

Windows 8 USB Recovery Drive



Last month I spoke about a new Windows 8 feature called File History which is a great way to back up and restore your data files. But what if your entire operating system becomes corrupted, to the point where you can't even boot up Windows? With past Windows versions, this either meant a complete Windows reinstallation or recovery of a system image (if you had the foresight to create one). On Windows 8, you can still create a system image, but there are two new capabilities as well: PC Reset and PC Refresh. PC Reset will reset your operating system without deleting your data and PC Refresh will refresh your system back to the state it was in when you first bought it. (PC Refresh is a more convenient way of doing a complete Windows reinstallation). Both of these capabilities reside on your hard drive. However, if your operating system is corrupted and you cannot boot Windows, you will not be able to invoke these services. The solution to this issue is a new Windows 8 capability called the USB Recovery Drive.

The USB Recovery Drive provides you the ability to invoke PC Reset and PC Refresh functions from a USB drive (as well as other recovery functions including restoring from a system image, repairing startup problems, etc) in the case where you cannot boot Windows 8 from your hard drive.

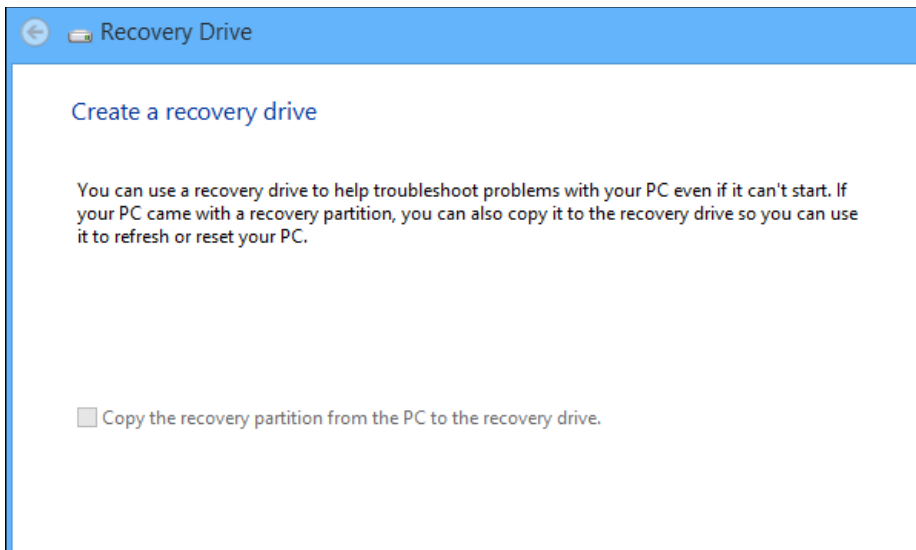
To create a USB Recovery Drive you need a USB flash drive that is at least 16 GB and is empty of anything you care about, because the process of creating it will erase all the data on it.

On your keyboard, hit two keys — the Windows Key + [W] and type "recovery". Then from the list of results it displays, click "Create a recovery drive".

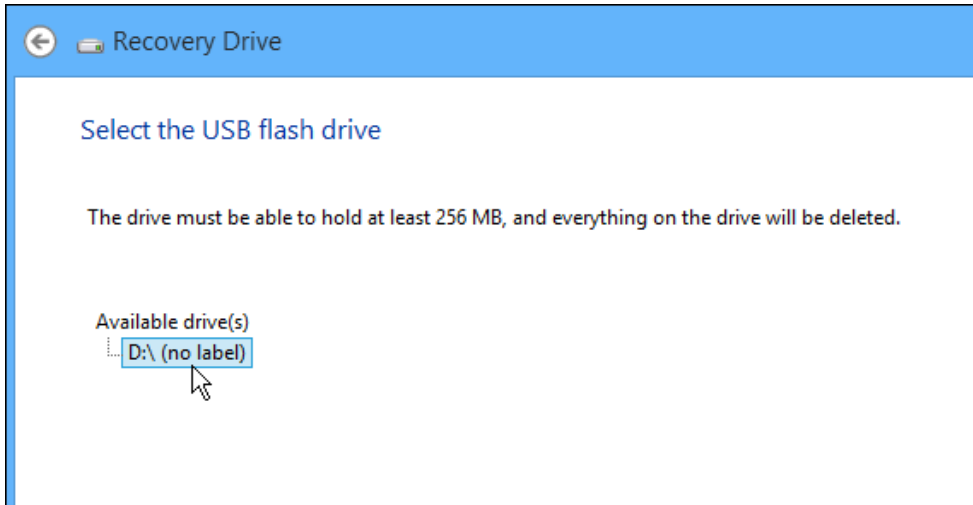


In the resulting screen, if the option to **Copy the recovery partition** is grayed out, that just means you don't have one.

