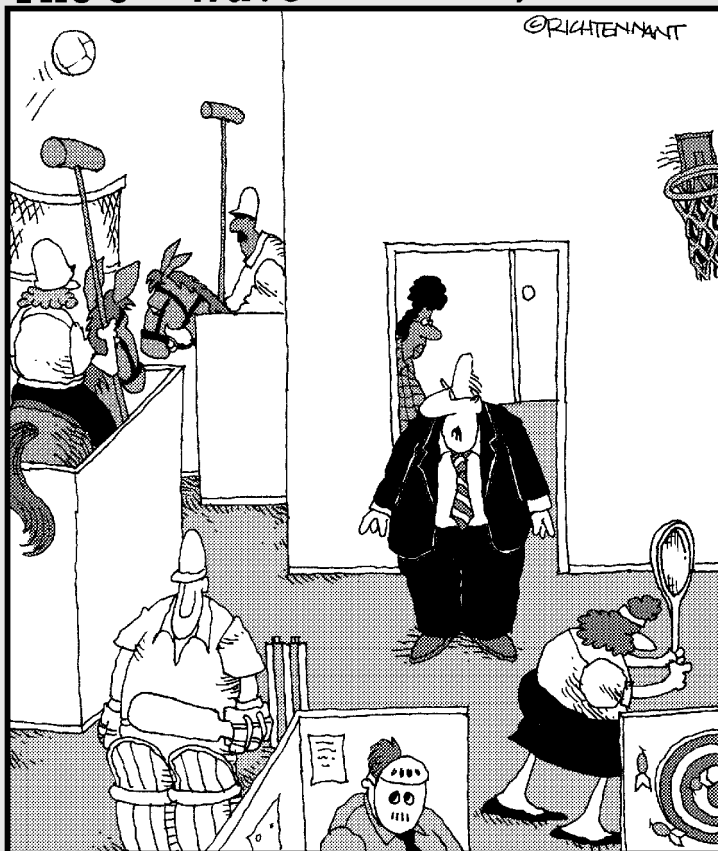


Part IV

Customizing and Upgrading Windows Vista

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



“Ms. Gretsky, tell the employees they can have internet games on their computers again.”

In this part . . .

When your life changes, you want Windows Vista to change with it, and that's where this part of the book comes in. Here's where you discover Windows Vista's reorganized Control Panel, which lets you change nearly everything but your computer's disposition.

Chapter 12 describes easy click-through tune-ups you can perform to keep your computer in top shape, backed up, and running smoothly. If you're sharing your computer with others, you discover how to dish out user accounts to each of them, with *you* deciding who can do what.

This part also walks you through Vista's new Parental Controls, which let you automatically control what your kids can and *can't* do when sitting down at the keyboard.

Finally, when you're ready to buy that second (or third, fourth, or fifth) computer, a chapter walks you through linking them all to create a home network, where they can all share the same Internet connection, printer, and files.

Chapter 11

Customizing Windows Vista with the Control Panel

In This Chapter

- ▶ Customizing the Control Panel
 - ▶ Altering Windows Vista's appearance
 - ▶ Changing video modes
 - ▶ Installing or removing programs
 - ▶ Adjusting your mouse
 - ▶ Automatically setting the computer's time and date
-

Anybody who's seen a science-fiction movie knows that robots come with secret control panels, the best of which include an emergency Off switch. Windows Vista's Control Panel lives in plain sight, thankfully, living one click away on the Start menu.

Inside the Control Panel, you'll find hundreds of switches and options that let you customize Windows' look, feel, and vibe. This chapter explains the switches and sliders you'll want to tweak, and it steers you away from the ones to avoid.

I also list shortcuts that whisk you directly to the right Control Panel setting, bypassing the long, twisting corridors of menus.

One word of caution, however: Some of the Control Panel's settings can be changed only by the person holding the almighty Administrator account — usually the computer's owner. If Vista refuses to open the Control Panel's hatch, call over the PC's owner for help.

Finding the Right Switch in the Control Panel

Flip open the Start menu's Control Panel, and you can while away an entire work week opening icons and flipping switches to fine-tune Vista. Part of the attraction comes from the Control Panel's magnitude: It houses more than 50 icons in the Classic View, and some icons summon menus with more than two dozen settings and tasks.

To save you from searching aimlessly for the right switch, the Control Panel lumps similar items together in its Category View, shown in Figure 11-1.

Below each category's name live shortcuts for that category's most popular offerings. The Security category icon in Figure 11-1, for example, offers shortcuts to check for the latest security updates, as well as evaluate your PC's current security status.



Windows XP veterans already familiar with the Control Panel's icons can switch to the Control Panel's Classic View, instead. (The mouse points to that option in Figure 11-1.) The Classic View drops the categories facade and presents *all* of Vista's icons, as shown in Figure 11-2.

Figure 11-1:
Windows Vista makes settings easier to find by grouping them into categories.

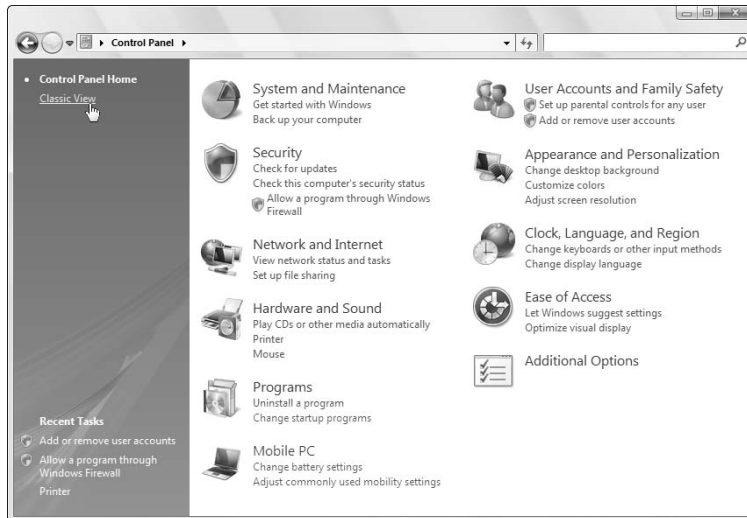
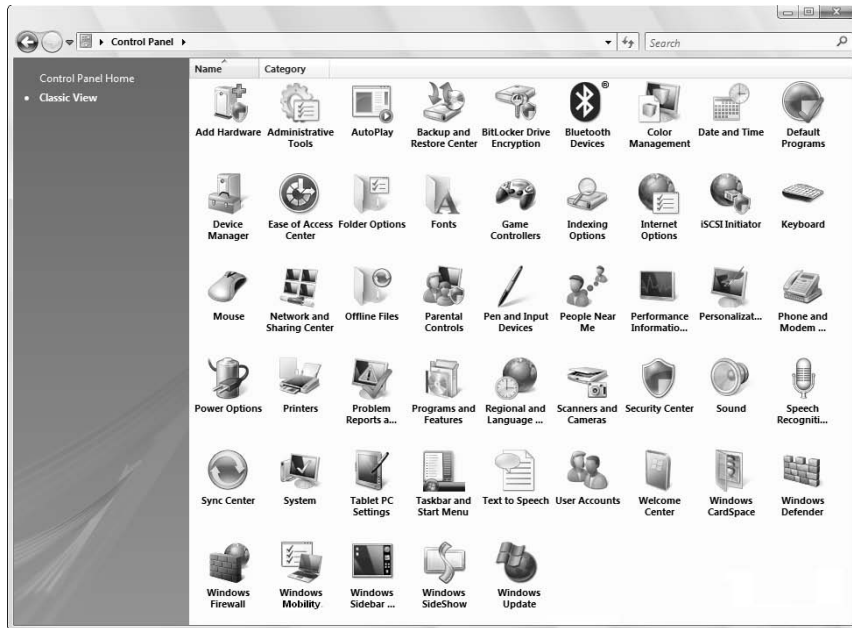


Figure 11-2: Designed for experienced PC owners, Windows Vista's Classic View displays *all* the Control Panel's icons.



Don't think something's astray if your Control Panel differs from the one in Figure 11-2. Different programs, accessories, and computer models often add their own icons to the Control Panel. Different versions of Vista, which I describe in Chapter 1, also leave out some of the icons seen here.



Rest your mouse pointer over any confusing icon or category in the Control Panel, and Windows Vista thoughtfully explains its meaning in life.



The Control Panel gathers all of Vista's main switches into one well-stocked panel, but it's certainly not the only way to change Vista's settings. You can almost always jump to these same settings by right-clicking the item you want to change — be it your desktop, Start menu, or a folder — and choosing Properties from the pop-up menu.

The rest of this chapter lists the Control Panel's Categories shown in Figure 11-1, the reasons you'd ever want to visit them, and the shortcuts for jumping straight to the setting you need.

System and Maintenance



Like a '67 Mustang, Windows Vista needs occasional maintenance. In fact, a little bit of maintenance can make Windows Vista run so much more smoothly that I devote the best of Chapter 12 to that subject.

That chapter explains how to speed up Windows, free up hard drive space, back up your data, and create a safety net called System Restore.



Like most Control Panel categories, the System and Maintenance section is jam-packed with options. To find things more easily, double-click the Control Panel's menu bar to make it fill the screen. Also, if necessary, scroll down the window to see the entries hiding below view along the menu's bottom.

User Accounts and Family Safety



I explain in Chapter 13 how to create separate accounts for other people to use your computer. That lets them use your PC, but limits the amount of damage they can do to Windows and your files.

Here's a refresher if you don't want to flip ahead to that chapter: Choose Control Panel from the Start menu. Then, in the User Accounts And Family Safety section, click Add Or Remove User Accounts.

That opens the Manage Accounts area, where you can also create accounts and change existing ones, including their name, password, or Start menu picture.

The Control Panel's User Accounts And Family Safety category also includes a link to the Security section, where you can place Parental Controls on what your kids do with the PC. I explain Parental Controls in Chapter 10.

Security



The Control Panel's Security category contains a full brigade of soldiers. I've written field manuals for them all in Chapter 10: Windows Firewall, Windows Update, Windows Defender, and Vista's new Parental Controls.

Changing Windows' Appearance (Appearance and Personalization)



One of the most popular categories, the Appearance and Personalization area lets you change Vista's look and feel in a wide variety of ways. Open the category to see the following six icons:



✔ **Personalization:** For many people, this icon is pay dirt. Choose this to splash a new picture or digital photo across your desktop, choose which screen saver kicks in when you're away from your PC, change the colors of Vista's window frames, and change your monitor's *screen resolution* — a nifty way to pack more information onto your screen.



✔ **Taskbar and Start menu:** Ready to add your own photo to that boring picture atop your Start menu? Want to customize the taskbar living along your desktop's bottom edge? I cover both these things in Chapter 2's Start menu and taskbar sections, but those same settings are available here, as well.



✔ **Ease of Access Center:** Designed to help people with special needs, these settings make Windows more navigable by the blind, deaf, and people with other physical challenges. Because the Control Panel offers Ease of Access as its own category, I describe it in its own section later in this chapter.



✔ **Folder Options:** Used mainly by experienced users, this area lets you add subtle tweaks to how folders look and behave.



✔ **Fonts:** Here's where you install new fonts to spruce up your printed work. I cover fonts where they belong, in the printing chapter (Chapter 7).



✔ **Windows Sidebar Properties:** This area lets you add gadgets to Vista's *Sidebar*, that thick strip along the desktop's right edge. I explain the Sidebar and its gadgets in Chapter 2, but here's the trick: Add gadgets by right-clicking a blank part of the Sidebar and choosing Add Gadgets.

In the next few sections, I explain the tasks in this category that you'll reach for most often.

Changing the desktop background

A *background*, also known as wallpaper, is simply the picture covering your desktop. To change it, follow these steps:



Right-clicking your desktop, choosing Personalize, and selecting Desktop Background jumps you quickly to Step 3.

1. Click the Start menu, choose Control Panel, and find the Appearance and Personalization category.

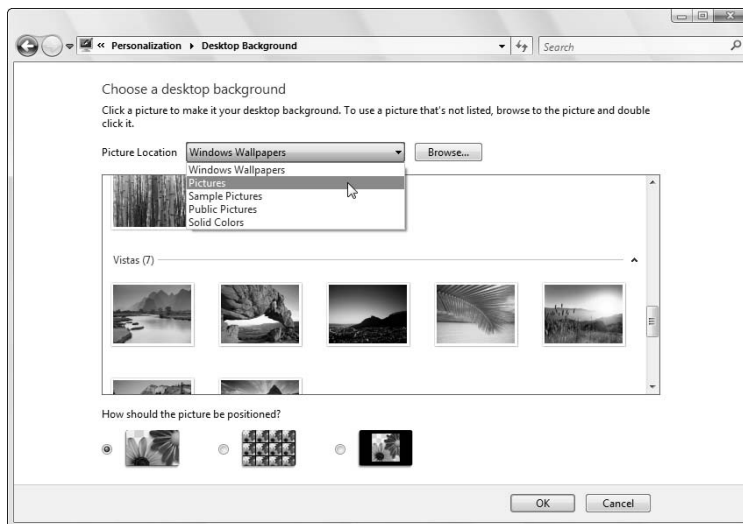


Its icon appears in the margin.

2. Choose Change Desktop Background from the Personalization section.

The window shown in Figure 11-3 appears.

Figure 11-3:
Click the drop-down menu to find more pictures to splash across your desktop as the background.



3. Click on a new picture for the background.

Be sure to click the drop-down menu, shown in Figure 11-3, to see all the available photos, textures, paintings, and light auras that Vista offers. To rummage through folders not listed, click Browse. Feel free to search your own Pictures folder for potential backgrounds.

Background files can be stored as BMP, GIF, JPG, JPEG, DIB, or PNG files. That means you can use nearly any photo or art found on the Internet or from a digital camera.

When you click a new picture, Windows Vista immediately places it across your desktop. If you're pleased, jump to Step 5.

4. Decide whether to stretch, tile, or center the picture.

Not every picture fits perfectly across a monitor. Small pictures, for example, need to be either stretched to fit the space or spread across the screen in rows like tiles on a floor. When tiling and stretching still looks odd, try centering the image and leaving blank space around its edges.



From left to right, the three large buttons along the bottom of Figure 11-3 let you stretch, tile, or center your photo.

5. Click OK to save your currently displayed background.



Did you happen to spot an eye-catching picture while Web surfing with Internet Explorer? Right-click that Web site's picture and choose Set As Background. Sneaky Windows copies the picture and splashes it across your desktop as a new background.

Choosing a screen saver

In the dinosaur days of computing, computer monitors suffered from *burn-in*: permanent damage when an oft-used program burned its image onto the screen. To prevent this burn-in, people installed a screen saver to jump in with a blank screen or moving lines. Today's monitors no longer suffer from burn-in problems, but people still use screen savers because they look cool.

Windows comes with several built-in screen savers. To try one out, follow these steps:

Right-clicking your desktop, choosing Personalize, and choosing Screen Saver jumps you quickly to Step 3.

1. Open the Control Panel from the Start menu and select the Appearance and Personalization category.

The Appearance and Personalization category opens to show its offerings.

2. Choose Change Screen Saver from the Personalization area.

The Screen Saver Settings dialog box appears.

3. Click the downward-pointing arrow in the Screen Saver box and select a screen saver.

After choosing a screen saver, click the Preview button for an audition. View as many candidates as you like before making a decision.

Be sure to click the Settings button, as most screen savers offer options, letting you specify the speed of a photo slide show, for example, and the direction the photos should travel across the screen.

4. If desired, add security by selecting the On Resume, Display Logon Screen check box.

This safeguard keeps people from sneaking into your computer while you're fetching coffee. It makes Windows ask for a password after waking up from screen-saver mode. (I cover passwords in Chapter 13.)

5. When you're done setting up your screen saver, click OK.



If you *really* want to extend your monitor's life (and save electricity), don't bother with screen savers. Instead, click Change Power Settings in Step 3. The resulting Select a Power Plan window lets you choose the Power Saver plan, which tells Windows Vista to turn off your monitor when you haven't used it for 20 minutes or so. (Tailor any plan to match your work habits by clicking Change Plan Settings.)

Changing the computer's theme

Themes are simply collections of settings: You can save your chosen screen saver and desktop background, for example, as one theme, letting you switch easily between them.

If you haven't created any themes on your own, then you won't find much in here. Windows Vista comes with *very* few prebuilt themes to slip on. To try one on, right-click your desktop, choose Personalize, and choose Theme. The Theme Settings dialog box appears, shown in Figure 11-4.

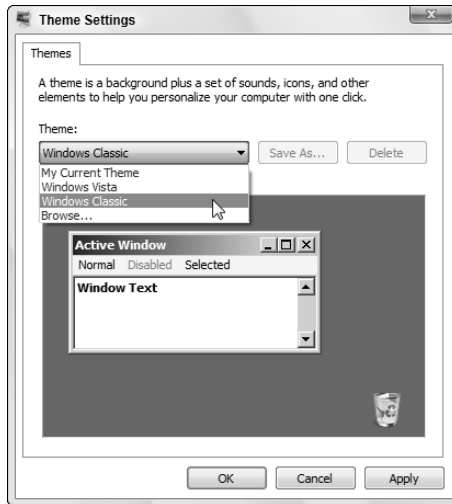


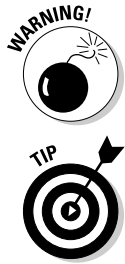
Figure 11-4: Choose a pre-configured theme to change how Windows looks and sounds.

Windows Vista lists its token bundled themes (and an option to browse for your own); click any of them to see a preview in the Sample window shown in Figure 11-4:

- ✔ **My Current Theme:** If you've somehow messed up Windows Vista's appearance settings — but haven't yet saved them — choose this command to revert to your last saved theme.
- ✔ **Windows Vista:** This setting reverts to the “stock” Windows Vista theme, the one it wore when first installed.
- ✔ **Windows Classic:** Retro users choose this setting to bring back the lean, mean, and lightening-fast look of the venerable Windows 98.
- ✔ **Browse:** Click here to grab a Theme you've saved in a specific folder. (Vista normally saves Themes in the Program Files folder.)

Choose any of the themes, and Windows Vista automatically slips into the new clothes. To preview a listed theme's look, click its name and watch the Sample window.

Instead of choosing from Vista's pre-assembled themes, feel free to make your own by changing Vista's background, colors, the screen saver, and other details. Then save your Theme by clicking Save As, shown in Figure 11-4, and naming your Theme.



- ✔ Vista's basic tools for creating themes wear thin after awhile. If you're really into creating Windows themes (called *skinning* by aficionados), pick up a third-party program like WindowBlinds (www.windowblinds.net). You can download Themes created by WindowBlinds aficionados at WinCustomize (www.wincustomize.com).
- ✔ Before you begin downloading themes from the Web or e-mail attachments, be sure that you're using an updated antivirus program. Viruses sometimes masquerade as themes.
- ✔ To change themes quickly, right-click your desktop and choose Personalize. When the Control Panel's Personalization area appears, select Theme and choose your new theme.

Changing the screen resolution

One of Vista's many change-it-once-and-forget-about-it options, screen resolution determines how many things Vista can cram onto your monitor at one time. Changing the resolution either shrinks windows to pack more of 'em on-screen, or it enlarges everything at the expense of desktop real estate.

Doubling your workspace with a second monitor

Blessed with an extra monitor, perhaps a leftover from a deceased PC? Connect it to your PC, place it aside your first monitor, and you've doubled your Windows desktop: Vista stretches your workspace across both monitors. That lets you view the online encyclopedia in one monitor while writing your term paper in the other.

To perform these video gymnastics, your PC needs a video card with two *ports*, and those ports must match your monitor's *connectors*—technical topics all covered in my book *Upgrading and Fixing PCs For Dummies*, published by Wiley Publishing, Inc.

To find your most comfortable resolution — or if a program or game mutters something about changing your *screen resolution* or *video mode* — follow these steps:

- 1. Choose Control Panel from the Start menu and choose the Appearance and Personalization category.**

The Appearance and Personalization area lists the main ways you can change Vista's appearance.

- 2. In the Personalization area, choose Adjust Screen Resolution.**

The Display Settings dialog box appears, as shown in Figure 11-5.



Figure 11-5: Depending on the screen resolution, Windows can squeeze different amounts of information onto your monitor.

3. Change the number of colors your monitor displays, if desired.

Vista lets you select several settings from the Colors drop-down menu.

To fully experience the rain forest in your digital camera photos, make sure that Windows Vista displays the highest number of colors as possible. Highest, or 32-bit mode, paints your photos with up to 16 million glorious colors. Medium (16-bit mode) displays only up to 65,000 colors, which makes a surprisingly large difference.

4. To change the screen resolution, use your mouse to drag the little bar in the Resolution area.

Watch the little preview screen change as you move the mouse. The more you slide the bar to the right, the larger your monitor grows. Unfortunately, the more information Vista can pack onto your monitor, the smaller that information appears.

There's no right or wrong choice here, but here's a word of advice: Most Web sites won't fit onto your screen well at 640 by 480 pixels. A setting of 800 by 600 is better, and 1,024 by 768, Vista's favorite, will accommodate just about any Web size you visit.

5. View your changes by clicking the Apply button.

When Windows Vista switches to a new resolution, it gives you 15 seconds to click a button approving the change. If the new resolution leaves your monitor blacked out, you won't see the on-screen button. After a few seconds, Windows notices that you didn't click the approval button and reverts to your original resolution.

6. Click OK when you're done tweaking the display.

After you've chosen the highest color setting and a comfortable screen resolution, you'll probably never return here. Unless you plug a second monitor into your PC, of course, which I describe in the sidebar.



Changing Network and Internet Connections



Vista normally reaches out and touches other PCs and the Internet automatically. Plug an Internet connection into your PC, and Vista quickly starts slurping information from the Web. Plug in another PC, and Vista tries to create a network.

But when Vista can't handle the job by itself, turn to the Control Panel's Network and Internet category: Choose Control Panel from the Start menu and choose the Network and Internet category.

I devote Chapter 14 completely to networking; the Internet gets its due in Chapter 8.

Setting the Date, Time, Language, and Regional Options

Microsoft designed this area mostly for laptop users who frequently travel to different time zones and locations. Otherwise, you touch this information only once — when first setting up your computer. Windows Vista subsequently remembers the time and date, even when your PC's turned off.



To drop by here, choose Control Panel from the Start menu and click the Clock, Language, and Region category. Two sections appear, Date and Time, and Regional and Language Options. Those sections let you perform these tasks:

- ✓ **Date and Time:** This area is fairly self explanatory. (Clicking your taskbar's clock and choosing Date and Time Settings lets you visit here, as well.)
- ✓ **Regional and Language Options:** Traveling in Italy? Click this task, and choose Italian from the Current Format menu. Windows switches to that country's currency symbols and date format. While you're there, click the Location tab and choose Italy — or whatever country you're currently visiting.

Bilinguals also visit this area when working on documents that require characters from different languages. (Foreign characters occasionally require installing another font, which I cover in Chapter 7.)

Hardware and Sound



Vista packs oodles of icons into its Hardware and Sound category, shown in Figure 11-6. It's a virtual warehouse of switches that control your PC's *hardware*: its mouse, speakers, keyboard, printer, telephone, scanner, digital camera, game controllers, and, for you graphic artists out there, a digital pen.

You won't spend much time in here, especially coming in through the Control Panel's doors. Most settings appear elsewhere, where a mouse-click will bring you directly to the setting you need.

Whether you arrive at these pages through the Control Panel or a shortcut, this section explains the most popular reasons for visiting here.

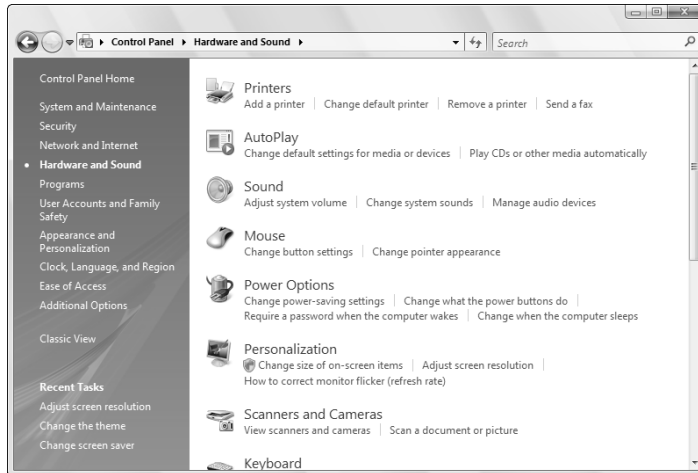


Figure 11-6:
Vista's
Hardware
and Sound
category
brims with
settings.

Adjusting Vista's volume and sounds

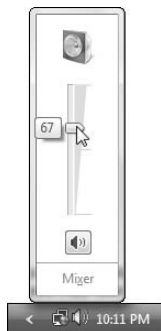
The Sound area lets you adjust your PC's volume, as well as connect seven speakers and a subwoofer to your PC, a feature much loved by World of Warcraft enthusiasts.



To turn down your PC's volume knob, shown in Figure 11-7, click the little speaker by your clock and slide down the volume. No speaker on your taskbar? Restore it by right-clicking the taskbar's clock, choosing Properties, and adding a check mark to the Volume check box.

To mute your PC, click the little speaker icon in Figure 11-7. Clicking that icon again removes the gag.

Figure 11-7:
Click the
speaker and
move the
sliding
control to
adjust your
PC's volume.





Vista one-ups Windows XP by letting you set different volumes for different programs. You can quietly detonate explosives in MineSweeper, allowing Windows Mail to loudly announce any new messages. To juggle volume levels between programs, follow these steps.

Double-clicking the little speaker icon next to your clock jumps you ahead to Step 3.

- 1. Choose Control Panel from the Start menu and choose Hardware and Sound.**

The Control Panel's Hardware and Sound area (shown in Figure 11-6) displays its tools.

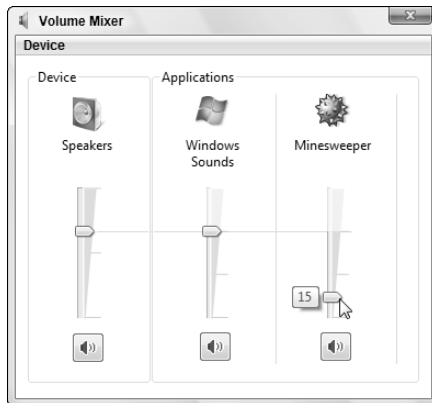
- 2. Find the Sound icon and then click Adjust System Volume.**

Vista's Volume box appears, shown in Figure 11-8, listing each noisemaker on your PC.

- 3. Slide any program's control up or down to muzzle it or raise it above the din.**

Close the Volume box by clicking the little red X in its corner.

Figure 11-8:
Turn down one program's volume without affecting the others.



Installing or setting up speakers

Most PCs come with only two speakers. Some PCs today come with four, and PCs that double as home theaters or gaming rigs sometimes have up to eight. To accommodate the variety of setups, Vista includes a speaker setup area, complete with a speaker test.



If you're installing new speakers, or you're not sure your old ones are working, follow these steps to introduce them properly to Vista.

Right-click your taskbar's Speaker icon and choose Playback Devices to jump to Step 2.

- 1. Click the Start button, choose Control Panel, and select the Hardware and Sound category.**

The familiar Hardware and Sound category from Figure 11-6 appears.

- 2. In the Sound area, choose Manage Audio Devices.**

The Sound dialog box appears, open to the Playback tab, which lists your speakers.

- 3. Click your speaker or speaker's icon, and click Configure.**

The Speaker Setup dialog box appears, shown in Figure 11-9.

