Windows Vista

The Pocket Guide

~~~

Dedicated to my wife, Mallory – thanks for being patient
with me while I balance my time with you and
with work, school, and my web design hobby

~~~

Contents

Introduction

Computers are part of our everyday lives; learning how to use them to your advantage is invaluable. With this in mind, it is important to learn how to use computers well and how to use them effectively.

In this book, you will learn more about the Windows Vista operating system. Follow along with your computer as you read the chapters and master the content.

This book will teach you how to backup your files, take control of security, maintain your computer and files, improve performance, increase efficiency, and personalize your system. You do not need to read this book in order – select a chapter that looks interesting and begin.

Introduction

My only suggestion is that you become familiar with the Getting Started chapter, as this will lay a solid foundation for the rest of the book.

You will be pointed to many useful software programs throughout this book. I ensure these programs are freeware (or have a free option) and are free from viruses and spyware. Always use caution when using third-party software and always download them from the vendor's website.

Now, take a look through the pages of this book and enjoy. When you have mastered all I can offer, don't stop – continue to learn how to use Windows Vista and don't be afraid to try new things.

2.0 Getting Started

Before you get started with this book, there are a few things you should first consider. In this chapter I'll cover your choice of OS, which builds the foundation of everything you'll learn. Things you should consider are: whether you want both XP and Vista on your computer, what version of Windows Vista to use, and whether you should go 64-bit or not.

The final two sections of this chapter will give you some background knowledge on working with the Windows Registry and the Windows Group Policy Management Console. These two tools will appear frequently in this book and you should be familiar with them.

Getting Started

2.1 Dual Boot Windows XP and Vista

There are times when I need to use XP (i.e. when I'm writing an XP compatible guide for Windows Guides) You may have your own reasons for use of both systems, or you may just have a licenses for Vista and XP and want to use them both.

It doesn't matter if you already have Windows Vista installed or Windows XP installed. Just use either of the following guides titled "2.1.2 Install Vista after Installing XP" or "2.1.3 Install XP after Installing Vista".

Before you begin, please note: it is **easier** to install XP first – if you are starting from scratch.

2.1.1 Create Partitions for Your Installations

You either need to install each operating system on a different physical disk or you will need to partition your drive before attempting a dual boot. Each partition should be a primary partition. Google will point you in the right direction if you don't know how to partition your drive.

2.1.2 Install Vista after Installing XP

Installing Vista is really easy if you already have Windows XP installed.

Simply boot from your Windows Vista installation disc, select the disk or partition you wish to install Vista on (make sure you don't install Vista on the XP partition), and Windows will take care of itself.

After installing Vista, you will be presented with a boot screen offering you to boot to Windows Vista or an earlier version of Windows (XP.)

2.1.3 Install XP after Installing Vista

1. Simply boot from your Windows XP installation disk, select the disk or partition you wish to install XP on (make sure you don't install XP on the Vista partition), and Windows will take care of itself.

2. Now boot from your Vista installation DVD. Click Next on the regional settings screen and click on Repair Your Computer. Select the Vista install and run the Startup Repair.

3. The next step is to tell Vista that XP exists by adding an entry for XP to the Vista boot manager. In Windows Vista, click Start and type Run. Right click on the shortcut and select Run as Administrator…

Getting Started

Run the following commands in the same order they are presented here:

```
bcdedit /create {ntldr} /d "Windows XP"
bcdedit /set {ntldr} device boot
bcdedit /set {ntldr} path \ntldr
bcdedit /displayorder {ntldr} /addlast
```

Now reboot your computer and you should have the option to boot to either Windows XP or Windows Vista.

2.2 Which Version of Vista?

Choosing a version of Vista can be a difficult task as there is a big price difference between the versions.

My suggestion is to avoid Home Basic and Business and choose Home Premium or Ultimate. I currently have Vista installed on three of my computers: Vista Home Premium on my personal laptop, Vista Business on my laptop for school, and Vista Ultimate on my media center desktop. I have no experience with Vista Home, but its functionality limitations will hinder you in the future. The fact that you are reading this book already suggests you should purchase Home Premium or above.

Please review figure 2.2.1. This chart is available on the Microsoft website and gives a good overview of which version you should use.

Getting Started

Features	Home Basic	Home Premium	Business	Ultimate
Suggested Retail Price (MSRP)	$99.95	$129.95	$199.95	$219.95
Most secure Windows ever...	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quickly find what you need...	✓	✓	✓	✓
Elegant Windows Aero experience...		✓	✓	✓
Best choice for laptops...		✓	✓	✓
Share documents and collaborate...		✓	✓	✓
Use a secondary screen on your mobile PC...		✓	✓	✓
All-in-one media center functionality...		✓		✓
Protect against hardware failure...			✓	✓
Scan, fax, and receive documents and images...			✓	✓
Automatically back up your files...		✓	✓	✓
Remotely access your business resources...			✓	✓
Easier networking connectivity...	✓	✓	✓	✓
Better protect your data against loss...				✓
Easily make DVDs...		✓		✓
Have more fun on your PC...		✓		✓
Create high-definition movies...		✓		✓

Figure 2.2.1 Vista Version Features Comparison Chart

Getting Started

2.3 Slim Down Your Vista Install

If you are new to using Vista, or if you want to begin a clean slate, you may want to cut out some of the bulk that comes with Vista. A popular program designed to help you with this task is named vLite.

vLite requires you to copy the setup files from your Vista installation disc to your hard drive. You then select the components you want to include in your install and then you make a bootable ISO file.

Details of which components you remove come down to your choice and are out of the scope of this book. However, there are many sites out there that are willing to give you a starter point and suggestions.

While vLite is aimed at more advanced users, you should have no problems having a go yourself. In the worst scenario, you are left with a Vista installation that doesn't have all the components you need.

One tip I will urge you to follow is to create the vLite ISO on a computer other than the one you are putting Vista on. If your OS is not functional you can at least try again.

2.4 Vista 32-bit or 64-bit?

When deciding to move up to a 64-bit operating system, you should first consider what 64-bit gets you.

Knowing what software runs on 64-bit should influence your decision as you will see no advantage if you are running 32-bit software on a 64-bit OS. You also lose the ability to run 16-bit software, which shouldn't be a problem unless you rely on older software, such as old work software or home-made packages you haven't yet updated.

2.3.1 What Does 64-Bit Vista Get Me?

More bits gets you access to more memory. The processor inside your PC communicates with your system memory (RAM) with numeric addressing. Thus the maximum amount of memory a 32-bit processor can address is 232 bytes, or 4 gigabytes. Newer 64-bit processors—not to mention the 64-bit operating systems that run on them—can address 264 bytes of memory, or 17,179,869,184 gigabytes (16 exabytes) of RAM. (17 million gigabytes may sound like a lot of space now, but it won't be long before you'll be taking baby pictures with an 8-gigapixel digital camera.)

Windows NT, released in 1993, was Microsoft's first fully 32-bit operating system. But it took eight years before the platform, which had since evolved into Windows 2000 and then XP, became mainstream. (For those keeping track, Windows 9x doesn't count because it was a hybrid OS that ran 32-bit applications on a 16-bit DOS foundation, which was one of the reasons it was so unstable.) 64-bit Windows became a

Getting Started

reality in XP, but Vista is Microsoft's first serious attempt to make 64-bit computing mainstream. But the question is, how mainstream is it?

2.3.2 How Mainstream is 64 bit?

While 64-bit Vista can run most 32-bit applications without a problem, it's not compatible with 32-bit hardware drivers or 32-bit utilities like Windows Explorer extensions (e.g., context menu add-ons). This means that you need a native 64-bit driver for every device on your PC. And since 64-bit Vista won't load unsigned drivers (see Chapter 6), finding support for all your hardware may be a bit of a challenge, at least presently. Since most Vista installations are still 32-bit, most manufacturers aren't bothering to compile, test, and support 64-bit drivers and software.

2.3.3 Is there a Performance Increase?

Now, 64-bit software running on 64-bit Windows has been known to run as much as 10% faster, which illustrates the other reason—aside from memory addressing—that people find 64-bit Vista alluring. Just be prepared for lackluster industry support, at least for the next few years until Microsoft releases a 64-bit-only OS.

All editions of Vista (except Starter) are available in both the 32-bit or 64-bit varieties; the retail Ultimate edition even includes both 32-bit and 64-bit DVDs right in the box.

2.5 Working with the Windows Registry

Throughout this book you will need to access the Windows Registry and make changes. I try to make executable registry hacks in most cases, but it can be fun to script your own registry files. Before doing anything with the Windows Registry, you should know what the registry is, how to back it up, how to restore it to a previous state, and how to add keys and values.

2.4.1 What is the Windows Registry?

Think of the Windows registry as a **control center for your computer**. Windows settings, individual program settings, and other important configuration information are stored here.

2.4.2 Accessing the Windows Registry Editor

To access the Windows Registry, press the start button, type **regedit**, and press **Enter**.

Getting Started

When the registry loads, you will be presented with the Windows Registry Editor. The registry is made up of the following components:

- Keys
- Subkeys
- Values

2.4.3 Backing up the Windows Registry

You may back up the entire registry, or a single key you are working on. Please see section 3.2.1 for an alternate method of backing up the registry.

