

Looking Through Windows and Other Software

Computers have two major types of components: hardware and software. I discuss the hardware side in Chapter 2. In this chapter, I cover basic software that can help you understand how your computer operates and fix some things that may go wrong.

Windows includes several applications that you'll probably use regularly to manage your PC and fix operational issues. You find many of these applications in *Control Panel*, a window on the innards of your computer where you can twiddle with the dials and throw a few switches *while the machine is running*. No screwdrivers or pliers are required.

You'll also want (and need) several third-party software packages to help you with everything from office work such as word processing and spreadsheet design to scanning, photography, and other tasks that you'll want to perform as you find out more about your computer.

Chapter 3

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Tour Windows

1. Choose Start⇨All Programs⇨Accessories.
2. Choose the appropriate command for your version of Windows:
 - Windows XP: Tour Windows XP
 - Vista: Welcome Center (see Figure 3-1)
 - Windows 7: Getting Started

Click a topic to launch a description or connect to the internet to get more information.



Figure 3-1

3. In Windows XP, choose whether you want an animated display with sound or a nonanimated tour. (Vista and Windows 7 skip this screen and go straight to the one shown in Figure 3-1.)
4. Choose Go Online to Learn More (Windows 7) or What's New in Windows (Vista) to visit a Microsoft help site that provides videos and other information about your version of the operating system.



You can go directly to the help site from Internet Explorer. For Vista, go to <http://windowshelp.microsoft.com/windows>. For Windows 7, go to www.windows.microsoft.com.

Open Control Panel

1. Choose Start⇨Control Panel or My Computer⇨Control Panel to open the Control Panel window.
2. Choose a different view, if you want, by clicking the Classic View or Category View option on the left side of the window (see **Figure 3-2**). In Classic View, the Control Panel applications are listed in alphabetical order.
3. Study the Control Panel window to familiarize yourself with the applications that you can access here.

Click this option to switch to Category View

Classic view in Windows XP

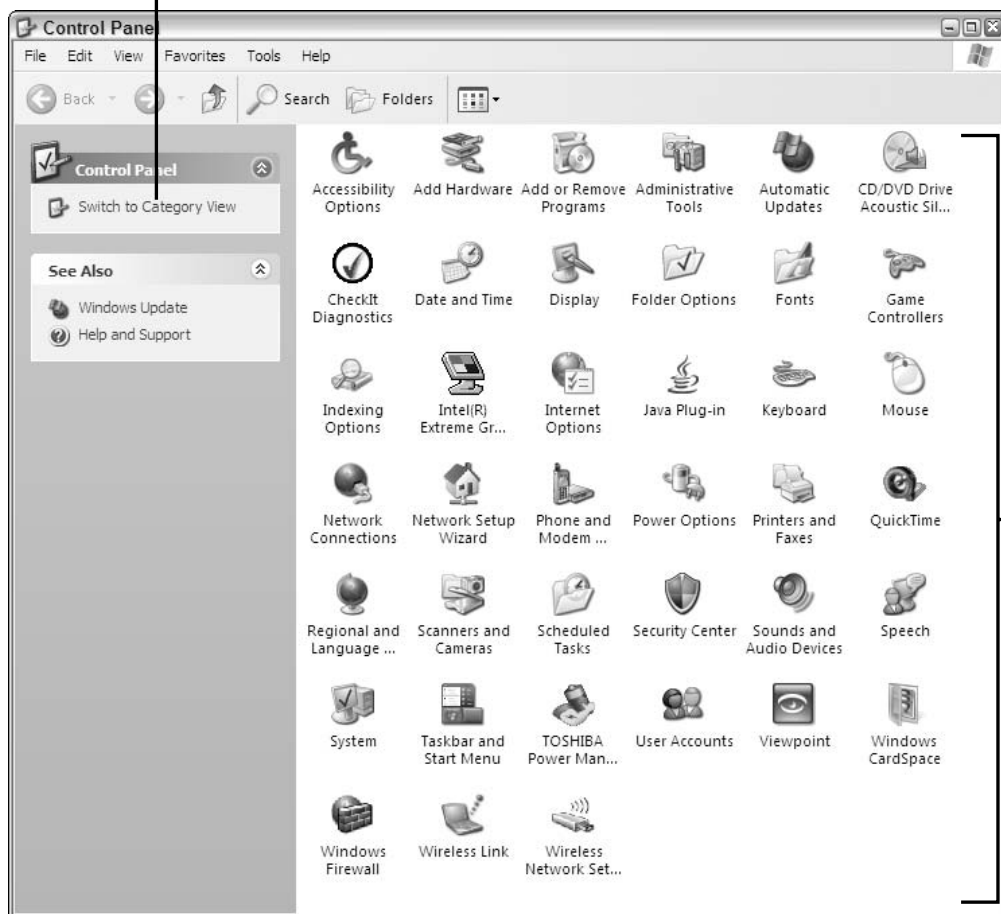


Figure 3-2

Customize Your Display

1. From Control Panel double-click the Display icon to launch the Display Properties utility (XP), or choose Personalization from the Appearance and Personalization menu in Windows 7 or Vista.