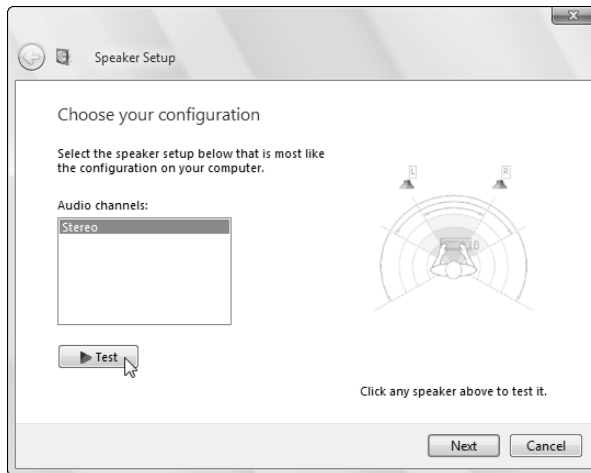


Figure 11-9: Click Test to hear your speakers.

- 4. Click the Test button, adjust your speaker's settings, and click Next.**

Vista walks you through selecting your number of speakers and their placement and then plays each one in turn so that you can hear whether they're in the correct locations.

- 5. Adjust any other sound devices and then click OK when you're done.**

While visiting, feel free to check your microphone volume by clicking the Recording tab in Step 2, as well as tabs for any other gadgetry you can afford.

Adding a printer

Quarrelling printer manufacturers couldn't agree on how printers should be installed. As a result, you install your printer in one of two ways:

- ✓ Some printer manufacturers say simply to plug in your printer, usually by pushing its connector into a little rectangular USB port. Flip your PC's On switch, and Windows Vista automatically recognizes and embraces your new printer. Add any needed ink cartridges, toner, or paper, and you're done.
- ✓ Other manufacturers took an uglier approach, saying you must install their bundled software *before* plugging in your printer. And if you don't install the software first, the printer may not work correctly.

The only way to know how your printer should be installed is to check the printer's manual. (Sometimes this information appears on a colorful, one-page Installation Cheat Sheet packed in the printer's box.)

If your printer didn't come with installation software, install the cartridges, add paper to the tray, and follow these instructions to put it to work:

1. With Vista up and running, plug your printer into your PC and turn on the printer.

If your printer's rectangular connector slides into a rectangular hole or *port* on your PC, you have a *USB printer*, the type used by most printers today. Vista may send a message saying that your printer is installed successfully, but follow the next two steps to test it.

If your printer's evil-looking, pronged connector pushes into a long oval connector full of holes, it plugs into your PC's *printer port*. (That connector is called *LPT1*: in computer language.)

2. Choose Control Panel from Vista's Start menu.

The Control Panel displays its categories of settings.

3. Open the Hardware and Sound category and choose Printers.

The Printers window appears, listing icons for any currently attached printers. If you spot your USB printer listed by its model name, right-click its icon, choose Properties, and click the Print Test Page button. If it prints correctly, you're finished. Congratulations. If your printer's name doesn't appear, though, move to Step 4.

Vista lists a printer named Microsoft XPS Document Writer that's not really a printer. Choosing to print to that printer creates a special file much like Adobe's PDF files, which require a special program to view and print. Vista can view or print XPS files; Windows XP, by contrast,



first requires you to download and install Microsoft's XPS Viewer (www.microsoft.com/downloads).

4. Click the Add a Printer button from the Printers window's top menu.

When the Choose a Local or Network Printer window appears, choose Add a Local Printer. (If you're installing a printer on a network, see Chapter 14 for the lowdown.)

5. Choose how you've connected the printer to your PC and click Next.

Choose LPT1 (the oblong connector). If you're using a USB printer, click Cancel, install the printer's software, and start over. No software? You need to download it from the printer manufacturer's Web site.

6. Choose your printer's port and click Next.

When Vista asks which printer port to use, choose LPT1: (Printer Port).

7. Click your printer's manufacturer and model names when you see them listed and click Next.

The Add Printer dialog box lists the names of printer manufacturers on the left; choose yours from the list. The right side of the box lists that manufacturer's printer models. (Vista knows how to talk to hundreds of different printer models.)

Windows Vista may ask you to stick the appropriate set-up CD into a drive. Stuck? Click the Windows Update button; Vista connects to the Internet to find software for that printer.

After a moment, you see the new printer listed. If Vista offers to print a test page, take it up on the offer.

That's it. If you're like most people, your printer will work like a charm. If it doesn't, I've stuffed some tips and fix-it tricks in Chapter 7's printing section.



If you have two or more printers attached to your computer, right-click the icon of your most oft-used printer and select Set As Default Printer from the menu. Windows Vista then prints to that printer automatically, unless you tell it otherwise.

- ✔ To remove a printer you no longer use, right-click its name and then choose Delete from the menu. That printer's name no longer appears as an option when you try to print from a program. If Vista asks to uninstall the printer's drivers and software, click Yes — unless you think you may install that printer again sometime.
- ✔ You can change printer options from within many programs. Choose File in a program's menu bar and then choose Print Setup or choose Print. From there, you can often access the same box of printer options as you find in the Control Panel. That area also lets you change things such as paper sizes, fonts, and types of graphics.



- ✓ To share a printer quickly over a network, right-click its icon and choose Sharing. Select the Share This Printer option and click OK. That printer shows up as an installation option for all the computers on your network.
- ✓ If your printer's software confuses you, try clicking the Help buttons in its dialog boxes. Many buttons are customized for your particular printer model, and they offer advice not found in Windows Vista.

Installing or adjusting other items

The Control Panel's Hardware and Sound area lists items tethered to most PCs: the mouse, keyboard, scanner, digital camera, game controllers, and perhaps a telephone. Click the name of any item to adjust its settings.

The rest of this section explains how to tweak the most common lazy gadgets into behaving.



To reach any of the following areas, choose Control Panel from the Start menu and choose Hardware and Sound. Click the area's name to see and change its settings.

Mouse



You'll find lots of settings inside here for standard-issue, two-button mice, but most are frivolous: Dressing up your mouse pointer's arrow, for example.

Southpaws should click here to swap their mouse buttons. Click the Switch Primary and Secondary Buttons box. (The change takes place immediately, even before you click Apply.)

People with slow fingers should fine tune their double-click speed. Test your current speed by double-clicking the test folder. If it opens, your settings are fine. If it doesn't open, though, slow down your mouse's double-click speed with the sliding control.

Owners of mice with extra buttons or wireless connections often hide extra settings in here, as well.

Scanners and Cameras



Click here to see your currently installed (and turned on) scanners and/or cameras. Or, to install *new* scanners or cameras, just plug them in and turn them on. Windows Vista almost always recognizes and greets them by name. On the rare occasion Windows doesn't recognize your model, though, take these extra steps:

- 1. Open Control Panel from the Start menu and choose Hardware and Sound.**

- 2. Click the Scanners and Cameras icon.**

The Scanners and Cameras window appears, listing all the attached scanners and cameras Vista currently recognizes.

- 3. Choose the Add Device button and click Next.**

Windows brings up its Scanner and Camera Installation wizard.

- 4. Choose the manufacturer and model, and click Next.**

Click the manufacturer's name on the window's left side and choose the model on the right.

- 5. Type a name for your scanner or camera, click Next, and click Finish.**

Type a name for the device (or keep the suggested name), click Next, and then click Finish. If you've turned on your camera or scanner and plugged in its cable correctly, Windows should recognize it and place an icon for it in both your Computer area and your Control Panel's Scanners and Cameras area.



Unfortunately, the installation of older cameras and scanners doesn't always work this easily. If Windows doesn't automatically accept your gear, fall back on the scanner or camera's bundled software. The scanner or camera should still work — you just won't be able to use Windows Vista's built-in software tools to grab its images.

Chapter 16 explains how to grab photos from a digital camera, and that chapter's same tips apply to scanners: Vista treats digital cameras and scanners the same way.

Keyboard



If your keyboard is not working or not plugged in, your computer usually tells you as soon as you turn it on. If you see your computer's startled Keyboard Error message — and Windows can't find the keyboard, either — it's time to buy a new one. When you plug in the new one, Windows Vista and your computer should find it automatically.

If your new keyboard comes with extra buttons along the top for things like "Internet," "Email" or "Volume," you need to install the keyboard's bundled software to make those buttons work. (Wireless keyboards almost always require their own software, as well.)

Enter this area mainly for minor keyboard adjustments like how fast the keys rrrrrrepeat when you hold them down.

Phone and Modem Options



You'll rarely use these phone and modem options unless you're a traveling laptop owner who constantly encounters different area codes. If you fit that description, click this area's Set Up Dialing Rules option and then add your new location and area code.

Windows thankfully saves all your previously entered area codes. Should you revisit the same place, reselect that location from the list to spare yourself from re-entering the information.

Game Controllers



Windows Vista almost always recognizes a newly plugged-in *game controller* (a fancy word for joystick, gamepad, flight yoke, rudder control, and similar gaming gear). Click the Game Controllers area to make any necessary sensitivity adjustments.

Adding new hardware

When you plug something into your PC's USB port, like iPods, cameras, or scanners, Vista almost always recognizes it and leaves it ready for action. But if Vista *doesn't* recognize something, call in the Add Hardware Wizard. Here's the process:

- 1. Choose Control Panel from the Start menu and choose the Classic View.**



Shown back in Figure 11-2, the Classic View shows *all* your icons — it's a hidden route to the Add Hardware icon.

- 2. Double-click the Add Hardware icon, click Continue (if prompted), and then click Next to let the wizard search for and install the hardware automatically.**

The Add Hardware Wizard introduces Windows Vista to whatever part you've plugged into your computer — if Vista recognizes one.

Here's where the path branches off:

- **If Windows Vista locates your new part**, click the newly installed part's name from the Windows Vista list, click Finish, and follow the rest of the wizard's instructions.
- **If the wizard *doesn't* find your new part**, click Next and follow the instructions. If you get lucky, rejoice — and click the device's name for Windows to install it.

But if Windows can't locate your newly installed part automatically, you need to contact the part's manufacturer and ask for a Windows Vista *driver* — a piece of software that lets Vista understand the new part. (Drivers are often downloadable from the manufacturer's Web site.) Some drivers come bundled with installation software to minimize installation chores. I cover driver-hunting in Chapter 12.

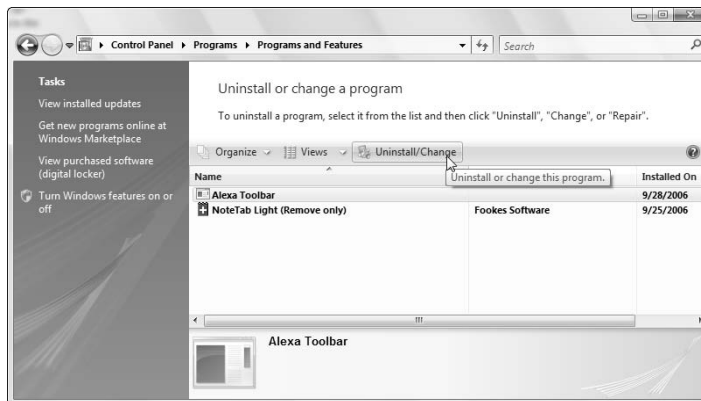
Adding or Removing Programs



Whether you've picked up a new program or you want to purge an old one, the Control Panel's Programs category handles the job fairly well. One of its categories, Installed Programs, lists your currently installed programs, shown in Figure 11-10. You click the one you want to discard or tweak.

The next two sections describe how to remove or change existing programs, and how to install new ones.

Figure 11-10: The Uninstall or Change a Program window removes any of your currently installed programs.



Removing or changing programs

To remove or change settings on a troublesome program, follow these steps:

- 1. Choose the Control Panel from the Start menu and choose Programs and Features from the Programs area.**

The Uninstall or Change a Program window appears, as shown in Figure 11-10, listing your currently installed programs, their publisher, size, and the date you installed the program.

2. **Click the unloved program and then click its Uninstall, Change, or Repair button.**

The Uninstall button always appears on the menu bar. Other buttons, called Change, and Repair appear only for some programs. If you spot the Repair or Change button, click it: Vista tries to repair the program or change some of its components. It sometimes fixes malfunctioning programs, but you often need its original CD handy.

3. **When Windows asks whether you're *sure*, click Yes.**

Windows Vista summons the program's built-in uninstall program — if it has one — or simply yanks the program off your computer's hard drive, sometimes rebooting your PC in the process.

Be careful, though. After you delete a program, it's gone for good unless you kept its installation CD. Unlike other deleted items, deleted programs don't linger inside your Recycle Bin.

When a program doesn't have an installation program . . .

Sometimes programs — especially small ones downloaded from the Internet — don't come with an installation program. If you've downloaded one of these low-budget creations to your computer, create a new folder for it and move the downloaded file inside. (Be sure to scan any downloaded file with your antivirus program.) Then try double-clicking the program's file. (It's usually the file with the fanciest icon.) One of two things may happen:

- ✓ **The program may simply start running.** That means you're done — the program doesn't need to be installed. (Drag and drop its program icon to your Start button to add it to the Start button.) If you need to uninstall the program, just right-click it and choose Delete. These types of programs rarely appear on your Change or Remove a Program list.

- ✓ **The program may start installing itself.** That means you're also done. The program's installation program takes over, sparing you any more trouble. To uninstall the program, use the Control Panel's Uninstall a Program option.

But if the program comes in a *zipped* folder — the folder icon bears a little zipper — you have an extra step. Right-click the zipped folder, choose Extract All, and then click Extract. Windows automatically *unzips* the folder's contents and places them into a new folder, usually named after the program. From there, you can either run the program directly or, if it has an installation program, run the installation program. I describe zipped folders in Chapter 4.



Always use the Control Panel's Uninstall or Change a Program window to uninstall unwanted programs. Simply deleting their folders won't do the trick. In fact, doing so often confuses your computer into sending bothersome error messages.

Adding new programs

Chances are, you'll never have to use this option. Today, most programs install themselves automatically as soon as you slide their CD into the drive. If you're not sure whether a program has installed, click the Start button and poke around in your All Programs menu. If it's listed there, the program has installed.

But if a program doesn't automatically leap into your computer, here are some tips that can help:

- ✓ You need an Administrator account to install programs. (Most computer owners automatically have an Administrator account.) That keeps the kids, with their Limited or Guest accounts, from installing programs and messing up the computer. I explain User accounts in Chapter 13.
- ✓ Downloaded a program? Vista usually saves them in your Downloads folder, accessible by clicking your username on the Start menu. Double-click the downloaded program's name to install it.
- ✓ Many eager, newly installed programs want to add a desktop shortcut, Start menu shortcut, *and* a Quick Launch toolbar shortcut. Say "no" to all but the Start menu. All those extra shortcuts clutter your computer, making programs difficult to find. You can safely delete these shortcuts if any program adds them by right-clicking the shortcut and choosing Delete.
- ✓ It's always a good idea to create a restore point before installing a new program. (I describe creating restore points in Chapter 12.) If your newly installed program goes haywire, use System Restore to return your computer to the peaceful state of mind it enjoyed before you installed the troublemaker.



Add/remove parts of Windows Vista

Just as you can install and uninstall programs, you can remove parts of Windows Vista that you don't need. You can remove the games, for example, to keep employees from playing them at the office.

Choosing the default program

Microsoft lets computer vendors replace Internet Explorer, Media Player, Outlook Express, and Windows Messenger with different programs from other companies. Your new computer may come with the Firefox Web browser, for example, instead of Microsoft's Internet Explorer. Some PCs may come with both browsers installed.

When more than one program can handle a task — opening a Web link, for example — Vista needs to know which program it should summon.

That's where Vista's program defaults area comes in. To choose your default programs, choose Control Panel from the Start button, choose Programs, select Default Programs, and choose Set Your Default Programs.

The Set Your Default Programs window lists programs along the right edge. Click the program you use the most and then choose Set This Program As Default. Repeat for any other listed programs that you prefer over Vista's bundled programs and then click OK.

To see what parts of itself Windows Vista has left off your computer or to remove unwanted components that Windows Vista *has* installed, follow these steps:

1. **Click the Start menu, choose Control Panel, and click the Programs icon.**
2. **In the Programs and Features area, choose Turn Windows Features On or Off and click Continue (if prompted).**

Windows brings up a window listing all its features. The features with check marks by their names are already installed. No check mark? Then that feature's not installed. If you see a box that's filled — neither empty nor checked — then double-click the component to see what's installed and what's left out.

3. **To add a component, click in its empty check box. To remove an installed component like Windows' Games, click its check box to uncheck its box.**
4. **Click the OK button.**

Windows Vista adds or removes the program. (You may need to insert your Windows Vista DVD during the process.)

Modifying Vista for the Physically Challenged



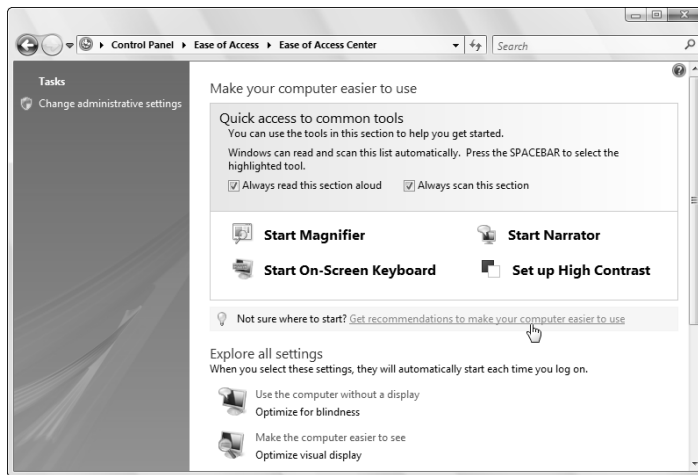
Nearly everybody finds Windows Vista to be challenging, but some people face special physical challenges, as well. To assist them, the Control Panel's Ease of Access area makes Windows easier to use for people with a wide variety of physical limitations.

Follow these steps to modify Vista's settings:

1. Choose Control Panel from the Start menu, choose Ease of Access, and choose Ease of Access Center.

The Change Ease of Access Settings window appears, as shown in Figure 11-11. Vista's ethereal voice kicks in, explaining how to change Vista's programs.

Figure 11-11: The Ease of Access area contains a wide variety of ways to help users with physical limitations.



2. Choose Get Recommendations to Make Your Computer Easier to Use.

Look for the task called, **Get Recommendations to Make Your Computer Easier to Use** (shown with the mouse pointing to it in Figure 11-11). That makes Vista give you a quick interview so that it can gauge what adjustments you may need. When it's through, Vista automatically makes its changes, and you're done.

If you're not happy with Vista's changes, move to Step 3.

3. Make your changes manually.

The Ease of Access Center window offers these toggle switches to make the keyboard, sound, display, and mouse easier to control:

- **Start Magnifier:** Designed for the visually impaired, this option magnifies the mouse pointer's exact location.
- **Start Narrator:** Vista's awful built-in narrator reads on-screen text for people who can't view it clearly.
- **Start On-Screen Keyboard:** This setting places a clickable keyboard along the screen's bottom, letting you type by pointing and clicking.
- **Set up High Contrast:** This setting eliminates most screen colors, but helps vision-impaired people view the screen and cursor more clearly.

Choose any of these options to turn on the feature immediately. Close the feature's window if the feature makes matters worse.

If you're still not happy, proceed to Step 4.

4. Choose a specific setting in the Explore All Available Settings area.

Here's where Vista gets down to the nitty gritty, letting you optimize Vista specifically for the following things:

- Blindness or impaired vision
- Using an alternative input device rather than a mouse or keyboard
- Adjusting the keyboard and mouse sensitivity to compensate for limited movements
- Turning on visual alerts instead of Vista's sound notifications
- Making it easier to focus on reading and typing tasks

Some centers that assist physically challenged people may offer software or assistance for helping you make these changes.

Options for Laptops (Mobile PC)



The Mobile PC area, shown only on laptops, lets you adjust the things dear to the heart of laptop owners: adjusting the screen's brightness, changing the sound volume, saving battery power, checking wireless network signals, and setting up external displays or projectors. I cover most of these settings in Chapter 22.

Additional Options



Vista normally leaves this catch-all area empty, but you may find controls for other programs and hardware you add to your PC.

Chapter 12

Keeping Windows from Breaking

In This Chapter

- ▶ Creating your own restore point
 - ▶ Backing up your computer
 - ▶ Freeing up hard drive space
 - ▶ Making your computer run faster
 - ▶ Tracking down and installing a new driver
 - ▶ Cleaning your mouse, keyboard, and monitor
-

If something in Windows is already broken, hop ahead to Chapter 17 for the fix. But if your computer seems to be running reasonably well, stay right here. This chapter explains how to keep it running that way for the longest time possible.

This chapter is a checklist of sorts, with each section explaining a fairly simple and necessary task to keep Windows running at its best. There's no need to call in a techie because much of this upkeep takes place using either Windows' built-in maintenance tools or standard household cleaners. For example, you run Vista's built-in Disk Cleanup program to free up space on a crowded hard drive.

This chapter also helps you fix the annoying and ubiquitous "bad driver" problem by explaining how to put a fresh driver behind the wheel.

Finally, you discover a quick way to clean your mouse — a necessary but oft-overlooked task that keeps the pointer on target. (Feel free to grab the vacuum cleaner and suck all the cookie crumbs out of your keyboard during the same cleaning spree.)



In addition to the checklist this chapter offers, make sure that Vista's Windows Update and Windows Defender programs are running on auto-pilot, as I describe in Chapter 10. They both go a long way to keep your computer running safely and securely.

Creating a Restore Point

When your computer's ailing, System Restore (which I cover in Chapter 17) provides a magical way to go back in time to when your computer was feeling better. Although System Restore creates restore points automatically, feel free to create your own. A restore point lets you return to a spot when you *know* your PC was working.

1. **Click the Start menu's All Programs menu, click Accessories, click System Tools, and click System Restore.**

The System Restore window appears.

2. **Choose Open System Protection and click the Create button.**

Found near the bottom of the System Restore window, the Open System Protection option fetches the System Protection page.

3. **Click Create, type a name for your new Restore Point and then click Create to save the Restore Point.**

Windows Vista creates a restore point with that name, leaving you with a bunch of open windows to close.

By creating your own restore points on good days, you'll know immediately which ones to use on bad days. I describe how to resuscitate your computer with System Restore in Chapter 17.

Tuning Up Windows Vista with Built-In Maintenance Tools



Vista contains a slew of tools for keeping Vista running smoothly. Several run automatically, limiting your work to checking their On switches. Others help you prepare for global warming by backing up your PC's files. To check them out, click the Start menu, choose Control Panel, and select the System and Maintenance category.

You'll need these tools most often:

- ✓ **Backup and Restore Center:** Windows Vista comes with an awkward backup program. But it's free, leaving you no excuse not to back up your files. All hard drives eventually die, and you've stored lots of memories on yours.
- ✓ **System:** Technical support people thrive in here. The System area lists your version of Vista, your PC's horsepower and networking status, and a scorecard rating of what Vista thinks of your PC's performance.

- ✔ **Windows Update:** This tool lets Microsoft automatically siphon security fixes into your PC through the Internet, usually a good thing. Here's where you can turn Windows Update back on, if necessary.
- ✔ **Power Options:** Not sure whether your PC or laptop is sleeping, hibernating, or just plain turned off? Chapter 2 explains the difference, and this section lets you decide your PC's degree of lethargy when you press its Off button. (Or, for you laptop owners, when you close its lid.)
- ✔ **Administrative Tools:** One gem lives here: Freeing up space on your hard drive by deleting your PC's garbage.

I describe these tasks more fully in this chapter's next five sections.

Backing up your computer

Your hard drive will eventually die, unfortunately, and it will take everything with it: years of digital photos, songs, letters, financial records, scanned items, and anything else you've created or stored on your PC.

That's why you must back up your files on a regular basis. That backup copy lets you pick up the pieces gracefully when your hard drive suddenly walks off the stage.

Windows Vista's solution, its bundled Backup program, offers a rare combination: It's basic *and* awkward to use. But if you have more time than money, here's how to make Windows Vista's built-in Backup program back up your important files. If you prefer something a little easier to use, ask your computer retailer to recommend a third-party backup program.

Before you can use Windows Vista's Backup program, you need three things:

- ✔ **A CD burner, DVD burner, or external hard drive:** Windows' free Backup program can write to CDs and DVDs — if you're willing to sit there and feed those discs to your PC. But for dependable, automatic backups, nothing beats an external hard drive. Buy one that simply plugs into your computer's FireWire or USB 2.0 port; Vista recognizes it on the spot.
- ✔ **An Administrator account:** You must be logged on to the computer with an Administrator account. I explain passwords and User accounts in Chapter 13.
- ✔ **Windows Vista's Backup program:** The Backup program comes for free in every version of Windows Vista. Unfortunately, the Backup program doesn't run *automatically* in Windows Home Basic — you must remember to run it every evening. (That's one of the reasons that version costs less than the Home Premium and Ultimate versions of Vista.)

Should I back up files and folders or my entire PC?

Vista's Backup and Restore Center offers two ways to back up your PC. Each takes an entirely different approach to stashing away your PC's contents.

- ✔ **File and Folder Backup:** The option chosen by most people — and the only option available for owners of Vista's Home and Premium versions — this lets you choose the files and folders you want backed up. Vista saves them all as one jumbo file, letting you break it up across several CDs or DVDs, if needed. When disaster strikes, this option lets you restore any or all of your backed-up files and folders.
- ✔ **CompletePC Backup:** Only available with Vista's Ultimate and Business versions, this

creates an "image" of your entire PC and then packs it into a jumbo file, just like the File and Folder Backup method. The difference, however, is that CompletePC Backup won't let you restore just a few files and folders from its stash. It only lets you restore your *entire* PC, which overwrites any files you've created since making the backup.

The CompletePC Backup comes in handy mostly with new PCs, or PCs you've laboriously set up just the way you want it. That CompletePC backup then provides a safe base to return to in case of catastrophe. For most people, though, File and Folder Backup provides the most versatile backup.

When you take care of those three things, follow these steps to make your computer back up your work automatically each month (good), week (better), or night (best):

1. Open Vista's Backup and Restore Center.

Click the Start button, choose Control Panel, select the System and Maintenance category, and click Backup and Restore Center.

2. Choose Backup Files.

If you're using Vista's Ultimate or Business version, the Backup and Restore Center offers two slightly different ways to back up your PC, both described in the sidebar. But you want to click the Backup Files button.

The thoughtful program asks where you want to save the files.

3. Choose where to save your backup and click Next.

Vista lets you save your backup nearly anywhere: CDs, DVDs, USB drives, portable hard drives, or even a drive on a *networked* computer (see Chapter 14).

Although your choice depends on the amount of information you're backing up, the best solution is a *portable hard drive*: A hard drive in a box that plugs into one of your PC's USB or FireWire ports, allowing for unattended backups.

If you can't afford a portable hard drive, then CDs or DVDs are the next best thing.

If you try to save to a networked drive on another PC, Vista will ask for an Administrator account's username and password on the other PC.

If Vista asks which disks you want to include in the backup, choose Local Disk (C:) (System).

4. Choose the types of files you want to back up and click Next.

Although Windows asks what types of files you want to back up, shown in Figure 12-1, it's already selected *every* type of file on the list. If you have a very good reason for not backing up some of them, remove the check marks next to those files.

If you don't remove any check marks, Vista backs up all the files in every User account on the PC.

What Vista doesn't back up, though, are programs. But because you've saved their installation discs, you can simply reinstall them as necessary.

