

Chapter

1

Make Windows Vista Faster and More Efficient

Whether you use Windows Vista at work or at home, you probably want to spend your time on the computer creating documents, sending and receiving e-mail, browsing the Web, playing games, and doing other useful and fun activities. You probably do *not* want to spend your time wrestling with Windows Vista or waiting for it to finish its tasks.

Using a few simple techniques, you can make working with Windows Vista faster and more convenient. For example, rather than opening a number of Start menu folders to get to a program, you can create a shortcut in a more convenient location.

In addition, you can work with a few settings to ensure Windows Vista is working quickly and efficiently. For example, you can speed up your display by reducing the number of visual effects Windows Vista uses to draw screen elements.

Sometimes getting the most out of Windows Vista is a simple matter of taking care of the little details. For example, if you find yourself wasting precious time retyping errant text every time you accidentally press Caps Lock, you can avoid the problem altogether by setting up Windows Vista to warn you when you turn on Caps Lock.

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Create Shortcuts for Your Favorite Programs

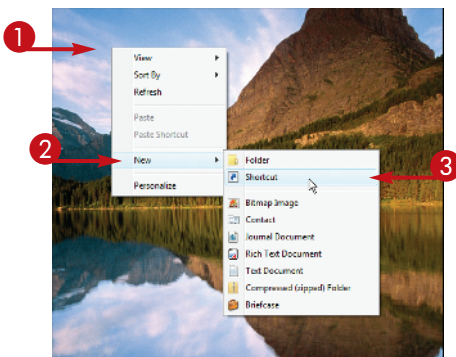
If you have a program that you use regularly, you can access the program more quickly by creating a shortcut. A *shortcut* is a special file that points to a program. When you double-click the shortcut, Windows Vista automatically loads that program.

Shortcuts become particularly handy when you create them in a convenient location. For example, you can create a

program shortcut on your Windows Vista desktop. That way, instead of clicking the Start menu and opening a number of subfolders to find and launch a particular program, you can simply double-click the shortcut on the desktop.

You can create as many shortcuts as you want; the Windows Vista desktop offers a number of features that help you keep your shortcuts organized.

- 1 Right-click the location on your desktop where you want to create the shortcut.
- 2 Click New.
- 3 Click Shortcut.



The Create Shortcut wizard appears.

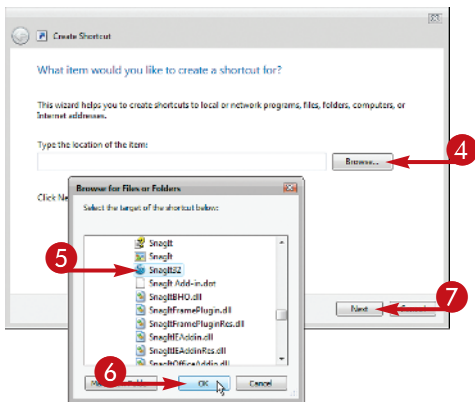
- 4 Click Browse.

The Browse for Files or Folders dialog box appears.

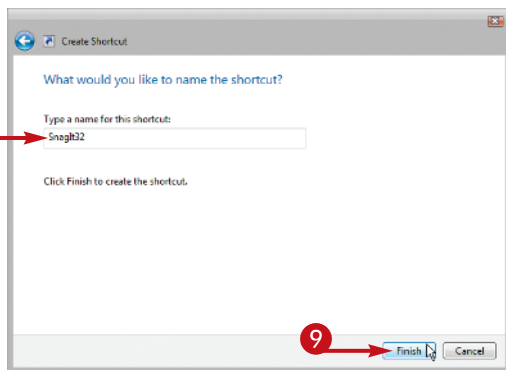
- 5 Select the program that you want the shortcut to start.

Note: You can also create shortcuts to documents.

- 6 Click OK.
- 7 Click Next.



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8 Type a name for the shortcut.

9 Click Finish.



● An icon for the shortcut appears on the desktop.

Note: You can also pin shortcuts to your Start menu, as explained in “Pin an Item to Your Start Menu” in Chapter 2.

TIP

Desktop Trick!

If you frequently use the Windows Vista desktop to store your program shortcuts, the desktop can quickly become a jumble of icons that make it difficult to find the shortcut you want. To solve this problem, right-click an empty spot on the desktop, click **Sort By**, and then click **Name**. This sorts the shortcuts alphabetically by name.

Adjust Visual Effects for Best Performance

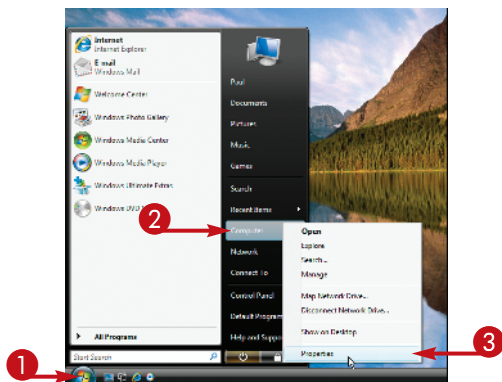
You can turn off some or all of the visual effects that Windows Vista uses to display screen elements. This reduces the load on your computer, which improves the overall performance of your machine.