To go directly to the Display Properties dialog without going through the Control Panel, right-click anywhere on the Windows Desktop and choose Properties (XP),

or right-click the Desktop and choose Personalize (Vista and Windows 7).

2. Select a general area to view or change from the tabs at the top of the Display Properties dialog (XP) or choose an area for modification from the menu choices at the left of the screen (Vista and Windows 7). For example, you can choose a new desktop background from the images installed with Windows or use your own art or photograph (the Desktop tab in XP, or the Personalization screen in Vista and Windows 7). You can do the same with the screen saver (Windows screen savers or your own images).



Vista and Windows 7 handle these display settings significantly differently from Windows XP, but the basic concept is the same. Instead of a tabbed display, Vista gives you menu choices in the Personalization display, which you will find under Appearance and Personalization in the Category view. Windows 7 uses the Personalization dialog as well, but in Windows 7 you set desktop themes, screen saver settings, sounds, and desktop background, all at once.

3. Click Apply to preview your changes (XP). In Vista and Windows 7 the display changes immediately when you make the choice. See **Figure 3-3**.
4. Make additional modifications as desired, then click OK to accept the changes and close the Display Properties dialog (XP) or just close the Personalization dialog in Vista and Windows 7. For more information managing and repairing your monitor and display settings, see Chapter 8.



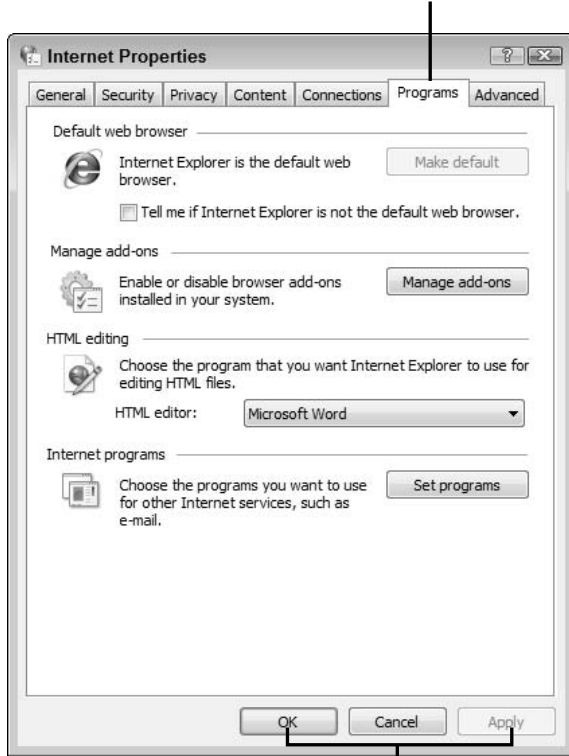
Click Apply to preview

Figure 3-3

Set Internet Options

1. From Control Panel, double-click the Internet Options dialog. This choice will be in the Vista and Windows 7 Network and Internet Category. **Figure 3-4** shows the Programs tab from the Vista Internet Options dialog.
2. Click the Programs tab to set a variety of program options for Internet access. You can choose the programs you want to use from the pull-down lists at each data entry field on this dialog.
3. Click the Connections tab to tell Windows how you want to reach the Internet. Click Setup on this dialog to launch a Connections Wizard to help you establish an Internet connection.

Click the tab to choose the options you want to view or change.



Click OK or Apply to accept the changes.

Figure 3-4



The Internet Options dialog box is available on the Tools menu of Internet Explorer.

4. Study the choices on the Advanced menu to make your Internet experience be just what you want it to be. Here's where you set security options, specify some Explorer display options, set printing options and more.

Configure Mail

1. From Control Panel double click the Mail icon to display the Mail Setup dialog. **Figure 3-5** shows the Vista Mail Setup dialog.

Click E-Mail Accounts to set up a new account or modify one you've already established.