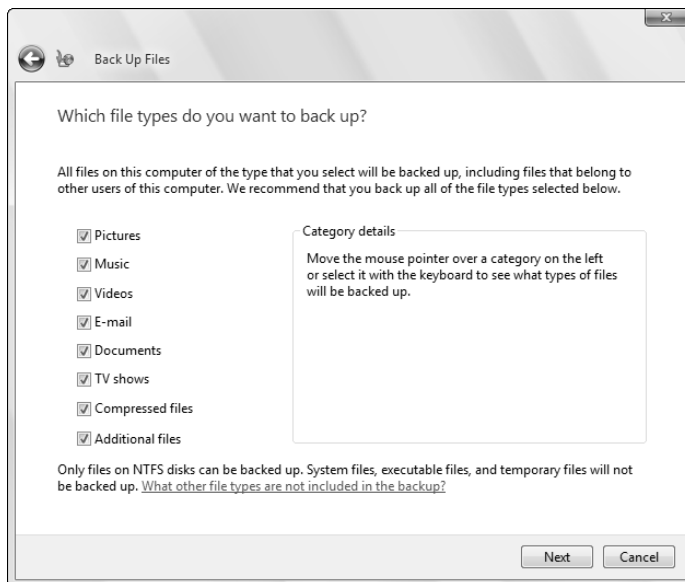


Figure 12-1:
Choose
what file
types you
want to
back up.



Vista saves every file and folder in each user's user account folder. To be precise, that's the C:\Users folder, including all the folders inside it.

5. Choose how often to back up, and click the Save Settings and Start Backup button.

Choose between Daily, Weekly, or Monthly backups, as shown in Figure 12-2, and then choose the day and time for the Backup program to kick in. You can choose a time when you'll already be working on your PC, but the backup will slow down your PC.



For the most convenient backups, choose a daily backup taking place in the wee hours of the morning. If you turn off your PC at night, choose a daytime schedule.

When you click the Save Settings and Start Backup button, Vista immediately starts its backup — even if one's not scheduled yet. That's because the ever-vigilant Vista wants to make sure that it grabs everything right now — before something goes wrong.

6. Restore a few files to test your backup.

Now it's time to make sure that everything worked. Repeat the first step, but choose Restore Files. Follow Vista's menus until you can browse the list of backed-up files. Restore a test file to make sure that it's copied back to its original place.

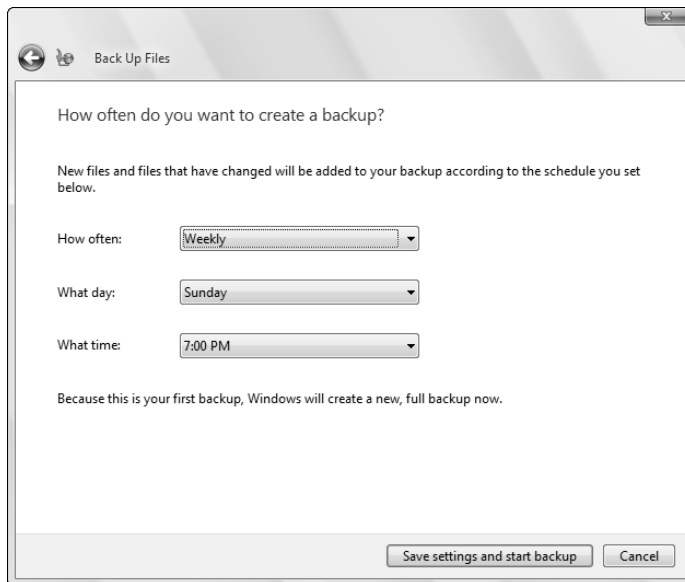


Figure 12-2: Choose the frequency, day, and time of your automatic backups.



Speeding up your PC by toning down the visual effects

As it frantically crunches numbers in the background, Windows Vista tries to project a navel-gazing image of inner peace. Its menus and windows open and close with a fade; aesthetically pleasing shadows surround each menu and the mouse pointer. If your video card possesses enough oomph, Vista even makes the window borders translucent, allowing part of the desktop to glow from behind.

All these extra visual decisions require extra calculations on Windows's part, however, slowing it down a bit. To change Windows' attitude from peaceful to performance, head for the

Control Panel's System and Maintenance category, choose System, and click Advanced System Settings. When the System Properties box opens to the Advanced tab, click the Settings button in the Performance area.

For fastest action, choose Adjust for Best Performance. Windows quickly strips away all the visuals and reverts to Classic mode — a faster way of working that mimics earlier, no-frills Windows versions. To return to a prettier, but slower, Windows, choose Let Windows Choose What's Best for My Computer.



The Backup program in Windows Vista Basic version can't run automatically. If you own the Basic version, it's up to you to remember to run the Backup program at least once a week.



- ✓ For your computer to back up automatically each night, you must leave it *turned on* during the scheduled backup time. I leave mine turned on 24 hours a day, as most PCs consume less power than a light bulb. (Please turn off your computer's monitor, though.)
- ✓ Vista saves your backup in a folder named Vista in the location you choose in Step 3. Don't change the backup's location. Vista may not be able to find it again when you choose to restore it.
- ✓ After making its first backup, Vista only starts backing up files that have changed since your last backup. Don't be surprised if subsequent backups are faster or don't require as many CDs or DVDs. Eventually, Vista tells you it's time for another complete backup, which will take longer.

Finding technical information about your computer



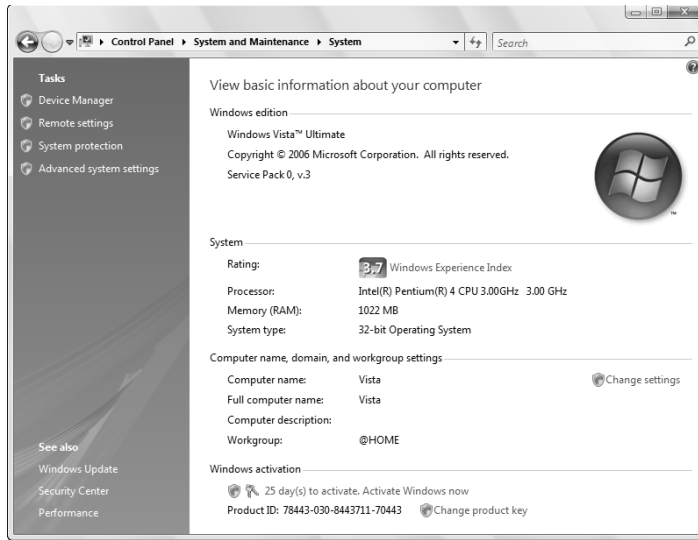
If you ever need to look under Windows Vista's hood, heaven forbid, open the Control Panel's System and Maintenance section and choose System. Shown in Figure 12-3, the System window offers an easily digestible technical briefing about your PC's viscera:

- ✔ **Windows edition:** Vista comes in way-too-many versions to remember. To jog your memory, Vista lists the version that's running on your PC.
- ✔ **System:** Here, Vista rates your PC's strength — its *Windows Experience Index* — on a scale of 1 (frail) to 5 (robust). Your PC's type of *CPU* (Central Processing Unit) also appears here, as well as its amount of memory.
- ✔ **Computer name, domain, and workgroup settings:** This section identifies your computer's name and *workgroup*, a term used when connecting to other computers in a network.
- ✔ **Windows Activation:** To keep people from buying one copy of Windows Vista and installing it on several PCs, Microsoft requires Windows Vista to be *activated*, a process that chains it to a single PC.

The pane along the left also lists some more advanced tasks you may find handy during those panic-stricken times when something's going wrong with your PC. Here's the rundown:

- ✔ **Device Manager:** This option lists all the parts inside your computer, but not in a friendly manner. Parts with exclamation points next to them aren't happy. Double-click them and choose Troubleshoot to diagnose their problem.
- ✔ **Remote Settings:** Rarely used, this complicated setup lets other people control your PC through the Internet, hopefully to fix things. If you can find one of these helpful people, let them walk you through this procedure over the phone, or through an instant messaging program.
- ✔ **System Protection:** This option lets you create restore points (described in this chapter's first section), as well as let a restore point take your PC back to another point in time — hopefully when it was in a better mood.
- ✔ **Advanced System Settings:** Professional techies spend lots of time in here. Everybody else ignores it.

Figure 12-3: Clicking the System icon brings up technical information about your PC.



Most of the stuff listed in Vista's System area is fairly complicated, so don't mess with it unless you're sure of what you're doing or a technical support person tells you to change a specific setting. If you want a taste of it, check out the sidebar on adjusting Vista's visual effects.

Freeing up space on your hard drive

Vista grabs more space on your hard drive than any other version of Windows. If programs begin whining about running out of room on your hard drive, this solution grants you a short reprieve:

- 1. Click the Start button and choose the Control Panel's System and Maintenance category. Then choose Free Up Disk Space from the Administrative Tools section.**

Vista asks whether it should clean your files, or every user's files.

- 2. Choose Files from All Users on This Computer.**

This step empties the Recycle Bin and cleans up trash from every user account on your PC.

If your PC asks you which drive you want to clean, choose the first one listed, the C: drive, and click OK.

3. Check all the items and then click OK.

Vista presents the Disk Cleanup window, shown in Figure 12-4. Check all the check boxes and then click OK. As you check a box, the Description section explains what's being deleted.

4. Click Delete Files when Windows Vista asks whether you're sure.

Windows Vista then proceeds to empty your Recycle Bin, destroy leftovers from old Web sites, and remove other hard drive clutter.

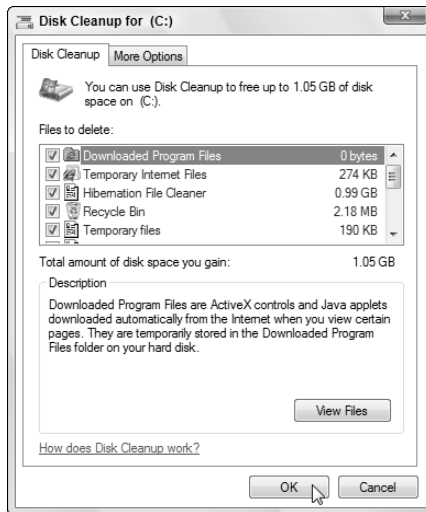


Figure 12-4:
Make sure
that all the
check
boxes are
checked.



For a shortcut to Disk Cleanup, click the Start menu and type **disk cleanup** in the Search box.

Empowering your power button

Normally, a press of a PC's power button turns off your PC, whether Vista's ready or not. That's why you should always turn off Vista with its *own* Off button, found by clicking the Start menu, clicking the little arrow by the lock icon, and choosing Shut Down. That gives Vista time to prepare for the event.

To avoid jolting Vista with an unexpected shutdown, consider reprogramming your laptop or PC's power button so that it doesn't turn off your PC at all. Instead, it puts your PC to sleep, Vista's new power-saving mode.

To change your power button's mission, choose Start, choose the Control Panel, and select the System and Maintenance category. Choose Power Options, and the Power Options window appears.

From the left side panel, click Choose What the Power Buttons Do. There, you can tell your PC's Power and Sleep buttons to either Sleep, Hibernate, Shut Down your PC, or do nothing, which prevents people from turning off your PC. (I describe the difference between Sleep and Hibernate in Chapter 2.)

For extra security, click Require a Password so that anybody waking up your PC will need your password to see your information.



For quick access to this area, type **Power Options** into the Start menu's Search box. Laptop owners will see an additional option letting them change how their laptop reacts when they close its lid.

Setting up devices that don't work (fiddling with drivers)

Windows comes with an arsenal of *drivers* — software that lets Windows communicate with the gadgets you plug into your PC. Normally, Vista automatically recognizes your new part, and it works. Other times, Vista heads to the Internet and fetches some instructions before finishing the job.

But occasionally, you'll install something that's either too new for Windows Vista to know about or too old for it to remember. Or perhaps something attached to your PC no longer works right, and Vista's Welcome Center grumbles about needing a "new driver."

In these cases, it's up to you to track down and install a Windows Vista driver for that part. The best drivers come with an installation program that automatically places the software in the right place. The worst drivers leave all the grunt work up to you.

If Windows Vista doesn't automatically recognize and install your newly attached piece of hardware — even after you restart your PC — follow these steps to locate and install a new driver:

1. Visit the part manufacturer's Web site and download the latest Windows Vista driver.

You often find the manufacturer's Web site stamped somewhere on the part's box. If you can't find it, try searching for the part manufacturer's name on Google (www.google.com) and locate its Web site.

Look in the Web site's Support or Customer Service area. There, you usually need to enter your part, its model number, and your computer's operating system (Windows Vista) before the Web site coughs up the driver.

No Windows Vista driver listed? Try downloading a Windows XP or Windows 2000 driver instead because they sometimes work just as well. (Be sure to scan *any* downloaded file with a virus checker.)

2. Run the driver's installation program.

Sometimes clicking your downloaded file makes its installation program jump into action, installing the driver for you. If so, you're through. If not, head to Step 3.



If the downloaded file has a little zipper on the icon, right-click it and choose Extract All to *unzip* its contents into a new folder. (Vista names that new folder after the file you've unzipped, making it easy to relocate.)

3. Choose Hardware and Sound from the Start menu's Control Panel and select Device Manager.

The Device Manager appears, listing an inventory of every part inside or attached to your computer.

4. Click anywhere inside the Device Manager, click Action, and then choose Add Legacy Hardware.

The Add Hardware Wizard guides you through the steps of installing your new hardware and, if necessary, installing your new driver.

- ✓ Avoid problems by keeping your drivers up-to-date. Even the ones packaged with newly bought parts are usually old. Visit the manufacturer's Web site and download the latest driver. Chances are, it fixes problems earlier users had with the first set of drivers.
- ✓ Problems with the new driver? Click the Start menu, choose Control Panel, and open the System and Maintenance category. Choose Device Manager and double-click the part name — *Keyboards*, for example — on the window's left side. Vista reveals the make and model of your part. Double-click the part's name and click the Driver tab on the Properties box. Breathe steadily. Finally, click the Roll Back Driver button. Windows Vista ditches the newly installed driver and returns to the previous driver.

Cleaning Your Computer

Even the best housekeeper or janitor draws the line at cleaning a computer. This chore's up to you, and you'll know when it's necessary. You don't need to turn off your computer for any of this — *except* if you need to remove your keyboard for cleaning.

Cleaning your mouse

If your mouse pointer jumps around on-screen or doesn't move at all, your mouse is probably clogged with desktop gunk. Follow these steps to degunkify it:

1. Turn the mouse upside down and clean off any dirt stuck to the bottom.

Your mouse must lie flat on its pad to work correctly.

2. Inspect the bottom of your mouse.

If your mouse has a little ball on the bottom, proceed to Step 3.

If your mouse has a little light on the bottom, proceed to Step 4.

3. Cleaning a mouse that has a ball.

Twist off the mouse's little round cover and remove the ball. Wipe off any crud from the ball and blow dust out of the hole. A little air blower, sold at office and computer stores, works well here. (It also blows off the dust layers clogging your computer's air vents.)

Pull out any stray hairs, dust, and roller goo. A cotton swab moistened with alcohol cleans the most persistent goo from the little rollers. (The rollers should be smooth and shiny.) Dirty rollers cause the most mouse problems.

Replace the cleaned ball into the cleaned hole and reinsert the clean little round cover.

4. Cleaning an optical mouse.

An *optical mouse* replaces the old-fashioned rubber ball with a tiny laser. With no moving parts, optical mice rarely need cleaning. But if yours is acting up, remove any stray hairs clinging to the bottom around the light.

Also, make sure that the mouse rests on a textured surface that's not shiny. If your desktop is glass or shiny (polished wood grain, for example), put your mouse on a mouse pad for best traction.

If your newly cleaned mouse still has problems, it may be time for a new one. But before shelling out the cash, check these things:

- ✔ Wireless mice go through batteries fairly quickly. If your mouse doesn't have a connecting cord, it's wireless. Check its battery and make sure that it's within range of its receiving unit. (The receiving unit plugs into your PC, perhaps in the back.)
- ✔ Check your mouse's settings: Click Start, choose Control Panel, and choose Mouse in the Hardware and Sound category. Look through the settings to see whether something's obviously wrong.

Cleaning your monitor

Don't spray glass cleaner directly onto your monitor because it drips down into the monitor's guts, frightening the circuits. Instead, spray the glass cleaner onto a soft rag and wipe the screen. Don't use paper because it can scratch the glass.

For cleaning flat panel monitors, use a soft, lint-free cloth, and a mix of half water and half vinegar. Feel free to clean your monitor's front panels, too, if you're feeling especially hygienic.

Cleaning your keyboard

Keyboards are usually too wide to shake over a wastebasket. The best way to clean them is to shut down Windows, turn off your computer, and unplug the keyboard from the computer. (If your keyboard has a rectangular plug that pushes into a USB port, you don't need to turn off your PC.)

Take the keyboard outdoors and shake it vigorously to remove the debris. If the keyboard's grimy, spray some household cleaning solution onto a rag and wipe off any goo from around the keyboard's edges and its keycaps.

Plug it back in, turn on your computer, and your computer looks almost new.

Chapter 13

Sharing One Computer with Several People

In This Chapter

- ▶ Understanding user accounts
 - ▶ Setting up, deleting, or changing user accounts
 - ▶ Logging on at the Welcome screen
 - ▶ Switching quickly between users
 - ▶ Understanding passwords
-

Vista's brimming with flashy new graphics, a souped-up search feature, a free calendar program, and even a three-dimensional chess game. But Microsoft's betting that something else will pry open people's wallets: Vista's enhanced security. Security's *everywhere* in Vista, which contains more warning signs than an electric fence.

One big part of security is the way Vista allows several people to share one computer, without letting anybody peek into anybody else's files.

The secret? Windows Vista grants each user his or her own *user account*, which neatly separates that person from other users. When people log on using their own user account, the computer looks tailor-made for them: It displays their personalized desktop background, menu choices, programs, and files — and it forbids them from seeing items belonging to other users.

This chapter explains how to set up a separate user account for everybody in the house, including the computer's owner, family members or roommates, and even occasional visitors who ask to check their e-mail.

Understanding User Accounts

Windows Vista wants you to set up a *user account* for everybody who uses your PC. A user account works like a cocktail-party name tag that helps Windows recognize who's sitting at the keyboard. Windows Vista offers three types of user accounts: Administrator, Standard, and Guest. To begin playing with the PC, people click their account's name when Windows Vista first loads, as shown in Figure 13-1.

Who cares? Well, Windows Vista gives each type of account permission to do different things on the computer. If the computer were a huge apartment building, the Administrator account would belong to the manager, each tenant would have a Standard account, and Guest accounts would belong to visitors trying to use the bathroom in the lobby. Here's how the different accounts translate into computer lingo:



- ✔ **Administrator:** The administrator controls the entire computer, deciding who gets to use it and what each user can do on it. On a computer running Windows Vista, the owner usually holds the almighty Administrator account. He or she then sets up accounts for each household member and decides what they can and can't do with the PC.
- ✔ **Standard:** Standard accounts can use most of the computer, but they can't make any big changes to it. They can't install programs, for example, but they can still run them. (Windows XP referred to Standard accounts as Limited accounts.)
- ✔ **Guest:** Guests can use the computer, but the computer doesn't recognize them by name. Guest accounts function much like Standard accounts, but with no privacy: Anybody can log on with the Guest account, and the desktop will look the way the last guest left it.

Giving yourself a Standard account

Whenever an evil piece of software slips into your computer — and you're logged in as an Administrator — that software controls all the powers you do. That's dangerous because Administrator accounts can delete just about anything. That's why Microsoft suggests creating *two* accounts for yourself: An Administrator account and a Standard account. Then, log on with your Standard account for everyday computing.

That way, Vista treats you just like any other Standard user: When the computer is about to

do something potentially harmful, Vista asks you to type the password of an Administrator account. Type your Administrator account's password, and Vista lets you proceed. But if Vista unexpectedly asks for permission to do something odd, you know something may be suspect.

This second account is inconvenient, no doubt about it. But so is reaching for a key whenever you enter your front door. Taking an extra step is the price of extra security.



Figure 13-1: Windows Vista lets users log on under their own accounts.



Here are some ways accounts are typically assigned when you're sharing the same computer under one roof:

- ✓ In a family, the parents usually hold Administrator accounts, the kids usually have Standard accounts, and the babysitter logs on using the Guest account.
- ✓ In a dorm or shared apartment, the computer's owner holds the Administrator account, and the roommates have either Standard or Guest accounts, depending on their trustworthiness level (and perhaps how clean they've left the kitchen that week).



To keep others from logging on under your user account, you must protect it with a password. (I describe how to choose a password for your account in this chapter's "Setting Up Passwords and Security" section.)



When you created new accounts in Windows XP, they were always made Administrator accounts — unless you clicked the Limited button. Vista reverses that to add a layer of security. When you create a new account, it's automatically granted *Standard* account status. To create an Administrator account in Vista, you must specifically click the Administrator Account button.

Setting Up or Changing User Accounts

Being second-class citizens, Standard account holders lack much power. They can run programs and change their account's picture, for example, or even change their password. But the administrators hold the *real* power: They can create or delete any user account, effectively wiping a person off the computer. (That's why you should never upset a computer's administrator.)

If you're an administrator, create a Standard user account for everybody who's sharing your computer. That account gives them enough control over the computer to keep them from bugging you all the time, yet it keeps them from accidentally deleting your important files or messing up your computer.

Follow these steps to add another user account to your PC or change an existing account:



1. Click the Start menu, choose Control Panel, and choose Add or Remove User Accounts from the User Accounts and Family Safety area.

A window pops up, as shown in Figure 13-2.

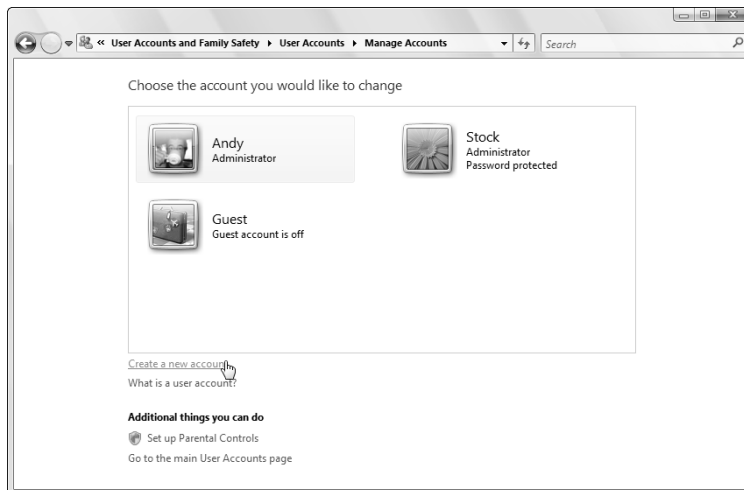


Figure 13-2:
Use the Manage Accounts area to create or change user accounts.

2. Create a new account, if desired.

If you click Create a New Account, shown in Figure 13-2, Windows lets you choose between creating a Standard or Administrator account. Choose Standard User unless you have an important reason to create another Administrator account. Type a name for the new account and click Create Account to finish — you're finished.

To tweak the settings of an existing account, move to Step 3.

3. Click the account you want to change.

Click either the account's name or photo. Vista displays a page with that user account's photo and lets you tweak the account's settings in any of these ways:

- **Change the Account Name:** Here's your chance to correct a misspelled name on an account. Or, feel free to jazz up your account name, changing Jane to Crystal Powers.
- **Create/Change a Password:** Every account should have a password to keep out other users. Here's your chance to add one or change the existing one.
- **Remove the Password:** You shouldn't use this option, but it's here, just in case.
- **Change the Picture:** Any account holder can change his own picture, so you needn't bother with this one — unless, of course, you somehow know more about computers than your kid.
- **Set Up Parental Controls:** A mainstay of both spies and parents, Parental Controls lets you restrict an account holder's activities. You can see what programs and Web sites an account holder has accessed, listed by time and date. This setting creates a *lot* of information, so I give Parental Controls full coverage in Chapter 10.
- **Change the Account Type:** Head here to promote a Standard user of high moral character to an Administrator account or bump a naughty administrator down to Standard.
- **Delete the Account:** Don't choose this setting hastily, as deleting somebody's account also deletes all their files. Even System Restore can't retrieve the files of a deleted account holder.
- **Manage Another Account:** Save your current crop of changes and begin tweaking somebody else's account.

4. When you're through, close the window by clicking the red X in its top, right corner.

Any changes made to a user's account take place immediately.

Switching Quickly between Users

Windows Vista enables an entire family, roommates, or a small office to share a single computer. Best yet, the computer keeps track of everybody's programs while different people use the computer. Mom can be playing chess and then let Jerry log on to check his e-mail. When Mom logs back on a few minutes later, her chess game is right where she left it, pondering the sacrifice of her bishop.

The big problem with Standard accounts

Standard account holders have no problem accessing their own files. But they can't do anything that affects other users — delete a program, for example, change one of the computer's settings, or even adjust the computer's clock. If they try, Vista freezes the screen, demanding an Administrator's password. That's when the administrator must walk over to type it in.

While some people appreciate the extra security, others feel like a slave to their PC. You have several ways to make Vista less demanding. Unfortunately, none of these options is a winner:

- ✓ **Upgrade everybody to Administrator accounts:** The upgrades allow *any* user to type a password and override the security screens. Beware, though: This option also lets any user do *anything* on your PC, including

delete your entire user account and your personal files.

- ✓ **Turn off User Account Protection:** Flip this switch, described in Chapter 10, and Vista stops caring: It no longer displays permission screens, disabling Vista's attempts to keep your PC secure.
- ✓ **Live with it:** You could just put up with Vista's new nag screens as the price of a secure computer in today's world. Juggle your own security and convenience levels and then make your own decision.

If you've turned off User Account Protection and want to turn it back on, head for the Control Panel's User Accounts and Family Safety category, choose User Accounts, and then choose Turn User Account Control On or Off.



Known as *Fast User Switching*, switching between users works fairly easily. While holding down the Windows key (it's usually between your keyboard's Ctrl and Alt keys), press the letter L. Wham! The Switch User button appears, letting you hand over the reins to the other person — or any other account holder.



When that person finishes, he can log off normally: Click the little arrow next to the Start button's lock icon (shown in the margin) and choose Log Off from the pop-up menu. Then you can log back on and see your desktop, just as you left it.



- ✓ With all this user switching, you may forget whose account you're actually using. To check, open the Start menu. The current account holder's name and picture appear at the menu's top right corner. Also, Vista's opening screen lists the words "logged on" beneath the picture of every user who's currently logged on.
- ✓ Don't restart the PC while another person's still logged on in the background, or that person will lose any work they haven't saved. (Vista warns you before restarting the PC, giving you a chance to ask the other person to save their work.)



✓ You can also switch users by clicking the Start button and clicking the little arrow by the Start menu's Lock sign (shown earlier in the margin). When the menu appears, click Switch User instead of Log Off.



✓ If you need to change a security setting while your child's logged on, you don't need to switch to your Administrator account. Just sit down at the PC and begin changing the setting: Like your child, you'll see a message asking for an Administrator's password. Type your Administrator password, and Vista lets you change the setting, just as if you'd logged on under your own account.

✓ Fast User Switching slows down older computers that lack gobs of memory. If your computer runs slowly with more than one person logged on, avoid Fast User Switching. Log on one person at a time, then log off when you're done to give somebody else some keyboard time.

Changing a User Account's Picture

Okay, now the important stuff: changing the dorky picture Windows automatically assigns to your user account. For every newly created user account, Windows Vista dips into its image bag and adds a random picture of plants, fish, soccer balls, or some similarly boring image. Feel free to change the picture to something more reflective of the Real You: You can use digital camera photos, as well as any pictures or graphics found on the Internet.



To change your user account's picture, click the Start button and click your picture at the menu's top. When the User Accounts window appears, click the Change Your Picture option. Vista lets you choose from its current stock, shown in Figure 13-3.

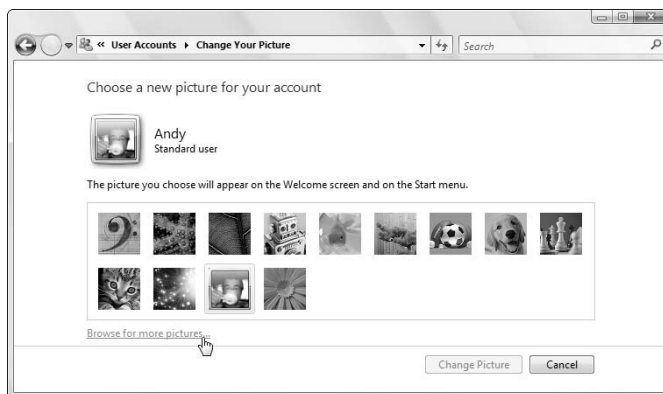


Figure 13-3: Windows Vista lets each user choose an account picture.

