CloneBoy[26] Quick Start

26.1 "Yeah Buddy" · a Nick's Tech Shop joint · *little bandit, big backups.*



CloneBoy[26] copies a Windows PC's disk **exactly**: the whole disk, as a Full-Flash Update (FFU) image. Use it to clone a PC, to back one up, or to put a saved image back onto a drive. It also makes a Windows installer stick.

Install and first run

Run `CloneBoy26-Setup-26.1.exe`. CloneBoy[26] is not code-signed, so Windows shows **"Windows protected your PC"** the first time: click **More info**, then **Run anyway**, then **Yes**. That happens once per PC. *Is This Safe?* in the Start menu explains why, and how to check your copy.

Open **CloneBoy26** from the Start menu. It asks for administrator rights every time, because it reads and writes whole disks.

Everything it does is written to a log. **ADVANCED TOOLS** → **LOG FOLDER** opens them.

The home screen

- **CREATE A BOOTABLE CLONEBOY[26]** *(Nick's pick)* makes the CloneBoy stick: boot any PC from it and pick CLONE to copy that PC's SSD onto another one. This is how you clone **this** PC. Needs a USB drive of **64 GB or bigger**; your images are saved on it.
- **CAPTURE OS IMAGE** saves a drive as an image, to back it up. Any plugged-in Windows drive: *no reboot*, the drive is only read. This PC's own Windows: the PC restarts into CloneBoy[26] once by itself, saves the image, and comes back to Windows with the result.
- **DEPLOY AN IMAGE** puts a saved image onto a drive, ready to boot. Onto a plugged-in drive: *no reboot*. Onto this PC's own disk: one restart, then the PC boots the deployed Windows.
- **CLONE A DIFFERENT DRIVE** clones any Windows drive onto another drive, from this PC, *no reboot*. You need three drives: the one to copy, the one to write, and a place to keep the image. **OPTIMIZE** (on by default) shrinks the image so it also fits a smaller drive.
- **CREATE A WINDOWS INSTALLER** puts Windows 10 or 11 onto a USB drive of **8 GB or bigger**. **DOWNLOAD WINDOWS 11** gets the ISO straight from Microsoft and checks it; **PICK** uses an ISO you already have.

ADVANCED TOOLS (bottom right): **IMAGE LIBRARY** (every image on every drive, with a checksum; **VERIFY** checks one), **DRIVES** (every disk; the one Windows runs from is red), **LOG FOLDER** and **ABOUT**. **BACK** returns home.

How it keeps you safe

- Anything that erases a disk shows that disk in a **red box** and waits for you to type `GO`. Nothing else starts it.
- The disk Windows runs from is never written, except by a deploy onto this PC that you asked for.

- Right before it erases, it reads the disk again and checks its serial number. If you swapped drives, it stops: nothing is erased.
- When a job finishes, CloneBoy[26] **ejects the USB drives it used**. **EJECTED** means it's safe to unplug.

Make the stick

1. Plug in a USB drive of **64 GB or bigger**. Everything on it is erased.
2. **CREATE A BOOTABLE CLONEBOY[26]**, click the drive, type `GO`, press **FORGE**. About five minutes.
3. **FORGE COMPLETE**, then **ON FIRST BOOT** pops up: the keys a Secure Boot PC asks for the first time (next section).

The stick starts on new PCs (UEFI) and old ones (legacy BIOS), with or without Secure Boot.

The first boot on a PC with Secure Boot on

The stick boots through Ventoy, which each PC has to trust **once**. The first time, a blue screen says **Verification failed**. Do these eight steps (the same picture pops up when the stick is made):



ON FIRST BOOT: the eight steps

1. **OK** (Enter)
2. **Any key, quick!** You have 10 seconds.
3. **Enroll key from disk**
4. **VTOYEFI**
5. **ENROLL_THIS_KEY_IN_MOKMANAGER.cer**
6. **Continue**
7. **Yes**
8. **Reboot**

Then the CloneBoy menu. That PC never asks again. Missed the 10 seconds? Just boot the stick again. Refused outright? In the BIOS, turn on **Allow Microsoft 3rd Party UEFI CA**, or turn Secure Boot off.

Clone a PC with the stick

1. Get the PC ready: **hibernation off** (`powercfg /h off` in an admin prompt) and **BitLocker off** (`manage-bde -status C:` says *Fully Decrypted*).
2. Connect the **target SSD** (a USB enclosure is best) and the stick. No other USB drives.
3. **Restart** (never Shut down) and boot from the stick: F12 on Lenovo; F2, F11, Esc or Del on others.
4. The CloneBoy menu (dark, with Knox) starts by itself after 10 seconds. In the CloneBoy window, press **1 (CLONE)**.
5. CloneBoy works out which SSD is which. A blank target starts after a 10-second countdown (**Q** stops it); a target with something on it asks once (**Y** erases it). Then hands off: capture, apply, first-boot setup.
6. Green **COMPLETE**: unplug the stick, unplug the PC from power for 30 seconds, put the new SSD in, boot. On its first boot the clone names itself `CB-xxxx` (so two clones never clash on a network) and restarts once. Done.

The image stays on the stick, with a log next to it.

The Windows installer stick

CREATE A WINDOWS INSTALLER: **DOWNLOAD WINDOWS 11** or **PICK** an ISO, click a USB drive of 8 GB or bigger, type `GO`. The stick starts Windows Setup by itself after 10 seconds, with Windows' own hardware checks. Secure Boot PCs ask for the same one-time key as above.

Rules

- **Same model of PC only.** An image carries the original PC's drivers.
- The target SSD can be any brand. It must be **the same size or bigger** (or smaller, if the image was OPTIMIZEd and still fits). CloneBoy[26] checks before it erases anything.
- Capture a PC **cold**: hibernation off, BitLocker off, reached by Restart.
- Test a clone only by putting it in the PC it is for. Plugged in next to the original, Windows shows it **Offline**: it is an exact copy, with the same disk ID.

Updates

When CloneBoy[26] starts, it checks for a newer version. If there is one, a green bar under the title says so: **DOWNLOAD** opens the download page. **ABOUT** → **CHECK FOR UPDATES** checks again.

Help

Something red you don't understand? Press **report a bug** at the bottom of any screen: CloneBoy[26] zips its logs onto your Desktop and opens an email to Nick's Tech Shop. Attach the zip and say what happened.

Free, and if it saved your day, **buy Knox a snack** (bottom of every screen). The Mac version is coming soon.