If you do have a recovery partition, be sure to select it so that you will be able to use either the PC Reset or Refresh options.

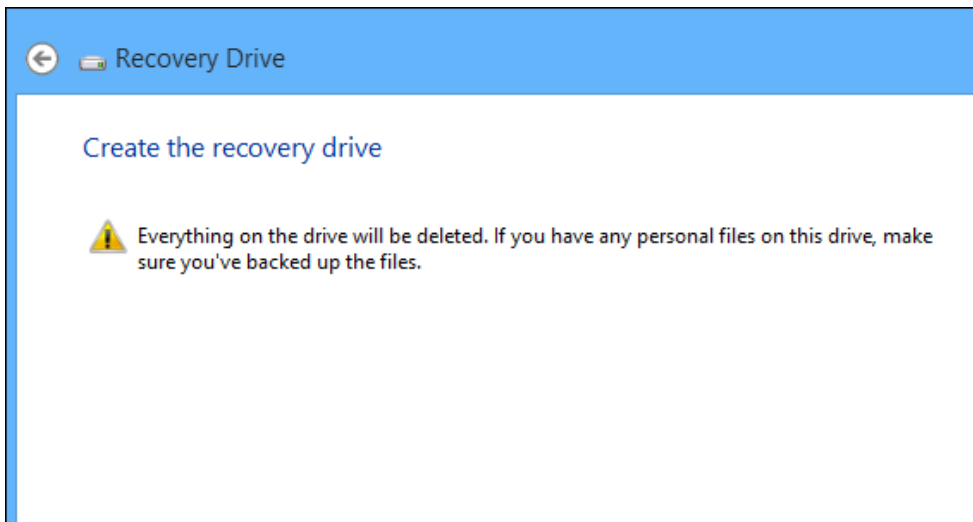


Next, select the flash drive you want to use.

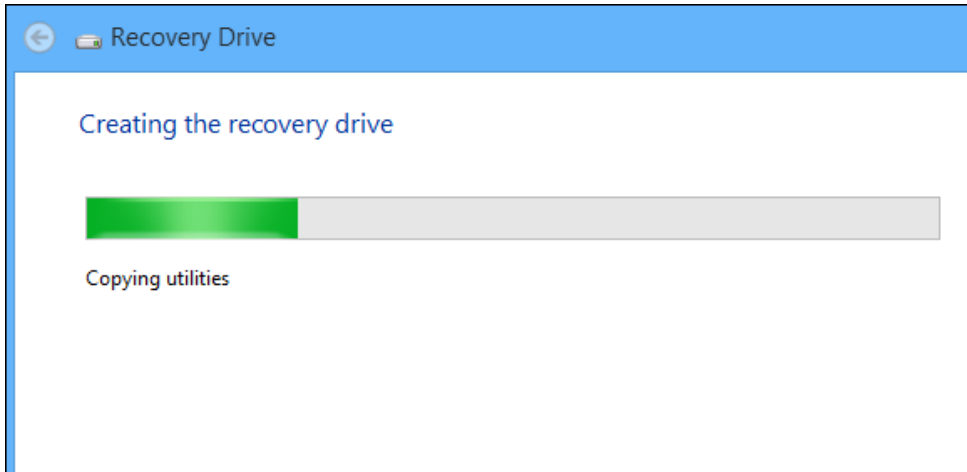


Remember that this process will format your flash drive and erase everything that was previously on it. Double-check you have the right drive selected before continuing.

Click the Create button.

