Windows Server

- Reset Password on Server 2016

Reset Password on Server 2016

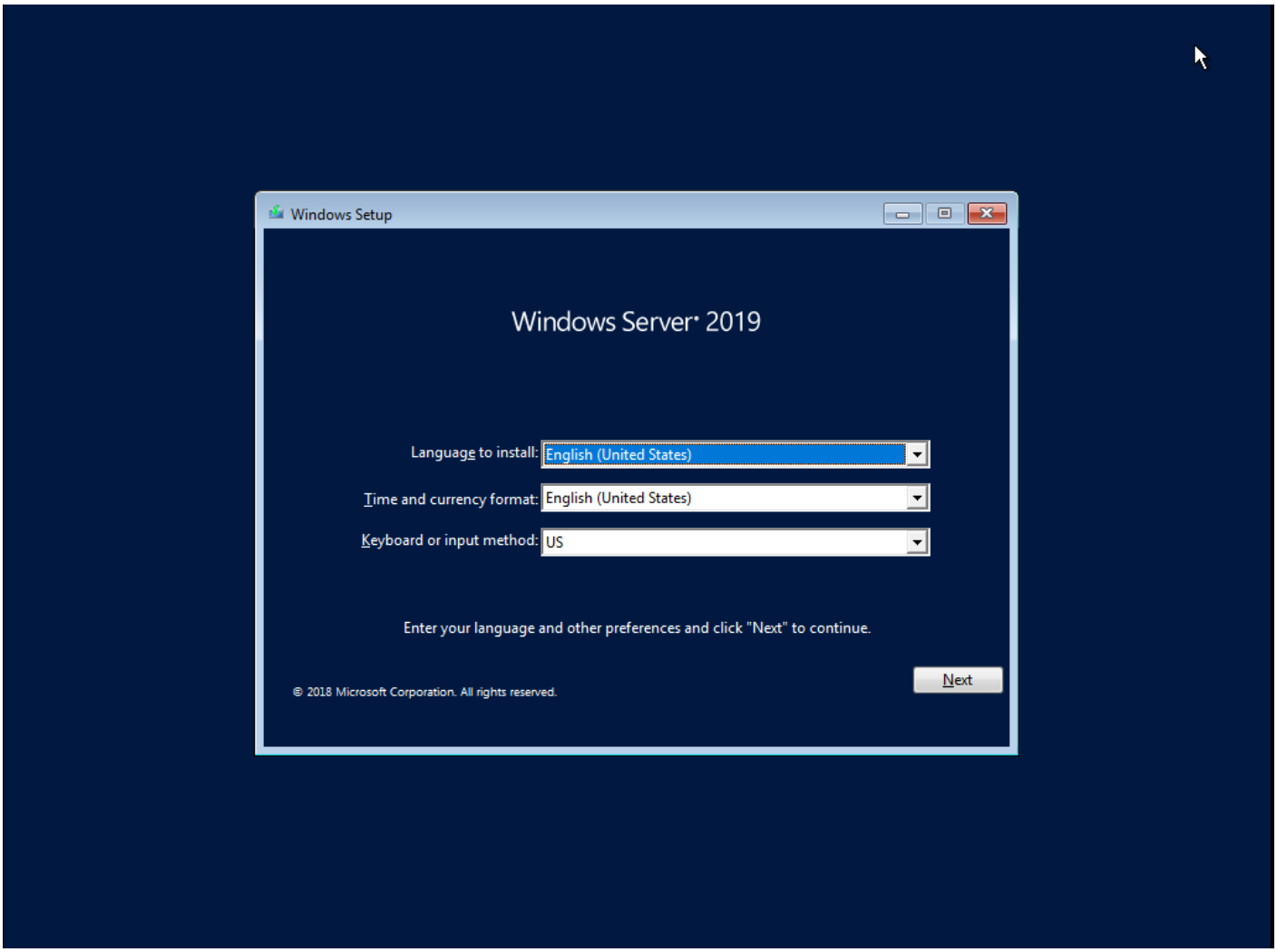
This potentially works with other versions of Windows server as well since adding an admin command prompt to Windows is relatively universal. Overview

> **Disclaimer**

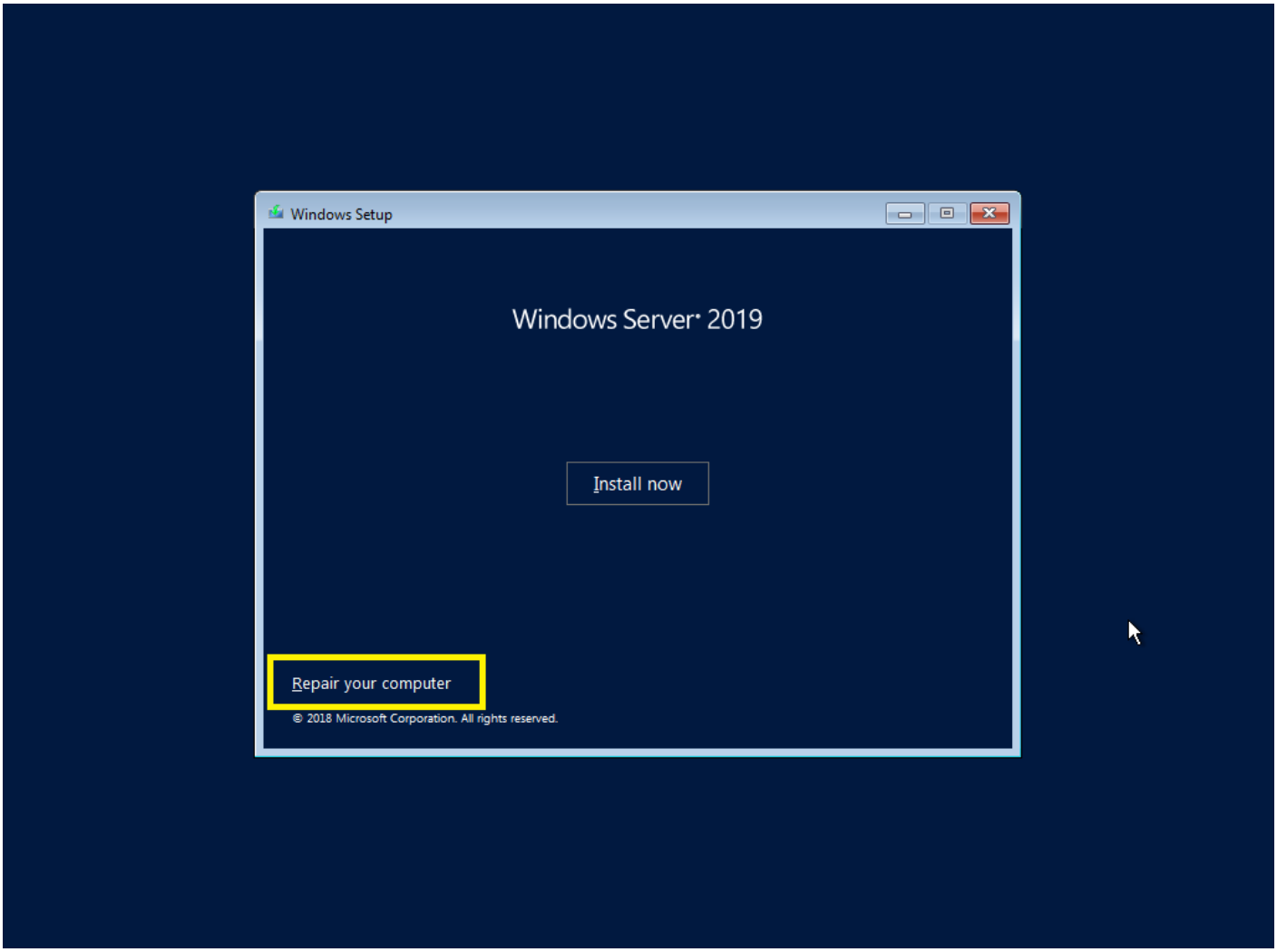
> These instructions are provided **AS IS** ! Use it at **your own risk** !!! We are not encouraging you to crack or hack systems where you have no authorized access. This post is intended for educational purposes.