2.4.3.1 Backing up the entire registry

1. Click **Start** type **systempropertiesprotection** in the Start Search box, and then press **ENTER**. *If you are prompted for an administrator password or for a confirmation, type the password, or click Continue*

2. Wait for Windows to search for available disks and most recent restore points. In the **System Properties** dialog box, on the **System Protection** tab, click **Create**

3. **Type a name** for the restore point and then click **Create**

4. After the restore point has been created successfully, **click OK two times**

Note: *If System Restore is turned off, click to select the local disk, click Apply and then click Create.*

2.4.3.2 Backing up a Single Key

1. Find the key you want to back up and right click on it

2. Click Export

3. Save the file somewhere safe with a distinctive name

2.4.4 Restoring the Windows Registry

You may restore the entire registry, or a single key you are working on.

2.4.4.1   Restoring the Entire Registry

1. Click **Start**, type **systempropertiesprotection** in the Start Search box, and then press **ENTER**
   If you are prompted for an administrator password or for a confirmation, type the password, or click Continue

2. In the System Properties dialog box, on the **System Protection** tab, click **System Restore**

3. In the System Restore dialog box select **Choose a different restore point**, and then click **Next**

Getting Started

4. Select the restore point that you want to use, and then click **Next**

5. Confirm your restore point, and then click **Finish System restore** - this restores the selected Windows Vista configuration and then restarts the computer

6. Log on to the computer. When the System Restore confirmation page appears, click **OK**..

2.4.4.2 Restoring a Single Key

1. **Find the key** that you previously saved

2. Double click on the file and select **Yes**

2.4.5 Adding Keys or Values

In some of the tutorials in this book, you will need to create a new key or value.

2.4.5.1 Adding a New Key

To add a new key, do the following:

1. **Right click** on the parent key

2. Select **New > Key**

3. Follow the guide's instructions for what key name to assign

2.4.5.2 Adding a New Value

To add a new value, do the following:

1. Navigate to the key that you want to add a value to

2. **Right click** in the blank space of the right pane

3. Select **New > xx** (*Where xx is the value specified in the guide*)

4. Follow the guide's instructions for what value to assign

2.6 Working with the Group Policy Management Console

Throughout this book you will need to access the Windows Group Policy Management Console (GPMC) and make changes. Before doing anything with the GPMC, you should know what the GPMC is, how to access it, and how to enable options with it.

Getting Started

2.6.1 What is the Group Policy Management Console?

Group Policy is a feature of Microsoft Windows that provides centralized management and configuration of computers.

2.6.2 Accessing the Group Policy Management Console

To access the GPMC, press the start button, type **GPEdit.msc**, and press **Enter**. Please note: the GPMC is only available in Vista Business and Ultimate. I include a registry hack, when possible, to help you replicate the results of changing an option in the console.

2.6.3 Enabling Options

To enable any options, as directed in any of the guides, double-click on the option in the right pane and change the setting to Enabled. To disable any options, simply do the above and change the option to disabled.

2.7 Now You Are Ready to Begin

With the knowledge gained from this chapter, you should be able to work with any of the guides in this

Getting Started

book. Refer to this chapter often when you have questions.

If you are still stuck and don't know what to do, refer to my contact information at the end of this book. I am always happy to answer your questions.

3.0 Backing up Early and Often

If you are one of the lucky people who have never lost a file on your computer, congratulations – this chapter is definitely for you. If you have lost files before – yep that's you – then you should review this chapter too before you begin.

In this chapter, you'll learn how to use the Backup and Restore Center, backup and restore your registry, and how to recover lost files or your Vista Installation.

Ready? If the above sounds like a lot to learn, take it one step at a time – but don't say I didn't warn you about backing up your files.

Back Up

3.1 The Backup and Restore Center

The Backup and Restore center – bundled with
Windows Vista – is an excellent tool, which allows you
to backup and restore your files or an image of your
operating system.

3.1.1 Launching the Backup and Restore Center

To launch the Backup and Restore Center, do the
following:

1. Press the Start buttom

2. Type Backup

3. Select Backup and Restore Center

3.1.2 Backing up Your Files

To backup your files, click Backup Files and follow the
directions given to you. Select the directories and files
you want to backup and find a suitable place to store

these files. I recommend an external hard drive or DVD(s).

3.1.3 Restoring Your Files

Launch the Backup and Restore center and click Restore Files. Locate the medium your files are stored on and follow the instructions to get your previously backed up files back.

3.2 Back Up and Restore the Registry

Some guides in this book will require you to change values in your registry. If you make a mistake and don't correct it, you may find your computer is not as functional as it was before. To protect yourself from any mistakes, you need to backup your registry. To back up and restore your registry, do the following:

Back Up

3.2.1 Backup the Registry

1. Press Start > Run (Winkey+R) and type regedit

2. Left click Computer in the left pane

3. Go to File > Export

4. Save the file (for extra caution, save the file to a USB thumb drive)

3.2.2 Restore the Registry

1. Press Start > Run (Winkey+R) and type regedit

2. Left click Computer in the left pane

3. Go to File > Import

4. Choose the backup file you created

Back Up

3.3 Recovering Lost Data on Your Drive

I lost some photos recently and after trying a few different recovery programs, I came across [Recuva](). My problem is solved and now I recommend this great software. Recuva (pronounced "recover") is a freeware Windows utility to restore files that have been accidentally deleted from your computer. This includes files emptied from the Recycle bin as well as images and other files that have been deleted by user error from digital camera memory cards or MP3 players. It will even bring back files that have been deleted by bugs, crashes and viruses!

3.4 Get a Windows Vista Recovery Disc

Most new computers these days come with windows Vista installed. Most of these computers don't come with any kind of Windows Vista disc. Some may come with a recovery disc but they are bad news as most recovery disks will delete all your files and restore your computer to the state it was in when you first purchased it.

Back Up

Windows Vista DVD's come with a recovery center to allow you to fix operating system related problems. If you do not have this DVD, Microsoft made a recovery disc for this purpose.

Please Note: This disc cannot be used to install or reinstall Windows Vista.

Download Windows Vista Recovery Disc (from NeoSmart technologies) (120 MiB)

Or Download Windows Vista Recovery Disc Torrent

Learn how to burn an ISO image to a DVD

Back Up

4.0 Security

Security is extremely important when using your computer; learning how to configure your PC to work for you in terms of security is essential.

In this chapter, you'll learn how to modify a couple of Vista "annoyances" that may be driving you mad. The rest of the chapter will focus on protecting your information and your computer. You'll learn how to encrypt your data and how to disable common functionality – so other users can't wreak havoc.

The tutorials toward the end of this chapter rely on the Group Policy Management Console (GPMC), which is not available in Vista Home and Home premium. Where possible, I will provide you with a registry hack and in some cases instructions to modify the registry.

Security

4.1 Add "Take Ownership" Context Menu

Many folders in Vista are protected from changes and require administrative approval to change every time. Sometimes this can become tedious, so I've created a registry hack you can use to take ownership of select files.

1. Download TakeOwnership.zip

2. Add "Take ownership" to your context menu by merging (double click) InstallTakeOwnership.reg into your windows registry

Remove "Take ownership" from your context menu by merging RemoveTakeOwnership.reg into your registry.

4.2 Stop UAC Blacking Out the Screen

Have you noticed that when Windows Vista prompts you to allow a program to take action, that the screen blacks out? This is to show you that you are moving to an elevated desktop - where you will allow the program to continue. This can be annoying but you can disable this feature.

1. Download DisableUACBlackout.zip

2. Extract the archive

3. Double click on DisableUACBlackout.reg

To re-enable the blackout, double click on ReEnableUACBlackout.reg

4.3 Disable User Account Control

If you feel confident with taking control of security, you probably don't need the User Account Control (UAC) altogether. To disable UAC, do the following:

1. Open the Start Menu and select Control Panel

2. Select User Accounts

3. Select Turn User Account Control on or off

4. Uncheck the box next to "Use User Account Control (UAC)…" and press OK

You will now be asked to restart your computer to activate your changes. After your computer is restarted you won't be bothered anymore by the UAC.

To re-enable UAC, repeat the above process and at step 4 recheck the box next to "Use User Account Control (UAC)…" and press OK.

Security

4.4 Encrypt Your USB/HDD Data

Do you have data on your USB drive that could be accessed by someone if they found your key drive? Do you have sensitive data that you need to protect, but don't want to pay for expensive software? TrueCrypt was designed for you and in this section you'll learn how to use it.

This guide is written for TrueCrypt 4.3a, but newer versions should operate in a similar fashion.

I will refer the media as a "USB key drive" throughout this tutorial. If you are encrypting your hard disk drive, simply replace this phrase with "hard disk drive" – the procedure is identical.

Final word: do not encrypt the entire drive your OS is stored on. You may encrypt parts of the drive, but not system files.

4.4.1 Download TrueCrypt

1. Download TrueCrypt

2. Run the installer

3. When prompted, select Extract and click Next

4. Extract the files to your USB key drive in a folder named TrueCrypt

Security

Figure 4.4.1.1 Necessary TrueCrypt Files

You can delete other files in the directory if you wish. Ensure you keep the following four files as depicted in Figure 4.4.1.1.