To assign a picture that's *not* currently shown, select Browse for More Pictures, shown in Figure 13-3. A new window appears, this time showing the contents of your Pictures folder. (Your digital camera usually stores its pictures in that folder.) Click a desired picture from the folder and choose Open. Vista quickly slaps that picture atop your Start menu.

Here are a few more options:

- ✓ You can also grab any picture off the Internet and save it to your Pictures folder for use as your user account picture. (Right-click the Internet picture and choose Save Picture As.)
- ✓ Don't worry about choosing a picture that's too big or too small. Windows Vista automatically shrinks or expands the image to fit the postage-stamp-sized space.
- ✓ All users may change their pictures — Administrator, Standard, and Guest accounts. (Pictures are about the only thing that guests *are* allowed to change.)

Setting Up Passwords and Security

There's not much point to having a user account if you don't have a password. Without one, Charles from the next cubicle can click your account on the logon screen, giving him free reign to snoop through your files.

Administrators, especially, should have passwords. If they don't, they're automatically letting anybody wreak havoc with the PC: When a permission's screen appears, anybody can just press Enter at the password screen to gain entrance.

To create or change a password, follow these steps:

- 1. Open the Start menu, choose Control Panel, and select User Accounts and Family Safety.**

The User Accounts screen opens.

- 2. Choose Change Your Windows Password.**

People who haven't created a password should instead choose Create a Password for Your Account.

3. **Make up an easy-to-remember password and type it into the New Password box, shown in Figure 13-4, and then retype the same characters into the Confirm New Password box below it. (Retyping eliminates the chance of typos.)**

Changing an existing password works slightly differently: The screen shows a Current Password box where you must first type your existing password. (That keeps pranksters from sneaking over and changing your password during lunch hours.)

I offer some tips on thinking up passwords a little later in this section.

Figure 13-4:
Type a hint that helps you — and only you — remember your password should you forget it.



4. **In the Type a Password Hint box, type a clue that helps you remember your forgotten password.**

Make sure that the clue works only for you. Don't choose "My hair color," for example. If you're at work, choose "My cat's favorite food" or "The director of my favorite movie." If you're at home, choose something only you know — and not the kids. And don't be afraid to change your password every once in a while, too. You can find out more about passwords in Chapter 2.

5. **When the User Accounts screen returns, choose Create a Password Reset Disk from along the screen's left side.**

Vista walks you through the process of creating a Password Reset Disk from a floppy, a memory card, or a USB thumbdrive.

When you forget your password, you can insert your Password Reset Disk as a key. Windows Vista will let you in to choose a new password, and all will be joyous. (But if you lose the Password Reset Disk, you have to beg for mercy from the administrator.) Hide your Password Reset Disk in a safe place, because it lets *anybody* into your account.



Creating a Password Reset Disk won't format or destroy any information on the disk you insert. It just adds a file named `userkey.psw`, which Vista uses to reset your password (but nobody else's).

Here are some tips that help you create a better password:

- ✓ When creating a password, use a word or combination of letters, numbers, and symbols of at least 7 to 14 characters. Don't *ever* use your name or username. (That's the first thing that thieves try when breaking in.)
- ✓ Don't choose a common word or name. Try to think of something that wouldn't appear in a dictionary. Combine two words, for example, to make a third. No grammar teachers will chide you this time.
- ✓ On a more serious note, keep a copy of your password in a safety deposit box for your spouse or heirs to find. Or, if you'd prefer to keep your financial records and memoirs secret, take your password to the grave.
- ✓ Uppercase and lowercase letters are treated differently. *PopCorn* is a different password than *popcorn*.

Chapter 14

Connecting Two or More Computers with a Network

In This Chapter

- ▶ Understanding a network's parts
 - ▶ Choosing between wired and wireless networks
 - ▶ Buying and installing parts for a network
 - ▶ Setting up a small network
 - ▶ Linking two computers quickly and easily
 - ▶ Sharing an Internet connection, files, and printers on a network
 - ▶ Locating other computers on a network
 - ▶ Troubleshooting a network
-

Buying that second PC brings you yet another computing problem: How can two PCs share the same Internet connection and printer? And how do you move your old files to your new PC?

The solution involves a *network*. By connecting two or more computers with a cable, Windows Vista introduces them to each other, and lets them swap information, share an Internet connection, and print with the same printer.

If your computers live too far apart to extend a cable, go *wireless*. Also known as *WiFi*, this option lets your computers chatter through the airwaves like radio stations that broadcast and take requests.

This chapter explains several ways to link a handful of computers so that they can share things. Be forewarned, however: This chapter contains some pretty advanced stuff; don't tread here unless you're running an Administrator account on your computer and you don't mind doing a little head-scratching as you wade from conceptualization to actualization to, "Hey, it works!"

Understanding a Network's Parts

A *network* is two or more computers that have been connected so that they can share things. Although computer networks range from pleasingly simple to agonizingly complicated, they all have three things in common:

- ✓ **A network adapter:** Every computer on your network needs its own network adapter. Adapters come in two main forms. A *wired* network adapter is a special jack where you plug in a cable to connect one computer with the other computers. A *wireless* network adapter translates your computer's information into radio signals and broadcasts them to the other computers. (Feel free to mix wired and wireless adapters; they get along fine.)
- ✓ **A router:** When you connect two computers with a single cable or with wireless connections, each computer is smart enough to swap messages with the other one. But connecting three or more computers requires a traffic cop in the form of a *router*. Each computer connects to the boxlike router, which sends the right messages to the right computer.
- ✓ **Cables:** Wireless networks don't require cables. But wired networks need cables to connect the computers' network adapters to each other or to the router.

After you connect your computers to each other through cables, wirelessly, or by using a combination of both, Windows Vista jumps in. On a good day, Vista automatically flips the right switches, letting everything communicate with each other. Most networks resemble a spider, as shown in Figure 14-1, with each computer's cable connecting to the router in the center.

A wireless network looks identical but without the cables. (The wireless router coordinates the messages' paths.) Or, you can mix wired and wireless adapters to create a network resembling Figure 14-2. Many routers come with built-in wireless access, letting your PCs connect to them with both wired and wireless adapters.

- ✓ Windows Vista divides its attention between networked computers quite well. It lets every networked computer share a single Internet connection, for example, so that everyone can surf the Internet or check their e-mail simultaneously. Everyone can share a single printer, too. If two people try to print something simultaneously, Windows stashes one person's files until the printer is free and then prints them when the printer's ready.
- ✓ Don't know whether you're already connected to a network or what other computers may be connected? Click the Start button and choose Network. Vista searches for a network and then shows the names of every computer connected to your own. To connect to another PC, double-click its name or icon. Vista then lets you browse its shared files as if you were browsing your own.



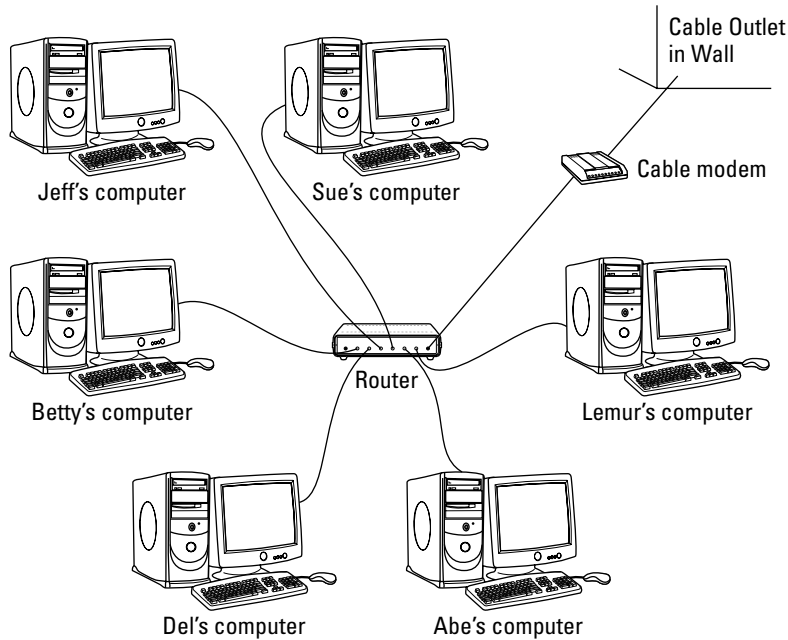


Figure 14-1: A network resembles a spider, with each computer's cable connecting to a router in the center.

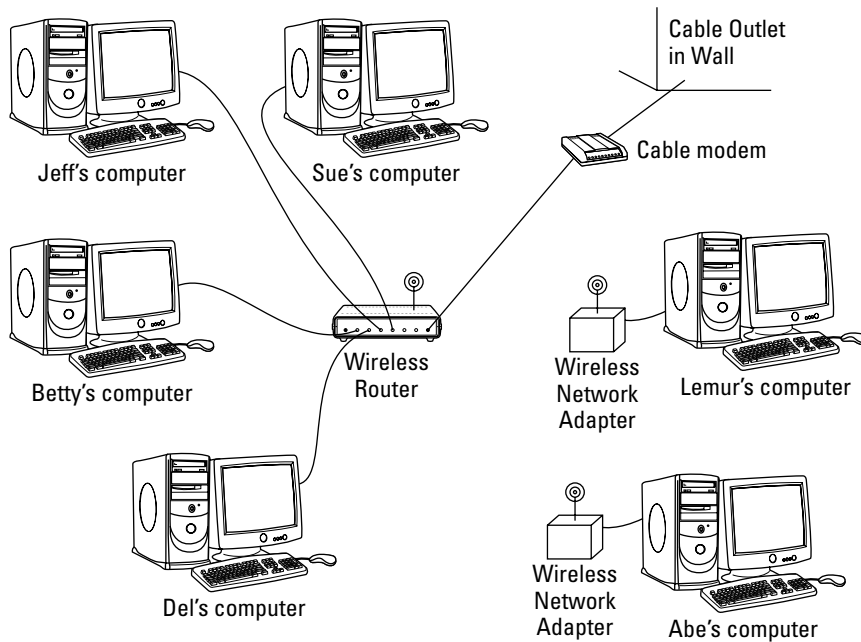


Figure 14-2: Adding a wireless router and wireless network adapters lets you combine wired and wireless network adapters in one network.

Choosing between wired and wireless networks

Today, *wireless* (also known as *WiFi*) is the buzzword, and it's easy to see why. It's easy to string cables between computers that sit on the same desk or live in one room. But cables quickly become messy if the computers live in separate rooms. The solution comes with *wireless* network adapters, which convert the information to radio waves and broadcast the waves to other computers on the network. The wireless adapters on the other computers catch the waves and convert them back into information.

But just as radio broadcasts fade as you drive out of the city, wireless signals fade as they travel through obstacles. The more they fade, the

slower the connection becomes. If your wireless signals pass through more than two walls, your computers may not be able to communicate. Wireless networks also take longer to set up because they have *a lot* more settings to tweak.

Wired connections work more quickly, efficiently, and inexpensively than wireless. But if your spouse says to remove the cables from the hallways, wireless may be your best option. Remember, you can set up adjacent computers with cables and use wireless for the rest.

To use wireless with broadband Internet access, buy a router with a built-in wireless access point.

Setting Up a Small Network

If you're trying to set up a lot of computers — more than five or ten — you probably need a more advanced book; networks are fairly easy to set up, but sharing their resources can be scary stuff, especially if the computers contain sensitive material. But if you're just trying to set up a handful of computers in your home or home office, this information may be all you need.

So without further blabbing, here's a low-carb, step-by-step list of how to set up a small and inexpensive network. The following sections show how to buy the three parts of a network — network adapters, cables (or wireless connections), and a router for moving information between each computer. I explain how to install the parts and, finally, how to make Windows Vista create a network out of your handiwork.



You find much more detailed instructions about home networking in my book *Upgrading & Fixing PCs For Dummies* (Wiley).

Buying parts for a network

Walk into the computer store, walk out with this stuff, and you're well on your way to setting up your network:

Fast Ethernet or 100BaseT cable: Buy a cable for each PC that won't be using wireless. You want *Ethernet* cable, which resembles phone cable but with slightly thicker jacks. Ethernet cable is sometimes called Ethernet RJ-45, Cat 5, or TPE (Twisted Pair Ethernet). The names usually include a number relating to the cable's speed rating: 10, 100, or 1,000. (Big numbers are faster.) When in doubt, buy Fast Ethernet or 100BaseT cable.

Some of today's newer homes come conveniently prewired with network jacks in the wall, sparing their owners the bother of buying and stringing long cables from room to room. If your computers are too far apart for cables, buy a wireless network adapter, described next.

Network adapters: Each computer on the network needs its own network adapter, and those gadgets come in many varieties. Most computers come with a built-in network adapter, sparing you the cost. Most newer laptops come with both wired *and* wireless adapters preinstalled, letting you connect either way.

If you need to buy a network adapter, keep these factors in mind:

- ✔ A wired adapter needs a 10/100 Ethernet connector. Adapters can plug into a USB port, plug inside one of your computer's unused slots, or even piggyback on your home's power or telephone lines.
- ✔ The adapter's box should say that it's *Plug and Play* and supports Windows Vista.

The easiest way to connect two computers

Sometimes you simply need to link two computers, quickly and easily, to move information from one to another (from an old computer to a new one, for example). If both computers have FireWire ports, found on many newer laptops, the setup is very simple. Connect a FireWire cable between the two FireWire ports, and you've created a quick-and-dirty network. Vista notices the connection, and you're done!

No FireWire ports? Then buy two network adapters (new PCs usually come with one preinstalled) and a *crossover cable*, which is a special breed of Ethernet cable. Be sure to emphasize

crossover or *crossed* cable when shopping at the computer store; a regular Ethernet cable won't work. Connect the crossed cable between the two computers' network adapters, and Vista creates a quick network between the two computers. If one computer connects to the Internet, the other computer should be able to share its Internet connection.

To connect two computers that each have wireless adapters, let Vista set them both up in ad-hoc mode, set to the same channel, using the same workgroup name, and the same type of security and password. Warning: This is complicated.

Router: Many of today's routers come with built-in wireless, and some even come with a built-in broadband modem. Your purchase depends on your Internet connection and network adapters:

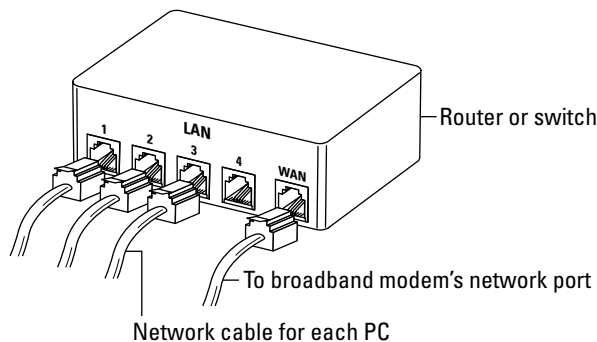
- ✓ Broadband Internet users should purchase a *router* that has enough ports for each networked computer. If you need a wireless connection, perhaps for lapping outdoors, buy a router with built-in wireless access. (Dialup Internet users can save money by purchasing a less expensive *switch* with enough ports for each computer.) Both a router and switch resemble the one shown in Figure 14-3. (A switch works just like a router, but lacks an outlet to plug in a broadband modem.)
- ✓ If you're using some or all wireless network adapters, make sure that your router has built-in wireless capabilities. If you're using a switch, buy a wireless access point to plug into it. (Wireless access points can usually accommodate dozens of wireless computers.)
- ✓ Buying the same brand of wireless router and wireless network adapter makes them easier to set up.



That's the shopping list. Drop this list onto the copy machine at the office and take it to the computer store.

Figure 14-3:

The router (or switch) needs a port for every computer's cable, and the router needs a port for your broadband modem.



Installing a wired network

After you've bought your network's parts, you need to plug everything into the right place. Windows Vista should automatically recognize the newly installed network adapters and embrace them gleefully.

1. Turn off and unplug all the computers on your soon-to-be network.

Turn 'em all off; unplug them as well.

2. Turn off all the computers' peripherals — printers, monitors, modems, and anything else that's attached.**3. Install the network adapters.**

Plug the USB adapters into your computers' USB ports. If you're using adapter cards, remove each computer's case and push the card into the proper size of slot. (If you live in a static-prone environment, ground yourself first by touching the side of the computer's case.)



If a card doesn't seem to fit into a slot, don't force it. Different types of cards fit into different types of slots, and you may be trying to push the wrong type of card into the wrong type of slot. See whether it fits into another slot more easily. Shameless plug: *Upgrading and Fixing PCs For Dummies* explains slots and cards in much more detail.

4. Replace the computers' cases, if necessary, and connect each network cable between the computer's adapter and the router (or switch).

Unless you're using wireless adapters, you may need to route cables under carpets or around doorways. (Most routers and switches have power cords that need to be plugged into a wall outlet as well.)

5. Broadband Internet users should plug their modem into the router's WAN port.

Most routers label their cable modem's port with the letters WAN (Wide Area Network). The router's other ports, labeled LAN (Local Area Network), are numbered. You can plug any PC into any of the numbered ports. (You can leave some numbered ports empty.)

Dialup modem users can keep the modem plugged into the computer. When that computer's turned on and connected to the Internet, Windows Vista allows each networked computer to share its Internet connection.

6. Turn on the computers and their peripherals.

Turn on the computers and their monitors, printers, modems, and whatever else happens to be connected to them.

7. Select a location for your network.

When Windows Vista wakes up and notices the newly attached network equipment, it asks you for your network's *location*: Home, Work, or Public Location. Choose whether you're working at home or work (safe) or in public (less safe), and Vista automatically adds the proper security level to protect you.

If all goes well, Windows Vista wakes up, notices its newly installed network adapter, and automatically sets up the connection. If your computer's network adapter came with an installation CD, insert it now. (If the setup program doesn't run automatically, double-click the disc's Setup file to install the software.)

If all *doesn't* go well, you probably need a new driver for your network adapter, a task I cover in Chapter 12.

Vista does a reasonably good job of casting its networking spells on your computers. If the computers are all connected correctly and restarted, chances are they wake up in bondage with each other. If they don't, try restarting them all again.



Workgroup names and Windows XP

Like anything else in life, networks need names. A network's name is called a *workgroup*, and for some reason, Microsoft used different workgroup names in different versions of Windows, and that causes problems if you have Windows XP PCs on your network.

Windows XP PCs automatically use MSHOME as their workgroup name; Windows Vista PCs use WORKGROUP as their workgroup name. The result? Put a Vista PC and a Windows XP PC on the same network, and they can't find or talk with each other: One PC searches in vain for other MSHOME PCs, and the other only looks for WORKGROUP PCs.

The solution is to give them both the *same* workgroup name, a fairly easy task with these steps:

1. On your Vista PC, click the Start menu, right-click Computer, and choose Properties.

The System screen appears, revealing basic techie information about your PC.

2. Choose Change Settings.

That task lives in the section called Computer Name, Domain, and Workgroup Settings. Clicking it fetches a questionnaire.

3. Click the Change button.

The Computer Name/Domain Changes dialog box appears.

4. In the bottom box, change the Workgroup name to MSHOME.

That puts Vista on the same workgroup as your Windows XP PC.

Alternatively, you can change your Windows XP PC's workgroup name to WORKGROUP by following these same five steps but clicking the Computer Name tag in Step 2. But no matter what you call your network's workgroup, make sure that every networked PC bears the *same* workgroup name.

Tip: Be careful in this step to change each PC's *workgroup* name, not its *computer* name, as they're different things.

5. Click OK to close the open windows and, when asked, click the Restart Now button to restart your PC.

Repeat these steps for your other networked PCs, making sure that the same name appears in each Workgroup box.

Keep these things in mind when setting up your network:



- ✓ Windows Vista automatically shares one folder on every networked PC: the Public folder, as well as any folders inside it. Any files you place inside that folder are available to everybody on your PC as well as anybody connected to the network. (I explain more about sharing files, folders, printers, and other items later in this chapter's "Connecting to and Sharing Files with Other PCs on Your Network" section.)
- ✓ Windows XP names its shared folder *Shared Documents*. Vista names that same folder *Public*, instead. But both do the same thing: Provide a place to share files with other people on your network.
- ✓ Click your Start menu and choose Network to see your other computers on your network.
- ✓ If your PC connects to the Internet through a dialup connection, run the Internet Connection Wizard, as described in Chapter 8. (That wizard then lets all your networked computers share that computer's Internet connection.) After that computer is set up, run the wizard on the other networked computers.
- ✓ If your PCs can't see each other, make sure that each PC uses the same Workgroup name, covered in the "Workgroup Names and Windows XP" sidebar.

Connecting Wirelessly

Setting up your own wireless home network takes two steps:

- ✓ First, set up the wireless router or wireless access point to start broadcasting and receiving information to and from your PCs.
- ✓ Second, set up Windows Vista on each PC to receive the signal and send information back, as well.

This section covers both of those daunting tasks.

Setting up a wireless router or access point

Wireless connections bring convenience, as every cell phone owner knows. But they're also more complicated to set up than wired connections. You're basically setting up a radio transmitter that broadcasts to little radios attached to your PCs. You need to worry about signal strength, finding the right signal, and even entering passwords to keep outsiders from listening in.

Wireless transmitters, known as *Wireless Access Points* (WAPs), come either built into your router or plugged into one of your router's ports. Unfortunately, different brands of wireless equipment come with different setup software, so there's no way I can provide step-by-step instructions for setting up your particular router.

However, the setup software on every model requires you to set up these three things:

- ✓ **Network name (SSID):** Enter a short, easy-to-remember name here to identify your particular wireless network. Later, when connecting to the wireless network with your computer, you'll select this same name to avoid accidentally connecting with your neighbor's wireless network.
- ✓ **Infrastructure:** Choose *Infrastructure* instead of the alternative, *Ad Hoc*.
- ✓ **Security:** This option encrypts your data as it flies through the air. Turn it on using the recommended settings.

Some routers include an installation program for changing these settings; other routers contain built-in software that you access with Windows' own Web browser.



As you enter settings for each of the three things, write them on a piece of paper: You need to enter these same three settings when setting up your PC's wireless connection, a job tackled in the next section.

Setting up Windows Vista to connect to a wireless network

After you've set up your router or wireless access point to broadcast your network, you must tell Windows Vista to receive it.

To connect to a wireless network, either your own or one in a public place, follow these steps:

1. Turn on your wireless adapter, if necessary.

Many laptops turn off their wireless adapters to save power. To turn it on, open the Control Panel from the Start menu, choose Mobile PC, open the Windows Mobility Center, and click the Turn Wireless On button. Not listed? Then you need to pull out your laptop's manual, unfortunately.

2. Choose Connect To from the Start menu.

Windows lists all the wireless networks it finds within range, shown in Figure 14-4. Don't be surprised to see several networks listed.

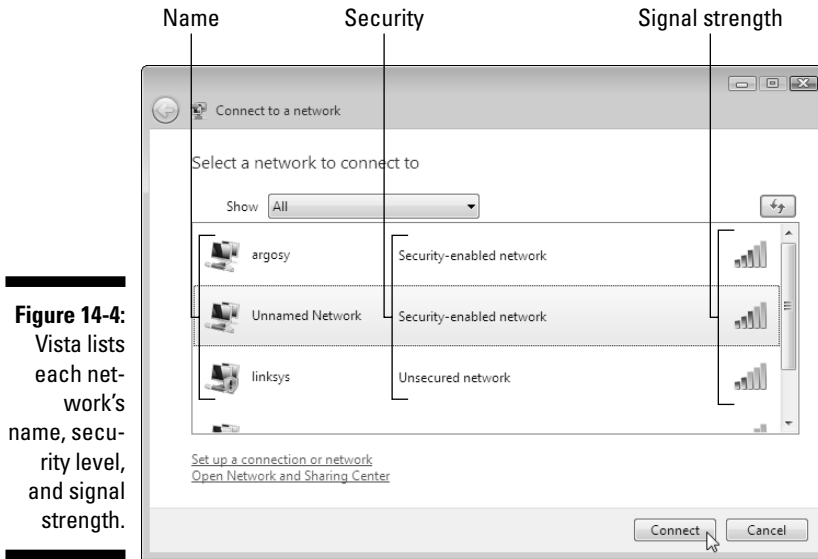


Figure 14-4: Vista lists each network's name, security level, and signal strength.

Vista sums up each available connection three ways, all shown in Figure 14-4:

- **Name:** This is the network's name, also known as its *SSID (Service Set Identifier)*. Because wireless networks overlap, network names let you connect to the specific network you want. Choose the SSID name you gave your wireless router when you set it up, for example, or select the name of the wireless network at the coffee shop or hotel.
- **Security:** Networks listed as *Unsecured Network* don't require a password. That means you can hop aboard and start surfing the Internet for free — even if you don't know who owns the network. However, the lack of a password means that other people can eavesdrop. Unsecured networks work fine for quick Internet access, but aren't safe for online shopping. A *Security-Enabled Network*, by contrast, is safer, as the network's password filters out all but the most dedicated snoops.
- **Signal Strength:** These little vertical bars work much like a cell phone's signal strength meter: More bars mean a stronger connection. Connecting to networks with two bars or less will be frustratingly sporadic.



If you need to revisit a previous step, click the little blue Back arrow in the window's top-left corner.

3. Connect to the desired network by clicking its name and clicking Connect.

If you spot your network's name, click it and then click the Connect button.

If you *don't* spot your network's name, head to Step 6.

4. Choose whether you're connecting from Home, Work, or a Public Location.

When you connect, Vista asks you whether you're connecting from Home, Work, or a Public Location so that it can add the right layer of security. Choose Home or Work only when connecting to a wireless connection within your home or office. Choose Public Location for all others to add extra security.

If you're connecting to an *unsecured network* — a network that doesn't require a password — you're done. Vista warns you about connecting to an unsecured network, and a click on the Connect Anyway button lets you connect.

If you're connecting to a security-enabled network, however, Vista asks for a password, described in the next step.

5. Enter a password, if needed, and click Connect.

When you try to connect to a security-enabled wireless connection, Vista sends you the window shown in Figure 14-5, asking for a password.

Here's where you type the password you entered into your router when setting up your wireless network.

If you're connecting to somebody else's password-protected wireless network, pull out your credit card. You need to buy some connection time from the people behind the counter.

Don't see your wireless network's name? Then move to Step 6.

6. Connect to an unlisted network.

If Vista doesn't list your wireless network's name, two culprits may be involved:



- **Low signal strength.** Like radio stations and cell phones, wireless networks are cursed with a limited range. Wireless signals travel several hundred feet through open air, but walls, floors, and ceilings severely limit their oomph. Try moving your computer closer to the wireless router or access point. (Or just move to a different spot in the coffee shop.) Keep moving closer and clicking the Refresh button (shown in margin) until your network appears.
- **It's hiding.** For security reasons, some wireless networks list their names as Unnamed Network. That means you must know the network's *real* name and type in that name before connecting. If you think that's your problem, move to the next step.