These visual effects include the animation Windows Vista uses when you minimize or maximize a window. For example, when you minimize a window, it appears to shrink down to the taskbar. Such effects are designed to help a novice user

better understand what is happening on their computer.

Graphics performance is mostly determined by the amount of memory on your computer's graphics adapter. Most new computers have at least 32MB, so turning off visual effects will have little impact on performance. If your adapter has 8MB or less, turning off visual effects can improve performance.

- 1 Click Start.
- 2 Right-click Computer.
- 3 Click Properties.



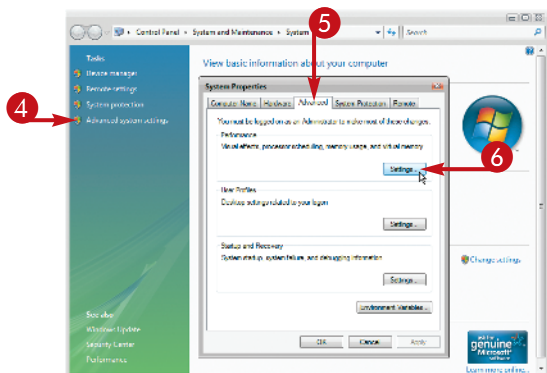
The System window appears.

- 4 Click Advanced System Settings.

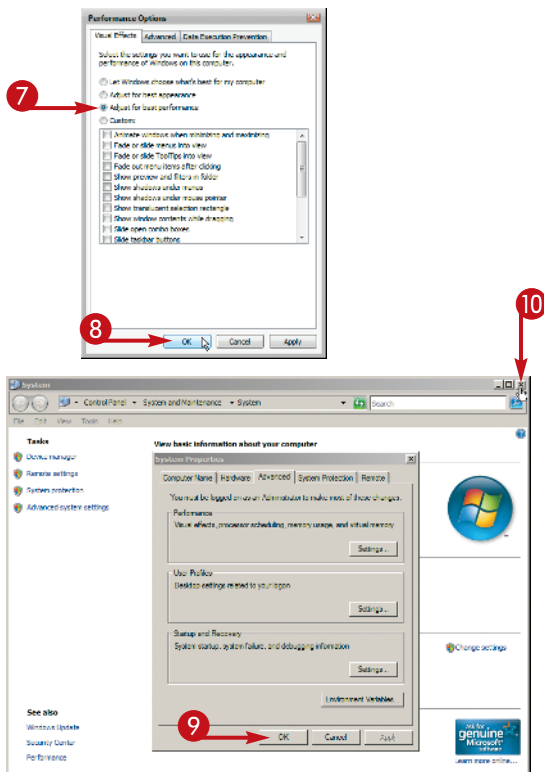
Note: If the User Account Control dialog box appears, click *Continue* or type an administrator password and click *Submit*.

The System Properties dialog box appears.

- 5 Click the Advanced tab.
- 6 In the Performance area, click Settings.



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The Performance Options dialog box appears.

- 7 Click the Adjust for best performance option (○ changes to ●).

- 8 Click OK to return to the System Properties dialog box.

Windows Vista turns off the visual effects.

- 9 Click OK.

The System Properties dialog box closes.

- 10 Click the Close box.

TIP

Did You Know?

If you do not know how much memory your graphics adapter has, Windows Vista can tell you. Follow steps 1 to 3 to display the System window, and then click the Windows Experience Index link. In the Performance Information and Tools window that appears, click the View and print details link. The Dedicated graphics memory value tells you the amount of memory in your graphics adapter.

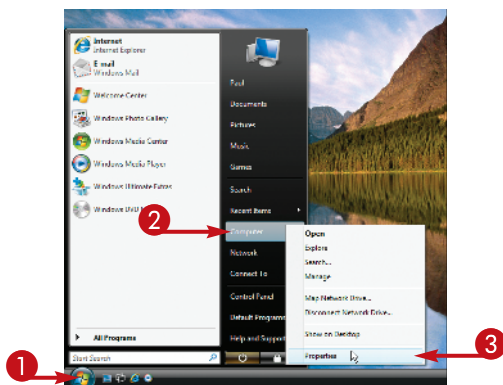
Ensure Windows Vista Is Optimized for Programs

You can set an option that ensures Windows Vista maximizes the performance of your programs. This option controls processor scheduling in Windows Vista.

The *processor* (or *CPU*) is the chip inside your machine that coordinates all the computer's activity; some call it the brain of the computer. *Processor scheduling*

determines how much time the processor allocates to the computer's activities. In particular, processor scheduling differentiates between the *foreground program* — the program in which you are currently working — and *background programs* — programs that perform tasks, such as printing or backing up, while you work in another program.

- 1 Click Start.
- 2 Right-click Computer.
- 3 Click Properties.