4.4.2 Encrypt part of your USB drive

1. Run TrueCrypt.exe

2. Once loaded, select a drive letter that will become the encrypted volume (the drive letter of your USB drive *won't* change - but will show as two different drive letters when you complete this tutorial)

3. Press Create Volume. Your USB drive will still keep its letter (i.e. "R"), but it will be split into two virtual drives (so the encrypted data will appear as a "W" drive in Computer after you finish the setup.)

Security

4. Now select Create a standard TrueCrypt volume and click Next

5. The next screen will ask you where you want to store the volume. Save a file named Container in the Truecrypt folder on your USB thumb drive and click Next

6. Select the size of the encrypted volume (I suggest you use 1/2 the size of the drive)

7. Create a secure password

8. Now select Format and your Container will form

9. After a confirmation message, click Exit

4.4.3 Verify Your Encrypted Drive Works

1. Go to your Computer and look for a "W" (or letter you chose) drive. It's not there; good news!

2. Open TrueCrypt

3. Select the drive letter you chose in the previous steps

4. Click Select File and find your Container you created

5. Click Mount

6. Type in your password and press OK and your volume will mount

7. Go to Computer and your drive will be there

When you are done, go back to TrueCrypt and select **Dismount.** Congratulations, you now have your data encrypted on your USB drive.

4.5 Disable Task Manager

Pressing CTRL+SHIFT+ESC or pressing CTRL+ALT+DEL and then selecting Task Manager will load the Task Manager**.**

Access to the task manager allows a user to do many things including making the system unstable or accessing other controls you may not want them to have. If you do not want others to have access to the task manager, you'll need to disable it with either the Group Policy Management Console or the Windows Registry.

Security

4.5.1 Disable the Task Manager using Group Policy Editor

1. Start Group Policy Editor (Start > Run > "gpedit.msc")

2. In the left panel, go to User Configuration > Administrative Templates > System > Ctrl+Alt+Del Options

3. In the right panel, enable Remove Task Manager

4.5.2 Disable the Task Manager using the Windows Registry Editor

1. Start Registry Editor (Start > Run > "regedit")

2. Disable Current User: In the left panel, navigate to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\system

3. Disable All Users: In the left panel, navigate to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\system

4. Create a new DWORD value named DisableTaskMgr

5. Set the value to 1 to disable Task Manager

6. Set the value to 0 to re-enable Task Manager

In order for this to take effect, you may need to restart your system.

4.6 Disable Right Click

You may not want users to have access to the right click menu. This can be useful when you don't want people editing the start menu. There are workarounds for not having the right click button, but this will deter most users. In this guide you'll learn how to disable right clicking in Windows.

4.6.1 Disable right click for the Desktop, Files, Folders, and Windows Explorer

1. Start Group Policy Editor (Start > Run > "gpedit.msc")

2. In the left panel, go to User Configuration > Administrative Templates > Start Menu and Taskbar

3. In the right panel, enable Remove access to the context menus for the taskbar

4.6.2 Disable right click for the Taskbar and the Start Menu

Security

1. Start Group Policy Editor (Start > Run > "gpedit.msc")
2. In the left panel, go to Administrative Templates > Windows Components > Windows Explorer

3. In the right panel, enable Remove Windows Explorer's default context menu

4.7 Disable Add/Remove Programs

This guide will help you remove the Add/Remove Programs option from the Control Panel. This is not a fool proof method, but deters most users from accessing this list.

1. Start Registry Editor (Start > Run > "regedit")

2. Disable Current User: In the left panel, navigate to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall

3. Disable All Users: In the left panel, navigate to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall

4. Create a new DWORD value named NoAddRemovePrograms

5. Set the value to 1 to disable Add/Remove Programs

6. Set the value to 0 to re-enable Add/Remove Programs

7. In order for this to take effect, you may need to restart your system.

4.8 Disable Control Panel Access

You may want to restrict access to the control panel and only allow administrative access. This is a very good idea if your children use an account or if you set up a computer in an office for an employee. Learn how to disable the control panel in this guide.

1. Start Group Policy Editor (Start > Run > "gpedit.msc")

2. In the left panel, go to User Configuration > Administrative Templates > Control Panel

3. In the right panel, enable Prohibit access to the control panel

Security

4.9 Disable Shutdown

You may not want someone shutting down a computer because you don't want them accessing the boot menu, or you may want to have the computer running at all times. This guide will show you how to remove the Shut Down option from the Start Menu, CTRL+ALT+DEL screen, and task manager**.** Users can still shutdown in the run dialogue — learn how to disable the run dialogue in section 4.12.

1. Start Group Policy Editor (Start > Run > "gpedit.msc")

2. In the left panel, go to User Configuration > Administrative Templates > Start Menu & TaskBar

3. In the right panel, enable Remove and Prevent Access to the Shut Down Command

4.10 Disable Internet Access

In this guide, you will learn how to set up a false proxy configuration so that any application that relies on the Microsoft Proxy (IE, Firefox, Opera, Office, Outlook) will not be able to access the Internet. This has obvious advantages and can be set for the whole system or all non-administrator accounts.

Alternatively, you can unplug the internet cable/disconnect the router… but you didn't need me to tell you that did you?

4.10.1 Setting up a False Proxy Server

1. Start Registry Editor (Start > Run > "regedit")

2. Disable Current User: In the left panel, navigate to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Internet Settings

3. Disable All Users: In the left panel, navigate to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Internet Settings

4. If one doesn't already exist, create a new DWORD value named ProxyEnable

5. Set the value to 1 to disable the internet

6. Set the value to 0 to re-enable the internet

7. If one doesn't already exist, create a new DWORD value named ProxyServer

8. Set the value to an unavailable IP number e.g. 0.0.0.1:1111

9. Set the value to the original value to re-enable the internet (or delete the key if it didn't exist before)

Security

4.10.2 Protecting the Proxy Server Configuration

Even after setting up the false proxy server, you can still get to the internet (if you know what you're doing), so do the following to stop users making changes to the internet configuration:

1. Start Registry Editor (Start > Run > "regedit")

2. Disable Current User: In the left panel, navigate to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Control Panel

3. Disable All Users: In the left panel, navigate to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Control Panel

4. Create a new DWORD value named Connwiz Admin Lock

5. Create a new DWORD value named Connection Settings

6. Set both values to 1 to disable the connection settings

7. Set both values to 0 to re-enable the connection settings

In order for this to take effect, you may need to restart your system.

4.11 Disable Logging off

Disabling Log Off helps users to remember to shut down their PC at night. In this guide you'll learn how to disable logging off from the Start Menu and Task Manager**.**

4.11.1 Removing Log Off from the Start Menu

1. Start Group Policy Editor (Start > Run > "gpedit.msc")

2. In the left panel, go to User Configuration > Administrative Templates > Start Menu and Taskbar

3. In the right panel, enable Remove Logoff on the Start Menu

4.11.2 Removing Log Off from Task Manager

1. Start Group Policy Editor (Start > Run > "gpedit.msc")

2. In the left panel, go to User Configuration > Administrative Templates > System > Ctrl+Alt+Del Options

3. In the right panel, enable Remove Logoff

Security

4.12 Disable Run Dialogue

Disabling the run dialogue is very useful when protecting your computer from unwanted changes — especially by those who know how to make critical changes. In this guide you'll learn how to disable the run dialogue.

1. Start Group Policy Editor (Start > Run > "gpedit.msc")

2. In the left panel, go to User Configuration > Administrative Templates > Start Menu and Taskbar

3. In the right panel, enable Remove run from Start Menu

Please note: disabling the run dialogue also disables the following actions:

- Clicking Run on Start menu.

- Pressing WINKEY+R for the run dialogue

- Running a New Task command in Task Manager

- Entering A UNC path (\\\) in the IE address bar

- Accessing ALL local drives and folders

4.13 Disable Registry Editor Access

By now, you should notice you can make some significant changes with the registry. To protect your computer from those changes being made, disable the Registry Editor (regedit.)

1. Start Group Policy Editor (Start > Run > "gpedit.msc")

2. In the left panel, go to User Configuration > Administrative Templates > System

3. In the right panel, enable Prevent access to registry editing tools

4.14 Disable System Properties Access

The System properties can be accessed by right-clicking Computer and selecting Properties. From here, you may change vital system settings. To disable access to these options, follow this guide.

1. Start Group Policy Editor (Start > Run > "gpedit.msc")

2. In the left panel, go to Desktop

3. In the right panel, enable Remove Properties from the My Computer context menu

5.0 System Maintenance & Management

Just like any car, Windows needs to be maintained and cleaned frequently. Whenever I work on someone's computer, I have a check list of things I like to do to ensure I won't be working on the same computer anytime soon.

Anyone can maintain their computer; they just have to learn how. In this chapter you'll learn some basic tips and tools to use – to ensure your computer becomes/remains clutter free and does not get sluggish.

Maintenance & Management

5.1 Cleaning Up Windows

Cleaning up Windows can be a tedious task as there are so many temporary and unused files stored everywhere. Manual cleaning may be more thorough, but would take hours. Luckily there are two programs suited to this job.

The first of these two programs is the well known CCleaner. CCleaner is a freeware system optimization, privacy and cleaning tool. It removes unused files from your system - allowing Windows to run faster and freeing up valuable hard disk space. It also cleans traces of your online activities such as your Internet history. Additionally it contains a fully featured registry cleaner.