Step 1 – Boot from Window ISO

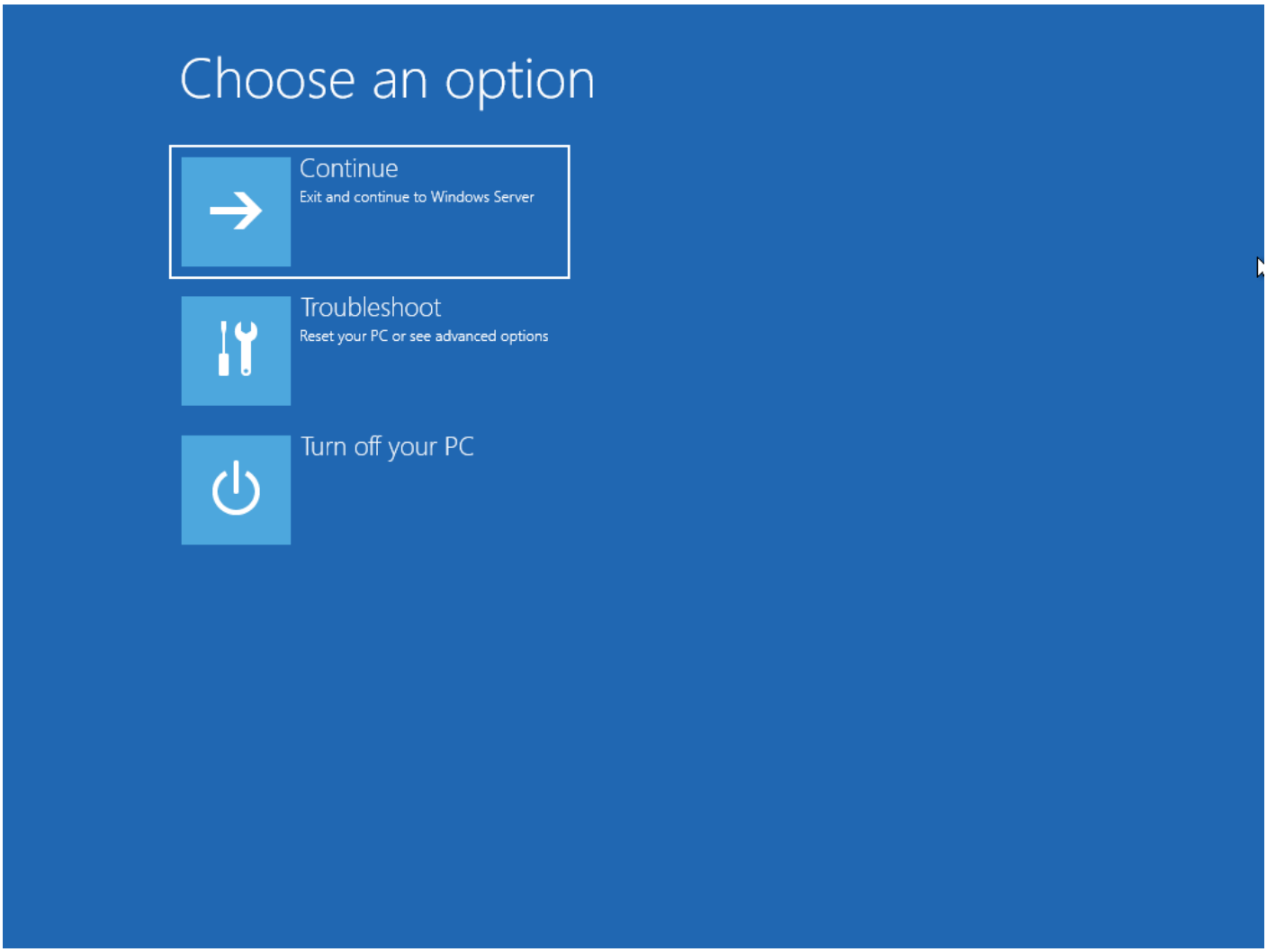
Depending your scenario (physical machine or virtual machine), you will need to boot from you Windows ISO Bootable image. When the installation wizard start, set your settings as required and press Next



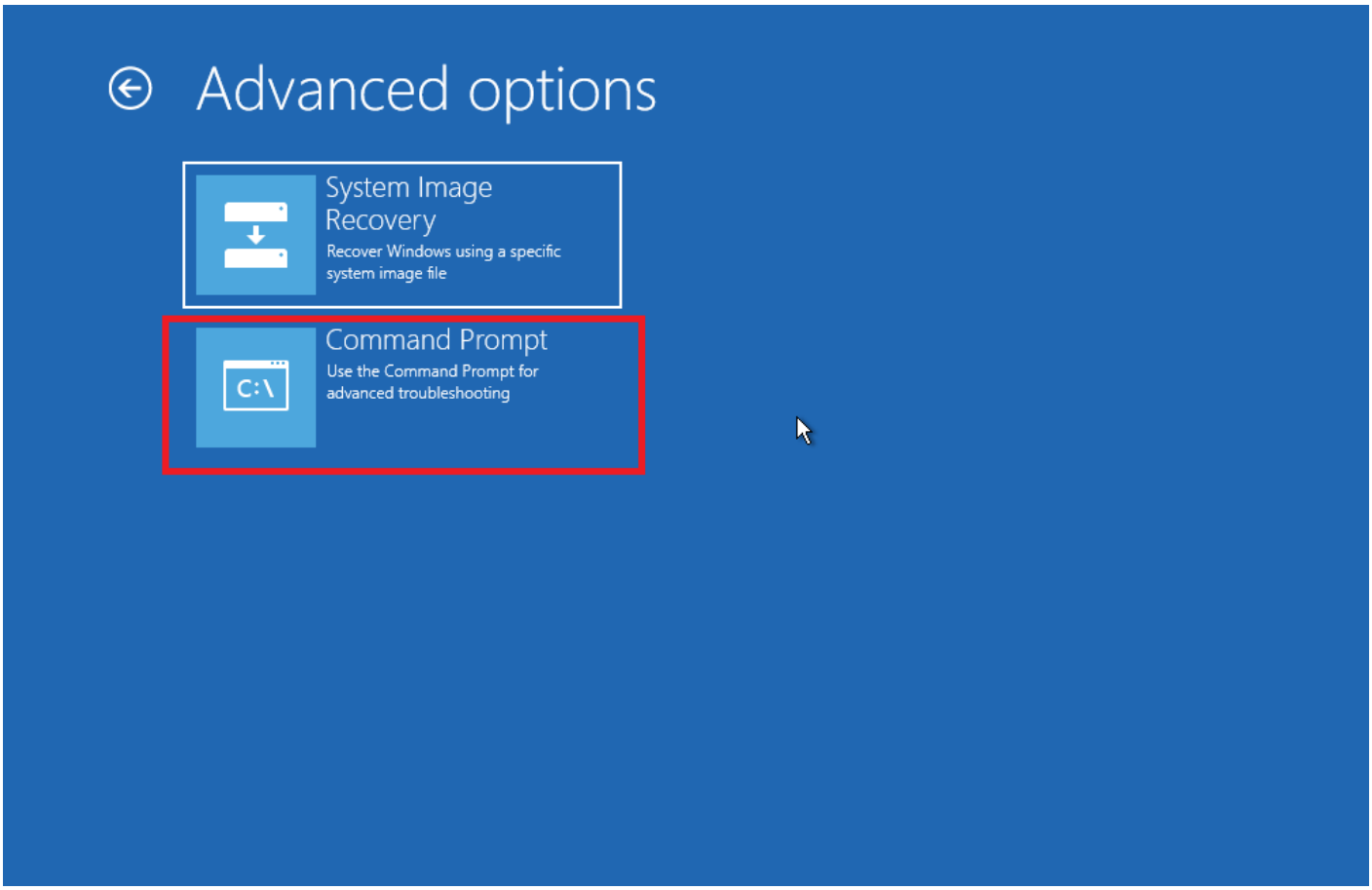
In the next installation screen, click on the **Repair your Computer** link in order to have access to the command line tool we will use to perform the necessary change