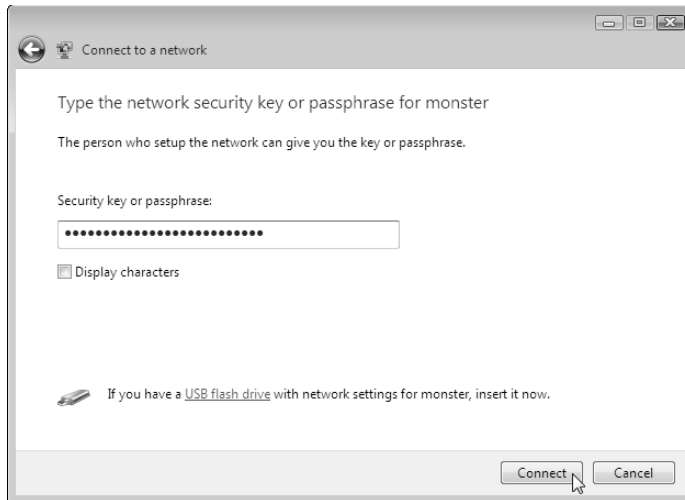


Figure 14-5:
Enter the wireless network's password and click Connect.

7. Click a wireless network listed as Unnamed Network and click Connect.

When asked, enter the network's name (SSID) and, if required, its password, described in Step 5. Once Vista knows the network's real name and password, Vista will connect.

Once you're connected, every user on your PC network will be able to connect to the Internet. If you're still having problems connecting, try the following tips:



- ✓ When Vista says that it can't connect to your wireless network, it offers two choices: Diagnose This Connection or Connect to a Different Network. Both messages always mean this: Move Your PC Closer to the Wireless Transmitter.
- ✓ If you can't connect to the network you want, try connecting to one of the unsecured networks, instead. Unsecured networks work fine for browsing the Internet, as long as you don't enter any passwords, credit card numbers, or other sensitive information.
- ✓ Unless you specifically tell it not to, Vista remembers the name and password of networks you've successfully connected with before, sparing you the chore of reentering all the information. Your PC will connect automatically whenever you're within range.
- ✓ Cordless phones and microwave ovens, oddly enough, interfere with wireless networks. Try to keep your cordless phone out of the same room as your wireless PC, and don't heat up that sandwich when browsing the Internet.
- ✓ If networks leave you wringing your hands, you need a book dealing more specifically with networks. Check out my other book, *Upgrading and Fixing PCs For Dummies*, by Wiley Publishing, Inc.

Connecting to and Sharing Files with Other PCs on Your Network

Even after you've set up your network, Vista *still* might not let you see your connected PCs or their files. That's right: Yet *another* security measure prevents PCs from seeing each other or sharing files on your private network. Here's how to knock some sense into Vista's security:

1. Click the Start menu and choose Network.

You may see icons for all your connected PCs, shown in Figure 14-6. To connect to a PC, double-click its name. Chances are, you'll be able to see files on your Windows XP PCs, but not any other Vista PCs. To see files on Vista PCs, move to Step 2.



Can't spot any of your networked Windows XP PCs listed? Fix the problem by reading this chapter's sidebar, "Workgroup names and Windows XP."

2. Click the Network and Sharing Center button.

The Network and Sharing Center button, seen along the top of Figure 14-6, fetches the Network and Sharing Center, shown in Figure 14-7.

3. Turn on Public Folder Sharing and click Apply.

Click the word **Off** in the Public Folder Sharing area, and the settings menu drops down, shown in Figure 14-7. To share your files, choose **Turn On Sharing So Anyone with Network Access Can Open, Change, and Create Files**.

That makes your PC's Public folder fair game: Anybody on the network can open, change, or leave files in that folder. To let other people copy your Public folder's files but *not* change your copies, choose **Turn On Sharing So Anyone with Network Access Can Open Files**, instead.

Figure 14-6:
Click
Network
from the
Start menu
to see other
PCs on your
network.

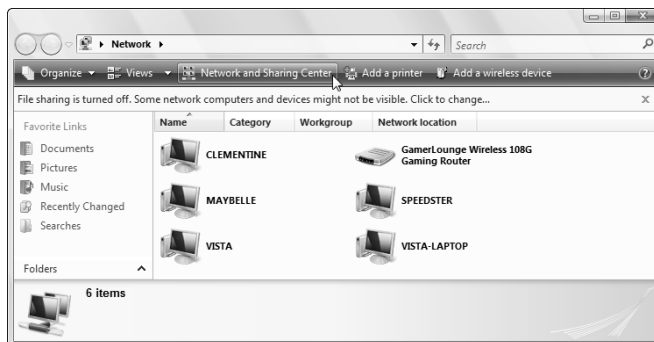
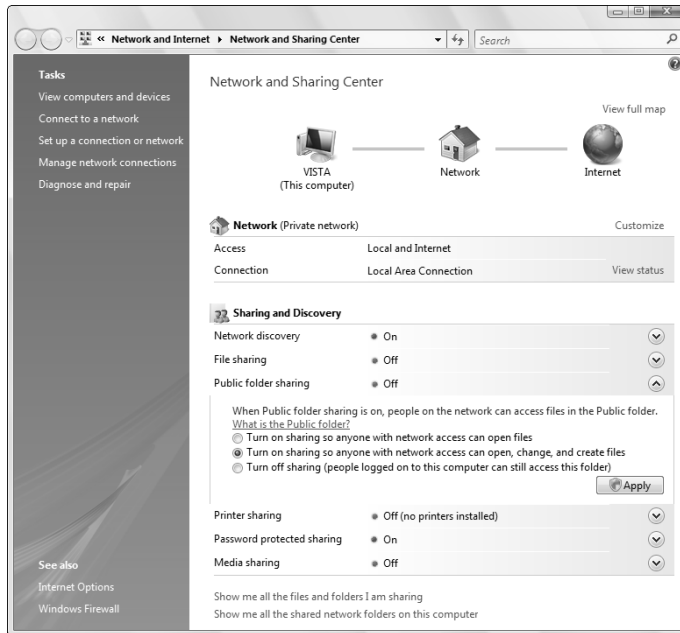


Figure 14-7:
The Network
Center
places
all your
network
settings in
one place.



4. Turn off Password Protected Sharing and click Apply.

There's one last hurdle. When somebody on the network tries to see inside a Vista PC's Public folder, they must enter a name and password from an account on that *other* PC; their own name and password won't do.

Although that makes for a *very* secure PC, it's overkill in a family environment. To remove that layer of security, click the word On in the Public Folder Sharing area, also seen in Figure 14-7. When the menu drops down, choose Turn Off Password Protected Sharing.

5. Place files and folders you want to share with others into your PC's Public folder.

A handy shortcut to the Public folder lives at the bottom of every folder's Navigation pane, that strip along every folder's left edge. Drag and drop files into the Public folder to *move* them there. To *copy* them there, instead, hold down the right mouse button while dragging; drop the file and choose Copy Here from the pop-up menu. (Clicking the Public folder lets you see what's inside.)



Deleting files from a networked PC

Normally, anything you delete on your PC ends up in your Recycle Bin, giving you a last chance at retrieval. That's not true when you're working on a file in a *networked* PC's Public folder. When

you delete a folder on another PC's Public folder, it's gone for good — it doesn't hop into the Recycle Bin of your PC *or* the networked PC. Beware.

If your PC still can't see other PCs, or those PCs can't see your PC or its files, check out the following tips:

- ✓ Turn off all the PCs, the router, and your broadband modem. Then turn on your broadband modem, your router, and your PCs — in that order, waiting 30 seconds between each one.
- ✓ Retrace your steps, making sure to turn on Public Folder Sharing and turn off Password Protected Sharing.
- ✓ Make sure that all your PCs have the same workgroup name, described in this chapter's sidebar, "Workgroup names and Windows XP."

Sharing a Printer on the Network

Many households or offices have several computers but only one printer. To let everybody on the network print on that printer, share it by following these steps on the Vista computer connected to the printer:

- 1. Click the Start menu, choose Network, and click the Network and Sharing Center button along the top.**

The Network and Sharing Center window appears, shown earlier in Figure 14-7.

- 2. Turn on Printer Sharing and click Apply.**

Look in the Printer Sharing category and click the Off button to reveal the menu. When the menu drops down, choose Turn On Printer Sharing and click Apply to share that printer with the network.

Now, tell your other networked PC (or PCs) about your newly shared printer by following these steps:

1. **Click the Start menu, choose Control Panel, and select Printers from the Hardware and Sound category.**

The Printers window lists icons for any installed printers. (Ignore the Microsoft XPS Document Writer, as it's not a real printer.)



2. **Click the Add a Printer button.**

The Add Printer window appears.

3. **Choose Add a Network, Wireless, or Bluetooth Printer and click Next.**

Your PC glances around the network for the other PCs' shared printer. When it finds it, click its name and click Next to install it. If it doesn't find it, move to Step 4.

4. **Choose The Printer That I Want Isn't Listed and then click Browse to go to the shared printer.**

Clicking the Browse button fetches a list of your networked PCs. Double-click the PC with the attached printer, and Vista lists the printer's name.

5. **Double-click the shared printer's icon and click Next.**

Vista finally connects to your networked printer. You may also need to install the printer's software on your PC before it can print to the networked printer.

Can I get in trouble for looking into the wrong networked computer?

People usually *tell* you where to find files and things on your computers attached to the network. But if nobody's dropped you a hint, feel free to grab a torch and go spelunking on your own by choosing Network from the Start menu. If you're worried about getting into trouble, the rule is simple: Windows Vista rarely lets you peek into networked areas where you're not supposed to be.

In fact, Windows Vista is so security conscious that it often keeps you from seeing things that

you *should* be able to see. (That's when you call on the office administrator or the computer's owner and ask him or her for help.) If you try to peek inside a forbidden computer, you simply see an access denied message. No embarrassing sirens or harm done.

If you find yourself in a folder where you obviously don't belong — for example, the folder of employee evaluations on your supervisor's computer — quietly bring it to the administrator's attention.

Troubleshooting a Network

Setting up a network is the hardest part of networking. After the computers recognize each other (and connect to the Internet, either themselves or through the network), the network usually runs fine. But when it doesn't, here are some things to try:



- ✓ Make sure that each PC on the network has the same workgroup name. Right-click Computer from the Start menu and choose Properties. Choose Change Settings, click the Change button, and make sure that the same name appears in each PC's Workgroup box.
- ✓ Turn off every computer (using the Start menu's Shut Down option, of course). Check their cables to make sure that everything's connected. If you're not using a router, turn on the computer with the Internet connection. When it's up, running, and connected to the Internet, turn on another one. When it's connected, move to the next computer, and repeat.
- ✓ Try making Windows Vista check and repair the connection, if necessary. Choose Control Panel from the Start menu and select Network and Internet. Click Network and Sharing Center and choose Manage Network Connections from the left pane to see your connections. Right-click the one that's not working and choose Diagnose.



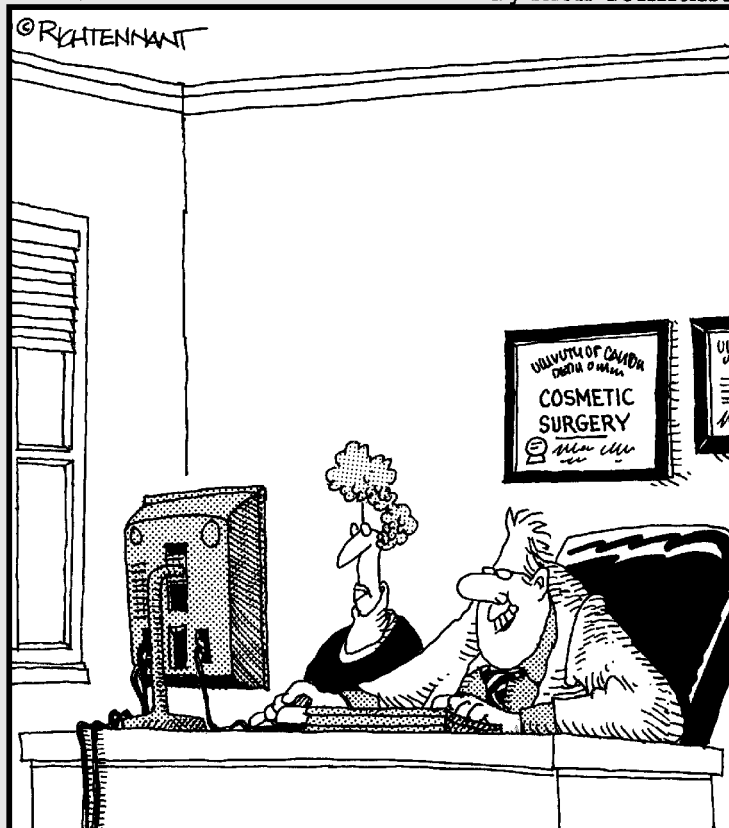
- ✓ Choose Help and Support from the Start menu and type **troubleshoot network** into the search box. Windows Vista offers many built-in troubleshooting tools to diagnose and repair network problems.
- ✓ On a network at home, make sure that you've set it to Private, not Public. To check, visit the Network and Sharing Center, described in the previous paragraph. Then click the word Customize next to your wireless network's name. That lets you switch from Public to Private and vice versa. If you accidentally chose Private when connected wirelessly in public, here's where you can switch back to Public to add more security.
- ✓ Click View Full Map in the Network and Sharing Center to see a map of your entire network: your Vista PCs, your router, and your Internet connection. Unfortunately, Vista leaves any Windows XP PCs *off* Vista's map. To complete your map, Microsoft offers downloadable software you can install on your Windows XP PCs to make them appear, as well.

Part V

Music, Movies, Memories (and Photos, Too)

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



“This time, just for fun, let’s see what you’d look like with bat ears and squash for a nose.”

In this part . . .

Up until now, the book has covered the boring-but-necessary stuff: adjusting your computer so that you can get your work done. This part of the book lets you turn your computer into an entertainment center:

- ✓ Watch DVDs on your PC or laptop.
- ✓ Create greatest hits CDs for your car stereo.
- ✓ Organize a digital photo album from your digital camera.
- ✓ Edit camcorder videos into something people *want* to watch.
- ✓ Create DVDs to display your edited movies or photo slide shows.

When you're ready to play for a while, flip to this part of the book for a helping hand.

Chapter 15

Playing and Copying Music in Media Player

In This Chapter

- ▶ Playing CDs, DVDs, TV shows, MP3 and WMA music files, and Internet radio
 - ▶ Creating, saving, and editing playlists
 - ▶ Copying CDs to your hard drive, another CD, or portable music player
 - ▶ Buying music and movies from online stores
-

Windows Vista's Media Player 11 is a big bundle of buttons that reveals how much money you've spent on your computer. On expensive computers, Media Player rumbles like a home theater. On cheap ones, it sounds like a cell phone's ring tone.

Now on its eleventh version, Media Player sticks to the basics. It's fine for playing CDs and DVDs, organizing your music and movie files, and sending digital music to some portable MP3 players — but not iPods. If you're an iPod owner, you may want to stick with iTunes (www.apple.com/itunes).

Load up Windows Media Player from the Start menu's All Programs area. Then check out this chapter for help on using Media Player's built-in features, as well as for tips on making Media Player do the things you *really* want it to do.

The last section introduces Windows Media *Center*, a completely different program than Windows Media Player. Windows Media Center lets you watch and record TV shows on your PC — provided your PC has the right equipment.

Stocking Media Player's Library

Once you begin using Media Player, the program automatically sorts through your stash of digital music, pictures, videos, and recorded TV shows, automatically stuffing everything into its neatly organized library. But if Media Player hasn't yet stocked your library with your own files, for some reason, push it in the right direction by following these steps:

Running Media Player for the first time

The first time you open Vista's Media Player, an opening screen asks how to deal with Media Player's privacy, storage, music store, and other settings:

✔ **Express:** Designed for the impatient, this option loads Media Player with Microsoft's chosen settings in place. Media Player sets itself up as the default player for all your music and video (robbing iTunes of that job, if you currently rely on iTunes or another media player). It also starts downloading software for MTV's URGE music store. Choose Express if you're in a hurry, as you can always customize the settings later.

✔ **Custom:** Aimed at the fiddlers, this choice lets you fine-tune Media Player's behavior. A series of screens let you choose the types of music and video Media Player can play, how much of your listening habits should be sent to Microsoft, and what online store you want — if any — for buying songs. Choose this option only if you have time to wade through several minutes of boring option screens.

If you want to customize any Media Player settings — either those chosen for you in Express setup or the ones you've chosen in Custom setup — press Alt to reveal Media Player's menu, click Tools, and choose Options.



1. Click the Library button and choose Add to Library from the drop-down menu.

Alternatively, you can press Alt to reveal the menu, click the File menu, and then choose Add To Library. Or, simply press F3. Windows offers enough choices to confuse everybody.

You can load Media Player by clicking its icon in the Quick Launch toolbar near your Start button.



2. Tell Media Player where to search for your files.

Make sure that My Personal Folders is selected, as shown in Figure 15-1. That tells Media Player to search your Music folder, as well as your PC's Public *folder* — the folder accessible to everybody on your PC and network (if you've set one up as described in Chapter 14).

To add music from Music folders belonging to *other* account holders on the PC or network, choose My Folders and Those of Others That I Can Access. (Then tell those people to *share* their music by choosing Media Sharing from Media Player's Library menu and then choosing Share My Media.)

To add music from even more folders or drives — perhaps a folder on a networked PC or flash drive — click the Advanced Options button, click Add, and navigate to the folder or drive you want to add.



3. Click the OK button to start searching.

A box appears, showing Media Player's progress as it stocks its library. When it finishes, Media Player displays your music, organized by any criteria you choose: artist, album (shown in Figure 15-2), genre, release year, song length, or rating.

Figure 15-1: Choose My Personal Folders to add your own music; choose the other option to also add music from other people's accounts on the PC.

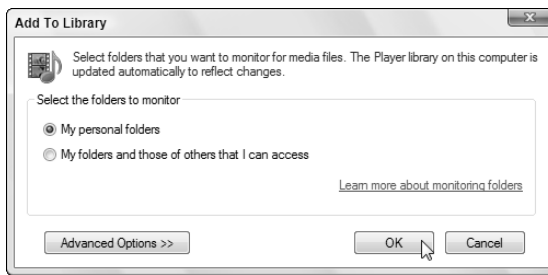
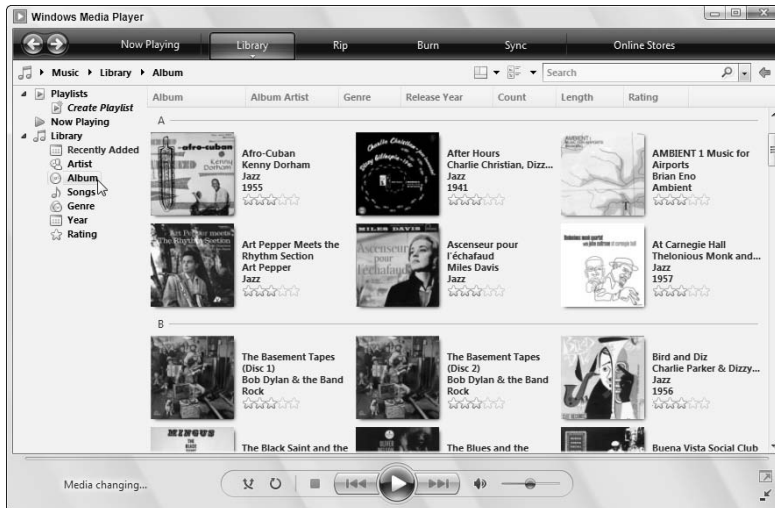


Figure 15-2: Click Album from the left menu to see pictures of your albums on the right.



What are a song's tags?

Inside every music file lives a small form called a *tag* that contains the song's title, artist, album, and similar information. When deciding how to sort, display, and categorize your music, Windows Media Player reads those tags — *not* the songs' filenames. Most portable music players, including the iPod, also rely on tags, so it's important to keep them filled out properly.

It's so important, in fact, that Media Player visits the Internet, grabs song information, and automatically fills in the tags when it adds files to its library.

Many people don't bother filling out their songs' tags; other people update them meticulously. If your tags are filled out the way you prefer, stop Media Player from messing with them. Click the Library button's downward-pointing arrow, choose More Options, and remove the check box from Retrieve Additional Information from the Internet on the Library tab. If your tags are a mess, leave that box checked so that Media Player will clean up the tags for you.

To edit a song's tag manually in Media Player, right-click the song's name in the library and choose Advanced Tag Editor.

After you add your first batch of tunes to Media Player, the program continues to stock its library in the following ways:

- ✔ **Monitoring your folders:** Vista constantly *monitors* your Music, Pictures, and Videos folders, automatically updating Media Player's library whenever you add or remove files. (You can change what folders Vista monitors by following the three preceding steps.)
- ✔ **Adding played items:** Anytime you play a music file on your PC or the Internet, Vista adds the song or its Internet location to its library so that you can find it to play again later. Unless told to, Vista *doesn't* add played items that live on networked PCs, USB thumbdrives, or memory cards.
- ✔ **Ripped music from CD:** When you insert a music CD into your CD drive, Vista offers to *rip* it. That's computereze for copying the CD's music to your PC, a task described in this chapter's "Copying CDs to Your PC" section. Any ripped music automatically appears in your Media Library. (Media Player won't copy DVD movies to your library, unfortunately.)
- ✔ **Downloaded music and video from online stores:** Media Player lets you shop from URGE (Microsoft's partner store with MTV Networks) and several other stores. When you buy a song, Media Player automatically stocks its library with your latest purchase.



Feel free to repeat the steps in this section to search for files whenever you want; Media Player ignores the ones it has already cataloged and adds any new ones.



Media Player offers zillions of options when creating its library. To see or change them, click the little arrow beneath the Library button and choose More Options. There, you can make Media Player automatically update your songs' tags (explained in the sidebar), correct any misspelled song names, and perform other maintenance chores while stocking its library.

Browsing Media Player's Libraries

When first loaded, Media Player displays your music library, appropriately enough. But Media Player actually holds several libraries, designed to showcase not only your music, but photographs, video, and recorded TV shows.

To toggle between your different libraries, click the Library button on Media Player's taskbar, shown in Figure 15-3, and choose either Music, Pictures, Video, Recorded TV, or Other. Media Player immediately begins showing items in that particular category:



Figure 15-3: Click Library and choose the type of media you want to browse.

- ✓ **Music:** All your digital music appears here. Media Player recognizes most major music formats, including MP3, WMA, and WAV. (It *doesn't* recognize AAC files, sold by iTunes.)
- ✓ **Pictures:** Media Player can play back photos in a slide show, but your Pictures folder, described in Chapter 16, handles that task much better.

- ✔ **Video:** Look here for video you've saved from a camcorder or digital camera or downloaded from the Internet. Media Library recognizes AVI, MPG, WMV, ASF, and a few other formats.
- ✔ **Recorded TV:** Owners of Vista Home Premium or Vista Ultimate will see recorded TV shows listed here — if your PC has the equipment needed to record them.
- ✔ **Other:** Your playlists appear here, as well as automatically created playlists for your recently added files.

Media Player's left pane lets you display your files in different ways. Click Artist, for example, to see the music arranged alphabetically by artists' first names.

Similarly, clicking Genre separates items into different types of music. Instead of just showing a name to click — blues, for example — Media Player arranges your music into piles of covers, just as if you'd sorted your albums or CDs on your living room floor.

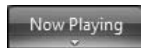


To play anything in Media Player, right-click it and choose Play. Or, to play all your music from one artist or genre, right-click the pile and choose Play All.

Understanding Media Player's Controls

Media Player offers the same basic controls when playing any type of file, be it a song, video, CD, DVD, or photo slide show. Figure 15-4 shows Media Player open to its Now Playing page as it plays an album. The labels explain each button's function. Or, rest your mouse pointer over an especially mysterious button, and Media Player displays a pop-up explanation.

The buttons along the bottom work like those found on any tape or CD player, letting you play, stop, rewind, fast-forward, and mute the current song or movie. Click the large square blue buttons along the player's top to perform these common tasks:



- ✔ **Now Playing:** Click here to view information about what you're currently hearing.



- ✔ **Library:** Media Player organizes your music, movies, and playlists here. To play anything listed in the library, double-click its name. To switch between libraries, click the little button directly below the big blue Back arrow button in the top-left corner.



- ✔ **Rip:** Copy a CD or some of its files to your hard drive. Customize how to copy the CD by clicking the Tools menu and choosing Options. (I cover ripping CDs in the "Copying CDs to Your PC" section.)



- ✓ **Burn:** Copy music from your hard drive to a CD or DVD. (See the “Creating, Saving, and Editing Playlists” section for more information.)
- ✓ **Sync:** Copy your current Now Playing list or other files to your portable music player, a task I cover in this chapter’s “Copying Songs to Your Portable Player” section.
- ✓ **URGE:** New to Media Player 11, this task takes you to Microsoft’s music-vending partner, MTV Network’s URGE, for buying songs and movies online. I cover buying songs in this chapter’s “Buying Music and Movies from Online Stores” section.

I describe each task in different sections throughout this chapter.

Figure 15-4:

The window’s bottom buttons work much like the buttons on a VCR or CD player.



- Turn on shuffle
 - Turn on repeat
 - Stop
 - Previous song
 - Pause
 - Next song
 - Mute
 - Volume
 - View full screen
 - Skin mode
- Album, title, and time played (scrolling)

Playing CDs

As long as you insert the CD in the CD drive correctly (usually label-side up), playing a music CD is one of Media Player’s easiest tasks. The biggest stumbling block comes with the pop-up form, shown in Figure 15-5, that appears when you insert the CD.

Eager to please, Windows Vista begs to know how to handle your newly inserted CD. Should it *play* the CD with Media Player? *Rip* (copy) its music onto your hard drive? Play it in *Media Center* — another Vista program described later in this chapter? *Open it* in Computer and display its files and folders?

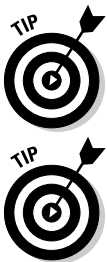
Here's the big problem with the form: The fine print reads, "Always do this for audio CDs." No matter what option you choose, Vista will automatically make that choice the next time you insert a CD.

Figure 15-5:
When you insert a CD, Windows Vista asks you what to do with it.



To keep Vista from doing that, click to remove the check mark from that box. *Then* make your choice.

If you're not interested in anything but playing CDs, however, then leave the box checked and choose Play Audio CD using Windows Media Player. Then Vista will automatically play any music CD you insert into your PC's drive.



- ✔ Too flustered for quick decisions? Pressing the Esc key kicks the question box off your screen (until the next time you insert a CD, that is).
- ✔ When inserting a music CD, don't choose the Open Folder to View Files option. That brings up a pointless list of numbered files named Track. Windows Vista won't let you copy songs to your PC that way; you must click Media Player's Rip button, instead.
- ✔ If Vista mistakenly displays the CD's files instead of playing the darn thing, choose Default Programs from the Start menu. Choose Change AutoPlay Settings and change the Audio CD drop-down menu to Play Audio CD Using Windows Media Player. Or, to see Vista's query in Figure 15-5 whenever you insert a CD, choose Ask Me Every Time.
- ✔ Press F7 to mute Media Player's sound and pick up that phone call.

Turn off Media Player's copy protection, quickly

Many of Media Player's options and settings are simply cosmetic. But be sure to turn off the copy protection to avoid serious problems later. Press Alt to reveal the menu. Then click the Tools menu, choose Options, and click the Rip Music tab.

Then remove the check mark from the box called Copy Protect Music. That prevents Microsoft from adding *Digital Rights Management*, a fancy term meaning that you won't be able to play your copied music on other computers or some portable music players.

Although protecting the artists' rights is important, make sure that you protect your *own* rights to CDs you've purchased.

While you're there, switch to MP3 instead of Windows Media Audio in the Format drop-down menu. That makes sure that your ripped songs will play on the widest variety of portable music players, including the iPod.

Playing DVDs

Media Player plays DVDs as well as CDs, letting your laptop do double-duty as a portable DVD player. Grab your favorite DVD, some headphones, and watch what *you* like during that next long flight.

Although Media Player plays, burns, and copies CDs, it can't copy a DVD's movie to your hard drive, nor can it duplicate a movie DVD. (Remember the black FBI notice at the beginning of each DVD warning you that copies are illegal?)

