

Reclaiming disk space from “system volume information”

Often seen and felt as a stupid problem in Windows (especially in Vista, as usual) is the habit of the strange entity called “system volume information” in C drive claiming a lot of disk space for apparently no practical purpose at all! You’d start off with a pretty neat 40 GB drive, and slowly over months you’d notice that you are only left with 5 GB in there whilst all your files summed up could only answer for 15 GB and the Windows+Program Files would be around another 10 GB. Where did the rest of the 10 GB vanish? The answer would be the hidden folder called “system volume information” (let’s call it SVI for ease of my typing). Seemingly windows saves information related to system restore inside that place and it is used when you actually perform a restoration (which is indeed a great facility). But when struggling for more disk space, I am sure you wouldn’t mind doing a trade off between what portion of your disk you want to give away for that purpose and what portion you want to keep for yourself.

Now here are some commands that you could use in the Command Prompt console in administrator mode in order to view and resize the space allocated for SVI:

1. To see the space allocated and used for SVI:

- Open Command Prompt with “Run as Administrator” option
- Type in: `vssadmin list shadowstorage`
- You will see Used Space, Allocated Space and Maximum Space for SVI

2. To see the restore information stored therein:

- Use in the same console command: `vssadmin list shadows`

3. To resize the maximum allocated space:

- Type in command: `vssadmin resize shadowstorage /on=[here add the drive letter]: /For=[here add the drive letter]: /Maxsize=[here add the maximum size]`
- E.g., `vssadmin resize shadowstorage /on=C: /For=C: /Maxsize=4GB`
- You will see a prompt confirming resize done
- You can check the status again using the command discussed in point 1 above

4. Just to get rid of the space already consumed, but sticking to the same size of max-size as before:

- Do actions as per point 3 to set the max-size t, say, 1GB
- If you check now, most likely you’ll see that used space is now 0KB

SBS 2008 / SBE 2008

- Do the resize again and set it back to what it was before
- Check your disk space availability in Windows Explorer, you should see the reclaim is done!

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