Figure 3-5



Windows 7 does not include an intrinsic E-Mail client like Outlook Express, which comes with XP. You'll need to download and configure the new Windows Live Mail client, a free Windows 7 upgrade. An earlier version of this client, called simply Windows Mail, is built into Vista. See Download and Configure Windows Live Applications later in this chapter for more information.

2. For the most part you can ignore the Data Files and Profiles options on this dialog. The default settings will handle all your needs.
3. Click E-mail Accounts to add a new E-mail account or view or change an existing account. If you have previously configured an e-mail account, you will see a dialog that shows that account and lets you modify it or add a new one. If this is your first e-mail account, Windows will step you through several dialog screens to input the information required to make the account work.



You'll need several pieces of key information to properly add or reconfigure an e-mail account. Information from your Internet Service Provider (ISP) will answer these: Account Type (IMAP or POP3), IMAP or POP3 server, SMTP Server, your e-mail address (xxx@yyy.zzz), your username (how you log into the e-mail server), and your password.

4. Click Finish on the final dialog to accept changes or create the new e-mail account.



On the e-mail settings screen where you enter the core information for your account, you can click Test Account Settings to make sure your settings are correct before you actually create the account.

Use the Network Setup Wizard

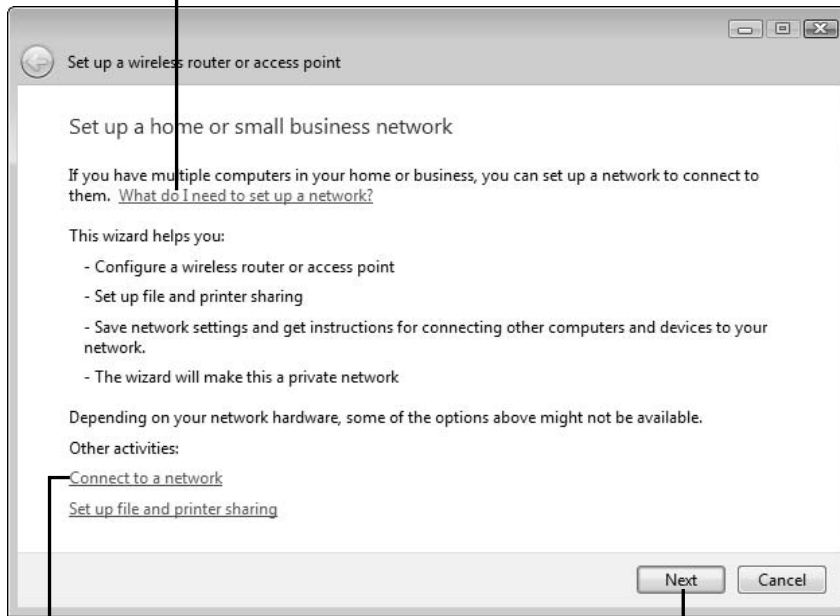
1. From Control Panel double-click the Network Setup Wizard icon (XP and Vista) to launch the wizard. The Vista setup dialog is shown in **Figure 3-6**. In Windows 7 open the Network and Sharing center from the Icon view, or choose Network Status and Tasks in the category view, then click on Set up a New Connection or Network.



In Vista and Windows 7, this one Control Panel choice lets you configure your local area network and also set up an Internet connection. In Windows XP the Network Setup Wizard gets you to the Internet. To create a new Local Area Network connection, choose Network Connections from the Control Panel, and Wireless Network Setup to configure a wireless network.

2. Click Connect to a Network on the Set up a wireless router or access point screen to add your computer to an existing network.

Click what do I need . . . to learn more about networking.



Click Next to set up a new network.

Click Connect to a Network if you're adding a computer to an existing network.