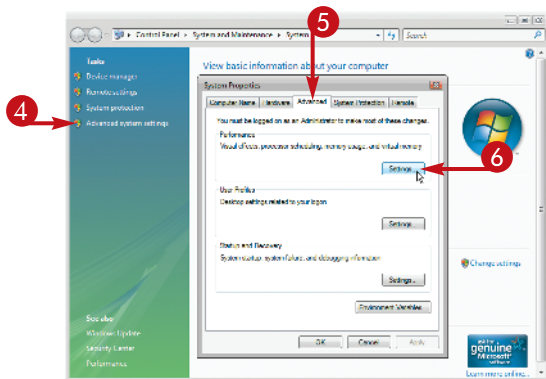
The System window appears.

- 4 Click Advanced System Settings.

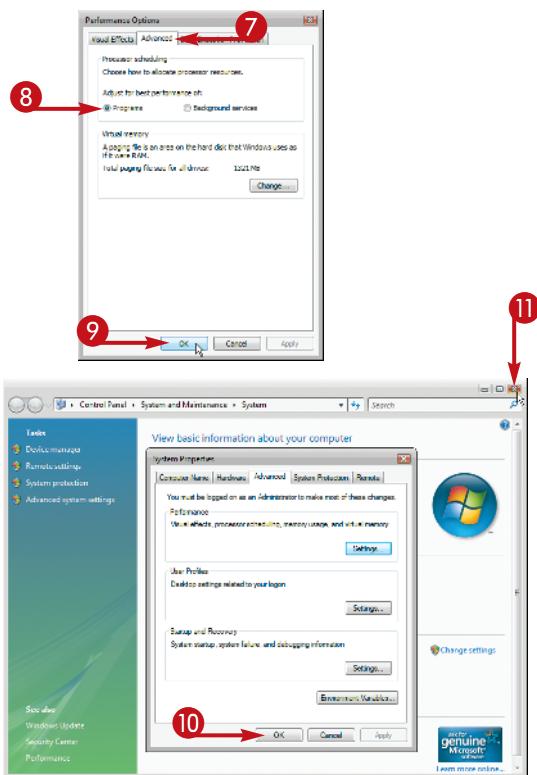
Note: If the User Account Control dialog box appears, click *Continue* or type an administrator password and click *Submit*.

The System Properties dialog box appears.

- 5 Click the Advanced tab.
- 6 In the Performance area, click Settings.



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The Performance Options dialog box appears.

- 7 Click the Advanced tab.
- 8 In the Processor scheduling area, click the Programs option (○ changes to ●).
- 9 Click OK to return to the System Properties dialog box.

Windows Vista applies the performance settings.

- 10 Click OK.
- 11 Click the Close box.

The System Properties dialog box closes.



Did You Know?

If you do not know what kind of processor or how much memory your computer has, Windows Vista can tell you. Follow steps 1 to 3 to display the System window, and then click the Windows Experience Index link. In the Performance Information and Tools window that appears, click the View and print details link. In the Details column, read the Processor and Memory (RAM) values.

Improve Performance with a USB Flash Drive

If you add a USB flash drive to your computer, Windows Vista can use the memory on that drive to improve the performance of your system.

Windows Vista uses a technology named SuperFetch to boost system performance. SuperFetch tracks the programs and data you use over time to create a kind of profile of your hard drive usage. Using

this profile, SuperFetch can then anticipate the data that you might use in the near future. It would then load (fetch) that data into memory ahead of time.

If you elect to insert a USB 2.0 flash drive (memory key) into your system to speed up your system, SuperFetch will use that drive's capacity as storage for the data that SuperFetch anticipates you will require.

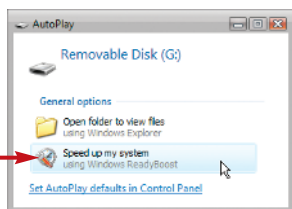
SPEED UP YOUR SYSTEM

- 1 Insert a flash drive into a USB port on your computer.

The AutoPlay dialog box appears.

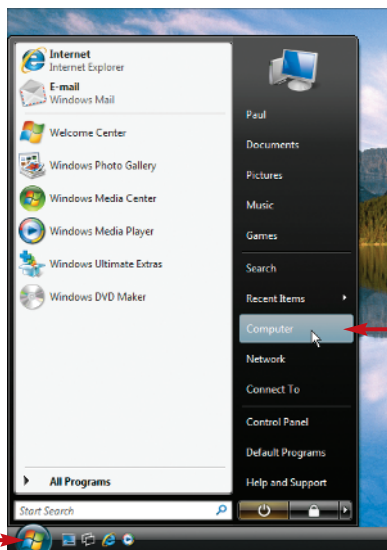
- 2 Click the Speed up my system using this device option.

Windows Vista configures SuperFetch to use the flash drive's memory.

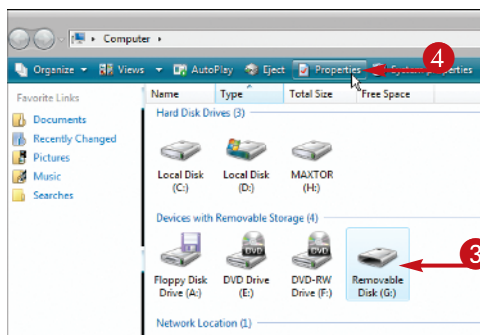


CONFIGURE FLASH DRIVE MEMORY

- 1 Click Start.
- 2 Click Computer.