Another program I use frequently is Advanced Windows Care (AWC.) AWC is a comprehensive PC-care utility that has a one-click approach to helping protect, repair and optimize your PC.

Personally I prefer AWC, but CCleaner is great too. You do not need both of these programs; one of these programs should take care of keeping your computer free of temporary clutter.

Maintenance & Management

5.2 Disable and Delete the Hibernation File

Windows places a file on your hard drive that stores your current data when your computer goes into hibernation. If you do not use hibernation, you can delete these files and save as much space as you have RAM (i.e. 512mb or 2gb etc.) In this guide you will learn how to disable hibernation and remove the old hibernation file.

5.2.1 Disable Hibernation

1. Click Start, All Programs, and then right click on Command Prompt. (Or type CMD into the start menu search box.)

2. Select Run as administrator.

3. If User Account Control prompts you to allow the action, click on Continue.

4. In the command prompt window, type "powercfg –h off" (without the quotes).

5. Close the Command Prompt window.

Maintenance & Management

5.2.2 Delete the Hibernation File

1. Click Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, and then click Disk Cleanup. (Or type Disk Cleanup into the start menu search box and hit enter.)

2. If prompted to choose a drive, select the drive in which Windows XP/Vista is installed on to and press OK.

3. Disk Cleanup will scan the hard drive and present you with a list of options.

4. Check Hibernation File Cleaner, and then click OK.

5. When asked "Are you sure you want to permanently delete these files?" click on the Delete Files button.

5.3 Reclaim Disk Space after SP1 Install

When you install Vista SP1, a backup of all replaced files is made. This is done so you can roll back to pre-SP1 if you desire. SP1 has been out for some time now and many of you will no doubt be satisfied with using it. In this guide, you will learn how to reclaim disk space taken up by the Vista SP1 install.

By following this guide, you will be able to save 600-800 MB of disk space.

Please note: After running this tool, you cannot uninstall Vista SP1.

1. Press WINKEY+R

2. Type vsp1cln.exe and hit enter

3. When prompted, type Y and hit enter

4. After a few seconds, you will have your hard disk space back

5.4 Remove Entries from Add/Remove Programs

There may be several reasons for removing certain programs from the add/remove programs list. One reason may be that you have no intention of removing some programs and they are cluttering the list - or you may want to remove that net monitoring program so your kids can't remove it. In this guide you will learn how to remove these programs.

I recommend you backup your registry before doing this; however, if you follow these instructions, you will be fine.

Maintenance & Management

1. Press the windows key and R

2. Type in regedit

3. Now you will see the registry editor.

4. Go to the following entry:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\
CurrentVersion\Uninstall

5. In the left pane are the programs (some represented by numbers and letters, and some by their name) and in the right pane you can see the display name.

6. Find the key that corresponds to the program you want to hide. Select the key in the left pane and click File > Export

7. Choose a name for the file and save it. (This will allow you to restore the key when you want to uninstall the program.)

8. Now the key is backed up, you can delete the key by right clicking on it and choosing Delete

5.5 Remove Icons from the System Tray

After using your computer for some time, you may find that there are a lot of icons building up in your system tray. With Windows Vista, you can hide these icons to

remove clutter. This guide will show you how to do this.

1. Right click the space next to the clock and select properties

2. In Taskbar and Start Menu Properties, select the Notification Area tab and then select customize

3. Now select the icons you want to hide and choose hide

4. Press OK on both windows you just opened and you are done

5.6 Remove Unwanted Software

I advise you to browse your add/remove programs list and weed out any software you do not use and is clearly taking up space.

If you have a newer PC, there may be a lot of trial software, coined "bloatware". The PC Decrapifier is designed to remove a specific list unwanted software in an unattended fashion. The PC does not need to be new; however, the older the PC is, the less likely it will have any of the software it can detect.

Maintenance & Management

Simply download the file above, and run the EXE. There is no installer necessary. If you have anti-virus software installed, it may complain about this program because it is written with a scripting language. These warnings can be safely ignored.

When it runs, you will be presented with a wizard style dialog box that steps you through the entire process.

You will be able to pick and choose what you want to remove.

It will not begin removing anything, without prompting you first!

Hit the "Next" button and it will begin cleaning your PC. If it does not find anything, a pop-up box will notify you of this and the program will exit and not modify your PC.

5.7 Shrink/Extend a Partition on Your Hard Drive

If you use multiple partitions on your hard drive, you may want to shrink or extend one of them - after realizing you want more space on another one of the partitions.

1. Right click on Computer and then click Manage (The Computer Management Console will show)

2. In the left pane, click Storage and then Disk Management

3. Now you see all your partitions which you have created. To shrink a partition, simply right click on the partition and choose Shrink Volume

4. Enter the amount of space to shrink in MB

If you would like to extend a partition, you will need to make sure there is empty space available behind the partition. Then go back to step 4 and instead select Extend Volume.

5.8 Disable Memory Dump Files and Save HDD Space

If your computer crashes it will create a dump file. From this dump file you can diagnose the source of the problem. It is unlikely you will need this file; if you do, you can always turn the option back on. This guide will show you how to save space by disabling memory dump files in Vista.

1. Press Start and click Control Panel

Maintenance & Management

2. Type Advanced in the search box

3. Click on View advanced system settings in the search results

4. Under Startup and Recovery, click Settings

5. In the Write debugging information drop down, click (none) and press OK

You will now save space and not store useless information.

5.9 Schedule Defragmentation

Defragmentation helps speed up access to data on your drive. In this guide you'll learn how to schedule defragmentation so you don't have to worry about ensuring your drive is tidy.

5.9.1 What does "Defragment" mean?

When you constantly add and delete files on your hard drive, they become fragmented.

Think of this as follows: You have a library full of collections of books. Each of these collections represents a file on your hard drive. You take one book from the collection and put some sticky notes in the

Maintenance & Management

book and make it too big to fit back on the shelf–so you put it on the end. Every now and then you get a new book for a collection; these too need to go on the end of the shelf. You sell a collection and buy a bigger one to replace it. Unfortunately, the whole collection doesn't fit in the recently made space so you put half in the space and half at the end of the shelf. You do this for years and you have a mess on your hands. Defragmenting "re-orders your book collections", and makes access to them a lot easier.

5.9.2 Setting up Scheduled Defragmentation

Setting up scheduled defrags is easy.

1. Click the Start button

2. Type defrag and hit enter

3. Ensure Run on a Schedule (Recommended) is selected

5.10 Take Charge of Automatic Updates

If you leave your computer on overnight, you may find you come back in the morning to find all your programs closed and that download, you were waiting for, canceled. Likely, automatic updates restarted your computer for you… or you had a short power outage.

Maintenance & Management

In this guide, we'll blame automatic updates and learn how to disable automatic installation of the updates.

Automatic updates will let you choose to download the updates, but wait for your permission to install the files.

1. Press Start and go to the Control Panel

2. Now click Security and select Turn Automatic Updating On or Off

3. Choose Download Updates but Let Me Choose Whether to Install Them

4. Press OK

Now, when updates are available, they will be downloaded and a balloon will pop up notifying you that updates are ready to install. At your convenience, install the updates that you want to include on your computer.

Maintenance & Management

6.0 Increasing Performance

Windows runs pretty well on its own, but there are many things you can do to increase performance. I could write many books on all the tweaks you can do, but in this chapter I will focus on the key things you can do to get the most out of doing the least in terms of performance.

I've divided this chapter up into three sections:

- Things you can enable
- Things you can change
- Things you can disable

As always, I recommend you make backups before making major changes to your system. Refer to chapter three for guidance.

Performance

Things You Can Enable

6.1 Run Startup Delayer to Reduce Boot Time

Does your computer boot slowly? If you shut your computer down regularly, this can be a real pain. Anything more than about 45 seconds tests my patience and I've used computers that take well over five minutes to boot (really not kidding.)

There are three easy things you can do to improve boot time:

- Remove spyware
- Remove unnecessary startup programs
- Delay non-essential programs on startup

In this guide you will learn how to do the latter two of these tasks.

6.1.1 Use Startup Delayer to Reduce Boot Time

Some programs need to start right away, like your dock or your antivirus program. Some programs can wait; for example: Messenger programs etc.

With StartUp Delayer, you can set programs to start up in 1 minute intervals, which will smooth the startup process considerably. The program also acts as a startup manager, allowing you to uncheck programs you don't want to run at all.

After testing this software on my Vista Business laptop (Core Duo 1.8 Ghz, 1.5 GB ram), I managed to get a complete startup time (boot to functionality) in 38 seconds (originally 52)… not bad. I have done other things to tweak my laptop, but this is still a real improvement.

6.2 Enhance SATA Disk Performance

This guide will help you improve the performance of your SATA hard drive by enhancing write caching.

If you are not sure whether or not you have an SATA drive in your computer, please check with your manufacturer.

A quick warning: If you turn this setting on and your computer is not connected to a battery backup, losing power increases you risk of data loss or corruption. If you are using a laptop, the chances of this are unlikely as you have a battery in the laptop that will act as a power source if there is an outage.