When you insert a DVD into your DVD drive, Media Player sends you a window much like Figure 15-5 in the previous section, asking what it should do with it. To avoid that distraction, click the Always Do This for DVD Movies box and then click Play DVD Video using Windows Media Player. Media Player will play the DVD immediately, usually pausing at the opening screen.

Media Player works very much like your TV's DVD player, with the mouse acting as the remote. Click the on-screen words or buttons to make the DVD do your bidding.



To play the DVD full-screen, hold down the Alt key and press Enter. Media Player fills the screen with the movie. (Hold down Alt and press Enter to revert to normal play inside a window mode.) Move your mouse off-screen, and the movie's controls go away; jiggle the mouse to bring the controls back in view.

Yes, Media Player spies on you

Just like your bank, credit-card company, and grocery store club card, Media Player spies on you. Media Player's 6,223-word online Privacy Statement boils down to this: Media Player tells Microsoft every song, file, or movie that you play, and some people find that creepy. But if Microsoft doesn't know what you're playing, Media Player can't connect to the Internet and retrieve applicable artist information and artwork.

If you don't care that Microsoft hums along to your CDs, don't bother reading any further. If you *do* care, choose your surveillance level: Press Alt to reveal the menus, click Tools, select Options, and click the Privacy tab. Here's the rundown on the Privacy tab options that cause the biggest ruckus:

- ✔ **Display Media Information from the Internet:** If checked, Media Player tells Microsoft what CD or DVD you're playing and retrieves doodads to display on your screen: CD covers, song titles, artist names, and similar information.
- ✔ **Update Music Files by Retrieving Media Info from the Internet:** Microsoft examines
- ✔ **Send Unique Player ID to Content Providers:** Known in the biz as *data mining*, this option lets other corporations track how you use Media Player. To leave yourself out of their databases, leave this blank.
- ✔ **Cookies:** Like several other Windows Vista programs, Media Player tracks your activity with little files called *cookies*. I cover cookies in Chapter 8 because Internet Explorer controls Media Player's cookies.
- ✔ **Save File and URL History in the Player:** Media Player lists the names of your recently played files on its File menu for your convenience — and the possible guffaws of your coworkers or family. Remove this check mark to keep people from seeing the titles of music and video you've recently played.

Playing Videos and TV Shows

Many digital cameras can capture short videos as well as photos, so don't be surprised if Media Player places several videos in its library's Video section. Media Player also lists videos you've created in Windows Vista's Movie Maker program, which I cover in Chapter 16.

Playing videos works much like playing a digital song. First, switch to the video library by choosing Video from the Library button along Media Player's top. Double-click the video you want to see and start enjoying the action, as shown in Figure 15-6.

Media Player lets you watch videos in several sizes. Hold down Alt and press Enter to make it fill the screen, just as when watching a DVD. (Repeat those keystrokes to return to the original size.)



- ✔ To make the video adjust itself automatically to the size of your Media Player window, choose Video Size from the View menu and select Fit Video to Player on Resize.
- ✔ When downloading video from the Internet, make sure that it's stored in Windows Media format. Media Player can't play videos stored in *QuickTime* or *RealVideo*. Those two competing formats require free players available from Apple (www.apple.com/quicktime) or Real (www.real.com). Make sure that you download the *free* versions — those sites often try to sucker you into buying their pay versions.
- ✔ Some Web sites only *stream* their video to your computer — you can't save the video to play later. But you can try: After watching a streaming Web video, choose Save from Media Player's File menu. If that option is *grayed out*, the Web site has forbidden you from saving the video.
- ✔ When choosing video to watch on the Internet, your connection speed determines its quality. If you have a dialup connection, watch the video's 56K version. Broadband users can watch either the 100K or 300K version. You can't damage your computer by choosing the wrong one; the video just won't look right.
- ✔ Media Player can also play TV shows recorded by Windows Vista's Media Center, which I cover in this chapter's "Working with Media Center" section.

Figure 15-6: Double-click a video file's name to watch it in Media Player.



Playing Music Files (MP3s and WMAs)

Media Player plays several types of digital music files, but they all have one thing in common: When you tell Media Player to play a song or album, Media Player immediately places that item on your *Now Playing list* — a list of items queued up for playing one after the other.

If you want to play a song listed in Media Player's library (or a music file in any folder, for that matter), right-click the song's name and choose Play. Media Player begins playing it immediately, and the song appears in the Now Playing list.

- ✓ To play an entire album in Media Player's library, right-click the album from the library's Album Artist category and choose Play.
- ✓ Want to hear several files or albums, one after the other? Right-click the first one and choose Play. Right-click the next one and choose Add to Now Playing list. Repeat until you're done. Media Player queues them all up in the Now Playing list.
- ✓ No decent music in your music library? Then start copying your favorite CDs to your PC — a process called *ripping*, which I explain in this chapter's "Copying CDs to Your PC" section.

Playing Internet Radio Stations

Media Player no longer offers a menu to access Internet radio stations, although you can buy listening rights at some of Media Player's online stores like URGE. (I cover online stores in this chapter's "Buying Music and Movies from Online Stores" section.) If you're looking for free stations, visit these places on the Web:



- ✓ Head to Google (www.google.com) and search for the words Internet Radio Station to see what turns up. When you find a station broadcasting in MP3 or Windows Media Audio (WMA) format, click the Web site's Tune In or Listen Now button to load Media Player and start listening.
- ✓ I like the stations at SomaFM (www.somafm.com), particularly Secret Agent, Drone Zone, and Space Station Soma.
- ✓ Download and install a copy of Winamp (www.winamp.com), an MP3 player that lets you listen to the thousands of free radio stations available through Shoutcast (www.shoutcast.com). It's an incredible resource.

Creating, Saving, and Editing Playlists

A *playlist* is simply a list of songs (and/or videos) that play in a certain order. So what? Well, the beauty of a playlist comes with what you can *do* with it. Save a playlist of your favorite songs, for example, and they're always available for play back with a single click.

You can create specially themed playlists to liven up long-distance drives, parties, special dinners, workouts, and other events.

To create a playlist, follow these steps:

1. Click the drop-down menu from Media Player's Library button.

Double-clicking a button also reveals the drop-down menu, as does clicking the little arrow beneath the button.

2. Choose Create Playlist from the drop-down menu.

Media Player's New Playlist window appears along its right edge, as shown in Figure 15-7.

Figure 15-7:
Choose Songs from the left pane and then drag and drop song titles and album covers to the right-most pane.



3. Right-click the album or song you want and choose Add To Untitled Playlist. (Or drag and drop albums and songs onto the Playlist pane along Media Player's right edge.)

Unfortunately, Media Player isn't intuitive enough to present you with a list of albums or songs to select. To see the songs and albums in your collection, click the Library button. If they're *still* not listed, click the Library button again and choose Music from the drop-down menu.

Finally, tell Media Player to display all your songs by choosing Songs from the left pane, as shown in Figure 15-7.

Start dragging and dropping albums or individual songs onto the right-most pane. (Right-clicking and choosing Add To Playlist sometimes speeds things up.) Media Player begins playing your playlist as soon as you add the first song.

Your song choices appear in the right pane in the order you've selected them.

4. Fine-tune your playlist to change the order or remove songs.

Added something by mistake? Right-click that item from the playlist and choose Remove from List. Rearrange your playlist by dragging and dropping items farther up or down the list.

5. When you're happy with your playlist, click the Save Playlist button at the list's bottom, type a name in the Playlist Name box, and press Enter.

Media Player lists your new playlist in the library's Playlists section, ready to be heard when you double-click it.

After you save a playlist, you can burn it to a CD with one click, as described in the next tip.



Make your own Desert Island Disc or Greatest Hits playlists; you can then burn them to a CD to play in your car or on your stereo. After you create a playlist, insert a blank CD into your CD burner and click the Burn button. Then select your previously saved playlist and click the Start Burn button.



To edit a previously created playlist, right-click it from the Playlists section of the library and choose Edit in List Pane.

Copying CDs to Your PC

Unlike older Media Player versions, Vista's Media Player can create MP3s, the industry standard for digital music. But until you tell the player that you want MP3 files, it creates *WMA* files that won't play on iPods or many other portable players.



To make Media Player create songs with the more versatile MP3 format instead of WMA, press Alt to reveal the menu, choose Tools, choose Options, and click the Rip Music tab. Choose MP3 instead of WMA from the Format pull-down menu and nudge the audio quality over a tad from 128 to 192, or even 256 for better sound.

To copy CDs to your PC's hard drive, follow these instructions:

1. Open Media Player, insert a music CD, and click the Rip button.

You may need to push a button on the front of the drive before the tray ejects.

Media Player connects to the Internet, identifies your CD, and fills in the album's name, artist, and song titles. Then the program begins copying the CD's songs to your PC and listing their titles in the Library. You're through.

If Media Player can't find the songs' titles automatically, move ahead to Step 2.

2. Click Find Album Info, if necessary.

If Media Player comes up empty-handed — a common occurrence when you're not connected to the Internet — fill in the titles yourself: Right-click the first track and choose Find Album Info. Then choose Enter Information for a CD That You Burned.

Finally, fill in Media Player's form with the artist and song title information.

Here are some tips for ripping CDs to your computer:

- ✔ Normally Media Player copies every song on the CD. To leave Tiny Tim off your ukulele music compilation, for example, remove the check mark from Tiny Tim's name. If Media Player's already copied the song to your PC, feel free to delete it from within Media Player. Click the Library button, right-click the song sung by the offending yodeler, and choose Delete.
- ✔ Some record companies add copy protection to their CDs to keep you from copying them to your computer. If you buy a copy-protected CD, try holding down the Shift key for a few seconds just before and after pushing the CD into the CD tray. That sometimes keeps the copy-protection software from working.
- ✔ Don't work with your computer while it's ripping songs — just let it sit there and churn away. Running other programs may distract it, potentially interfering with the music.
- ✔ Media Player automatically places your ripped CDs into your Music folder. You'll also find your newly ripped music there by choosing Music from the Start menu.

Media Player's ripping quality settings

Musical CDs contain a *huge* amount of information — so much, in fact, that the Rolling Stones catalog probably wouldn't fit on your hard drive. To keep music files manageably small, ripping programs, such as Media Player, *compress* songs to about one-tenth of their normal size. Compressing the songs lessens their quality, so the big question becomes, how much quality loss is acceptable?

The answer is when you can hear the difference, a much-debated point among listeners. Many people can't tell the difference between a CD and a song ripped at 128 Kbps (kilobits per second), so Media Player defaults to that standard. Also,

ripped songs are usually played on computers or portable players — not high-fidelity stereos — so 96 Kbps files might sound fine to you.

If you'd rather sacrifice a bit more disk space for better quality, kick up the quality a notch: Press Alt to reveal the menu, choose Options from the Tools menu, and click the Rip Music tab. Slide the bar to the right (Best Quality) to rip at a higher quality. To create music files that don't lose *any* fidelity, choose Windows Media Audio Lossless from the Format drop-down list, and prepare for huge files. (So much for the entire Rolling Stone catalog. . . .)

Burning Music CDs

To create a music CD with your favorite songs, create a playlist containing the CD's songs, listed in the order you want to play them; then burn the playlist to a CD. I explain how to do that in this chapter's "Creating, Saving, and Editing Playlists" section.

But what if you want to duplicate a CD, perhaps to create a disposable copy of your favorite CD to play in your car? No sense scratching up your original. You'll want to make copies of CDs for your kids, too, before they create pizzas out of them.

Unfortunately, neither Media Player nor Windows Vista offers a Duplicate CD option. Instead, you must jump through the following five hoops to create a new CD with the same songs as the original CD:

1. **Rip (copy) the music to your hard drive.**
2. **Insert a blank CD into your writable CD drive.**
3. **Click the Library button and choose Album to see your saved CDs.**

- 4. Right-click the album in your library and choose Add to Burn List.**

Or, right-click the playlist containing the music you want to burn to the CD and choose Add to Burn List.

- 5. Click the Start Burn button.**

Now, for the fine print. Media Player compresses your songs as it saves them on your hard drive, throwing out some audio quality in the process. Burning them back to CD won't replace that lost quality. If you want *true* duplicates of your CDs, buy CD burning software from your local office supply or computer store.

Copying Songs to Your Portable Player

Media Player 11 doesn't work with the majority of portable music players, including the bestselling iPod. And it's clearly optimized for transferring WMA files — not the MP3 files used by most portable players. Many people don't bother using Media Player, instead opting for the transfer software that came with their portable player. But if you're willing to give Media Player a go, follow these steps.

- 1. Connect your player to your computer.**

This step usually involves connecting a USB cord between your device and your computer. The cord's small end pushes into a hole on your player; the large end fits into a rectangular-shaped port in the front or back of your PC.

The plugs only fit one way — the right way — on each end.

- 2. Start Media Player.**

Several things may happen at this point, depending on your particular music player and the way its manufacturer set it up. (Try looking for some of these options on your player's setup menus.)

If Media Player recognizes your player, a Sync List pane appears along Media Player's right edge.

If your player is set up to *Sync Automatically*, Media Player dutifully copies all the music (and video, if your player supports it) from Media Player's library to your player. It's a fairly quick process for a few hundred songs, but if your player holds thousands, you may be twiddling your thumbs for several minutes.

If your player is set up to *Sync Manually*, click Finish. You need to tell Media Player what music to copy, covered in the next step.

If your player does nothing, or Media Player's library holds more music than will fit on your player, you're forced to Step 3.

3. Choose what music to stuff onto your player.

You can choose what music goes to your player in a couple of ways:

- **Shuffle Music:** Found on the Sync List pane, this quick and easy option tells Media Player to copy a random mix of songs to the Sync List. It's great for an on-the-fly refresher, but you give up control over exactly what music will live on your player.
- **Playlist:** Create a *playlist* — a list of music — that you want to appear on your player. Already created a playlist or two that you like? Right-click them and choose Add to Sync List, and Media Player will toss those songs onto the Sync List that's aimed at your player.

4. Click the Start Sync button.

Once you've chosen the music to transfer — and it's all sitting in the Sync List pane along the player's right side — copy it all to your player by clicking the Start Sync button at the bottom of Media Player's right pane.

Media Player sends your music to your player, taking anywhere from several seconds to a few minutes.

- ✔ If Media Player can't seem to find your portable player, click the Sync button along Media Player's top and choose Refresh Devices. That tells Media Player to take another look before giving up.
- ✔ To change how Media Player sends files to your particular media player, press Alt to reveal the menus. Then choose Options from the Tools menu and click the Devices tab. Double-click your player's name to see its current options. Some players offer zillions of options; others only offer a few.
- ✔ Some players may require *firmware upgrades* — special pieces of software — before they'll work with Media Player 11. Downloadable from the manufacturer's Web site, firmware upgrades run on your PC like any software installation program. But instead of installing software on your PC, they install software onto your portable player to bring it up to date.



Buying Music and Movies from Online Stores

Media Player 11's biggest new feature could be the online partnership with URGE, run by MTV Networks. There, you can pay to download songs and movies or listen to a customized radio station. To start shopping, follow these steps:

1. **Click the word URGE in the player's upper-right corner.**

URGE asks you to click to approve its 2,046-word licensing agreement before downloading its software to your PC. After a few minutes, URGE's Web site appears in Media Player, shown in Figure 15-8. (You may have to click the URGE button again to see the store.)

2. **Type the artist or song you want into the Search box.**

Media Player's Search box, found in its upper-right corner, normally searches through your PC's own stash of music. But when you're connected to URGE, Media Player searches both your songs *and* those on URGE, listing the results on-screen.

Oddly enough, URGE lists songs matching your search even if they're not for sale. The entire Beatles catalog is listed, for example, but every song is grayed out, with no price next to the name. (That's because The Beatles don't sell their music online.)

Figure 15-8:
Click URGE
to begin
shopping for
music from
MTV
Network's
digital music
store.



3. Listen to the first 30 seconds of any song.

Double-click an album cover, for example, to hear a snippet of the first song; double-click a song title itself to hear the song.

URGE also sells playlists — ordered lists of songs chosen by theme, genre, TV shows, decade, city, celebrity picks, and other criteria.

4. Buy the song, album, or playlist.

Here's where you can choose between URGE's purchase plans.

- **Subscription:** Here, you fork over a monthly fee to URGE, and the company lets you download all the songs you want. Sound sweet? Unfortunately, when you stop paying the fee, your songs stop playing, both in your player and your PC. Also, some players don't support the subscription plan's required copy protection. Subscriptions currently cost \$14.95 per month, \$9.95 if you don't copy songs to a portable player.
- **Ala carte:** Some songs cost 99 cents, others cost \$3 or more, and some are available only if you purchase the entire album. (And unlike CDs you buy at the store, you can't resell or trade-in digital music.)

To sign up for an URGE account, click the Sign In button in Media Player's top-right corner.

Be sure to read the fine print before typing your credit-card number. URGE doesn't offer songs from every artist or record label, and it's not compatible with most portable music players.



The wrong player keeps opening my files!

You'd never hear Microsoft say it, but Media Player isn't the only Windows program for playing songs or viewing movies. In fact, you need QuickTime (www.quicktime.com) to view lots of Internet videos stored in Apple's competing QuickTime movie format. Many Internet sounds and videos come stored in Real's (www.real.com) competing RealAudio or RealVideo format, which Media Player can't handle, either.

And some people use Winamp (www.winamp.com) for playing their music, videos, and a wide variety of Internet radio stations. With all the

competing formats available, many people install several different media players — one for each format. Unfortunately, these multiple installations lead to bickering among each player because they all fight to become your default player.

Vista attempts to settle these arguments with its new Default Programs area. To choose the player that should open each format, click the Start button, choose Default Programs, and click Set Your Default Programs. A window appears where you can choose which program plays your CDs, DVDs, pictures, video, audio, and other media.

Note: When you're browsing the online store, Media Player displays screens sent from URGE's Web site (www.urge.com). Unlike Windows programs, Web sites change frequently. The steps shown here may change slightly as URGE updates its Web site.

Working with Media Center

Media Center began life as a special version of Windows designed to be viewed on a TV screen and manipulated with a remote control. In fact, its large menus and simple controls seem out of place in Windows Vista. Because Media Center doubles many of Media Player's efforts, you'll probably find Media Player's familiar controls more convenient.

But if you want to give Media Center a whirl, using it to watch and record TV shows, keep in mind that all this fun comes with a few stipulations:

- ✔ **Vista Home Premium or Ultimate:** Neither Vista Home Basic nor Vista's Business versions include the Media Center.
- ✔ **TV Tuner:** Your PC doesn't need a TV set to view or record TV shows. No, your PC needs its own built-in *TV tuner*: special circuitry that lets you view TV on a monitor and change channels. Big bonus points go to TV tuners that come with remote controls, but Media Center also works with a mouse or keyboard.
- ✔ **TV signal:** Like a TV set, a PC's TV tuner can extract channels only from a TV signal. You can connect the cable that plugs into your TV set into your PC's TV tuner. Or, if you're desperate, you can attach a "rabbit ears" antenna to the tuner, but the picture won't look nearly as good.
- ✔ **Video with TV-Out port:** TV shows look fine on your computer monitor. But to watch those shows on a real TV, your PC's tuner needs a spot to plug in your TV set. Most tuners offer a combination of S-Video, composite, and occasionally coax connectors, the three connectors used by most TV sets.

When run on a properly equipped PC, Media Center should find everything — the tuner, the signal, and the monitor. To give the program a test run, click Start, choose All Programs, and choose Windows Media Center.

If Media Center *doesn't* find those things, you probably need a new Vista-compatible driver for your tuner card, a piece of software downloadable from the tuner manufacturer's Web site.



Pressing F8 mutes the sound in Media Center, a difficult thing to remember because Media Player mutes when you press F7.

Running Media Center for the first time

Don't start Media Center for the first time unless you have a good 15 or 20 minutes to kill. It takes that long to set things up. Media Center begins by poking and prodding your PC to look for an Internet connection and home network and then gives you a fairly lengthy interview. Microsoft wants you to approve its privacy policies, for example, which consist of wading through more than 68 pages of fine print.

Media Center asks you to type your zip code and select the provider supplying your TV signal. After

downloading listings for upcoming shows, Media Center ends its interview by letting you select your type of monitor, speakers, and the way they're connected. These settings are most important for people who connect their PC to a TV set and home stereo to watch the videos.

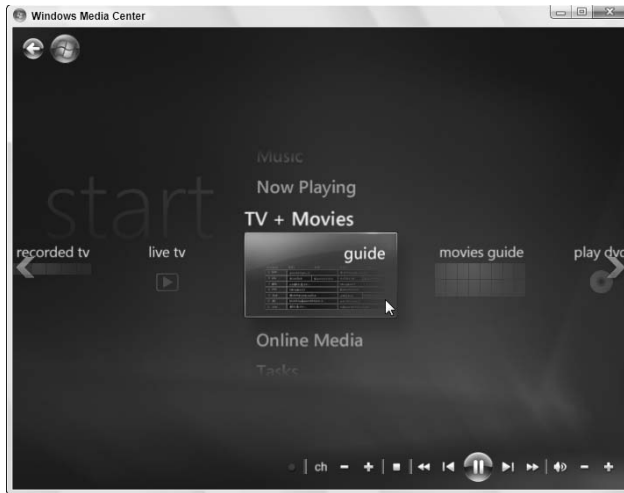
When it finally finishes, Media Center displays a *TV Guide*-type of listing on the screen, which lets you browse shows and choose the ones to watch or record for later viewing.

Browsing Media Center's menus

For a souped-up VCR, Media Center offers a lot of options. Here are Media Center's menus, shown in Figure 15-9, and a briefer on what lies behind each one:

- ✔ **TV and Movies:** Media Center opens to this menu option, which lets you choose from several options: Record a TV show or movie, watch live or recorded TV, play a DVD, or Set Up TV — a must if you want to begin recording live TV shows. Once you've set up your TV, you can browse for movies and shows through a *TV Guide*-style menu.
- ✔ **Music:** Media Center can play your music, just like Media Player. Unlike Media Player's dizzying array of options, Media Center offers three choices. The Music Library option displays every album cover in your Music folder; click the cover of the album you want to hear. The Radio option doesn't tune in Internet stations, but FM stations that may piggy-back on your TV signal.
- ✔ **Tools:** Enter here for settings that tweak everything from your TV reception to how Media Center displays your album art.
- ✔ **Pictures + Videos:** Just as you'd expect, this setting displays pictures from your Pictures folder, complete with slide shows. Videos from your Videos folder appear here, as well.
- ✔ **Tasks:** This section lets you burn CDs from your music collection and DVDs from recorded TV shows — without editing out the commercials, of course.

Figure 15-9: Media Center lets you watch and record shows, play your music, and view your videos.



To move from one menu to another, use the remote control that came with your TV tuner. No remote? Then point your mouse where you want to go; right-clicking also brings up menus. Your keyboard's arrow keys also work well for menu hopping.



To return to a previous menu, use the remote's Back key, use the mouse to click the Back arrow in the screen's upper-left corner, or press the keyboard's Backspace key.

Getting the most out of Media Center

Because Media Center duplicates Media Player's functions, you probably won't find yourself using it much. In fact, it comes in handy only on these particular occasions:

- ✓ **Xbox hooked up to TV:** Microsoft's game box, the Xbox 360, hooks up to a TV for playing games. But when hooked up to a network, the Xbox 360 can connect to Media Center, sharing its libraries of music, photos, and movies.
- ✓ **PC hooked up to TV:** Few people want a large, noisy PC sitting next to their TV. But if your PC serves exclusively as part of your home theater, Media Center provides a nice command center.

- ✓ **Ease of access:** Media Center's large and simple menus won't satisfy control freaks. But if you're looking for easy-to-read menus for handling simple chores, you may prefer Media Center to Media Player.
- ✓ **TV tuner:** If your PC comes with a TV tuner, it probably came with software for recording and watching TV shows. If you find Media Center easier to use and more dependable, it's natural to switch.

Chapter 16

Fiddling with Photos and Movies

In This Chapter

- ▶ Copying digital camera photos into your computer
- ▶ Viewing photos in your Pictures folder
- ▶ Saving digital photos to a CD
- ▶ E-mailing photos
- ▶ Printing photos
- ▶ Creating a slide show and copying it to a DVD
- ▶ Copying camcorder footage into your computer
- ▶ Editing your clips into a movie
- ▶ Adding transitions between clips
- ▶ Saving your completed movie to a DVD

This chapter introduces you to the growing relationship among Windows, digital cameras, and camcorders — both the new digital and older analog models. It explains how to move your digital photos and movies onto your computer, edit out the bad parts, display them to the family, e-mail them to distant relatives, and save them in easy-to-find locations on your computer.

One final note: After you've started creating your family album on your computer, please take steps to back it up properly, as I describe in Chapter 12. (This chapter explains how to copy them to a CD or DVD.) Your family memories can't be replaced.

Using Your Computer as a Digital Shoebox

With an eye on the digital camera boom, Microsoft's programmers have transformed Windows' built-in Pictures folder into a computerized family album. After you've dumped your digital camera photos into that folder, Windows Vista makes it easy to create on-the-fly slide shows, screen savers, and wallpaper, as well as apply a host of editing tricks.

Windows Vista doesn't recognize my camera!

Although Windows Vista usually greets cameras as soon as they're plugged into the computer, sometimes the two don't become friends immediately: Vista doesn't display its import Photos menu, or another program's menu tries to take over. If those problems occur, unplug your camera, and wait a few seconds before plugging it back in.

If that doesn't do the job, follow these steps:

1. **Click Start, choose Default Programs, and open Change AutoPlay Settings.**
2. **Scroll down to the Devices area.**

The Devices area lives near the window's bottom.

3. **Choose your camera, choose Import Using Windows from the pull-down menu, and click Save.**

If Windows Vista *still* doesn't greet your camera when you plug it in, Windows Vista needs a translator to understand your camera's language. Unfortunately, that translator will have to be the camera's bundled software. If you no longer have the software, you can almost always download it from your camera manufacturer's Web site.

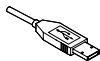
This section walks you through connecting your camera to your computer and copying the photos to the computer for viewing.

Dumping the camera's photos into your computer

Most digital cameras come with software that grabs your camera's photos and places them into your computer. But you needn't install it, nor even bother trying to figure it out, thank goodness. Windows Vista's built-in software easily fetches photos from nearly any make and model of digital camera when you follow these steps:

1. **Plug the camera's cable into your computer.**

Most cameras come with two cables: One that plugs into your TV set for viewing, and another that plugs into your PC. You need to find the one that plugs into your PC for transferring photos.



Plug the transfer cable's small end into your camera, and the larger end (shown in the margin) into your computer's *USB port*, a rectangular-looking hole about a half-inch long and a fourth-inch high. (Most USB ports live on the back of the computer, but newer computers offer them up front.)

2. Turn on your camera, if it's not already turned on, and wait for Windows Vista to recognize it.

If you're plugging in the camera for the first time, Windows Vista sometimes heralds the camera's presence with a small pop-up window above your taskbar by the clock.



If Windows Vista doesn't recognize your camera, make sure that the camera is set to Display mode — which lets you see the photos on its screen — rather than Shoot mode, which you use to take pictures. Also, try unplugging the cable from your PC, waiting a few seconds, and then plugging it back in.

3. When the AutoPlay window appears, click Import Pictures Using Windows.

When you first plug a digital camera into Vista, the AutoPlay window appears, shown in Figure 16-1. Make sure that a check mark appears in Always Do This for This Device and click Import Pictures Using Windows. That tells Vista to automatically grab your camera's pictures whenever you connect it to your PC.



Don't see the AutoPlay window? Try opening Computer from the Start menu and double-clicking your camera icon, shown in the margin.

Figure 16-1:
Choose Import Pictures Using Windows so that Vista automatically extracts your camera's photos.