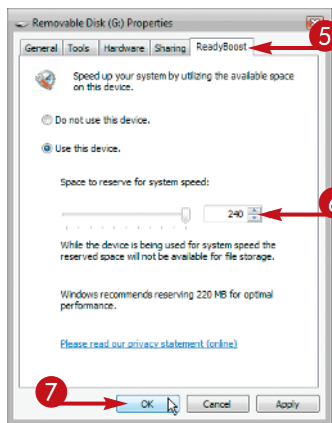


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The Computer window appears.

- 3 Click the flash drive icon.
- 4 Click Properties.



The drive's Properties dialog box appears.

- 5 Click the ReadyBoost tab.
- 6 Click and drag the slider, or click the Spinner arrows, to set the amount of drive memory Vista sets aside for SuperFetch.
- 7 Click OK.

TIP

Reverse It!

If you decide later on that you want to use the flash drive's full capacity for file storage, you can tell Windows Vista not to use the drive to augment SuperFetch. Click Start, Computer, click the flash drive, and then click Properties. Click the ReadyBoost tab and then click the Do not use this device option (○ changes to ●). Click OK to put the new setting into effect.

Run a Program with Elevated Privileges

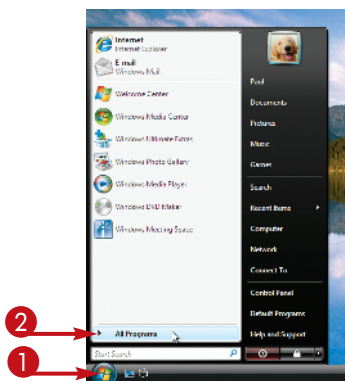
If you need to perform advanced tasks in a program, you may need to run that program with elevated privileges.

With Windows Vista's User Account Control, you must provide credentials to perform certain actions. However, this security model falls short when you need to perform certain actions. For example, if you edit a file in one of the Windows Vista protected folders, you will receive a

Permission Denied error when you try to save your changes.

To work around such problems, you need to start the program you are using with elevated privileges. This tells Windows Vista to run the program as though you were using the Administrator account, the highest-level account on your system, and the only account that does not need to provide credentials.

- 1 Click Start.
- 2 Click All Programs.

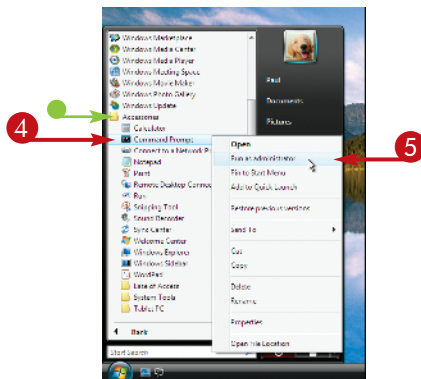


- 3 Click the Start menu folder that contains the icon of the program you want to run.

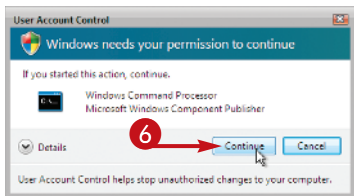
- For example, to run the Command Prompt with elevated privileges, click Accessories.

- 4 Right-click the program icon (for example, the Command Prompt icon).

- 5 Click Run as administrator.



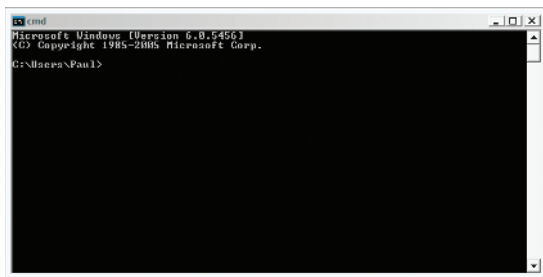
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The User Account Control dialog box appears.

6 Click Continue.

If you have a standard user account, type the password for an administrator and then click Submit.



Windows Vista runs the program with elevated privileges.

TIP

Did You Know?

If you have a program that you use frequently and you normally run it with elevated privileges, you can tell Windows Vista to always run the program elevated. Follow steps **1** to **3** in this task to find the program icon, right-click the icon, and then click Properties. Click the Compatibility tab, click the Run this program as an administrator check box (☐ changes to ☒) , and then click OK.

Make Your File Searches Run Faster

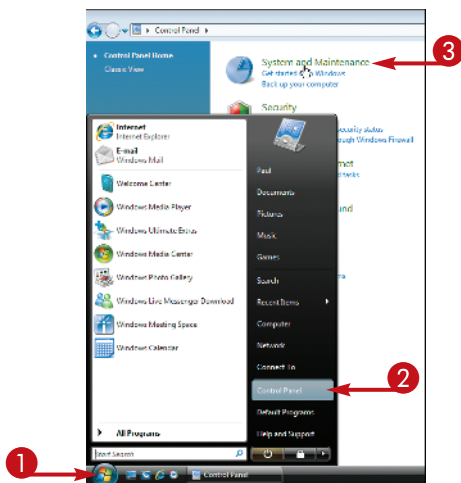
You can add folders to the Windows Search engine's index, which makes your file searches in those folders run noticeably faster.