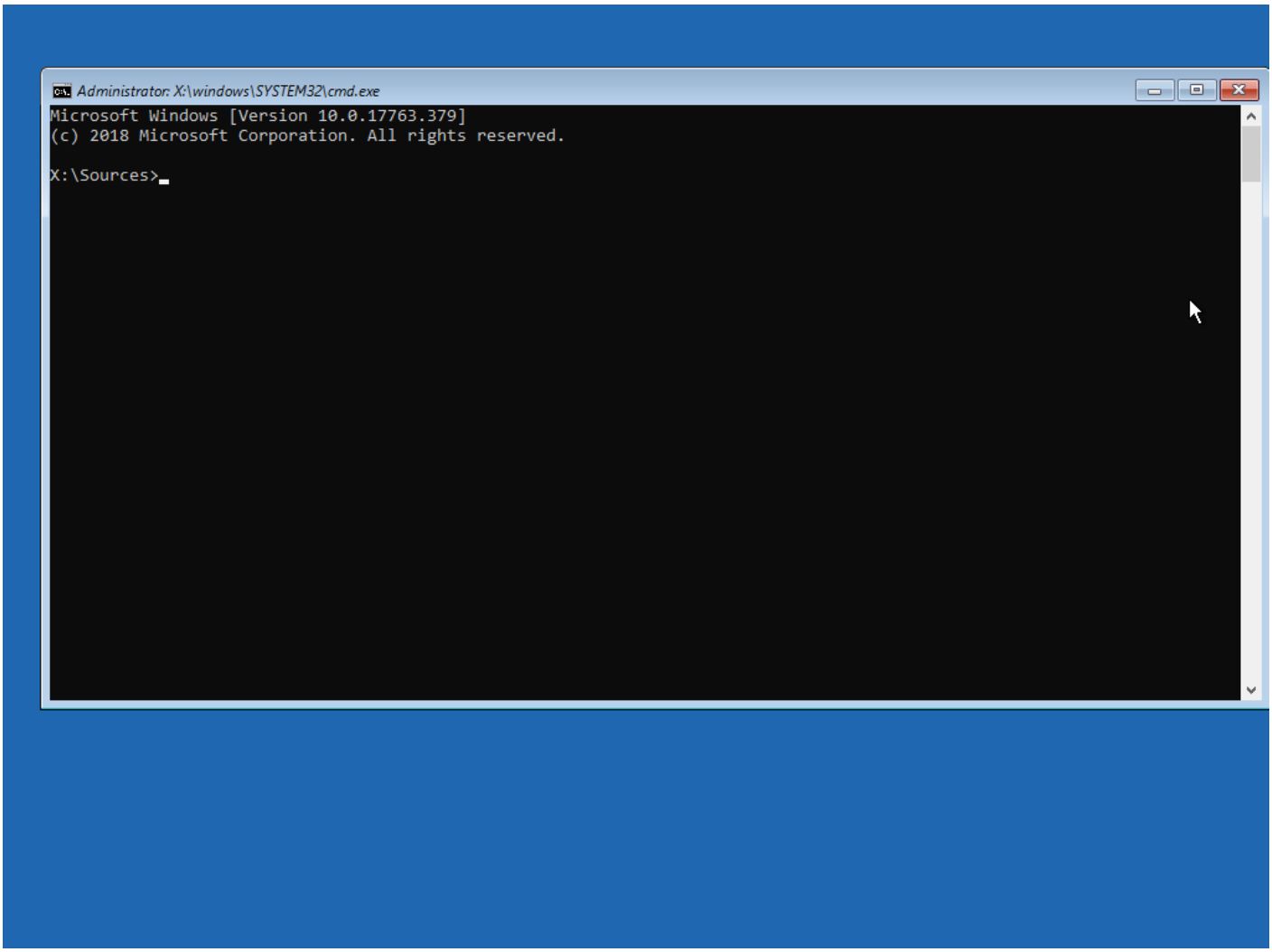
In the **Choose an option** screen, Select the option **Troubleshoot (so the second option on the screenshot !!!)**



Finally, in the **Advanced Settings Page**, select the option **Command Prompt**

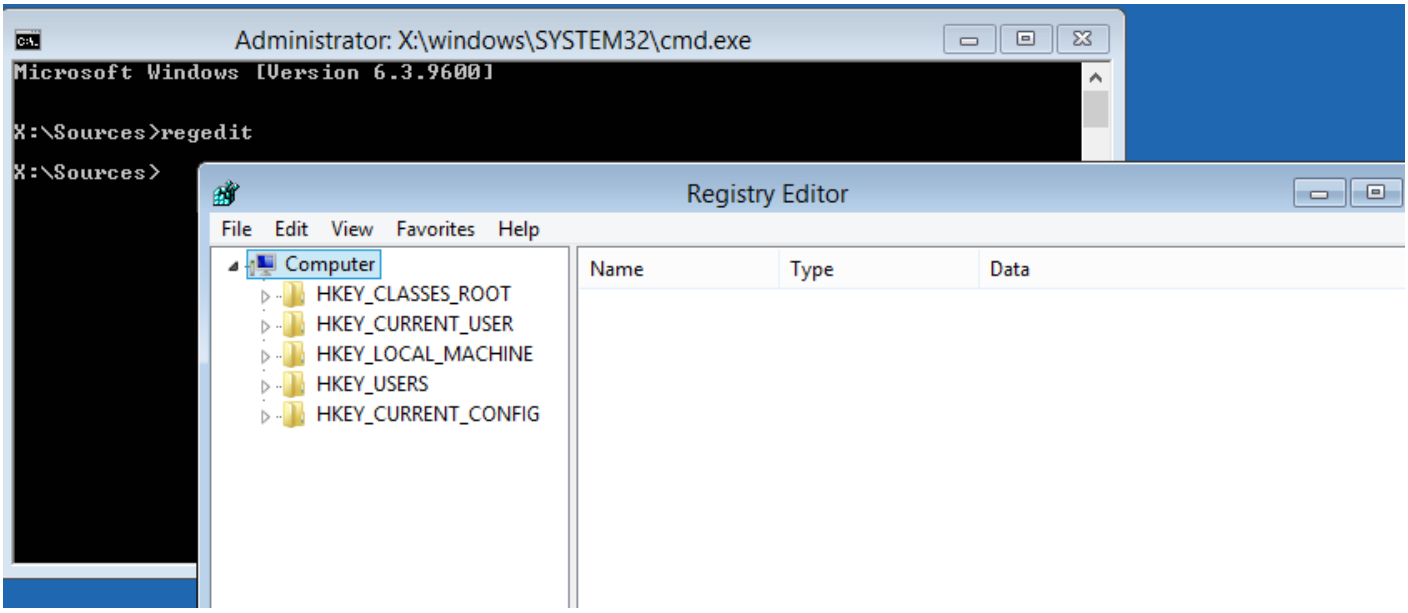


After clicking on the command Prompt, you can see that indeed we have access to a nice command line interface

