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Creating a “Default User” account for OS X Images

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Those familiar with Windows imaging and deployment are most likely aware of the process of building a default profile account on each image. For the uninitiated, a custom default profile will load with predefined settings whenever a user first logs into the computer. Common customizations include a unique wallpaper, desktop shortcuts, and Start Menu items. A default user account can also be configured with Mac OS X but requires a little bit more work. This article will walk you through creating a default account on OS X 10.7.x and above.

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1. Login to a fresh installation of OS X as a local administrator account. Make sure to set a password for this account.
2. Open System Preferences > Users & Groups and create a new admin user with the name of Default and a simple password. This account will be removed at the end of the process but the settings will remain.
3. Log out of the admin account and into the new Default account. Once logged in, install and launch any additional software you would like to be included in your system image. Configure software settings and System Preferences to your specifications. Apply all available Apple system updates. Some updates may require a restart. Customize the Dock with the icons you would like to show for all users.
4. Programs and scripts can also be configured to automatically launch at login. The list of applications that will automatically launch can be found at **System Preferences > Users & Groups > Default user account > Login Items**.
5. Now we will clean the Default account. OS X Lion and later hide the Library folder but we want to clean it out. Launch Terminal and enter the following:
chflags nohidden ~/Library
6. Now with Finder navigate to **/Users/default/Library/Caches** and delete the entirety of the folder contents. While still in Finder click **Go > Recent Folders > Clear Menu**.

7. Restart the computer and login with the admin account.

8. Launch Terminal and enter **sudo -s**. Input your password when prompted.

9. Now we will clean out the system wide default account. Enter the command:

```
rm -rf “/System/Library/User Template/English.lproj/*”
```

10. Next copy the default account settings to the system wide default account:

```
cp -R /Users/default/* “/System/Library/User Template/English.lproj”
```

11. Reboot the computer and log back into your admin account. Launch Disk Utility and select your hard drive. Click **First Aid > Repair Disk Permissions**

12. Once permissions have been fixed browse to **System Preferences > Users & Accounts** and delete the default account we created earlier.

13. It's now time to seal the system and prepare it for image capture. Reboot the system and hold down **CMD + S** at startup. If done correctly you will boot to Unix Terminal in single user mode.

14. Enter the following commands:

```
fsck -fy  
/sbin/mount -uw /  
rm -rf /var/db/.AppleSetupDone  
shutdown -h now
```

If you experience an error at any time when entering these commands you will need to reboot the computer and troubleshoot what has gone wrong in the previous steps. If no errors are received you now have a custom default user account and your Mac has been resealed and ready for image capture!

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