1. Click on the Start Button and type in Device Manager in the search box

2. Hit Enter

3. Click on the + Next to Disk Drives

Performance

4. Right click on your hard drive and select
   Properties

5. Select the Policies tab and check Enable
   advanced performance

6. Now click OK and close Device Manager

6.3 Speed up Your External Hard Drives

The default setting in Windows Vista disables write
caching for external drives. This is done so that you
can eject the drive at any time without data loss. If you
are willing to eject your drive each time, you can
increase the performance of your external hard drives.

To turn write caching back on and activate advanced
performance, do the following:

1. Click on the Start Button and type in Device
   Manager in the search box and hit enter

2. Click on the + Next to Disk Drives

3. Right click on your external hard drive and select
   Properties

4. Select the Policies tab and select Optimize for
   performance

5. Check Enable write caching on the disk and Enable advanced performance

6. Click OK and reboot your computer

6.4 Use Readyboost to Speed up Programs

Using Windows Readyboost is a great way to improve the performance of your computer when doing your day-to-day tasks.

In this guide, we will learn what Readyboost is, what its requirements are, and how to get it working for you.

6.4.1 What is Readyboost?

Readyboost uses a USB thumb drive to create an extra cache of the most commonly used data.

6.4.2 How Does Readyboost Work?

Solid state memory (what your USB drive uses) has excellent transfer speeds; therefore, it can be used to store and access data that is needed quickly.

Performance

Windows Vista Readyboost uses the USB thumb drive as an extra cache between the processor and the hard disk. Unlike RAM, the data is stored on your thumb drive and can be used next time you use your computer — a great time saver.

6.4.3 What are the Requirements for Readyboost?

For a USB thumb drive to be compatible, it needs to have a minimum of 256 MB free space. Most modern USB thumb drives will meet the space and speed requirements of Readyboost.

6.4.4 How Can I get Readyboost Working for Me?

To enable Readyboost, do the following:

1. Put your USB thumb drive into a USB port on your computer

2. When the Autorun menu appears, select Speed up my System with Windows Readyboost

3. Select your device and select how much of the drive you want to use for Readyboost. I recommend using a full USB drive. (TIP: match the size of your drive to the amount of RAM you have in your computer.)

4. Press OK. Don't expect miracles - but stick with it and your computer will begin to perform more efficiently.

Things You Can Change

6.5 Move Page File to Different Physical Drive

If you have more than one physical drive in your computer, this guide is for you. The page file can take a considerable toll on your system drive; by moving the page file to a separate drive, you can increase overall performance. Learn how to move the Windows Vista page file to another drive in this guide.

1. Press Start, right click on Computer, and select Properties

2. In the left-hand pane, select Advanced System Settings

3. Click the Advanced tab and under Performance, select Settings…

4. Click the Advanced tab and under Virtual Memory, select Change…

Performance

5. Uncheck "Automatically Manage Paging File Size for All Drives"

6. Select the different physical drive that you want your paging file to now be stored on (e.g. D) and select System managed size and press Set. (make sure this is the first partition on the second drive)

7. Select the drive that contains your paging file (usually C), select the Custom Size option, set the original and maximum size, and press Set

Your page file will now need to rebuild on the new drive – this may temporarily slow performance.

Note: The reason for keeping around 1GB on the OS drive is because Windows Vista needs still some pagefile space there.

6.6 Rebuild the Page File

Windows Vista creates a pagefile, which essentially acts as RAM on your hard drive. This page file speeds up access to commonly used programs and becomes fragmented over time.

Rebuilding the pagefile eliminates fragmentation; learn how to rebuild the pagefile in this guide.

Performance

1. Press Start, right click on Computer and select Properties

2. In the left-hand pane, select Advanced System Settings

3. Click the Advanced tab and under Performance, select Settings…

4. Click the Advanced tab and under Virtual Memory, select Change…

5. Uncheck Automatically Manage Paging File Size for All Drives

6. Select the drive that contains your paging file (usually C) and select the Custom size option

7. Edit the minimum and maximum page file size to 0 and press set

8. Now restart your computer

9. Now follow steps 1-5 and replace step 6 with System managed size and press Set

10. Press OK to save and after a brief period of sluggishness, while the computer rebuilds the page file, you should notice improved speeds.

Performance

6.7 Move Search Index to a Different Physical Drive

If you have more than one physical drive in your computer, this guide is for you. The search index can take a considerable toll on your system drive; by moving the index to a separate drive, you can increase overall performance.

To move your search index, do the following:

1. Press Start, type index in the search bar and press Enter

2. Press the Advanced button

3. Press Select new at the bottom and select a new location on a different physical hard drive

4. Press OK

Your search index will now need to rebuild, which may temporarily slow performance.

Things You Can Disable

6.8 Disable Superfetch to Save Memory

Windows Vista Superfetch learns your typical activities with files and application access. By learning, it predicts your computer use actions and puts your most commonly used applications in memory. This is great if you have a lot of RAM, but if you have less than 2GB, I suggest you disable this feature — saving you from sluggish computer use.

Please Note: Even with less than 2GB of ram, you may find this doesn't help. If you notice no difference after a day or two, then you can probably re-enable Superfetch.

To disable Superfetch, do the following:

1. Press Start, type services in the search bar and press Enter

2. Locate Superfetch in the list of services, right click it, and select properties

3. Change the Startup Type dropdown box to disabled and click the stop button

4. Now click OK

Please remember, this will only help if you have less than 2GB of RAM.

Performance

6.9 Disable "Last Accessed" File Attribute

Every time you access a file on your computer, a Last Accessed file attribute is updated. You will likely not need this, so you can remove some overhead by following this guide.

6.9.1 Download the Registry Hack

If you don't feel confident working with the Registry Editor, you can download this registry hack. Simply extract the file and double click on DisableLastAccess.reg. To re-enable the Last Access option, double click on ReEnableLastAccess.reg

6.9.2 Manually Disable Last Access File Updates

1. Press Start, type regedit in the search bar and press Enter (or press Winkey+R)

2. Navigate to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\FileSystem

3. Update the value of NtfsDisableLastAccessUpdate to 1

4. To undo this change, simply change the value back to 0

In order for this to take effect, you may need to restart your system.

6.10 Make Windows Shut Down Faster

As you install programs on your computer, it slows down - we all know that. However, what you may not know is that the programs install what we call services. Windows is "kind" enough to patiently wait for these services to stop when you shut down your computer. It really doesn't pay off to wait.

Decrease the time it takes for Windows to shut down by doing the following:

1. Click the start button and type regedit in the search bar

2. Hit the enter key

3. You will see a screen like the one below. Find your way to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlS et\Control in the left menu

4. In the right window you will see a key called WaitToKillServiceTimeout, with a default value of 20000 (20 seconds.)

5. Right click on the key and select Modify…

Performance

6. Change the value from 20000 to 5000

This can potentially reduce your shut down time by 15 seconds.

Please note: I do not advise setting this value to less than five seconds.

Performance

7.0 Working Efficiently

There are many things we do on a day-to-day basis that become very repetitive. When we find a way to do these things more quickly, we save a lot of time.

This chapter mainly consists of shortcut keys. There is a reason for this: shortcut keys save you a lot of time!

I tried to count the number of times I used a shortcut key while compiling this chapter. I'm sure I missed a lot because I automatically use them; however, I counted 128 times. That's a lot. I imagine I saved some decent time while putting this chapter together.

Working Efficiently

7.1 General Windows Shortcut Keys

There are so many shortcut keys in Windows – here are the best of them:

General Windows Keyboard Shortcuts	
Single Keys	
F2	Rename the selected item
F3	Search for a file or folder
F4	Display the Address bar list in Windows Explorer
F5	Refresh the active window
F6	Cycle through screen elements in a window or on the desktop
F10	Activate the menu bar in the active program
DELETE	Delete the selected item and move it to the Recycle Bin
ESC	Cancel the current task
RIGHT ARROW	Open the next menu to the right, or open a submenu
LEFT ARROW	Open the next menu to the left, or close a submenu

Working Efficiently

Using the Control Key

CTRL+A	Select all items in a document or window
CTRL+C	Copy the selected item
CTRL+X	Cut the selected item
CTRL+V	Paste the selected item
CTRL+Z	Undo an action
CTRL+RIGHT ARROW	Move the cursor to the beginning of the next word
CTRL+LEFT ARROW	Move the cursor to the beginning of the previous word
CTRL+DOWN ARROW	Move the cursor to the beginning of the next paragraph
CTRL+UP ARROW	Move the cursor to the beginning of the previous paragraph
CTRL+SHIFT w/ arrow key	Select a block of text
CTRL+F4	Close the active document (in programs that allow you to have multiple documents open simultaneously)
CTRL+ESC	Open the Start menu
CTRL+ALT+TAB	Use the arrow keys to switch between open items
CTRL+SHFT+ESC	Open Task Manager

Working Efficiently

Using the Shift Key	
SHIFT+DELETE	Delete the selected item without moving it to the Recycle Bin first
SHIFT when you insert a CD	Prevent the CD from automatically playing
SHIFT with any arrow key	Select more than one item in a window or on the desktop, or select text within a document
SHIFT+F10	Display the shortcut menu for the selected item