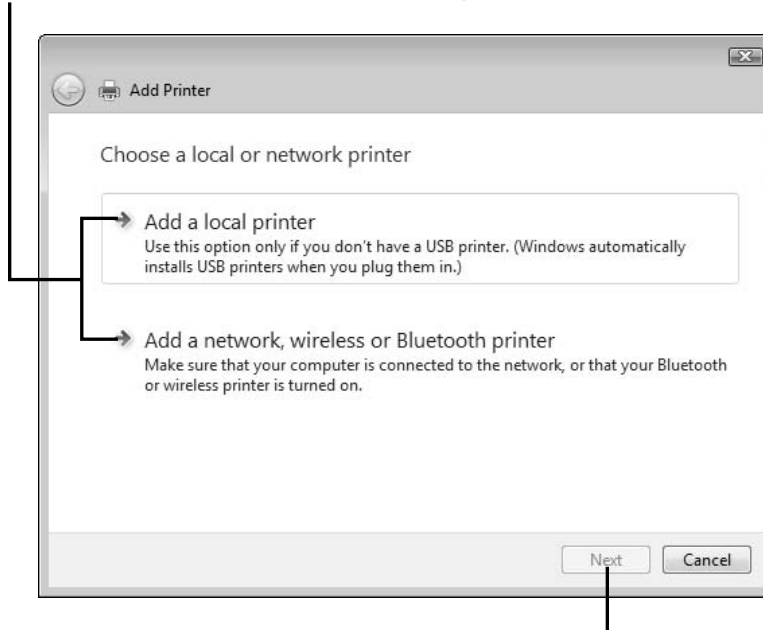
Figure 3-6

3. Click Next at the bottom of this dialog to set up a new network. Windows will scan for wireless access points and step you through configuring them for your network.

Configure Printers and Faxes

1. From Control Panel, double-click the Printers and Faxes icon (XP). In Vista and Windows 7 choose Devices and Printers to view a list with icons of printers and fax devices.
2. Click Add a Printer to add a new device to your computer. **Figure 3-7** shows the initial Add a Printer dialog in Vista and Windows 7. Windows XP displays a wizard welcome screen, then lets you choose the type of printer to install on the second dialog.

Choose Local or Network (remote) printer.



Click Next to let the wizard help you finish the installation.

Figure 3-7

- 3.** Choose Local or Network printer from the wizard dialog and click Next to move to the next screen. You will see different screens after this, depending on what type of printer you are installing. Windows will try to find a printer to install automatically, but you may be asked for printer manufacturer, model, network address (for a remote printer), and other information.



If you are installing a printer attached to a networked computer or other network device (such as a wireless access point or router), choose the printer host device from the port list on the next printer wizard dialog. For a stand-alone Ethernet connected printer you may need to create a new TCP/IP.

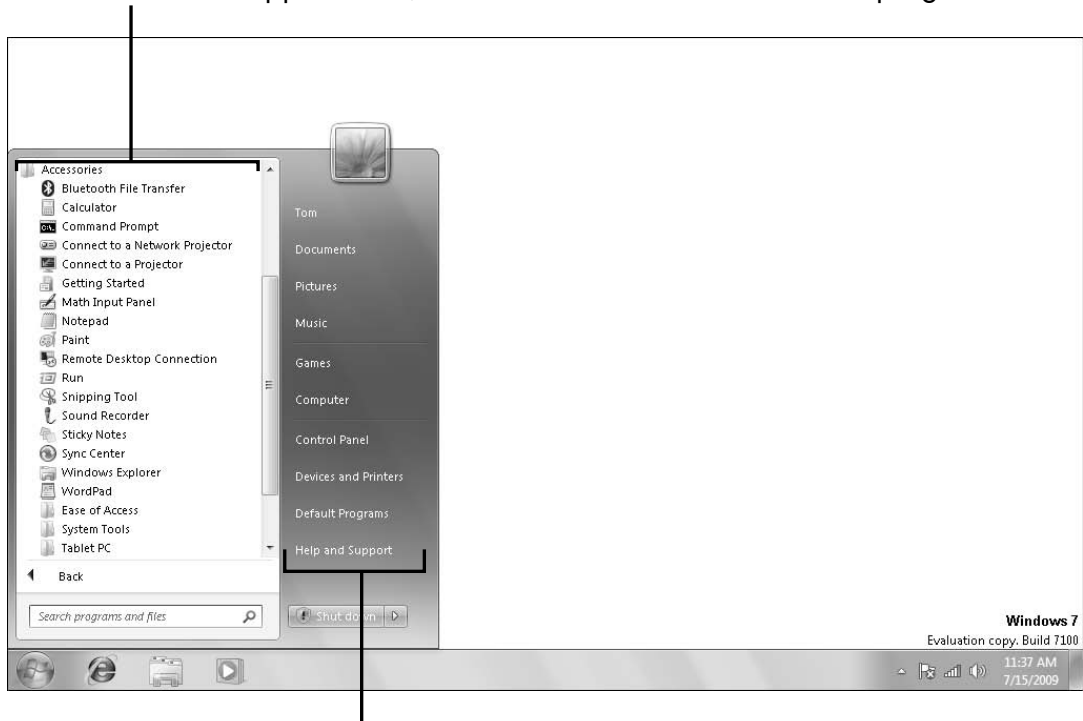
- 4.** Follow the wizard to the next to last page, answering the questions as you go, and choose Yes to print a test page. This will verify your settings before you finish the installation.