The Windows Vista Search feature works well if what you are looking for is in your main user account folder or one of its subfolders (such as Documents, Pictures, and Music). This is because Windows

Vista automatically *indexes* those folders, which means it keeps a detailed record of the contents of all your files.

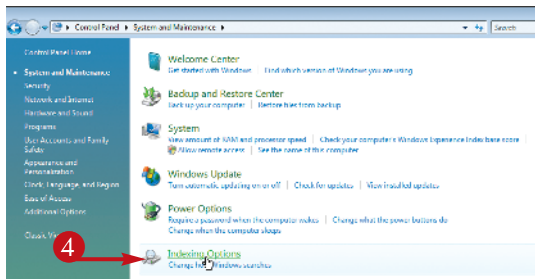
If you have files in a different location, Windows Vista does not index them, which makes searching for those files very time-consuming. You can dramatically speed up the searching of those files by adding their location to the Search index.

- 1 Click Start.
 - 2 Click Control Panel.
- The Control Panel window appears.
- 3 Click System and Maintenance.

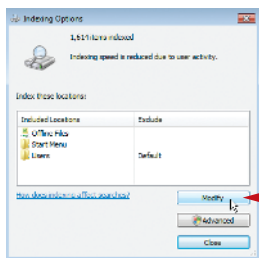


The System and Maintenance window appears.

- 4 Click Indexing Options.

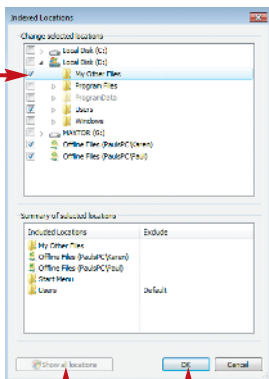


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The Indexing Options dialog box appears.

- 5 Click Modify.



- 6 Click Show all locations.

Note: If the User Account Control dialog box appears, click Continue or type an administrator password and click Submit.

- 7 Click the folder you want to include in the index.

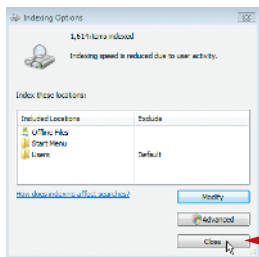
- 8 The folder appears in the list of included locations.

- 8 Click OK.

- 9 Click Close.

Windows Vista includes the folder in the index and begins rebuilding the index.

Note: To learn how to run advanced searches in Windows Vista, see "Perform an Advanced File Search" in Chapter 4.



TIP

Did You Know?

If Windows Vista takes a long time to search or cannot find your files, you may need to rebuild the index. Follow steps 1 to 5 to display the Indexing Options dialog box and activate the global settings. Click Advanced to display the Advanced Options dialog box, and then click Rebuild.

Hear an Alert When You Press the Caps Lock Key

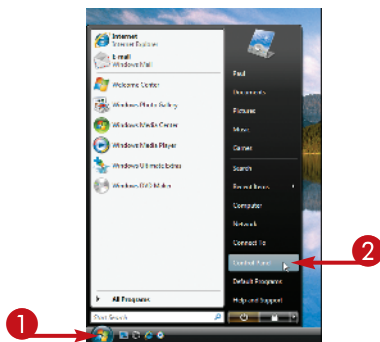
You can adjust a setting that tells Windows Vista to beep your computer's speaker whenever you press the Caps Lock key.

When you are typing quickly, it is common to accidentally press the Caps Lock key instead of either Shift, Tab, or A. As you probably know, when you inadvertently press Caps Lock, it may be a

while before you realize it. This means that you end up with a great deal of typing that has the capital letters reversed. Not only must you delete this text, but you must also retype it with the correct letters, all of which wastes valuable time.

To save this wasted time, you can configure Windows Vista to beep your computer's speaker when you press Caps Lock.

- 1 Click Start.
- 2 Click Control Panel.

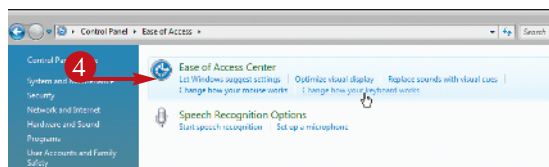


The Control Panel window appears.

- 3 Click Ease of Access.

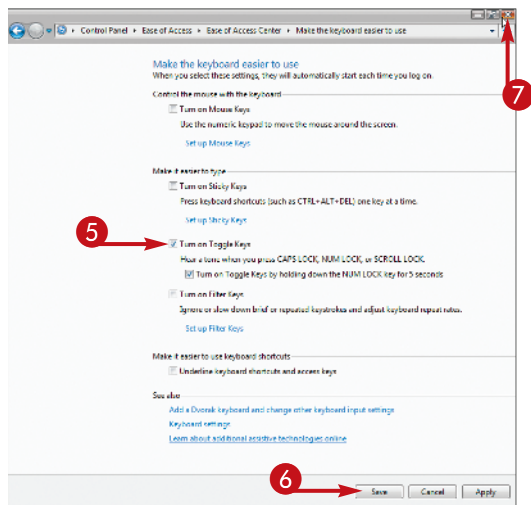


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The Ease of Access Center window appears.

