

Making a System Dossier

What is a system dossier?

A system dossier is a great way to provide needed information about your computer (hardware, software, and OS). While you could list it all by hand, some problems can require a lot of information, and it would be time-consuming to obtain it all manually. The more info you can provide about your computer the easier it is for someone to diagnose your issue, and the more accurate their advice will be.

General System Information

None of the tools here do everything, but oftentimes all of them don't need to be run.

Speccy

Speccy is a small tool made by Piriform that gets a bunch of info about your hardware, software, and OS, and allows convenient ways to save and share it. You can [download it here](#).

After installing, let it analyze your system for a moment, then you can either save or publish your snapshot. These are under the file menu

- Saving your snapshot will save a .speccy file. This will give a bit more information which might be helpful, but some of this information may be sensitive. This also relies on the person reading the file to also have Speccy.
- Publishing your snapshot will provide you with a link to speccy.piriform.com. This link will strip all information that may be sensitive and can be read without Speccy. These links will eventually expire, so if your information gets too old you will have to publish another snapshot.

msinfo32

msinfo32 is built into Windows. It will provide some of the same information Speccy does. This is more focused on hardware and OS than installed software.

It is best if you run this tool with elevated privileges, but it won't force you to.

You can open the tool by typing `msinfo32` into a command line, or you can open it using run (Win+R).

When saving information from msinfo32, you can choose to save or export. Both of these provide

all of the information seen.

- Saving will create a .nfo file, which allows it to be opened in msinfo32 later. It can be read by hand as well. It will be larger than export.
- Exporting will create a .txt file, which is easiest to read without msinfo32. It cannot be opened by msinfo32 at a later date

dxdiag

dxdiag is also built into Windows. It provides very basic information about your system but has a few things that nothing else provides.

It is best if you run this tool with elevated privileges, but it won't force you to.

You can open the tool by typing `dxdiag` into a command line, or you can open it using run (Win+R).

There is only one way to save the information from dxdiag, which is the "Save All Information..." button. It will create a small .txt file.

Useful for crashes or blackscreens

These are not a replacement for general system information tools, these should only be an additional tool you use.

HWiNFO stress tests and logging

[Link to separate guide](#)

This provides a view of how your system runs under load. This is useful to determine hardware faults or overheating issues.

Dump files

Dump files are what Windows uses to save information before a crash. You might have dump files in C:\Windows\Minidump.

If you do, copy the folder to the desktop and create a zip file of it.

Power Supply

If you are using a desktop computer, getting the make and model of your power supply can help identify if that is the problem.

None of these tools can identify it, you have to look at your PSU if you don't know. Saying "500W Gold" doesn't give any real information about your power supply.

Useful for networking issues

These are not a replacement for general system information tools, these should only be an additional tool you use.

ipconfig

ipconfig is a command-line tool built into Windows. This outputs information into the command line and you are responsible for saving it. You can use [pastebin](#), or save it to a text file.

- Running `ipconfig /all` will give information about network adapters and current network connection status.
- Running `ipconfig /displaydns` will give information about currently cached information

ifconfig.me

ifconfig.me is a site which give information about your external network connection and status. You can use the command line to get information using the `curl` commands. This outputs information into the command line and you are responsible for saving it. You can use [pastebin](#), or save it to a text file.

- Running `curl ifconfig.me/all` will give information out external connection status.

If you get the error `Could not resolve host`, just saying that is fine.

Other, single-task tools

These are not a replacement for general system information tools, these should only be an additional tool you use.

winver

winver is a tool built into Windows. It will give information about the Windows version, build, and skew.

You can open the tool by typing `winver` into a command line, or you can open it using run (Win+R).

Taking a screenshot, or manually copying the relevant information is acceptable.

- For version and build, you need the line: `Version _____ (OS Build ____ . ____)`
- For skew, you need the line: `The Windows _____ operating system and...`

slmgr

slmgr is a tool built into Windows. It will give information about the current license and licensing status.

You can open the tool by typing `slmgr /dli` into a command line, or you can open it using run (Win+R).

Most of this information can be useful, it is recommended that you take a screenshot of the window that pops up.

Crystal disk info

Crystal disk info (CDI) is a tool for obtaining the smart status of all attached drives.

You can download it [here](#).

For saving information, `edit` -> `copy` then either save it to a text file or use [pastebin](#)

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