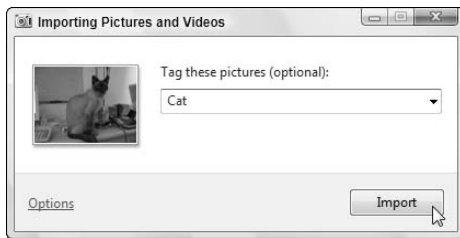


4. Type a tag or name for your photos and click Import.

Type a descriptive word or two to describe the photos, as shown in Figure 16-2. Type the word **Cat**, for example, and Windows Vista names the incoming photos as Cat 001, Cat 002, Cat 003, and so on. Later, you can find these pictures by searching for the word **Cat**.

Click Import to bring your camera's photos into your PC and automatically name them.

Figure 16-2:
Type a tag
or name that
describes
your photo
session.

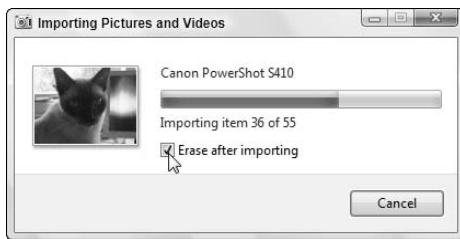


Clicking the word Options, shown in Figure 16-2, lets you change how Vista imports your photos. It's worth a look-see, as it lets you “undo” any options you've mistakenly chosen when first importing your photos.

5. Click Erase After Importing.

If you don't delete your camera's photos after importing them into your PC, you won't have room to take more photos. Click Erase After Importing, shown in Figure 16-3, and Vista erases the camera's photos, saving you the trouble of rummaging through your camera's menus.

Figure 16-3:
Click Erase
After
Importing to
free up your
camera for
more
photos.



6. If asked, let Windows correct your picture's rotation.

When Windows notices that you've turned your camera sideways to take a picture — which usually happens when you take photos of trees or small groups of standing people — take it up on its offer to rotate your photos by clicking Yes. That keeps your photos from showing up sideways on your monitor.

Some older cameras don't tell Windows when you've turned the camera sideways for a photo, so you may not see this option.

When Windows finishes importing your photos, it displays the folder containing your new pictures.

Grabbing your camera's photos with a card reader

Windows Vista grabs photos from your camera fairly easily. But a *memory card reader* not only speeds up the job, it's your only option when you've lost your camera's transfer cable. A memory card reader is a little box with a cable that plugs into your computer's USB port — the same spot your camera does.

To dump your camera's pictures into your computer, remove the camera's memory card and slide the card into the slot in the card reader. Windows Vista notices that you've inserted the card and treats it like your camera, offering the same menus.

Or, choose Computer from the Start menu and double-click the card reader's drive letter to see

all the photos. From there, you can select the photos you want and cut and paste them to a folder in your Pictures folder.

Memory card readers are cheap (less than \$20), easy to set up, fast at copying images, and much more convenient. Plus, you can leave your camera turned off while dumping the vacation photos, saving battery life. When buying a card reader, make sure that it can read the type of memory cards used by your camera — as well as several other types of memory cards. (That ensures it will work with any new computer-related gadgets you might acquire around the holidays.)

Browsing your photos with Windows Photo Gallery

Your Pictures folder, located one click away on the Start menu's right side, easily earns kudos as the best place to store your digital photos. When Vista imports your digital camera's photos, it automatically stuffs them in there to take advantage of that folder's built-in viewing tools.

To peek inside any folder, double-click its icon. Inside, each folder offers the usual file-viewing tools found in every folder, plus a convenient row of buttons for displaying, editing, e-mailing, and printing your photos. (Click the View button to cycle quickly through three different thumbnail sizes.)

But when your Pictures folder grows too crowded for easy viewing, fire up Vista's new Photo Gallery Viewer: Click the Start button, choose All Programs, and click Windows Photo Gallery.

Shown in Figure 16-4, the Photo Gallery offers oodles of ways to sort quickly through thousands of photos by clicking different words, dates, and ratings listed on the Navigation Pane along the viewer's left side. Double-click any photo to see a larger view, then return to the Gallery by clicking the Backwards arrow in the top-left corner.

Clicking these words in the Navigation Pane let you sort your photos in a variety of ways:

- ✔ **All Pictures and Videos:** Click this option to see *all* your photos and videos, sorted chronologically by the year you snapped them or dumped them into your PC. Two subcategories let you view just pictures or just videos. If you spot the one you're after, double-click its icon to view it.
- ✔ **Recently Imported:** This option provides a handy way to find pictures you've *just* added to your PC.
- ✔ **Tags:** Remember the tag you assigned to your photos when importing them from your digital camera in Figure 16-2? The Navigation Pane lists those tags, ready to retrieve their matching photos with a click. Feel free to add tags on the fly: Select your photos of Uncle Frank (select several photos by holding down Ctrl as you click each one), click Add Tags from the pane along the right edge, and type **Uncle Frank** to add that name as a tag.
- ✔ **Date Taken:** This option lets you see all the photos taken in a certain year or month, or on a certain date. Click 2004, for example, hold down Ctrl, and click the tag Cat to see every photo of your cat from 2004.
- ✔ **Ratings:** Spot a photo that's a real keeper? Or perhaps a stinker? Hold down Ctrl and press **1**, **2**, **3**, **4**, or **5**, with 5 meaning it's an absolute favorite. Vista remembers that particular rating and lets you sort photos by their ratings. You can also rate a currently viewed photo by clicking any of the rating stars on the right side, as shown in Figure 16-4.
- ✔ **Folders:** Click any folder listed here to view photos stored in a particular folder. To add any folder to the list, right-click the word Folders, choose Add Folder to Gallery, and browse to the folder you'd like to add.

By mixing and matching dates, tags, and ratings, you can ferret out the particular photos you're after. The following tips also increase your chances of locating a particular photo:

- ✔ Spot a blurred or ugly photo? Right-click it and choose Delete. Weeding out the garbage makes the good ones easier to find.
- ✔ You can assign several different tags to one photo, adding a tag for each person in a group picture, for example. That makes that photo appear in searches for *any* of its tags.
- ✔ Type any photo's tag into the Pictures folder's Search box, located in its top-right corner, and Vista quickly displays photos assigned with that particular tag.
- ✔ Double-click any picture for a closer look, making it fill the window. The Photo Gallery's preview window displays the picture, offering buttons to fix, print, e-mail, open, and see information about the photo. (I describe those buttons in this chapter's "Fixing photos" section.)



- Want to cover your entire desktop with a photo? Right-click the picture and choose Set As Background. Windows immediately splashes that photo across your desktop.
- Hover your mouse pointer over any photo for a larger view, as well as information about its filename, rating, tags, date snapped, size, and dimensions.

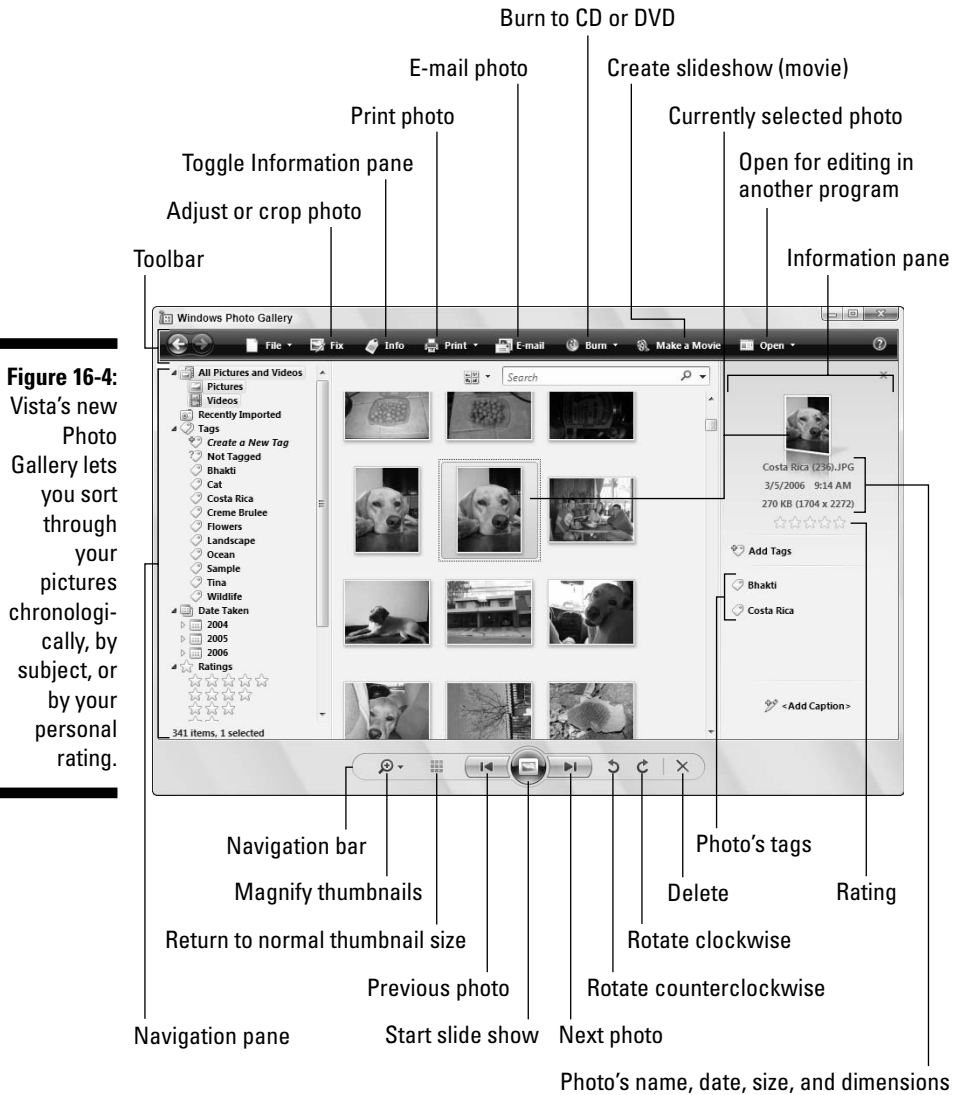


Figure 16-4: Vista's new Photo Gallery lets you sort through your pictures chronologically, by subject, or by your personal rating.

Keeping digital photos organized

It's tempting to create a folder called New Photos in your Pictures folder and start dumping new pictures into it. But when it comes time to relocating a particular photo, that system breaks down quickly. Vista's importing tools do a fairly good job of naming each photo session after the date and the tag. These tips also help keep your pictures organized and easy to retrieve:

- ✓ Assign a few key tags like Home, Travel, and Holidays to photos. Searching for those tags makes it easy to see all the pictures taken at your own house, while traveling, or during holiday events.
- ✓ Windows assigns your chosen tag to each batch of photos you import. Spend a little time immediately afterward to assign more tags to each photo.
- ✓ If digital photography turns into a hobby, consider buying one of many third-party photo programs like ThumbsPlus (www.serious.com). They provide more photo management and editing features, improving upon Windows Vista's basic tools.

Viewing a slide show

Windows XP offers a simple slide show that displays one photo after another. In Vista's hands, the slide show turns into an extravaganza, with a whopping 15 different types of slide shows.

Start the photos flowing across the screen either of these two ways:



- ✓ When in your Pictures folder, click the Slide Show button (shown in the margin) from along the folder's top.



- ✓ While in the Photo Gallery, click the large, round Play Slide Show button (shown in the margin) from along the folder's bottom center.

Windows immediately darkens the monitor, fills the screen with the first picture, and then blends one picture into the next.

Don't see a fancy slide show? If Vista wears its drab Basic clothes, then your PC either isn't powerful enough to handle the graphics, or you're using Windows Vista Basic — Vista's least expensive version.



Click the Themes button along the slide show's bottom edge to change the pictures' presentation. The Album theme, for example, creates a scrapbook look; Classic brings back Windows XP's simple slide show; and Travel melds several different displays into one. Feel free to experiment.

The Slide Show button creates quick, on-the-fly slide shows, but if you're looking for slide shows to save to a CD or DVD and give to friends, check out this chapter's last two sections. There, I explain how to create and save slide shows with Vista's built-in Movie Maker and DVD Maker programs.

Here are more tips for successful on-the-fly slide shows:



- ✓ Before starting the slide show, rotate any “sideways” pictures, if necessary, so that they all appear right side up.
- ✓ The slide show includes all the photos in your current folder, as well as any photos living in folders inside that folder.
- ✓ Select just a few of a folder's pictures and click the Slide Show button to limit the show to just those pictures. (Hold down Ctrl while clicking pictures to select more than one.)



- ✓ You can turn any of these slide shows into screen savers. Right-click the desktop, choose Personalize, click Screensaver, and choose Photos from the Screen Saver pull-down menu. (Click the Settings button to choose your favorite type of slide show or limit displayed photos by tag, rating, and folder.)
- ✓ Feel free to add music to your slide show by playing a song in Media Player, described in Chapter 15, before starting your show. Or, if you picked up a Hawaiian CD while vacationing on the islands, insert that in your CD player to play a soundtrack during your vacation slide show.

Fixing photos

Windows Vista finally offers some photo repair tools to remove red eye from flash photos, tweak washed-out colors, and crop photos to different sizes. Oddly enough, Vista hides these repair tools inside the Windows Photo Gallery: To begin a repair job, click Start, choose All Programs, and select Windows Photo Gallery.



Select the problem photo by clicking it and then click the Fix button (shown in the margin) on the Windows Photo Gallery's toolbar. The next few sections explain how to fix your photos with the gallery's easy-to-use fix-it tools, shown in Figure 16-5.

Vista's photo fix-ups aren't permanent. If you make a mistake, click the Undo button at the screen's bottom. If you decide you've made a mistake several days later, click that problematic figure, click the Fix button, and you'll see a Revert button at the figure's bottom. Click it, and Vista can *still* revert to the original photo.



Be sure to fix your photos *before* printing them or sending them to be printed. A little bit of cropping and adjustment help make your photos look their best before you commit them to paper.

Figure 16-5:
Click
Windows
Photo
Gallery's Fix
button to
access the
"fix-it" tools
along the
right side.



Adjusting exposure and color

Photographs capture the light entering the camera's lens, and that light rarely looks the same as the light beaming back at you from your computer monitor. To adjust for the difference, Windows Photo Gallery lets you adjust a photo's color, as well as correct for overexposed photos — a problem when your camera picks up too much or too little light.

Here's the quickest and easiest way to adjust a particular photo's lighting:

- 1. Open the Windows Photo Gallery, click the awful photo, and click the Fix button on the toolbar.**



The Windows Photo Gallery lives in the Start menu's All Programs area. The photo repair tools quickly appear along the window's right edge, as shown earlier in Figure 16-5.

- 2. Click Auto Adjust.**

Vista's robotic intelligence chooses the settings it thinks the photo needs. Surprisingly enough, Auto Adjust usually makes the photo look much better. If you think the photo now looks perfect, you're through. But if it looks worse or isn't quite fixed yet, move to Step 3.

- 3. Click Adjust Exposure and adjust the Brightness and Contrast settings.**

Vista's Auto Adjust tool almost always changes a photo's exposure settings slightly. The slider bars for Brightness and Contrast are normally

centered, but after Auto Adjust does its work, one or both will be off-center. Slide the bars to further tweak Auto Adjust's changes. If the photo *still* doesn't look right, move to Step 4.

4. Click Adjust Color and adjust the Tint, Color Temperature, and Saturation settings.

Just as before, slide the bars to the center or edge to either enhance or remove Auto Adjust's settings.

5. Save or discard your changes.

If you're pleased with the outcome, save your changes by either clicking the Back To Gallery button in the top, left corner or closing the Gallery.

But if the photo looks worse than ever, discard your changes: Keep clicking the Undo button along the bottom to remove each change, or revert to the original by clicking the little arrow next to the Undo button and choosing Undo All.

Cropping photos

You crop a photo every time you take a picture: You look through the camera's viewfinder or its color screen, aiming the camera and zooming in or pulling back until the subject appears nicely framed.

But when you go home, you may notice your quick framing wasn't as nice as you'd thought. A telephone pole protrudes from a person's head, for example, or that little tree frog disappears in the leafy background.

Cropping can solve both of those problems, letting you remove a photo's bad parts and enhance the good. These steps show how to crop a photo to make a distant object — a Costa Rican tree frog — appear closer.



1. Open the Windows Photo Gallery, click the problem photo, and click the Fix button.

The Windows Photo Gallery lives in the Start menu's All Programs area.

2. Click the Crop Picture tool and choose your Proportion.

The Crop Picture tool places a rectangle in your photo, shown in Figure 16-6. The rectangle shows the cropped area — everything outside the rectangle will be cropped out.

3. Adjust the cropped area around your subject.

Vista places the rectangle in the center of your photo, which is rarely the best place to crop. Reposition the rectangle by pointing at it, and while holding down the mouse button, move the mouse to drag the cropping area to a new position. Then, adjust the rectangle's size by dragging the corners in and out.

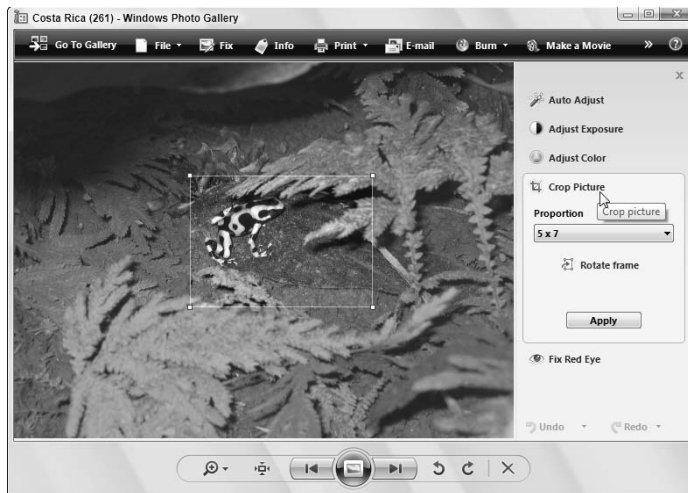


Figure 16-6:
Adjust the
rectangle to
fit the area
you want to
crop.

To crop for different paper sizes — a 5 by 7 or 4 by 6, for example — click the Proportion drop-down menu and choose a different size. Feel free to click Rotate Frame if that frames your subject better.



Don't always center your subject. For more interesting crops and shots, follow the *Rule of Thirds*. Imagine two vertical and horizontal lines dividing your photo into equal thirds, as shown in Figure 16-7. Then position the photo's subject anywhere where those lines intersect.

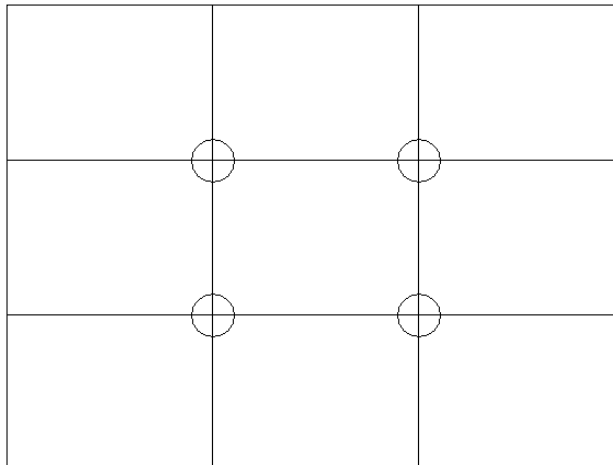


Figure 16-7:
For
interesting
crops, place
your subject
on the
intersecting
lines.

4. Click Apply to crop the image.

Windows Photo Gallery crops away the photo portions outside your frame, leaving a photo like the one in Figure 16-8. (Notice how the placement of the frog follows the Rule of Thirds.)



Figure 16-8: Click Apply to crop the unwanted areas from your photo.

5. Click Undo if you're unhappy with the crop; if you're happy with it, close the program or click the Back To Gallery button.

Clicking Undo brings back the uncropped photo for you to try again. If you're happy with the crop, though, click Back To Gallery to see your photos again or close the program.



Cropping comes in handy for creating pictures for your user account photo — the photo that appears atop your Start menu. Crop out everything but your head, save the shot, and then head to the Control Panel's User Accounts area to use that head shot for your account picture. (I explain user accounts in Chapter 13.)

Removing red eye

Flash photos work so quickly that the pupil doesn't have time to contract. Instead of seeing a black pupil, the camera catches the blood-red retina in the back of the eye.

Vista's Fix Red Eye tool replaces the red with the more natural black, fixing a problem that's plagued party photographers around the world.



1. **Open the Windows Photo Gallery, click your red-eye photo, and click the Fix button.**

The Windows Photo Gallery lives in the Start menu's All Programs area.

Zoom in on the red eye area by clicking the magnifying glass icon on the Navigation bar along the window's bottom and sliding the bar upward. Then drag the photo with your mouse pointer until the red eye comes into view.



2. **Click Fix Red Eye, drag a rectangle around the red part of the pupil, and then release the mouse button.**

Click just above the red portion of the pupil, hold down your mouse button, and point down and to the side to surround the red portion with a rectangle.

Releasing the mouse button turns the red into black.

Copying digital photos to a CD or DVD

Don't lose all your digital memories because you didn't back them up. Head to the computer or office-supply store and pick up a stack of blank CDs or DVDs to match your PC's drive. (I explain how to tell what type of disc drive lives inside your PC in Chapter 4.)

Then follow these steps to copy every item in your Pictures folder to a blank CD or DVD:

1. **Open your Pictures folder from the Start menu and click the Burn button.**

Vista asks you to insert a blank disc into your drive.

2. **Insert a blank CD or DVD into your writable disc drive.**

DVDs can store five times as much information as a CD, so insert a DVD into your

DVD burner. No DVD burner? Insert a blank CD, instead.

3. **Type a name for your backup disc and click Next.**

Type today's date and the words Photo Backup. Vista begins backing up all your photos to your CD or DVD.

Don't have enough space on the CD or DVD to hold all your files? Unfortunately, Windows Vista isn't smart enough to tell you when to insert the second disc. Instead, it whines about not having enough room and stops in its tracks. In that case, head for Vista's much smarter Backup program (Chapter 10), which has the smarts to split your backup between several discs.

Fixing rotated pictures

In the old days, it never mattered how you tilted your camera when taking the photo; you simply turned the printed photo to view it. Most of today's computer monitors don't swivel, so Windows Vista rotates the photo for you — if you figure out how.

The trick is to right-click any photo that shows up sideways. Choose Rotate Clockwise or Rotate Counter Clockwise to turn your green cliffs into grassy meadows.



To rotate a sideways photo in Windows Photo Gallery, click the clockwise or counterclockwise Rotate icons along the picture's bottom.

E-mailing photos

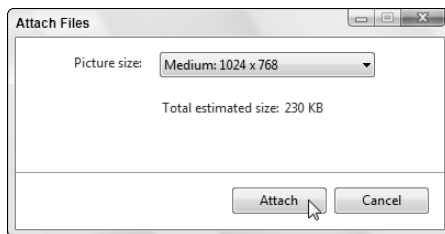
Digital cameras create *huge* files, but e-mail requires *small* files. If the files are too big, they'll bounce back to your Inbox or overwhelm the recipient's e-mail account. To solve this technical conundrum, Windows Vista conveniently offers to resize your digital photos when you e-mail them. Here's how to take advantage of its kind offer:

- 1. Right-click the desired photo or photos, choose Send To from the menu, and choose Mail Recipient.**

Or, if you're looking at the photo in a folder or from within Windows Photo Gallery, click the E-mail button from the toolbar along the top.

Windows Vista sends up a window, shown in Figure 16-9, offering to shrink your e-mailed pictures. Take it up on its offer.

Figure 16-9:
Choose
Medium for
most
recipients.



2. Click the Attach button.

Windows resizes the photos you're e-mailing, opens your default e-mail program (usually Windows Mail or Microsoft Outlook), and attaches them to a message.

3. Fill in the recipient's e-mail address and click Send.

For more details about e-mail, look for my coverage of Windows Mail in Chapter 9.

4. Click the Send button.

Windows Mail sends your message to the recipient with the photo or photos attached.

Printing pictures

Windows Vista's Photo Printing Wizard offers nearly as many options as the drugstore's photo counter, printing full-page glossies, wallet prints, and nearly anything in between.



The key to printing nice photos is buying nice (and expensive) photo paper and using a photo-quality printer. Ask to see printed samples before buying a printer, then buy that printer's recommended photo-quality paper.



Before printing your photos, feel free to crop and adjust their colors, as I describe earlier in this chapter's "Fixing photos" section.

Here's how to move photos from your screen to the printed page:

1. Open Pictures from the Start menu and select the photos you'd like to print.

Want to print one photo? Then click it. To select more than one photo, hold down the Ctrl key as you click each one.

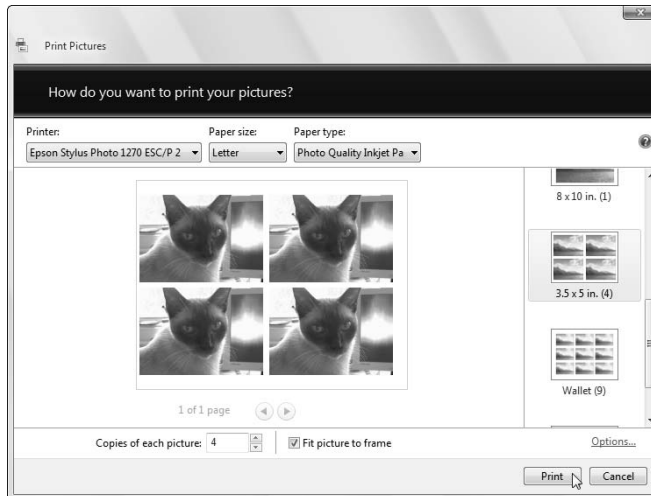
2. Tell Vista to print the selected photos.

You can tell Vista to print your selection either of these ways:

- Click the Print button from the folder's toolbar. You'll spot a handy Print button atop your Pictures folder, as well as in the Windows Photo Gallery.
- Right-click the selected photos and choose Print from the pop-up menu.

No matter which method you choose, the Print Pictures window appears, shown in Figure 16-10.

Figure 16-10: Choose how the photos should appear on paper and then click the Print button.



3. Choose your printer, paper, and photo layout and the number of times to print each picture.

The Print Pictures window lets you tweak several settings. (If you don't tweak anything, Vista prints one copy of each photo across an entire sheet of 8½-by-11-inch photo paper.)

- **Printer:** Vista lists your default printer — your only printer, if you only have one — in its top, left box. If you own a second printer you only use for photos, choose that printer from the drop-down menu.
- **Paper size:** Vista lists different paper sizes in this drop-down menu in case you'll be printing on something besides normal 8½-by-11-inch photo paper.
- **Layout:** Choose how Vista should arrange the photos on the paper. You can print each photo to fill an entire page, for example, print nine wallet photos, or somewhere in between. Each time you choose an option, the wizard displays a preview of the printed page, as shown in Figure 16-10.
- **Copies of each picture:** Choose anywhere from 1 to 99 copies of each picture.

4. Insert photo paper into your printer and click Print.

Follow the instructions for inserting your photo paper into your printer. It must face the correct direction and print on the correct side. Some paper requires a stiff paper backing sheet, as well.

Click Print, and Vista shuttles your photo off to the printer.



Most photo developers print digital photos with better quality paper and ink than your own printer. And with the cost of expensive printer paper and ink cartridges, photo developers are often less expensive than printing photos yourself. Check their pricing and ask how they like their photos delivered — by CD, memory card, or over the Internet.

Creating, Editing, and Viewing Digital Movies and Slide Shows

The shelves of most camcorder owners weigh heavy with tapes filled with vacation footage, sporting events, and mud-bathing children. Windows Vista's built-in Movie Maker helps you turn that pile of tapes into complete, edited movies. Take your TV shows recorded with Vista's Media Center (Chapter 15), and edit out the commercials before sending them to a DVD.

The versatile Movie Maker considers photo slide shows to be movies, as well: Arrange your photos in the order you like, create transitions between each photo, add a musical soundtrack, and burn them to a DVD.