- 4 Click Change how your keyboard works.



- 5 Click the Turn on Toggle Keys check box (☐ changes to ☒).

- 6 Click Save.

- 7 Click the Close box to close the Ease of Access Center window.

Windows alerts you with a tone when you press the Caps Lock key.

TIP

Did You Know?

You can turn off Toggle Keys by holding down the Num Lock key for five seconds, until you hear a beep. To turn it back on, hold down Num Lock for five seconds, until you see the Toggle Keys dialog box. Click OK to turn Toggle Keys on; click Cancel to leave Toggle Keys off.

Display More Programs On Your Start Menu

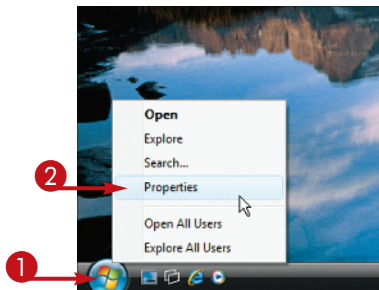
You can customize the Start menu to display more of the programs you use most often.

The list displaying your most frequently used programs appears on the bottom-left side of the Start menu, above All Programs. As you work with your programs, Windows Vista keeps track of how many times you launch each one. The programs that you have launched most often appear on the Start menu for

easy, two-click access. These programs appear at the top of the list, followed by the next most-often-used programs, and so on. When another program becomes popular, Windows Vista drops the bottom program and adds the new one.

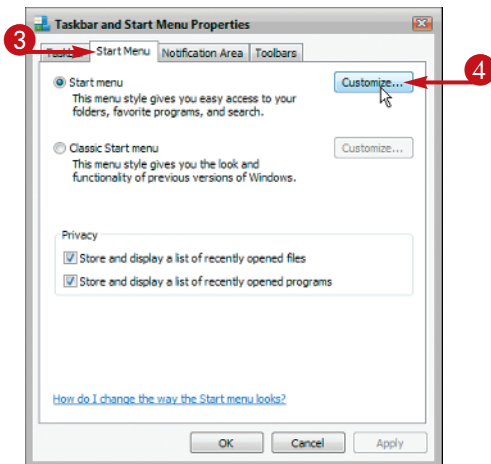
The default Start menu shows just the six most popular programs, but you can increase the size of the list to force Windows Vista to display more programs.

- 1 Right-click Start.
- 2 Click Properties.

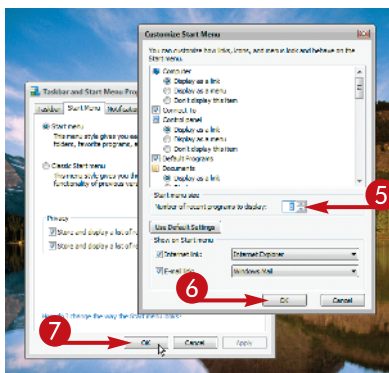


The Taskbar and Start Menu Properties dialog box appears.

- 3 Click the Start Menu tab.
- 4 Click Customize.



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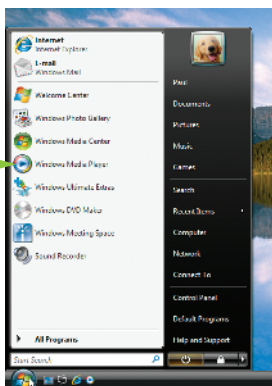


The Customize Start Menu dialog box appears.

- 5 Type the number of programs you want to see.

Note: The maximum number of programs is 30.

- 6 Click OK to return to the Taskbar and Start Menu Properties dialog box.
- 7 Click OK.



- Windows Vista adjusts the size of the Start menu's most frequently used program list.

TIP

More Options!

The height of the Start menu is restricted by the height of your screen. To display more Start menu items without changing the screen height, follow steps 1 to 4 to open the Customize Start Menu dialog box. In the list, click to uncheck the Use large icons check box (☒ changes to ☐) and then click OK. Using smaller icons enables more items to appear on the Start menu.

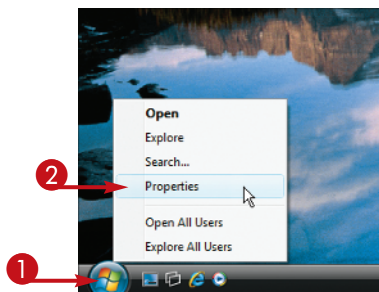
Launch Control Panel Icons Faster by Using a Menu

You can quickly access items in the Control Panel by converting the Start menu's Control Panel item into a menu. The longer you use Windows Vista, the more you appreciate the Control Panel. The problem, however, is that the default Control Panel window uses a category view that groups the Control Panel icons into categories, such as System and

Maintenance, Security, and Appearance and Personalization. That view hampers more experienced users, who must often negotiate several windows to get to the icon they want. Converting the Start menu's Control Panel item into a menu on the Start menu enables you to easily find and choose any Control Panel item.