Using the ALT Key	
ALT+ENTER	Display properties for the selected item
ALT+F4	Close the active item, or exit the active program
ALT+SPACEBAR	Open the shortcut menu for the active window
ALT+TAB	Switch between open items
ALT+ESC	Cycle through items in the order in which they were opened
ALT+underlined letter	Display the corresponding menu
ALT+underlined letter	Perform the menu command (or other underlined command)
ALT+UP ARROW	View the folder one level up in Windows Explorer

7.2 Windows Photo Gallery Shortcut Keys

CTRL+F	Open the Fix pane
CTRL+P	Print the selected picture
ENTER	View the selected picture at a larger size
CTRL+I	Open or close the Details pane
CTRL+PERIOD (.)	Rotate the picture clockwise
CTRL+COMMA (,)	Rotate the picture counter-clockwise
F2	Rename the selected item
CTRL+E	Search for an item
ALT+LEFT ARROW	Go back
ALT+RIGHT ARROW	Go forward
PLUS SIGN (+)	Zoom in or resize the picture thumbnail
MINUS SIGN (-)	Zoom out or resize the picture thumbnail
CTRL+B	Best fit
LEFT ARROW	Select the previous item
DOWN ARROW	Select the next item or row
UP ARROW	Previous item (Easel) or previous row (Thumbnail)
PAGE UP	Previous screen
PAGE DOWN	Next screen
HOME	Select the first item
END	Select the last item
DELETE	Move the selected item to the Recycle Bin
SHIFT+DELETE	Permanently delete the selected item
LEFT ARROW	Collapse node
RIGHT ARROW	Expand node

Working Efficiently

Here are some Windows Photo Gallery shortcut keys you can use when working with videos:

J	Move back one frame
K	Pause the playback
L	Move forward one frame
I	Set the start trim point
O	Set the end trim point
M	Split a clip
HOME	Stop and rewind all the way back to the start trim point
ALT+RIGHT ARROW	Advance to the next frame
ALT+LEFT ARROW	Go back to the previous frame
CTRL+K	Stop and rewind playback
CTRL+P	Play from the current location
HOME	Move the start trim point
END	Move to the end trim point
PAGE UP	Seek to nearest split point before the current location
PAGE DOWN	Seek to nearest split point after the current location

7.3 Microsoft Word Shortcut Keys

Shortcut Keys	Description
Ctrl + A	Select all contents of the page.
Ctrl + B	Bold highlighted selection.
Ctrl + C	Copy selected text.
Ctrl + D	Open the font dialogue box.
Ctrl + E	Aligns the line or selected text to the center of the screen.
Ctrl + F	Open find box.
Ctrl + G	Open find and replace box.
Ctrl + H	Also opens find and replace box.
Ctrl + I	Italicise highlighted selection.
Ctrl + J	Justify (spread) the text across the page.
Ctrl + K	Insert link.
Ctrl + L	Aligns the line or selected text to the left of the screen.
Ctrl + M	Indent the paragraph.
Ctrl + N	Open a new document.

Working Efficiently

Ctrl + O	Open a document stored on your hard drive.
Ctrl + P	Open the print window.
Ctrl + R	Aligns the line or selected text to the right of the screen.
Ctrl + S	Saves the current document.
Ctrl + U	Underline highlighted selection.
Ctrl + V	Paste contents of clipboard.
Ctrl + W	Closes the current document.
Ctrl + X	Cut selected text.
Ctrl + Y	Redo the last action performed.
Ctrl + Z	Undo last action.
Ctrl + Shift + F	Change the font.
Ctrl + Shift + >	Increase selected font +1pts up to 12pt and then increases font +2pts.
Ctrl +]	Increase selected font +1pts.
Ctrl + Shift + <	Decrease selected font -1pts if 12pt or lower, if above 12 decreases font by +2pt.
Ctrl + [	Decrease selected font -1pts.
Ctrl + Shift + *	View or hide non printing characters.

Working Efficiently

Ctrl + \<left arrow\>	Moves one word to the left.
Ctrl + \<right arrow\>	Moves one word to the right.
Ctrl + \<up arrow\>	Moves to the beginning of the line or paragraph.
Ctrl + \<down arrow\>	Moves to the end of the paragraph.
Ctrl + Del	Deletes word to right of cursor.
Ctrl + Backspace	Deletes word to left of cursor.
Ctrl + End	Moves the cursor to the end of the document.
Ctrl + Home	Moves the cursor to the beginning of the document.
Ctrl + Spacebar	Reset highlighted text to the default font.
Ctrl + 1	Single-space lines.
Ctrl + 2	Double-space lines.
Ctrl + 5	1.5-line spacing.
Ctrl + Alt + 1	Changes text to heading 1.
Ctrl + Alt + 2	Changes text to heading 2.
Ctrl + Alt + 3	Changes text to heading 3.
Ctrl + F1	Open the Task Pane.
F1	Open Help.

Working Efficiently

Alt + Ctrl + F2	Open new document.
Ctrl + F2	Display the print preview.
Shift + F3	Change the text from upper to lower case or a capital letter at the beginning of every word.
Shift + Insert	Paste.
F4	Repeat the last action performed.
F5	Open the find, replace, and go to window in Microsoft Word.
Ctrl + Shift + F6	Opens to another open Microsoft Word document.
F7	Spell and grammar check selected text and/or document.
Shift + F7	Runs a Thesaurus check on the word highlighted.
F12	Save as.
Shift + F12	Save.
Ctrl + Shift + F12	Prints the document.
Alt + Shift + D	Insert the current date.
Alt + Shift + T	Insert the current time.

Working Efficiently

7.4 Remote Desktop Shortcut Keys

Remote Desktop Connection Keyboard Shortcuts		
Combination	**Effect**	**Equivalent**
Ctrl+Alt+End	Interrupt keys	Ctrl+Alt+Del
Alt+Home	Displays the Windows start menu	⊞
Alt+Page Up	Switch between programs to the left	Alt+Tab+Left Arrow
Alt+Page Down	Switch between programs to the right	Alt+Tab+Right Arrow
Alt+Insert	Switch between programs in most recently used order	Alt+Tab
Alt+Del	Window (context) menu	Alt+Space
Ctrl+Alt+Break	Changes remote window to full screen and back	Alt, Space, X
Ctrl+Alt+Left Arrow	Switches you to host computer	-
Ctrl+Alt+Right Arrow	Switches you back to remote computer	-
Ctrl+Alt+Plus (+)	Screen shot of the whole screen	Prnt Scrn
Ctrl+Alt+Minus (-)	Screen shot of the active window	ALT+Prnt Scrn

Sideways ☺

Working Efficiently

7.5 Useful Windows Commands

By using Windows commands, you can have quick access to tools to configure and fix your computer. They also allow you quick access to Microsoft software embedded within your operating system. Some of these commands can be very useful. Some are not so useful but can be fun to try.

Open the run dialogue, by pressing WINKEY+R

Now type in one of the following commands to open a program. (Note: Some of these programs may not be available in your Vista editions.)

Windows Environment Controls	
%ALLUSERSPROFILE%	Open the All User's Profile
%HomeDrive%	Opens your home drive e.g. C:\
%UserProfile%	Opens your User's Profile
%temp%	Opens the temporary file Folder
%systemroot%	Opens Windows folder

Working Efficiently

Consoles, Programs etc.

access.cpl	Accessibility Controls
hdwwiz.cpl	Add Hardware Wizard
appwiz.cpl	Add/Remove Programs
control admintools	Administrative Tools
wuaucpl.cpl	Automatic Updates
fsquirt	Bluetooth Transfer Wizard
calc	Calculator
certmgr.msc	Certificate Manager
charmap	Character Map
chkdsk	Check Disk Utility
clipbrd	Clipboard Viewer
cmd	Command Prompt
dcomcnfg	Component Services
compmgmt.msc	Computer Management
control panel	Control Panel
timedate.cpl	Date and Time Properties
ddeshare	DDE Share
devmgmt.msc	Device Manager
directx.cpl	Direct X Control Panel
dxdiag	Direct X Troubleshooter
cleanmgr	Disk Cleanup Utility
dfrg.msc	Disk Defragment
diskmgmt.msc	Disk Management
diskpart	Disk Partition Manager

Working Efficiently

control desktop	Display Properties
desk.cpl	Display Properties
control color	Display Properties
drwtsn32	Dr. Watson System Troubleshooting Utility
verifier	Driver Verifier Utility
eventvwr.msc	Event Viewer
sigverif	File Signature Verification Tool
findfast.cpl	Findfast
control folders	Folders Properties
control fonts	Fonts
fonts	Fonts Folder
freecell	Free Cell Card Game
joy.cpl	Game Controllers
gpedit.msc	Group Policy Editor (XP Prof)
mshearts	Hearts Card Game
iexpress	Iexpress Wizard
ciadv.msc	Indexing Service
inetcpl.cpl	Internet Properties
Iexplore	Internet Explorer
ipconfig /all	IP Configuration (Connection Configuration)
ipconfig /displaydns	IP Config (DNS Cache Contents)
ipconfig /flushdns	IP Config (Delete DNS Cache Contents)
ipconfig /release	IP Config (Release All Connections)
ipconfig /renew	IP Config (Renew All Connections)
ipconfig /registerdns	IP Config (Refresh DHCP & Re-Registers DNS)