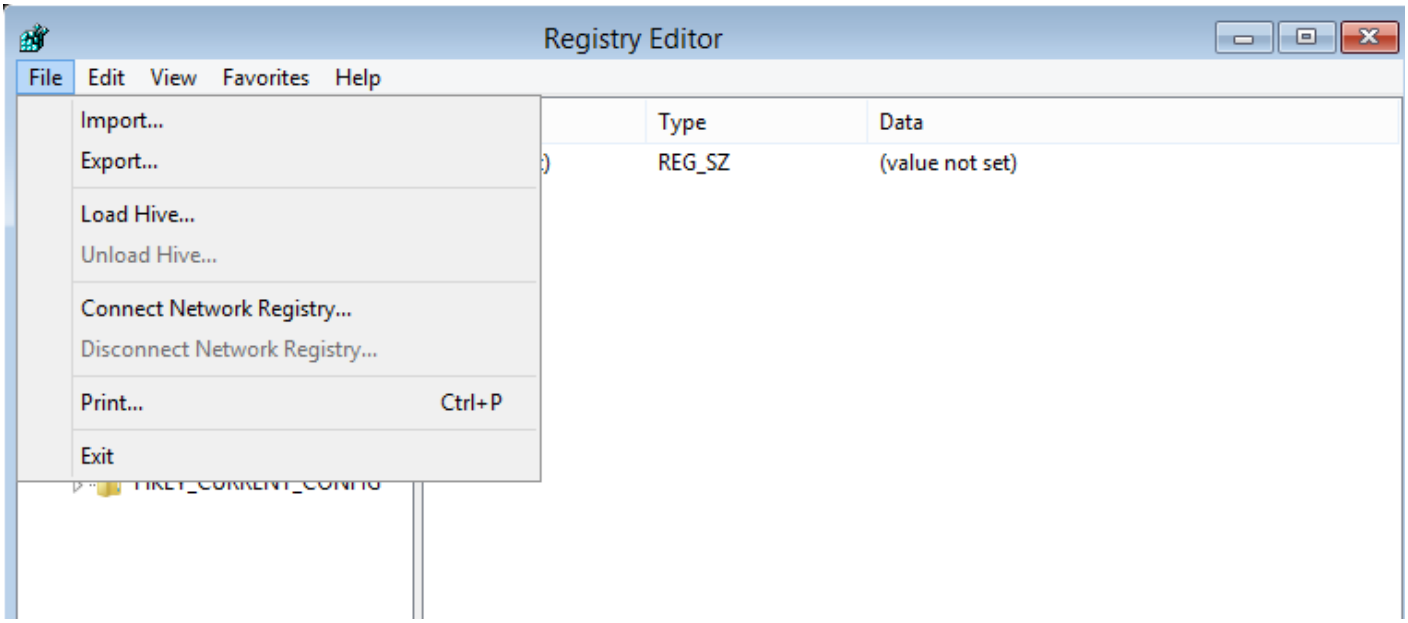


Step 2 – Modify “Offline Registry”

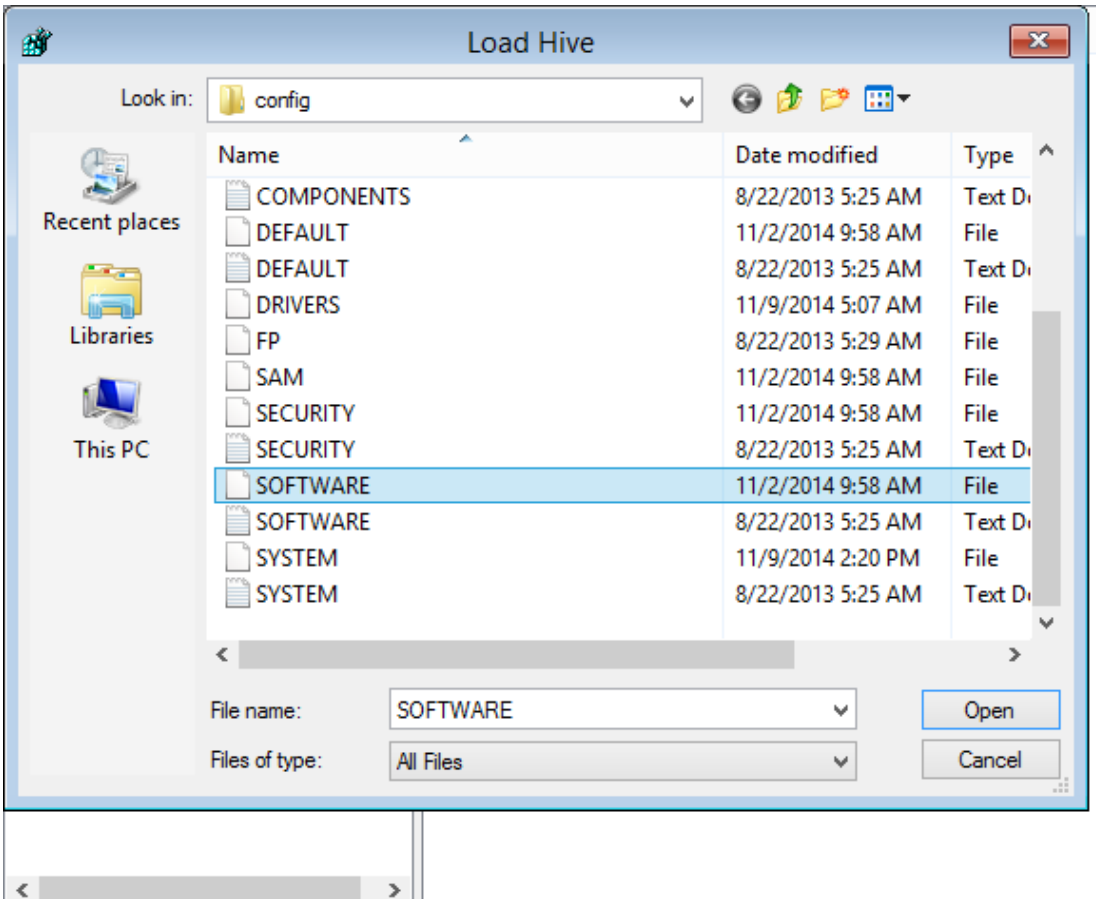
In the command prompt, you will issue the follow command ：**regedit**. This will open the registry editor.



