windows and some imaging applications have made limited progress in driver management, a bootable machine is not a fully functional machine. Other solutions still require significant time, effort, and skill on the part of the IT staff between locating the correct drivers for large and diverse hardware environments and avoiding the problems associated with a mass driver store.

Most UIU customers have reported a 90-day return on their investment. IT managers, administrators and help desk technicians spend far less time on image and driver management allowing them to focus on more customer-facing issues. Additionally, hardware acquisitions can be more flexible once a single make and model machine is no longer the best way to minimize the problems generally associated with cross-platform imaging.

For More Information Regarding the UIU please visit www.uiu4you.com