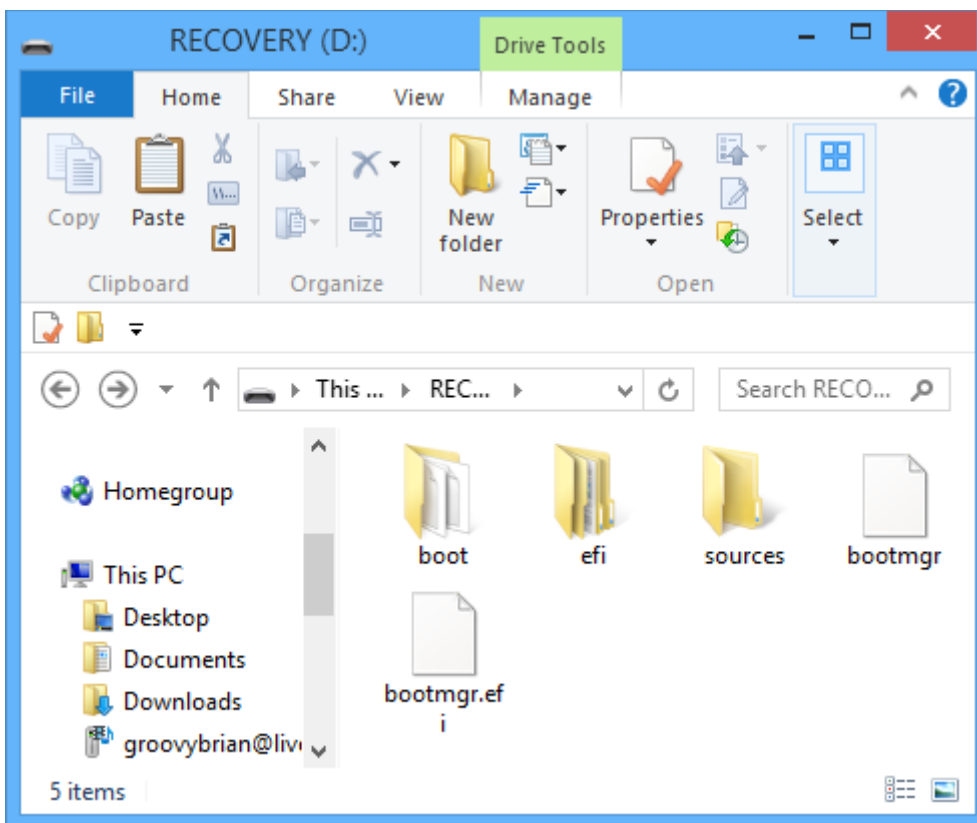


Wait while the system formats your drive and copies over the utilities it needs for the recovery drive.



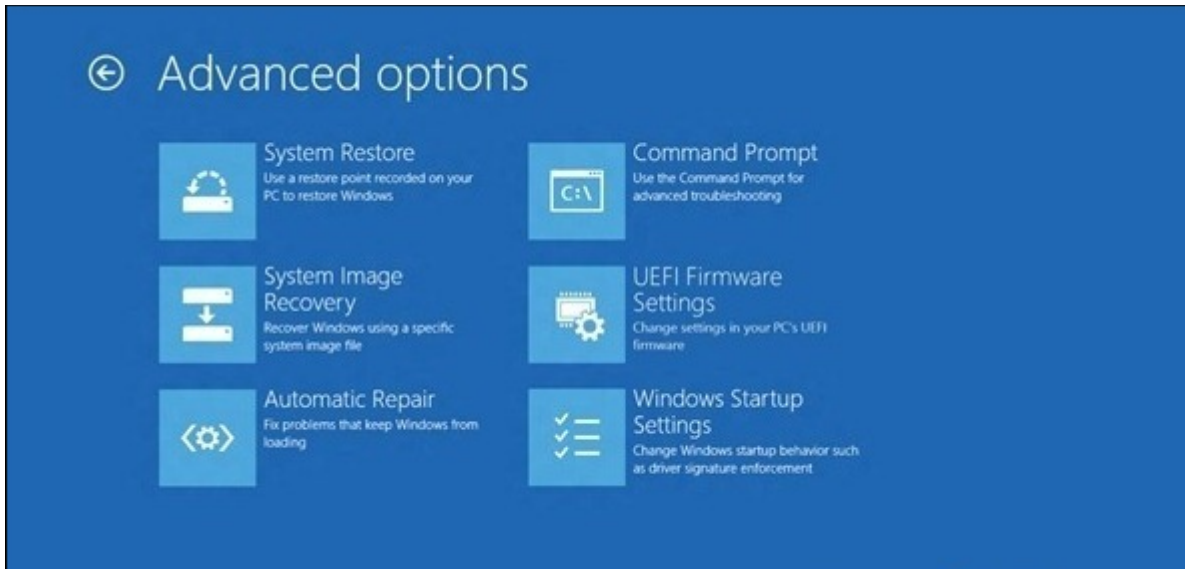
When it's done, click **Finish**.

If you want to verify, open the drive. You'll see the following folders and files.



Label the drive and put it in a safe place. If you are ever unable to boot Windows 8 from your local drive for any reason, from now on you'll be able to boot from the flash recovery drive you just made and start troubleshooting the issue.

The screen below shows all the options the USB Recovery Drive gives you.



As always, I hope you have found this information useful. If you do not wish to receive these emails in the future, let me know.

This newsletter, as well as all past newsletters, can be found on my web site (<http://steve.gimnicher.com>).