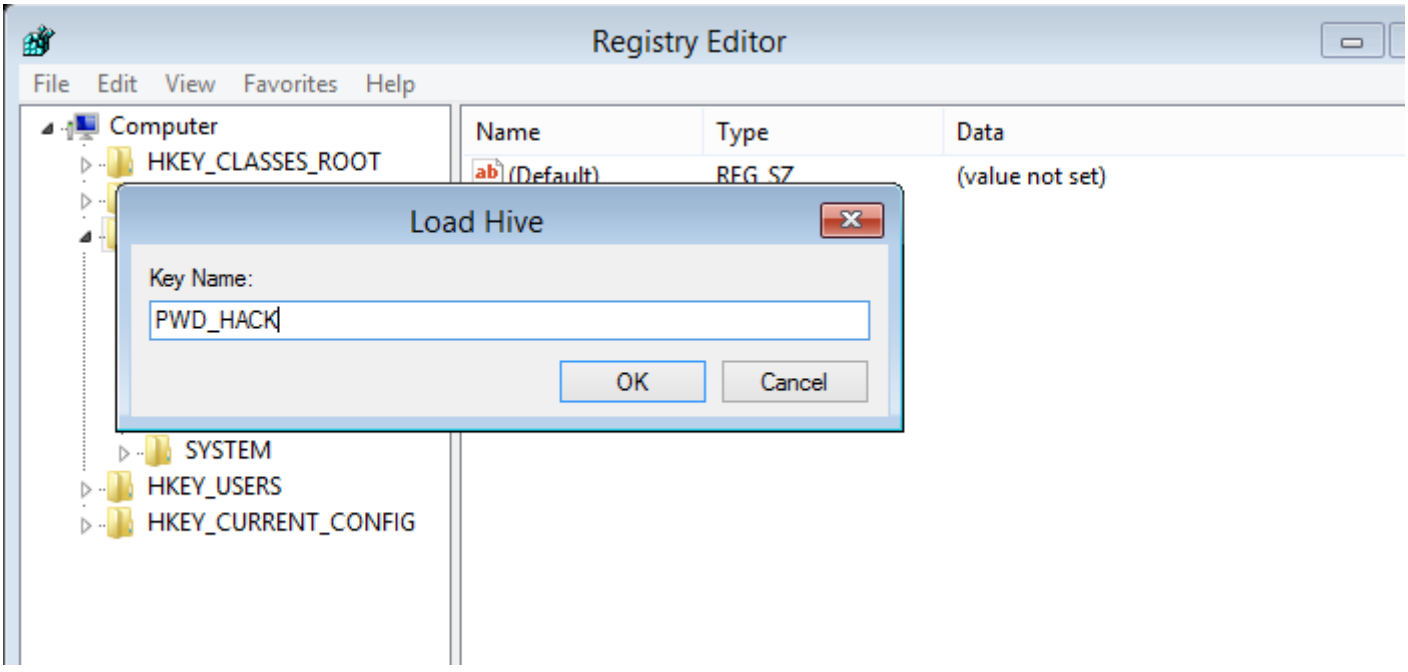
In the registry editor, Select on the **HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE** Node and from the **File menu**, Select **Load Hive**



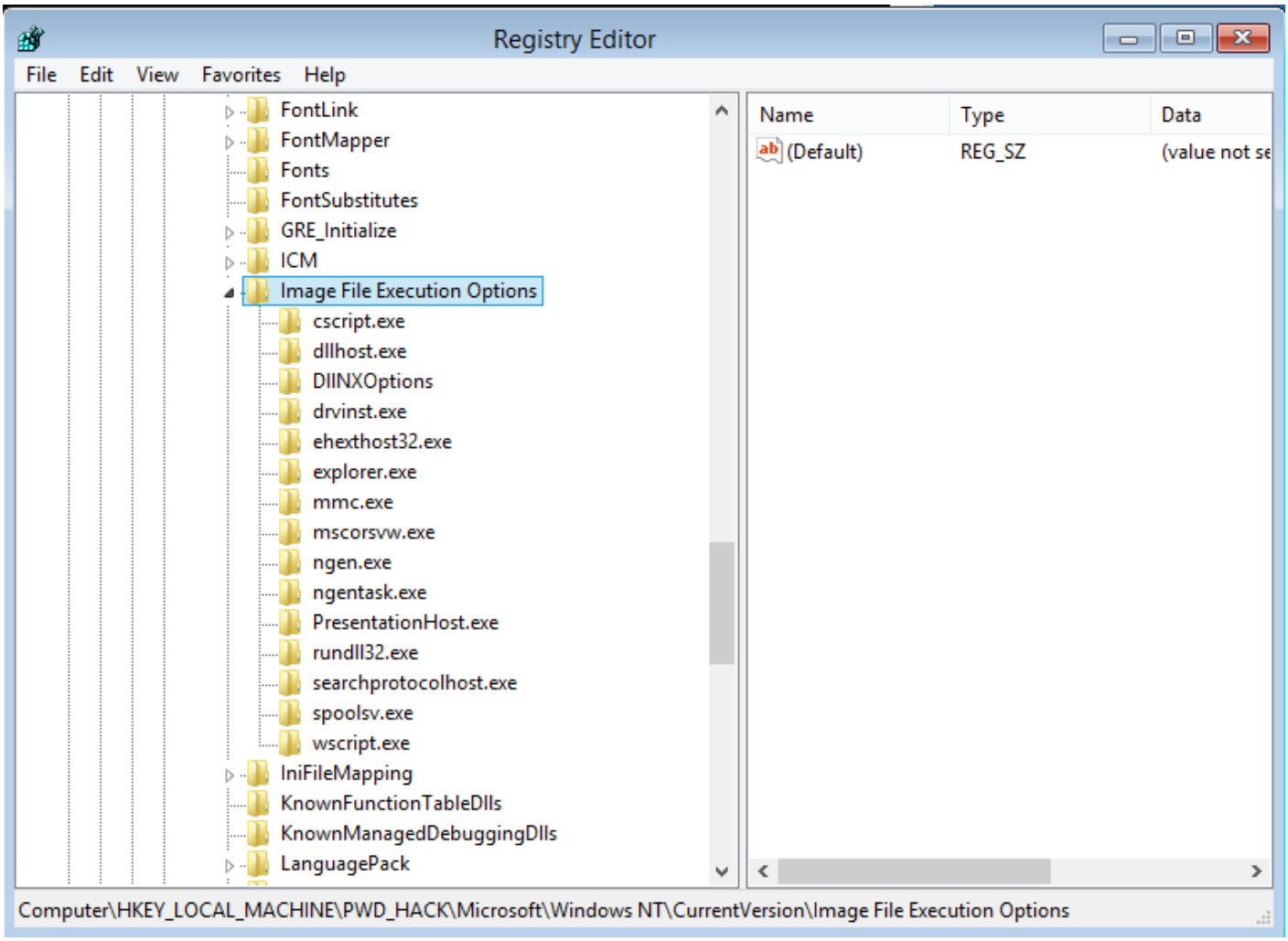
In the dialog box, find **your os partition** and navigate to **c:\Windows\System32\config.** From the location, select the file **Software (not the software.txt file but the software file)**