Working Efficiently

ipconfig /showclassid	IP Config (Display DHCP Class ID)
ipconfig /setclassid	IP Config (Modifies DHCP Class ID)
jpicpl32.cpl	Java Control Panel (If Installed)
javaws	Java Control Panel (If Installed)
toy.cpl	Joystick Properties
control keyboard	Keyboard Properties
main.cpl keyboard	Keyboard Properties
secpol.msc	Local Security Settings
lusrmgr.msc	Local Users and Groups
logoff	Logs You Out Of Windows
winchat	Microsoft Chat
winmine	Minesweeper Game
control mouse	Mouse Properties
main.cpl	Mouse Properties
control netconnections	Network Connections
ncpa.cpl	Network Connections
netsetup.cpl	Network Setup Wizard
notepad	Notepad
nvtuicpl.cpl	Nview Desktop Manager (If Installed)
packager	Object Packager
odbccp32.cpl	ODBC Data Source Administrator
osk	On Screen Keyboard
ac3filter.cpl	Opens AC3 Filter (If Installed)
password.cpl	Password Properties
perfmon.msc	Performance Monitor
perfmon	Performance Monitor

Working Efficiently

telephon.cpl	Phone and Modem Options
powercfg.cpl	Power Management
control printers	Printers and Faxes
printers	Printers Folder
eudcedit	Private Character Editor
QuickTime.cpl	Quicktime (If Installed)
intl.cpl	Regional Settings
regedit	Registry Editor
regedit32	Registry Editor
mstsc	Remote Desktop
ntmsmgr.msc	Removable Storage
ntmsoprq.msc	Removable Storage Operator Requests
rsop.msc	Resultant Set of Policy (XP Prof)
sticpl.cpl	Scanners and Cameras
control schedtasks	Scheduled Tasks
wscui.cpl	Security Center
services.msc	Services
fsmgmt.msc	Shared Folders
shutdown	Shuts Down Windows
mmsys.cpl	Sounds and Audio
spider	Spider Solitare Card Game
cliconfg	SQL Client Configuration
sysedit	System Configuration Editor
msconfig	System Configuration Utility
sfc /scannow	System File Checker (Scan Immediately)
sfc /scanonce	System FC (Scan Once At Next Boot)

sfc /scanboot	System FC (Scan On Every Boot)
sfc /revert	System FC (Return to Default Setting)
sfc /purgecache	System FC (Purge File Cache)
sfc /cachesize=x	System FC (Set Cache Size to size x)
sysdm.cpl	System Properties
Taskmgr	Task Manager
nusrmgr.cpl	User Account Management
utilman	Utility Manager
explorer	Windows Explorer
firewall.cpl	Windows Firewall
magnify	Windows Magnifier
wmimgmt.msc	Windows Management Infrastructure
syskey	Windows System Security Tool
wupdmgr	Windows Update Launches
winver	Windows Version
tourstart	Windows XP Tour Wizard
Write	Wordpad

7.6 Add Extra Clocks in Windows Vista

Ever wanted to see, at a glance, what time it is in say…
London or even Nuku'alofa? With Windows Vista you
can. This guide will show you how to add up to two
extra clocks with Windows Vista without adding any
extra software.

1. Click the clock…

Working Efficiently

2. Click on "Change date and time settings..."

3. Click the "Additional Clocks" tab

4. Check the "Show this clock" button

5. Select the time zone you want to see a clock for

6. Give the clock a name

7. Press "OK"

Now you can see, at a glance, the time around the world.

7.7 Search Google and More from the Start Menu

If you use Google, Wikipedia, Yahoo, etc a lot then this guide is for you. In this guide, you'll learn how to search these websites from your Start Menu.

Please Note: This guide involves the use of the Group Policy Editor, which is not included with Vista Home Premium/Basic or Windows XP Home.

7.7.1 Configuring Your Start Menu to Search Google

1. Start Group Policy Editor (Start > Run > "gpedit.msc")

2. In the left panel, go to User Configuration > Administrative Templates >Windows Components > Instant Search

3. In the right panel, right click on Custom Instant Search Internet Search Provider policy setting and select Properties

4. Select Enabled

5. Now in the first String or dll resource... field, type Search Google

6. In the The URL to use when... field, type http://www.google.com/search?q=%w

7. Press OK and Reboot your computer(If you wish to apply the changed policy setting immediately, open a command prompt and run gpupdate/force)

8. Press the Start button, type your search for Google, click Search Google, and Google will load

Working Efficiently

7.7.2 Configuring Your Start Menu to Search Wikipedia

Follow the steps above and replace steps 5 & 6 with the following:

> 5. Now in the first String or dll resource… field, type Search Wikipedia

> 6. In the The URL to use when… field, type http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%w

7.7.3 Configuring Your Start Menu to Search Yahoo

Follow the steps above and replace steps 5 & 6 with the following:

> 5. Now in the first String or dll resource… field, type Search Yahoo

> 6. In the The URL to use when… field, type http://search.yahoo.com/search?p=%w

7.8 Save Your Battery with Vista Battery Saver

If you use Vista on a laptop, you may find your battery life isn't great. I updated my computer from XP to Vista about a year ago and I must say I noticed a significant (10%+) loss in battery life. Honestly, I don't mind, but I've tested [Vista Battery Saver](#) and it helps a lot.

Vista battery saver disables the battery draining sidebar and aero interface — saving your battery for longer use. By disabling battery draining components automatically, your laptop battery will power your computer for more time.

8.0 Personalizing Vista

Customizing Vista is easy; in this chapter, you'll learn some cool tricks you can try. I will point you to some freeware you can download to make your computer even more personalized.

As in other chapters, I link to third-party software. I have used or still use all of this software and it is spyware and adware free. As always, use caution when installing third-party software. All of the vendors of these products can be trusted, but it helps to be smart and double check for yourself.

This software has been selected for its minimal use on system resources – there are alternatives out there, but I feel these are your best option.

Personalize

8.1 Customize Your Logon Screen

[Logon Studio](), created by the Stardock team lets you customize your Windows Vista logon screen. Choose from many styles that will make your computer stand out from the crowd.

Logon Studio is freeware, which can set any wallpaper as your logon screen. All you need to do is to download this utility and choose the wallpaper you want to use.

Logon studio lets you create custom screens within the program. Once you apply the screen, Logon Studio locks your computer so you can test drive the screen to see if it works for you.

8.2 Customize Your Start Menu

The Windows Start Menu is notoriously bloated. There are a couple of ways you can customize your start menu to restore order. The first is to customize the right-hand panel and the second is to organize the programs folder.

8.2.1 Customizing the Right-hand Panel

1. Right click on the Windows button and select Properties

2. Click the Customize… button

3. Here you can change what shows up in the right section of the start menu. If you don't use your Music folder, then why have it linked there?

8.2.2 Customizing the Programs List

After installing a few programs, your start menu can get cluttered. To reduce the number of folders in the left part of the menu, consider using folders like "Media", "Internet" etc. To do this, down the following.

1. Click the Start Menu button

2. Click on Programs

3. Right click on a folder and select Explore All Users/Explore

4. Once in the windows explorer window, you can rename folders and put links together. I usually delete the shortcuts to readme files, help files, and uninstall links as these can all be accessed from other places, and I rarely use them.

Personalize

8.3 Enable the Aurora Boot Screen

The boot screen in Windows Vista is plain and lame. To change the boot screen, follow these simple steps:

1. Press the Start button, type msconfig, and press enter

2. If prompted, select Continue

3. The System Configuration window will come up. Click on the Boot tab

4. Select your Windows Vista installation

5. Check the No GUI boot box

6. Press OK

7. Click on Restart

Your computer will now reboot, and you will see the Aurora boot screen.

8.4 Enable Vista Aero Mouse Cursors

Can't use Vista Aero because it melts your computer? Well you can still use the cursors. To enable the Vista Aero cursors, follow these simple steps:

1. Right click on your desktop and select
   Personalize

2. Click on the Mouse Pointers item to select a
   different mouse cursor scheme

3. Change the Scheme from None to Windows Aero

4. Click OK

Now you have the Aero cursors working for you.

8.5 Add a Mac-like Dock to Your Desktop

Although OS X doesn't suit my computing needs, I do
love the look of some of the features it has. One of the
best features is the easy-to-use and customizable dock.
You can put a dock in Windows Vista too. To install a
dock, do the following:

1. Download ObjectDock here (Go to the page and
   click the "Free Download" button.)

2. Install ObjectDock on to your computer.

3. Once installed, launch ObjectDock (if it hasn't
   already).

You can get thousands of icons for your dock here.

Personalize

ObjectDock is very easy to use and there is a lot of support out there for this free product; go to the ObjectDock website and click "Forums".

8.6 Replace Outdated System Icons

Vize is a GUI enhancer for Windows Vista. It replaces most of the non-Vista icons, animations and bitmaps that Microsoft is still overlooking.

Vize automates the process of replacing resources in system files, applying the real fit and finish to Windows Vista.

8.6.1 How Does Vize Work?

The patching process will not disable Vista's built-in security features. Vize will automatically restore all files and folder permissions, making your Vista experience nicer without sacrificing security.

Vize does not contain any spyware or ad-ware of any kind.

If you are not satisfied with the results, you can completely uninstall Vize.