5. On the last screen click Finish to complete the installation.

Explore Windows Accessories

1. Choose Start→All Programs→Accessories. **Figure 3-8** shows the accessories list from Windows 7. Vista and XP will have slightly different applications in this list. As with the Control Panel, study this list to familiarize yourself with the types of utilities here.

Some entries are applications; others are folders with additional programs.



Hover your mouse pointer over an entry for more information.

Figure 3-8



Vista and Windows 7 display drop-down menus when you choose Accessories or one of the Accessories sub-menus. Windows XP display successive menus as you hover your mouse over each parent menu.

2. To use one of the Accessories applications, simply click the menu item you want to use.
3. To exit the Accessories menu, move your mouse pointer outside the menu area and click on the desktop.

Use Windows Explorer

1. Choose Start→All Programs→Accessories.
2. Click Windows Explorer to open this utility. **Figure 3-9** shows the Vista Explorer utility.



This is a utility you will use frequently. From the Accessories program list you can right-drag the Windows Explorer icon to your desk to create a shortcut to make access easier.

3. Click the right-facing triangle to the left of a folder name in the Folders display at the left of the screen to present a list of the sub-folders within.
4. Click a folder name to display its contents on the right side of the Explorer screen.



You can move files easily among directories. First display the folder contents for the source location of a file or files, then click the triangle to the left of a main folder on the left to display the destination. Drag the file from the right window display across to the folder name to move it to the new location.

Part I: A Computer Is Not a Toaster

Click a folder name on the left of the screen to display its contents on the right. Note the additional menu items.

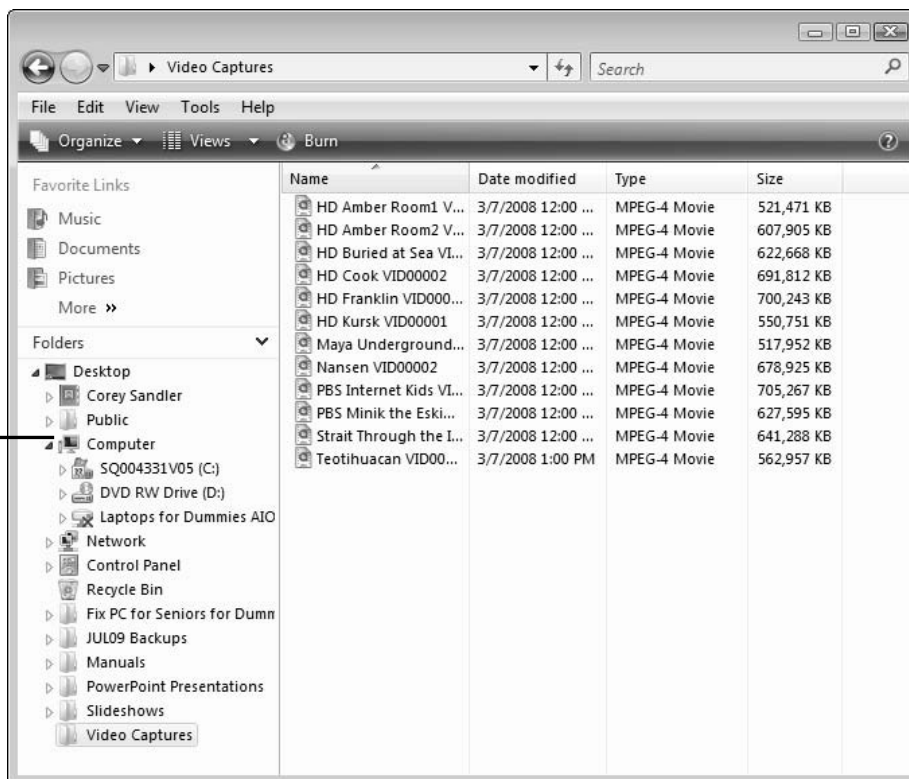


Figure 3-9

5. Click in the Search field at the upper right of the Explorer window and type all or a part of a file name to find it. Narrow the search by first selecting a folder at the left. If you select Computer (Vista and Windows 7) the search routine will look in all of your storage devices for the specified file. In Windows XP click on the Search spyglass on the Explorer toolbar and fill out the information displayed on the next screen.