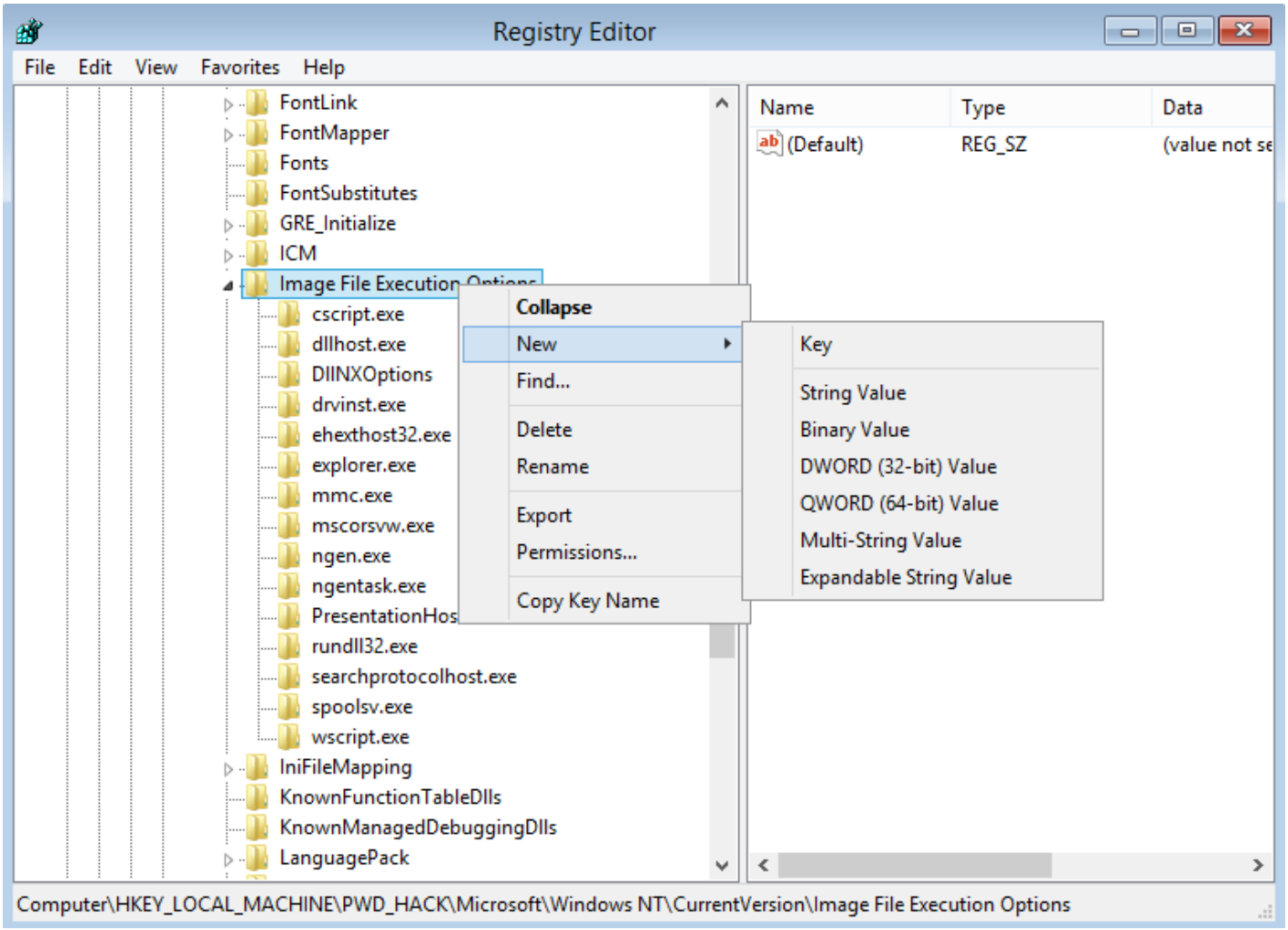
Provide a new name to the hive and **press OK**

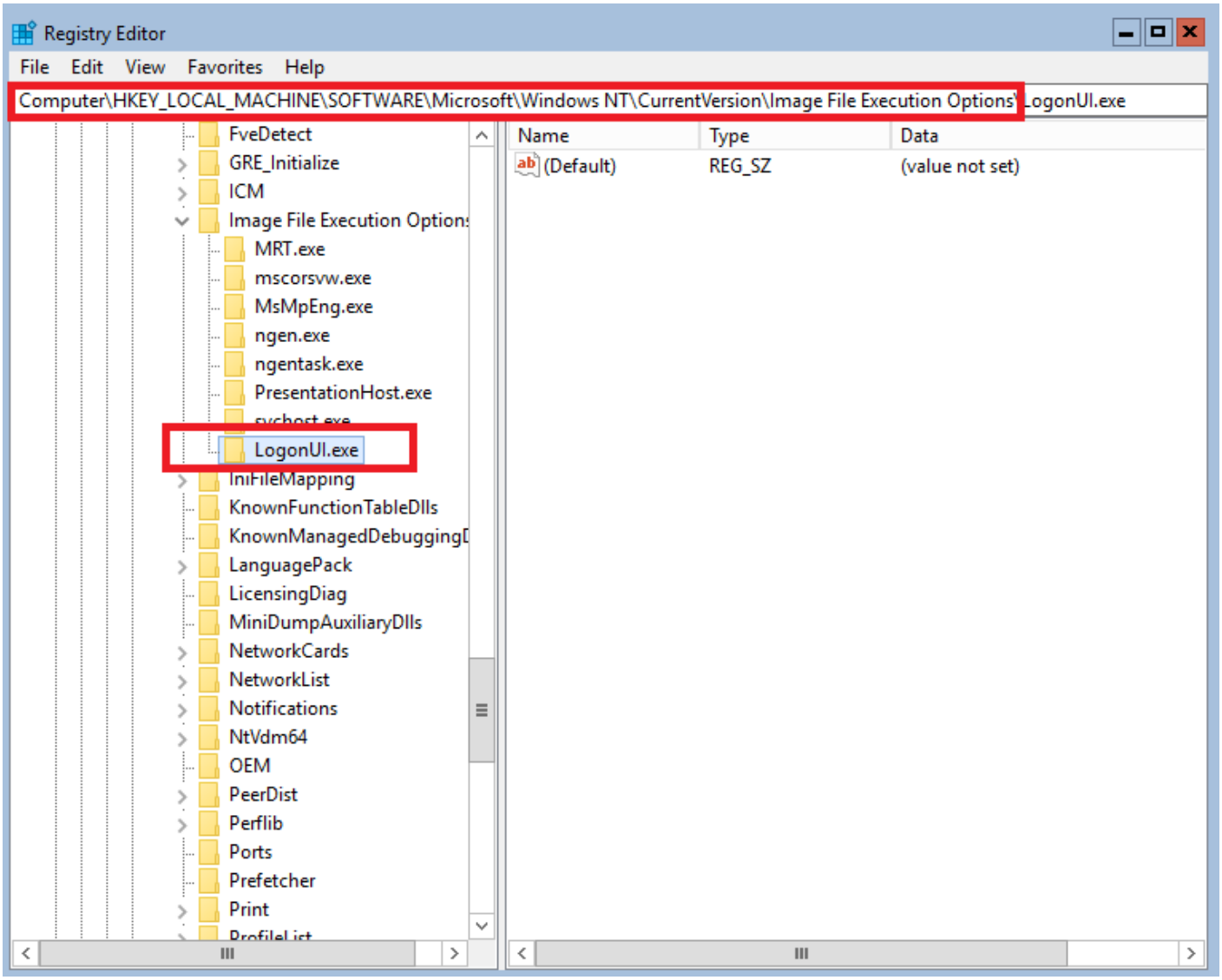


Expand the newly created folder (i.e. PWD_HACK) and browse to the following location : **HKLM\<%Name of loaded HIVE>\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\Image File Execution Options**