Vize is compatible with any version (except x64) and any language of Windows Vista and Windows Server 2008.

8.7 Install New Fonts

On mintywhite.com, you can [download hundreds of fonts](#). To install and use these fonts, do the following:

1. [Download a font](#)

2. Extract the zip file

3. Navigate to C:\Windows\Fonts (or the drive Vista is installed on)

4. Drag and drop the font into the fonts folder

Now you may use your font in most applications including the following: Microsoft Office, Paint, Photoshop etc.

Personalize

8.8 Change the Taskbar to Any Color(s) You Want

Want to have a colorful task bar in Vista? Achieving this effect is very simple. Simply paste a color bar over the top of your wallpaper and set the new image as wallpaper. Now when you are viewing the desktop in Vista (with Aero enabled) you can see a colorful effect on your task bar.

To create a wallpaper to change the taskbar color, do the following:

1. Open your wallpaper in Photoshop/Paint.Net etc

2. Create a new layer with the bars provided below and align the bar to the bottom of the wallpaper

3. Save the file and set it as your wallpaper

4. Now, when you are viewing your desktop with Aero enabled, you will see a colorful bar

I put together some Photoshop and Bitmap files you can use these as the top layer — or you can make your own.

Sample Files to Use to Create Rainbow Taskbar Effect

Resolution (Width)	PSD Files	BMP Files
1024	Download	Download
1152	Download	Download
1280	Download	Download
1600	Download	Download

8.9 Make Your Desktop Wallpaper Ripple Like Water

Want to add some eye candy to your desktop? With Ripple, you can do this. To configure your desktop, do the following:

1. Download ripple

2. Extract the file and install it

3. Start ripple from the start menu and enjoy

[Click for image of ripple on my desktop (1.04 MB)]

Personalize

8.10 Change Folder Backgrounds

In Vista, the ability to have custom backgrounds in explorer folders is gone. Vista Folder Background makes folder backgrounds possible again.

8.10.1 About Vista Folder Background

Vista Folder Background applies a background to any folder and automatically applies that same background to subfolders.

8.10.2 Installing Vista Folder Background

1. Download Vista Folder Background

2. Unzip the downloaded file

3. Run install.bat

To uninstall, run uninstall.bat - then restart your computer

Personalize

9.0 Taking Control of Your Files

The final chapter in this book covers taking charge of your files. No doubt, you will have a decent sized hard drive, with a decent amount of data stored on it. These days we seem to collect a lot of media, whether it be pictures, videos, music etc. Learn in this guide some tips to help you keep your files in order.

9.1 Automatically Delete Temporary Files

The Windows Disk Cleanup Wizard will delete your temporary files, but only if they are over a week old. To create a simple batch script that will clean up your temporary directories, do the following:

Taking Control

9.1.1 Creating the Batch File

1. Open Notepad and type the following:

   cd C:\Users\%username%\AppData\Local

   rmdir /S /Q Temp

2. Save the file as cleantemp.bat

3. Now double click on the file to remove your temporary files and free up space on your computer.

If this doesn't work and gives an access error, try replacing %username% with you windows login username.

9.1.2 Automating the Process

To automate this process, so you do not need to remember to run it, do the following:

1. Right click on the batch file and select create shortcut

2. Place the shortcut in your startup folder in the start menu.

Now when you log in to Windows Vista, your temporary files will be deleted.

9.2 Automatically Move Files Off Your Desktop

Do you have a cluttered desktop? Do you spend time looking for the documents, pictures etc you've saved recently and then move them to different folders? If this is the case, or if you just like a clean desktop, this guide is for you. Desktop teleporter is a great utility that moves files and folders that are newly created on your desktop to pre-determined folders.

To automate the process of organizing your desktop, do the following:

1. [Download](#) Desktop Teleporter

2. Set up rules to help manage images, music, documents etc

3. Set exceptions to your rules if you need them

[[Click to see an image of my clutter-free desktop](#)]

9.3 Use Naming Conventions to Organize Your Data

[Here](#) you may see the naming conventions I use for my files. This is just as a guide to get you started on your own system. I set many of these conventions many years ago, but they work. Experience has given me newer ideas, some of which I am currently using.

Taking Control

Photo Files

I archive my photos in the following way:

Photo > %Year% > %Date%&Title

Documents

Even though you can sort files by date in all popular OSs, I still append a date to the front of a file. This helps me with versioning and I usually remember when I wrote something, and not what I called it.

Music

Everyone names their music differently, this is my way (but I'm not an MP3 tag person, so I would probably use this for inspiration and not instruction.)

I archive my music in the following way:

Music > %genre% > %album_title%

All individual songs that I buy separately go into the genre folder, along with any albums that are in their own folders. Tags essentially do the same thing, but when you have over 100 albums (or 1000s as may be the case), it helps to do some organization within your file structure.

As a reminder, please visit this page, for screenshots of my file system.

9.4 Batch Rename Your Files

I don't remember when I first started using D-File Mu, but it is an invaluable tool for me. I use it all the time and I recommend it to anyone. It may take a little getting used to, but it's not too complicated and works very well. In this guide, you'll learn how to set rules and batch rename your files without going near the command prompt.

Download D-FileMU

9.4.1 D-FileMU Features

D-File MU Performs the following changes:

- Adding strings to the beginning and end of the filenames

- Deleting specified number of characters from beginning or end of the filenames

- Adding numbers in sequence to the beginning or end of the filenames

- Changing to upper or lowercase

- Replacing strings with specified string

- Changing the file extension of filenames

- Capitalizing words and more…

Taking Control

9.5 Scan Your Drive for Duplicate Files

Do you have thousands of photos, documents, songs etc on your hard drive? If you do, you'll likely have duplicates all over the place. In this guide you'll learn how to search for duplicates and delete them; thus, saving you space and keeping you organized.

Download Easy Duplicate Finder

9.5.1 Easy Duplicate Finder Features

- Search for true duplicates (files with same contents)

- Powerful search engine with fast files check

- Full binary (byte-by-byte) comparison

- Flexible Scan settings

- Search files by masks

- Size conditions & skip zero-length files option

- Find duplicates from selected folders or drives

- Add multiple folders/drives for scanning

- Protect system files and folders

- Move files to Recycle Bin or delete duplicate files permanently

- Mark selected duplicates by renaming them with adding prefix to file names - to test which files is safe to delete

- Much more…

9.5.2 Easy Duplicate Finder System Requirements

- OS: Windows 95/98/Me/2000/XP/Vista

- CPU: 400 MHz or higher

- RAM: 128 MB or more

- Hard Drive: 5 MB of free space

About This Book

My name is Rich and I am the author and creator of Windows Guides on mintywhite.com. Web design is my hobby and I've been developing websites for over ten years – HTML, DHTML, XML, C#, J#, VB.NET, ASP.NET, ASP, Javascript, Java, PHP – you name it, I've probably developed in it at some time.

I enjoy the design aspect of web development, but I'm not that good at it (make your own judgment on that) However, I love putting together How To's, documentation, tutorials, guides etc. and want to share that talent with you all.

There is no charge for this book – if you somehow paid for it, get a refund! I hope this guide can be a reference for you in the future as you toy with Windows Vista. Check back often for updates as I will continue to develop this book – as I learn more.

Contact Me

Y ou may have questions as you read this book – please don't keep them to yourself – ask me them anytime. There are a number of ways you can contact me – listed below:

Website: http://mintywhite.com

Email: rich@mintywhite.com

Digg: http://digg.com/users/mintywhite

Plurk: http://www.plurk.com/user/mintywhite

StumbleUpon: http://mintywhite.stumbleupon.com

Twitter: http://twitter.com/mintywhite

AIM: mintywhitecom

ICQ: 363425810

MSN: mintywhitecom@hotmail.com

Yahoo: mintywhitecom

If you enjoyed this book, please consider making a donation.

Version History

Version	Date	Revisions
1.0	1 Aug 08	First edition published
1.1	6 Aug 08	Grammatical and formatting improvements
1.2	24 Feb 09	Updates to ensure book is correct with Vista SP2
1.2.1	24 Mar 09	Updated with link to new books page

Get the latest version of the book here

If you enjoyed this book, please consider making a donation.

New:

Windows 7

The Pocket Guide

Download Here
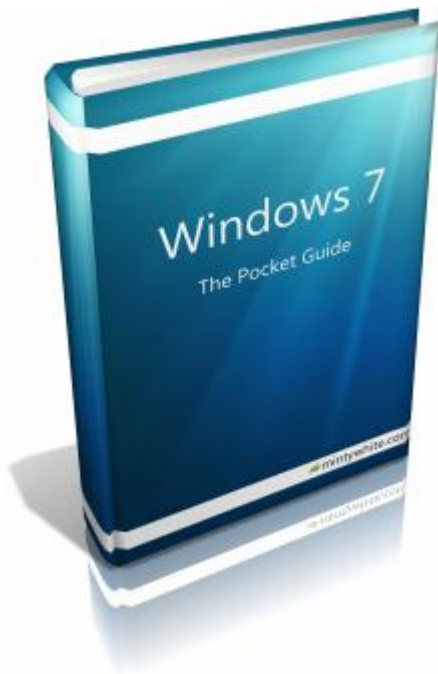
Version History

Windows Vista

The Pocket Guide