1 Right-click Start.

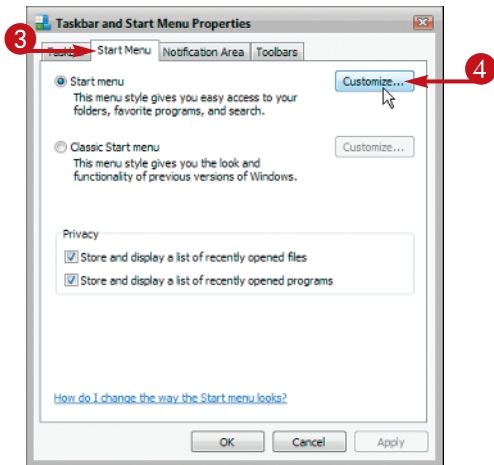
2 Click Properties.



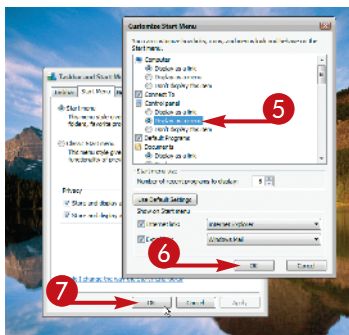
The Taskbar and Start Menu Properties dialog box appears.

3 Click the Start Menu tab.

4 Click Customize.

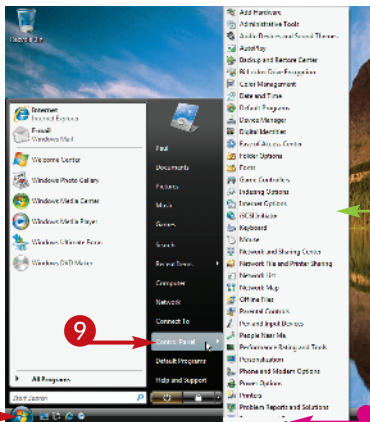


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The Customize Start Menu dialog box appears.

- 5 In the list of Start menu items, under Control Panel, click the Display as a menu option (○ changes to ●).
- 6 Click OK to return to the Taskbar and Start Menu Properties dialog box.
- 7 Click OK.



- 8 Click Start.
- 9 Click Control Panel.
- A menu of the Control Panel items appears.
- If the entire menu does not fit on your screen, position the mouse here to expand the menu.

TIP

More Options!

You can display other Start menu items as menus. Follow steps 1 to 5 to display the Customize Start Menu dialog box. The following branches have a Display as a menu option that you can click (○ changes to ●): Computer, Documents, Games, Music, Personal folder, and Pictures.

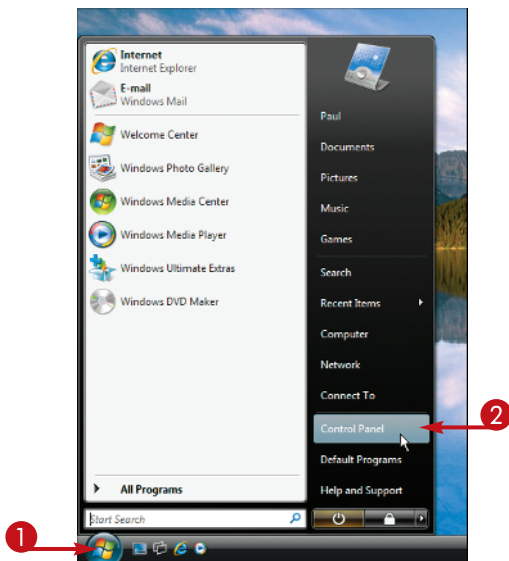
Update a Device Driver to Ensure Top Device Performance

You can ensure that a device is working at optimum performance by updating the device's driver to the latest version.

Windows Vista communicates with a hardware device by using a small program called a *device driver*, and this communication works two ways: from the device and to the device. For example, a keyboard uses its device driver to let Windows Vista know which key you pressed.

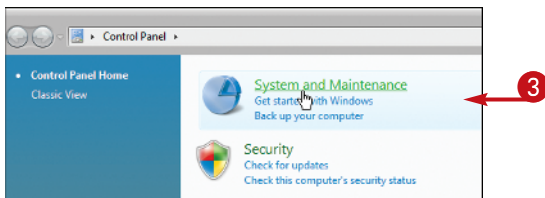
Hardware manufacturers often create new versions of their device drivers to fix problems and improve the device's performance. For these reasons, it is a good idea to always use the latest device drivers for your system's hardware. After you download a new driver from the manufacturer's Web site, you then need to update the existing driver on your system.

- 1 Click Start.
- 2 Click Control Panel.

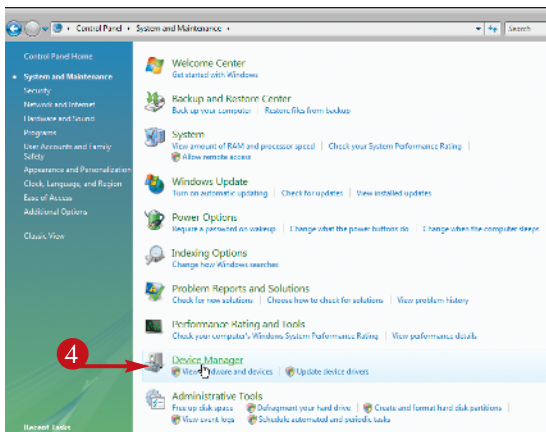


The Control Panel window appears.