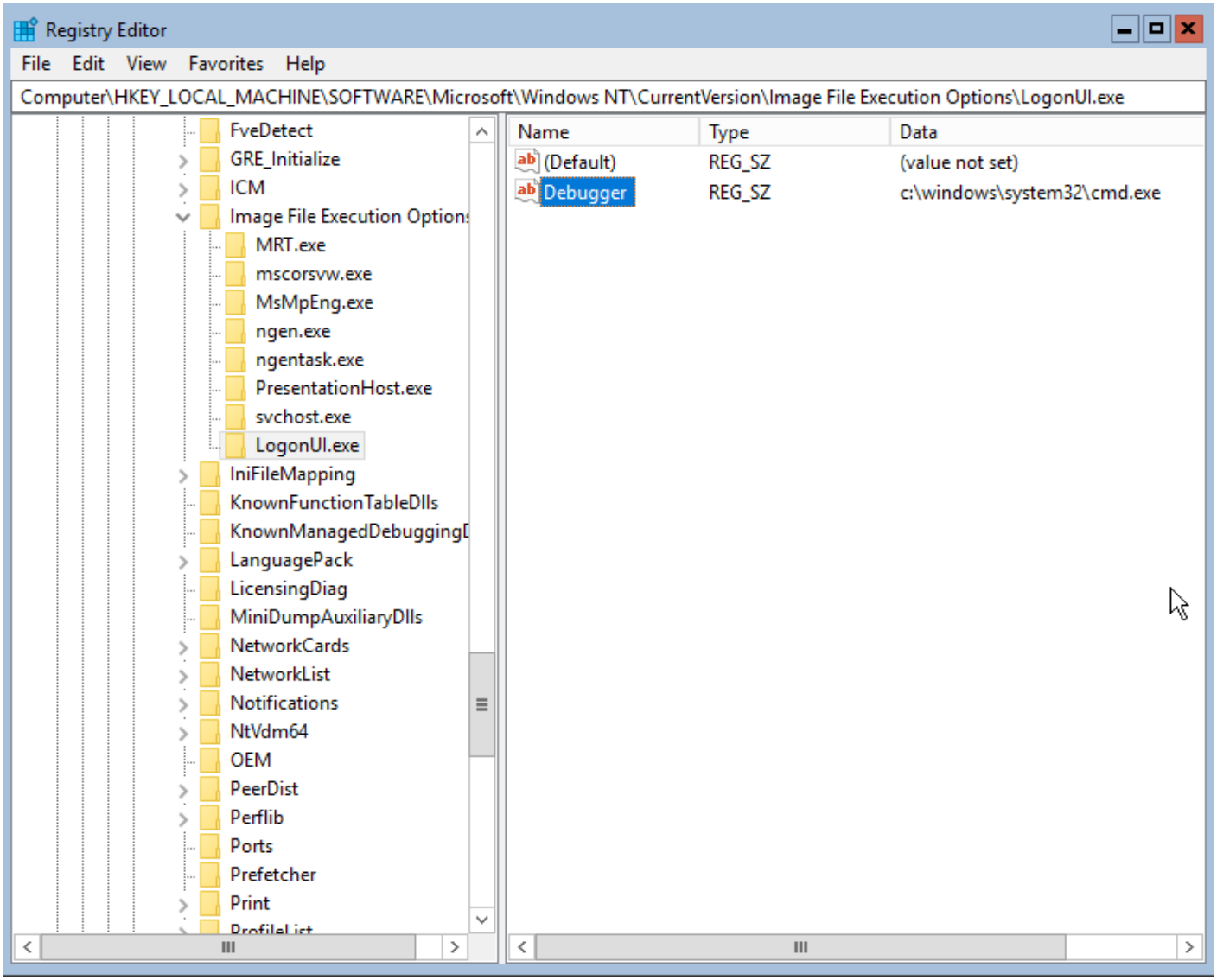


Under the **Image File Execution options**, create a new key called **LogonUI.exe**


Registry Editor
File
Edit
View
Favorites
Help
FontLink
FontMapper
Fonts
FontSubstitutes
GRE_Initialize
ICM
Image File Execution Options
cscript.exe
dllhost.exe
DllNXOptions
drvinst.exe
ehexthost32.exe
explorer.exe
mmc.exe
mscorsvw.exe
ngen.exe
ngentask.exe
PresentationHos
rundll32.exe
searchprotocolhost.exe
spoolsv.exe
wscript.exe
IniFileMapping
KnownFunctionTableDlls
KnownManagedDebuggingDlls
LanguagePack
Name
Type
Data
(Default)
REG_SZ
(value not se
Collapse
New
Find...
Delete
Rename
Export
Permissions...
Copy Key Name
Key
String Value
Binary Value
DWORD (32-bit) Value
QWORD (64-bit) Value
Multi-String Value
Expandable String Value
Computer\HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\PWD_HACK\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\Image File Execution Options



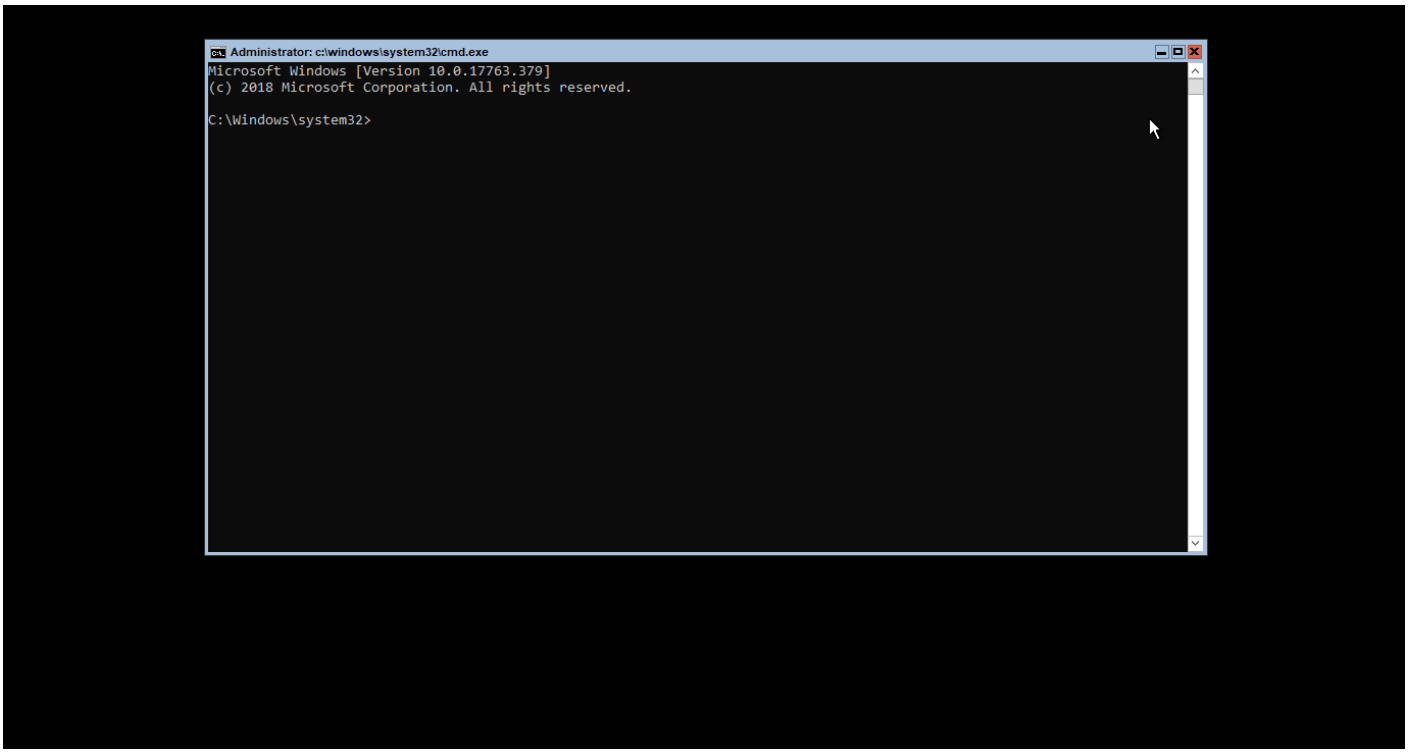
Select the **LogonUI.exe** key and create a new **REG_SZ (String Value) called Debugger.** Select the String Value **Debugger**, **double-click** on it and put as value the following **c:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe.**



When done, you can reboot your machine….

Step 3 – Recover your Password !

The change we have made in the registry will basically start a command prompt with Admin rights instead of the login shell where you would need to enter your username and password… You have to do nothing, the prompt is there and you are ready to reset or create a new user account with admin rights in order to restore your lost access….

