## How to Fix "NTLDR is Missing" Computer Errors

"NTLDR is Missing: Press any Key to Restart" – this is the first message I got on my computer screen when I turned it on... and NTLDR Missing errors werer not as uncommon as I thought it was! Here is my experience troubleshooting NTLDR Missing errors on my computer...

### What is NTLDR?



NTLDR is short for NT loader – a program loaded from the hard drive boot sector that displays the Microsoft Windows NT startup menu and helps Microsoft Windows NT load. So when it goes missing for some reason, your windows cannot load. I use Windows XP on a Pentium 4 PC. Though it seemed common on a routine google search, it was not so easy to fix and many forums reported that formatting hard drive was the last solution eventually.

## Causes and fixes of NTLDR is Missing

Firstly I started with Microsoft Support to get an official reason for the computer error and they have the causes to it-

#### **SYMPTOMS**

When you try to install Microsoft Windows XP or upgrade to Windows XP on a computer that runs Microsoft Windows 95, Windows 98, or Windows Millennium Edition, you may receive the following error message after the first restart during the installation:

NTLDR is missing

Press any key to restart

#### **CAUSE**

This problem may occur if your existing Windows 95, Windows 98, or Windows Millennium Edition installation was cloned and then applied to a drive that has a different geometry from that of the source drive of the cloned copy.

#### RESOLUTION

To resolve this problem, correct the Heads (sides) value in the FAT32 BPB so the Windows XP startup can continue. To update the value, rewrite the Windows 95, Windows 98, or Windows Millennium Edition startup code.

But the problem was that I had an original preinstalled Windows XP on my branded PC, and there was no attempt to "try to install Microsoft Windows XP or upgrade to Windows XP on a computer that runs Microsoft Windows 95, Windows 98, or Windows Millennium Edition". So I went looking for alternative sources of help.

I can across a site NTLDRmissing.com – a problem common enough to deserve its own domain name, of course it redirects to another site. It **helps you make a NTLDR boot disk** to get back into Windows and Use windows to

fix the boot files on the hard drive. And this is why the problem occured in the first place they say

"When your computer starts, the BIOS attempts to find the primary hard drive's active partition to read the first sector for the MBR (Master Boot Record), it uses that info to load the rest of the OS. For Windows NT4/2k/XP the NTLDR (New Technology Loader) takes it from there. If you get the "NTLDR is missing, press any key to restart" what's most likely going on is the BIOS either didn't look for the right drive, didn't find the right partition, it wasn't active, didn't find the MBR, or the MBR didn't list NTLDR in the right place, or the location of NTLDR changed."

ComputerHope has another excellent article enlisting the causes for these errors and tutorials on how to fix them too.

#### Cause:

- 1. Computer is booting from a non-bootable source.
- 2. Computer hard disk drive is not properly setup in BIOS.
- 3. Corrupt NTLDR and/or NTDETECT.COM file.
- 4. Misconfiguration with the boot.ini file.
- 5. Attempting to upgrade from a Windows 95, 98, or ME computer that is using FAT32.
- 6. New hard disk drive being added.
- 7. Corrupt boot sector / master boot record.
- 8. Seriously corrupted version of Windows 2000 or Windows XP.
- 9. Loose or Faulty IDE/EIDE hard disk drive cable.

## How we fixed NTLDR Missing on Our Computer

We tried several of the possible soultions, but none worked well. Finally what worked was that since NTLDR was missing, we decided to **substitute the NTLDR file in the right place**. Since we had access to another computer, we copied the NTLDR and NTDETECT.COM which was available from the recovery CD which comes with computer. If you do not have the recovery CD, they were available from the site mentioned above or is available from another computer using the same Operating System (Windows XP in our case). The location was C:\i386\ntderc:\i386\ntd

We then used a **bootable disc to restart the computer** (the Win XP bootable CD did not work, a Win 98 bootable CD worked). After entering MS DOS mode, these 2 files were copied to the C drive in the proper location. After restart, then pressing F10 on start up (used for system recovery on my computer), we were able to start the **repair of Windows via system recovery** (which was not possible earlier). This reinstalled all Windows drivers and system files, while preserving all data on my computer.

Thus, I was **saved from formatting my hard drive**, learned how to make a bootable disc, learned copying files in MS DOS, how to perform system recovery and remember to keep the original PC system recovery CD safe. So before you end up formatting your hard drive, give these other options a try.

**NOTE:** This article is for informational purpose only and is just a detail of how I went about fixing my computer for common NTLDR error which can affect your computer too. **If you are not an expert in hardware or software computer issues, seek professional support.** Unnecessary mishandling the computer hardware of software could make your computer unusable and cause data loss permanently.

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