- 3 Click System and Maintenance.



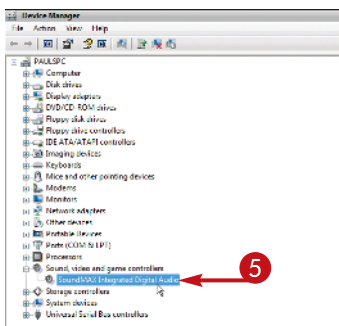
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The System and Maintenance window appears.

4 Click Device Manager.

Note: If the User Account Control dialog box appears, click *Continue* or type an administrator password and click *Submit*.



The Device Manager window appears.

5 Click the device you want to update.



Did You Know?

If you have a device that is performing slowly or is having problems, the cause may be a corrupted device driver file. In most cases, you can fix this problem by reinstalling the device's driver. Follow the steps in this task and, when it is time to select the driver, select the original driver, which is usually on the CD that came with the device.



Update a Device Driver to Ensure Top Device Performance (continued)

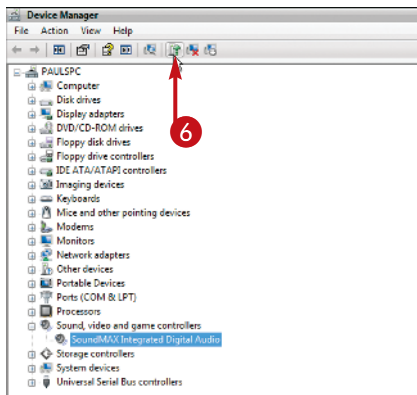
Most device manufacturers offer a Web site where you can download the latest drivers, but it helps to know how to navigate these sites.

Look for an area of the site dedicated to driver downloads. The good sites have links to areas named Downloads or Drivers, but it is far more common to go through a Support or Customer Service area first.

When you get to the device's download page, be careful which file you choose. Make sure that it is a Windows Vista driver, and make sure that you are not downloading a utility program or some other non-driver file.

When you finally get to download the file, save it to your computer. The best location is your user account's Downloads folder.

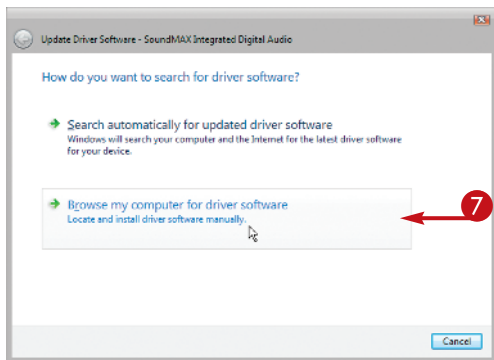
- 6** Click the Update Driver Software button.



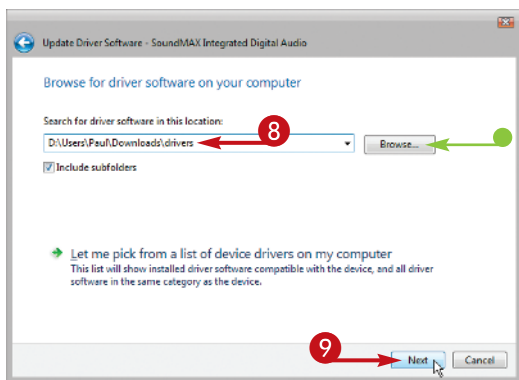
The Update Driver Software dialog box appears.

- 7** Click Browse my computer for driver software.

Note: If you have a CD with the device driver, insert the disc and click Search automatically for driver software, instead.

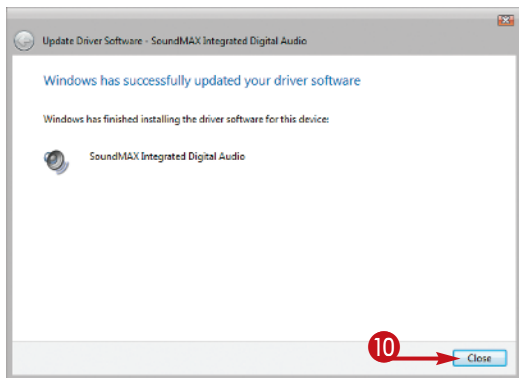


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The Browse for driver software on your computer dialog box appears.

- 8 Type the location of the folder where you saved the downloaded driver.
- Alternatively, click Browse, use the Browse for Folder dialog box to select the folder, and then click OK.
- 9 Click Next.



Windows Vista installs the driver.

- 10 Click Close.
- 11 Click the Close box to close Device Manager.

Windows Vista now uses the updated device driver.

TIP

Reverse It!

The latest device drivers are usually the most stable and bug-free. However, you may occasionally find that updating a device driver causes problems. In that case, you need to *roll back* the driver to the previous version. Follow steps 1 to 4 to display Device Manager, and then double-click your device. Click the Driver tab and then click the Roll Back Driver button.