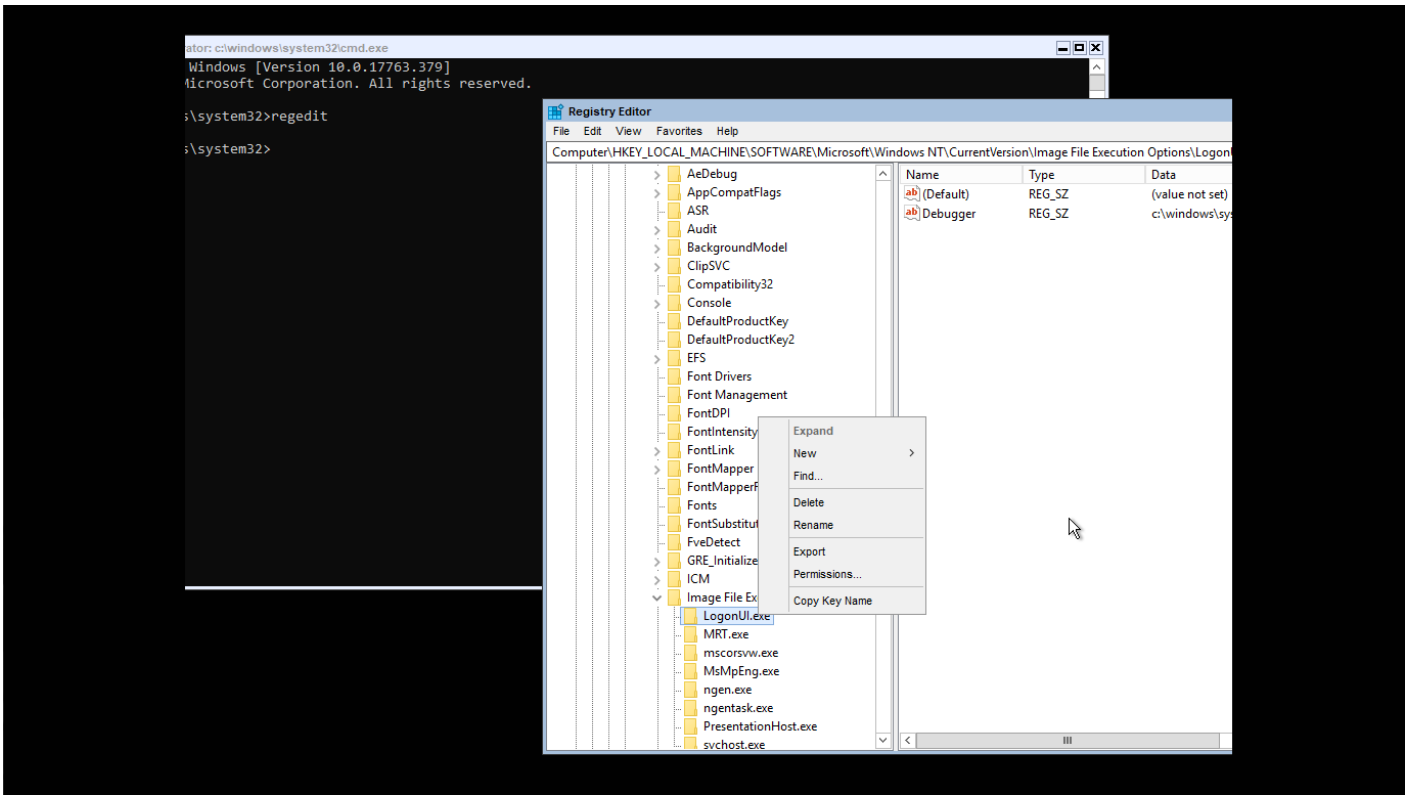


To reset the password of the administrator; type in the command prompt **net user administrator <%newPassword%>**

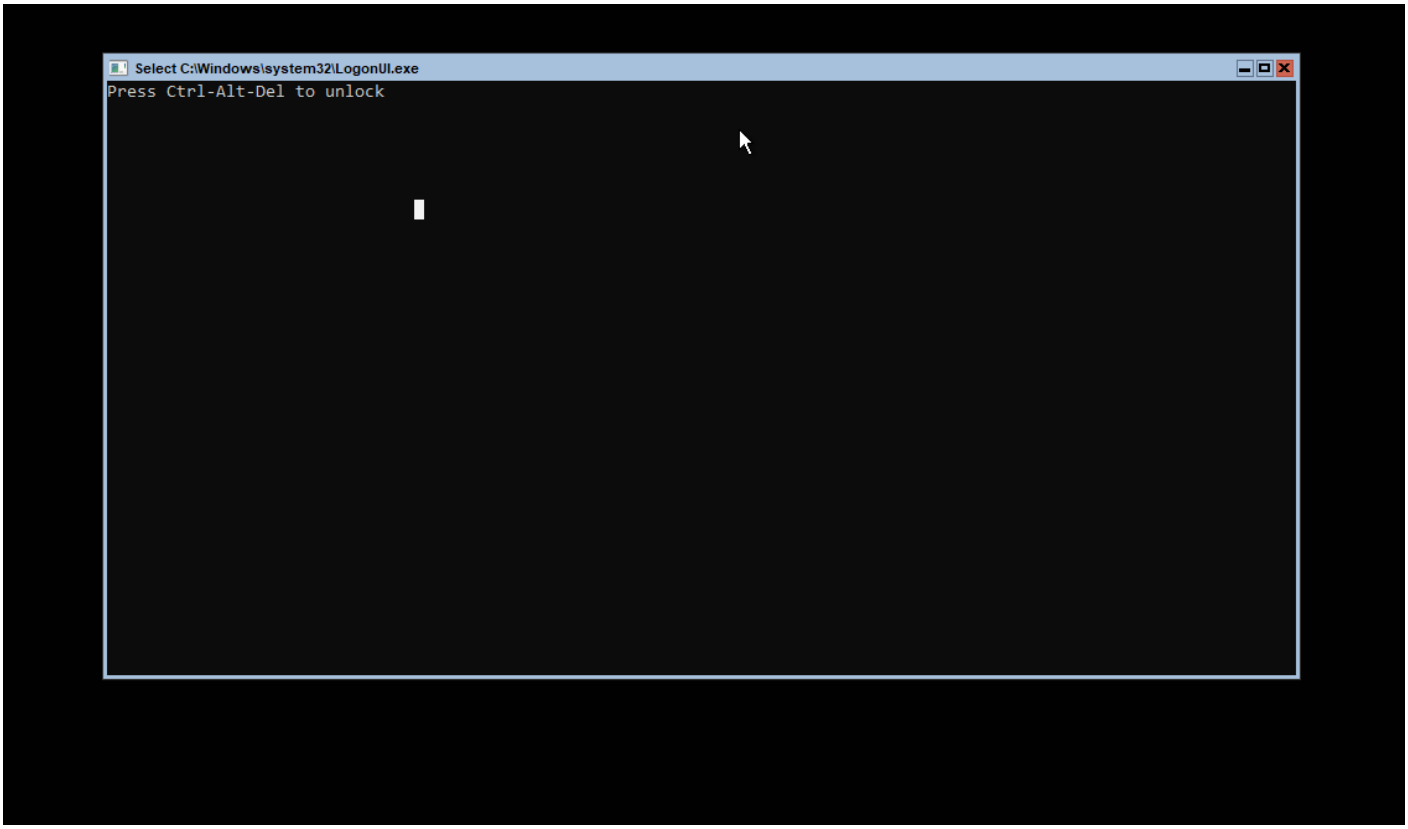
> **You can also create a new admin user with the commands below.**
>
> **net user newuser01 newPassword /add**
> **net localgroup administrators newuser01 /add**

Step 4 – Revert your Changes while logged in

Since we are already on the machine and since we have reset the admin password, we can already revert the changes we have made. We simply need to start registry again and delete the key we have created under **HKLM\Software\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\Image File Execution Option**



Wait a few minutes and normally the **standard Login shell** will be displayed.



At this stage, you can try to login into your system with the newly password you have set and you can perform whatever action is needed to restore services on this specific machine.