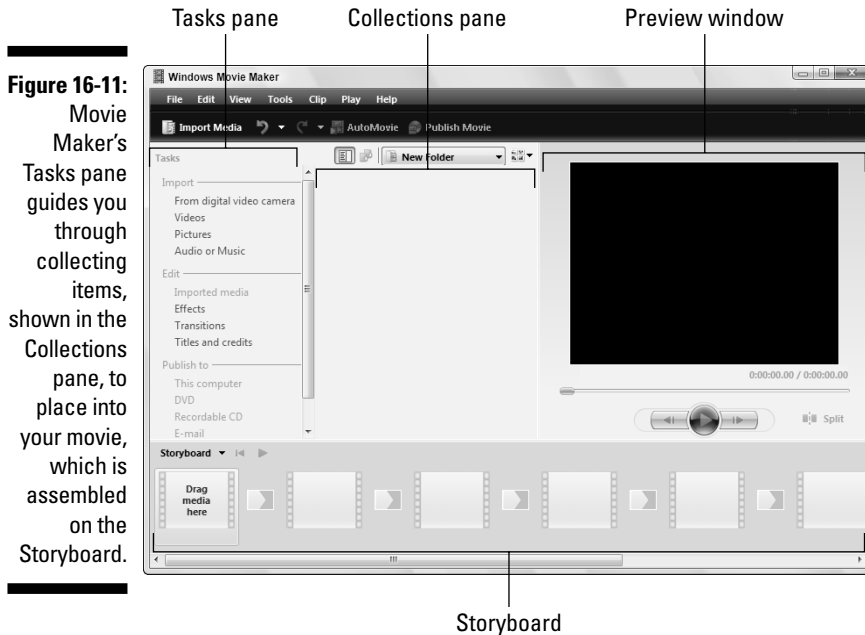
Vista's Movie Maker program works much like Windows XP's Movie Maker, with a few menu wording changes. The biggest improvement is that you can *finally* play back your finished movies using a standard DVD player.

Shown in Figure 16-11, Movie Maker's Tasks pane gently guides you through the three steps of creating a movie: importing your video and/or photos, editing them into a movie, and saving your creation to your PC, a DVD, CD, e-mail, or even back into your digital camera to save the edited project on tape.

Letting Movie Maker's robot build an AutoMovie

If you're not up to Movie Maker's learning curve and simply want a movie — *fast* — then let Movie Maker's AutoMovie function do it automatically. After you've imported your video footage and/or photos, choose AutoMovie from the Tools menu. Select the movie style you're after, be it clean-and-simple cuts and fades, a flashy music video, a vintage "aged" movie, or a sports flick that narrows in on your fast pans and zooms.

Movie Maker takes over from there, robotically assembling a movie from your footage and/or photos. It analyzes your work for interesting pans and zooms, and shaky and dark shots, and turns your highlights into a complete flick. Although not perfect, AutoMovie is a surprisingly quick way to turn that tall stack of videotapes into short, easily accessible movies.



The rest of this section explains the three steps involved in movie making:

1. Import.

Step 1 gathers your raw materials. You'll copy a camcorder's footage onto the hard drive, watching as Movie Maker breaks each camcorder shot into a separate *clip*. Sprinkle in other videos, recorded TV shows, music files, and/or digital photos to piece together your movie.

2. Edit.

This step combines your raw clips, music, and pictures into a structured movie. Drag and drop the best clips onto the Storyboard in an order that tells your movie's story. Edit each clip down to its best moments and add *transitions* between the clips — the way one clip fades into the next. Add a soundtrack, if you want, and opening/closing credits.

3. Publish.

When you finish editing, Movie Maker combines your batch of clips into a complete movie, ready to be played back on your computer, saved to a DVD or CD, or saved back on your camcorder.

Creating movies requires a *lot* of free hard drive space. A 15-minute movie can consume 2.5GB. If Movie Maker complains about space, you have two choices: create smaller videos or upgrade your computer with a second hard drive.



Pressed for time? Movie Maker's AutoMovie mode, described in the sidebar, analyzes your footage and creates a quick, simple movie. AutoMovie works well as a starting point for your own movie or simply for tinkering with Movie Maker's controls.

Step 1: Import video, pictures, and music

If you've already imported footage from a digital camcorder, jump ahead to Step 4 in the steps in this section and begin there. You're several steps ahead of the pack.

But if you're importing video from a digital camcorder, you must work a little harder. Before Movie Maker can edit your digital camcorder's video, you must copy the footage onto your computer through a cable. Most digital camcorders connect to a computer's FireWire or USB 2.0 port. (FireWire ports, also known as IEEE 1394 ports, work the best.)

If your computer lacks a FireWire port, you can add one by plugging an inexpensive card inside your computer. I describe the process in *Upgrading & Fixing PCs For Dummies* (Wiley).

Still using an old *analog* rather than digital camcorder? You can still dump your movies into Windows Vista by plugging a *video capture* card inside your computer.



When importing video through FireWire (IEEE 1394), you need only connect a single cable between the camcorder and FireWire port. With that one cable, Vista grabs the sound and video, *and* controls the camera.

To copy digital video into your computer, follow these steps:

- 1. Open Movie Maker, connect your digital camcorder to your computer, and (if asked) click Import Video.**

If this is your first time plugging in the digital camcorder, Windows Vista will recognize it and offer to import its video. To catch Vista's attention, you may need to switch your camcorder to the setting where it plays back — not records — video. (Some camcorders label that setting as VCR.)

But if you've plugged in your camcorder before, Vista immediately displays Figure 16-12. (Don't see Figure 16-12? Open Movie Maker from the Start menu's All Programs area, click File, and choose Import from Digital Video Camera.)

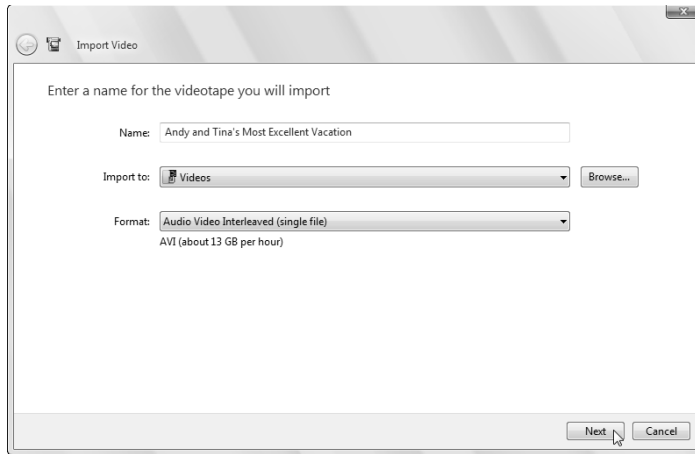


Figure 16-12:
Vista offers
to import
your video.

2. Enter a name for your video, choose the video format, and click Next.

First, name your incoming video after the event you've filmed, be it a vacation, wedding, or visit to a skateboard park.

Next, choose one of the three ways Vista offers to import the video into your Videos folder, shown in Figure 16-12:

- **Audio Video Interleaved (single file):** The best option for people with huge hard drives, it copies the entire video as a single file without any loss in fidelity. Unfortunately, it consumes 13GB for each hour of footage.
- **Windows Media Video (single file):** The option for people with smaller hard drives, it copies and compresses your entire video into one file consuming only 2GB per hour.
- **Windows Media Video (one file per scene):** The option for people with teensy hard drives, this option breaks each shot into a *separate* file. That way, you can clear your hard drive quickly by deleting the bad shots, as well as the file space they consumed.

Although the first two options save your imported video as one file, Vista still keeps track of when each shot begins and ends. When you open your video in Movie Maker, the program displays each shot separately for you to piece together.

3. Choose whether to import the entire videotape or just portions, and click Next; click OK when it's finished importing your tape.

Vista offers two ways to import the video:

- **Import the Entire Videotape to My Computer:** This option imports *all* the video on your tape. This choice works best for people who store each videotaping session on a different tape.

- **Only Parts of the Videotape to My Computer:** Choose this option for quickly importing a few portions of the tape. Vista displays a playback window with on-screen controls. Fast forward to the section you want, click the Start Video Import button, record a snippet, and then click Stop Video Import. Repeat until you've gathered any other shots you want, and then click Finish.



Let your computer work uninterrupted while it's grabbing video, because it needs lots of processing power for smooth captures. Don't work with other programs or browse the Web.

Vista saves your video in your Videos folder, available for viewing by opening the Start menu, clicking your user account's name, and opening the Videos folder.

4. Open Movie Maker, if it's not already open.

To summon Movie Maker, choose All Programs from the Start menu and select Windows Movie Maker.

If Windows Vista recommends that you set your screen resolution to 1024 x 768 or higher, do so now. (I explain how in Chapter 11.) That setting gives you more on-screen elbow room for editing your video.



When opened, Movie Maker shows any clips left over from your last movie editing project. To start afresh, choose New Project from the File menu. Then delete any clips left over in the Collections area by clicking anywhere inside the Collections pane, choosing Select All from the Edit menu, and pressing the Delete key. (That doesn't delete your *real* clips, as items in the Collections area are only copies.)

5. Gather the videos, pictures, music, and sounds you want to include in your video.

Movie Maker's Import task, the first listed on the Tasks pane along the program's left edge, lets you gather all the material you want in your video. (Don't worry about gathering too much, as you don't have to use it all.) The Import task lets you gather these items:

- **From Digital Video Camcorder:** This option launches Vista's Import Video program, which I cover in this section's first three steps.
- **Videos:** Choose this task to import video already stored on your computer.
- **Pictures:** This task lets you add digital photos to your work area, ready to be combined into a slide show or sprinkled into your movies.
- **Audio or Music:** Movie Maker lets you mix several sound sources, layering the camcorder's recorded sounds with your own voice *and* music. In fact, many movies work best if you replace the camcorder's wind-blown soundtrack with music. (I explain how to copy music from audio CDs in Chapter 15.)

At the end of this step, Movie Maker will be stocked with all the video, photos, and music you need to assemble your movie. In the next step, described in the next section, you begin combining them all into a finished work.

Step 2: Edit your movie

After you've imported the video, songs, and photos, you're ready to assemble everything into a movie, weeding out the bad shots and splicing together the good stuff. If you're not picky, you can finish in a few minutes. If you're a Kurosawa fan, you can spend days or weeks here, lining up the shots, adding transitions, and coordinating breaks with a soundtrack that holds everything together.



Don't worry that your edits will harm the original video you've saved onto your computer. You're only working with a copy, and you still have the master copy on your camcorder's tape.



As you work, feel free to play back your work at any time. Just click the Play button on the preview window.

These steps walk you through editing your movie:

1. Familiarize yourself with the videos and pictures in your workspace.

Examine Movie Maker's Collections pane (the middle section, shown in Figure 16-11), which shows your imported video clips, photos, and music files. Each shot appears here as a separate clip, lined up in the order you shot them.

Movie Maker's top-right corner shows a movie playback window. (Double-click any clip to see it play in the window.)

Along the bottom lies the Storyboard — your workspace for linking clips in an order that tells a story, be it a vacation narrative or a science-fiction thriller.

2. Drag and drop videos and or pictures from the Collections pane onto the Storyboard in the order you'd like them played back.

When you spot some clips or photos that would look good spliced together in a certain order, drag and drop them, one after another, onto the Storyboard along the bottom. Place them in the order you'd like them played back, and Movie Maker begins to look like Figure 16-13. (When you drag an item onto the Storyboard, it doesn't disappear from your clip collection; you can reuse the same video or photo as many times as you want.)

If you feel like you're done, finish the job by jumping ahead to the next section, "Step 3: Saving your edited movie or slide show." But if you'd like to trim your clips a bit, add a soundtrack, or add fades between clips, move to the next step.

3. Save your project.

Before you forget, choose Save Project from the File menu. That saves your imported clips and the edits you've placed onto the Storyboard, and gives you something to return to if you mess up in subsequent steps. You can also return to this point at any time by choosing Open Project from Movie Maker's File menu.

Save your project each time you complete something significant or time-consuming.

4. Show the Timeline view to edit your clips and add music, if desired.

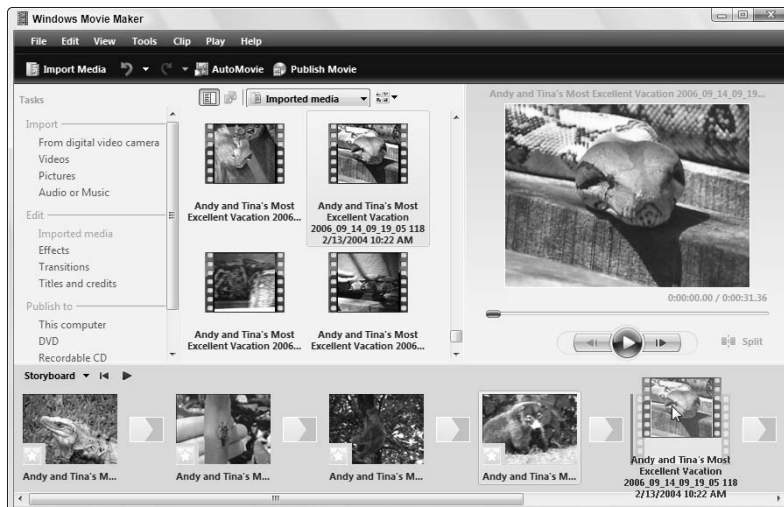
To edit your clips and add music, click the Storyboard button (shown in the margin) and choose Timeline from the drop-down menu. The Storyboard's look changes immediately, as shown in Figure 16-14. Instead of displaying clips as square blocks, Movie Maker displays the clips according to their length. The first clip on the timeline, for example, is much longer than the others and could use some trimming.

To trim the clip, click it and then click the vertical line where the clip starts. (The mouse pointer turns into a two-headed arrow, shown in Figure 16-14.) As you drag the line inward with your left mouse button pressed, keep an eye on the movie preview window; the window updates to show your current position. When you reach the point where the clip should begin, let go of the mouse button.



Storyboard ▾

Figure 16-13:
Drag and drop clips onto the Storyboard in the order in which they should appear in your movie.



Movie Maker quickly trims the clip to its new beginning. Similarly, sliding the line inward at a clip's end will trim the clip's end. Repeat for each clip until you've kept only the good parts.

Made a mistake and trimmed too much? Choose Undo Trim Clip from the Edit menu.



Click the little plus and minus magnifying glass buttons by the Timeline button to toggle between close-up and faraway views of your editing. Close-up views let you edit a clip to start at the crack of a baseball bat, for example.

Figure 16-14: The timeline view shows the length of your clips and lets you slide in their edges to edit them.



To add music, drag a music file onto the timeline's Audio/Music area. Windows mixes it in with the audio captured by your camcorder. (Right-click either the audio track or the music track to change its volume.) Similarly, drag any digital photos onto the timeline to incorporate them into your movie. Adjust the length of movies and photos by dragging in their borders, just as with clips.

If you're satisfied with your work, jump to the next section, "Step 3: Saving your edited movie or slide show." But if you're ready for even more fine-tuning, move to the next step.

5. Click the Timeline button, switch back to Storyboard mode, and add transitions.

Switch back to Storyboard mode by clicking the Timeline button and choosing Storyboard from the drop-down menu.

Transitions are how clips join together. One clip can slowly fade into another, for example. Or, an incoming clip can push an earlier clip off the side of the screen.

To add transitions, click Transitions in the Edit area of the Tasks pane. Double-click any transitions, and the preview window shows how they work. When you find one you like, drag and drop it between two adjoining clips. Click the Play button to watch the transition in the preview window, and, if you don't like it, replace the transition with a different one. (To remove a bothersome transition, right-click it and choose Remove.)

When you're satisfied with your clips, transitions, and sounds, tell Movie Maker to assemble your movie, described in the next section, "Saving your edited movie or slide show."

Movie Maker offers a huge bag of tricks. Click Titles and Credits in the Tasks pane's Edit section, for example, to type an opening title and the ending credits where you're the producer, director, cinematographer, and key grip.



Although Movie Maker provides dozens of fun transitions, they're better for slide shows than movies. Wild transitions look like somebody has been playing with effects rather than making a movie. Think about your favorite movies — how many transitions did they use? Transitions work best for slide shows.

Step 3: Save your edited movie or slide show



When you've finished editing your clips into a movie, click the Publish Movie button (shown in the margin) from Movie Maker's toolbar. The program offers to save your work as a complete movie in any of several places:

- ✓ **This Computer:** This option creates a small file suitable for playback on your PC.
- ✓ **DVD:** Click here to open Vista's DVD Maker program and burn your movie to DVD. I cover this option in this chapter's next section.
- ✓ **Recordable CD:** This option creates a small file that fits onto a CD for playback on other PCs.
- ✓ **E-mail:** It's postage-stamp sized, but your edited movie can be e-mailed to friends.
- ✓ **Digital Video Camera:** Designed for people without CDs or DVDs, this option lets you copy the edited movie back onto a blank tape in your digital camera. For large movies that won't fit onto a DVD, this is your best backup option.

After you choose an option and click Next, Windows creates your movie, choosing the appropriate file size and quality for the destination you choose. Keep these things in mind when saving your finished movie:

- ✓ Publishing movies and slide shows can take a *long* time. Windows needs to arrange all your clips, create the transitions and soundtracks, and compress everything into a single file.
- ✓ Movies saved back onto your digital camcorder receive the best size and quality because the camcorder can record the huge file on tape.
- ✓ Movies saved for e-mail and a Web site have the lowest quality; otherwise, they'd take too long for most people to download.
- ✓ If your movies are short, Windows can save a high-quality copy to a CD for playback on other PCs. But most movies won't fit onto a CD.

Saving a Movie or Slide Show to a DVD with Windows DVD Maker

Windows DVD Maker does something no earlier version of Windows could do: Create DVDs that play back on a DVD player. Before Vista, people had to buy a DVD-burning program from another company or hope that their new computer came with one pre-installed.

Note: If you want to copy or back up files to a blank DVD, don't use DVD Maker. Instead, copy the files to the DVD the same way you copy files to a CD or any folder, a process I cover in Chapter 4.

Follow these steps to create a DVD movie or slide show for playing back on a DVD player and watching on TV:

1. Load Windows DVD Maker, if necessary.

Windows Movie Maker loads Windows DVD Maker automatically, leaving you at Step 3. But if you're creating a slide show or burning an already completed video, load Windows DVD Maker yourself by choosing DVD Maker from the Start menu's All Programs area.

2. Click Add Items, add your photos or videos, and click Next.

Click the Add Items button and choose the movie file or photos you'd like to add to your DVD. If you're creating a slide show, here's your chance to arrange the photos' display order by dragging and dropping them in place.

3. Customize the opening menu, if desired.

Spend some time here to craft your DVD's *opening menu* — the screen you watch until the last person's settled around the TV set and you can push Play. DVD Maker offers these menu options:

- **Menu Text:** Click this button to choose the title of your movie or slide show, as well as what options should appear on the menu. Or, stick with the default options found on every DVD: Play and Scenes.
- **Customize Menu:** Here, you can change the opening menu's font, choose a video to repeat in the background, choose music to play, and even change the shape of the *scenes menu* — that screen where you can jump quickly to different parts of your movie. Click the Preview button to make sure that it's just what you want.
- **Slide Show:** Meant specifically for slide shows, this option lets you choose the background music, the amount of time the photos should display, and their transitions.
- **Menu Styles:** The drop-down menu here lets you dump Movie Maker's stock background for these spruced up graphics. (I like Video Wall for movies and Photographs for slide shows.)

4. Click Burn.

Then walk away from your computer for a few hours. DVD Maker's a certified slowpoke.

When DVD Maker finishes, it spits out a DVD, ready for you to label with a magic marker and pop into your DVD player to watch on TV.

Creating and saving a slide show to DVD

Vista offers you two ways to create slide shows on a DVD, both with their pros and cons:

- ✓ **Movie Maker:** Slide shows are basically movies, so Windows Movie Maker handles them very well. The program's detailed controls take extra time and effort to master, however. But if you like hands-on projects, create a slide show by following the steps in the "Creating, Editing, and Viewing Digital Movies and Slide Shows" section.
- ✓ **DVD Maker:** When you're looking for a fast and easy slide show, Windows DVD Maker may be your ticket: Add transitions, choose

background music, and burn the result to a DVD. To create a quick slide show in DVD Maker, follow the steps in the "Saving a Movie or Slide Show to a DVD with Windows DVD Maker" section.

The biggest difference between the two programs breaks down to the transitions: the way one picture flows into another. Movie Maker allows for elaborately crafted transitions, while DVD Maker uses the same transition between every photo. (DVD Maker's Random transition offers the only variety.)

Part VI

Help!

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



"We should cast a circle, invoke the elements, and direct the energy. If that doesn't work, we'll read the manual."

In this part . . .

Windows Vista can do hundreds of tasks in dozens of ways, which means that several thousand things can fail at any given time.

Some problems are easy to fix — if you know how to fix them, that is. For example, one misplaced click on the desktop makes all your icons suddenly vanish. Yet, one more click in the right place puts them all back.

Other problems are far more complex, requiring teams of computer surgeons to diagnose, remedy, and bill accordingly.

This part of the book helps you separate the big problems from the little ones. You'll know whether you can fix a mistake yourself with a few clicks and a kick. You also discover how to solve one of the biggest computing problems of all: How to copy your old PC's information to your *new* PC.

Chapter 17

The Case of the Broken Window

In This Chapter

- ▶ Turning off Vista's permission screens
 - ▶ Reviving deleted files and folders and their older versions
 - ▶ Retrieving a forgotten password
 - ▶ Repairing a mouse
 - ▶ Fixing vanishing icons and files, stuck menus, and frozen screens
-

Sometimes you just have a sense that something's wrong. The computer makes quiet grumbling noises, or Windows Vista starts running more slowly than Congress. Other times, something's obviously gone haywire. Programs freeze, menus keep shooting at you, or Windows Vista greets you with a cheery error message when you turn on your computer.

Many of the biggest-looking problems are solved by the smallest-looking solutions. This chapter may be able to point you to the right one.

Vista Keeps Asking Me for Permission!



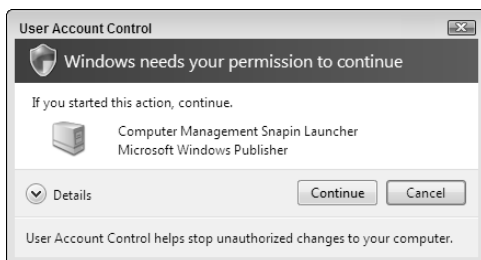
When it came to security, Windows XP was fairly easy to figure out. If you owned an Administrator account — and most people did — Windows XP mostly stayed out of your face. Owners of the less powerful Limited and Guest accounts, however, frequently faced screens telling them that their actions were restricted to Administrator accounts.

But with Vista, even Administrator accounts get the nag screens, and often for the most innocuous actions. Vista's more secure than Windows XP, so you'll constantly brush up against Vista's barbed wire fence. As you work with your PC, Vista pokes you with a message like the one shown in Figure 17-1.

Standard account holders see a slightly different message that commands them to fetch an Administrator account holder to type in a password.

Figure 17-1:

Although designed to protect you, Vista's permission screens work even better at annoying you.



Of course, with screens like this one popping up constantly, most people will simply ignore them and click Continue — even if that means they’ve just allowed a piece of spyware to latch onto their PC.

When Vista sends you a permission screen, ask yourself this question:

Is Vista asking permission for something *I* did? If your answer is yes, then click Continue to give Vista permission to carry out your command. But if Vista sends you a permission screen out of the blue, when you haven’t done anything, click Cancel. That keeps the nasties from invading your PC.

If you don’t have time for this bothersome security layer and your PC’s well protected with a firewall and an up-to-date antivirus program, you can find out how to turn off Vista’s User Account Permissions by reading Chapter 10.

Restoring Calm with System Restore

When your computer is a disaster, wouldn’t you love to go back in time to when Windows worked *right*? Just as with Windows XP, Windows Vista’s built-in time-traveling program, System Restore, lets you turn back the clock with a few clicks.

It works like this: Every day or so, Windows takes a snapshot, known as a *restore point*, of Windows’ most important settings and saves them by date. When your computer begins acting up, tell System Restore to return to a restore point created when everything worked fine.



System Restore won’t erase any of your files or e-mail, but programs installed after a restore point’s date may need to be reinstalled. System Restore is also reversible; you can undo your last restore point or try a different one.

To send your computer back to a restore point, when it was working much better, follow these steps:

1. Save any open files, close any loaded programs, load System Restore, and click Next.

Choose Start, click All Programs, and begin weaving your way through the menus: Choose Accessories, select System Tools, and click System Restore. Click Next to move past the opening screen.

2. Choose a Restore Point and click Next.

Windows XP made you guess which Restore Point to apply. Vista assumes that you're here because something happened recently, so it highlights the most recently created Restore Point for you to choose.

If you're running these steps a second time, because Vista's recommended restore point didn't supply the magic fix, choose a Different Restore Point and click Next.

3. Make *sure* that you've saved any open files and then click Finish.

Your computer grumbles a bit and then restarts, using those earlier settings that (hopefully) worked fine.

If your system is *already* working fine, feel free to create your own restore point: In Step 1, click the words, Open System Protection. When the System Properties window appears, click the Create button along the window's bottom.

Removing infected restore points

If your computer has a virus, erase all your restore points before disinfecting your computer with an antivirus program. Here's what to do:

- 1. Click Start, right-click Computer, and choose Properties.**
- 2. Choose System Protection from the task pane along the left.**
- 3. Remove the check mark from any checked boxes in the Automatic Restore Points section.**
- 4. Click Turn System Restore Off when Vista warns you that you're about to delete your restore points.**
- 5. Click OK to close the window and then restart your computer.**
- 6. After updating your antivirus program with the latest virus definitions, scan and disinfect your entire computer.**
- 7. When the computer is disinfecting, repeat Steps 1 through 3, except that in Step 3, place a check mark in the box marked Local Disk (C:) (System), and click OK.**

When you're through, create a new restore point named after the virus you just disinfecting. That leaves you with a safe restore point for future use.

Name the restore point something descriptive, such as Before Letting the Babysitter Use the PC. (That way, you know which restore point to use if things go awry.)

These tips help wring the most fix-it power from System Restore:



- ✓ Before installing a program or any new computer toys, load System Restore and create a restore point in case the installation is a disaster. Create a restore point *after* successfully installing something, too. Returning to that restore point will keep your successful installation intact. (I describe how to create restore points in Chapter 12.)



- ✓ You can save quite a few restore points, depending on your hard drive's size. You'll likely have room for a dozen or more. Windows Vista deletes the oldest restore points to make room for the newer ones, so make your own Restore Points frequently.



- ✓ If you restore your computer to a time *before* you installed some new hardware or software, those items may not work correctly. If they're not working correctly, reinstall them. Also, as described in the "Removing infected restore points" sidebar, be sure to erase your existing restore points if your computer contracted a virus. Using an infected restore point can reinfect your computer.

Reviving Messed Up or Deleted Files

Everybody who's worked on a computer knows the agony of seeing hours of work go down the drain. You'll mistakenly delete a file by accident, for example, or change one for the better — only to realize that you've messed it up rather than improved it.

System Restore won't help here, as it memorizes your PC's settings, not your files. But Vista offers ways to not only retrieve deleted files but to dig up their earlier versions, the two tasks described in this section.

Undeleting accidentally deleted files



Vista doesn't really delete files, even if you tell it to delete them. Instead, Vista slips deleted files into your Recycle Bin (shown in the margin), which lives on your desktop. Open the Recycle Bin, and you'll find every file you've

deleted in the past few weeks. Click the file you want back and click the Restore This Item button from the Recycle Bin's menu bar. The Recycle Bin places the file back in the place where you deleted it.

I cover the Recycle Bin in Chapter 2.

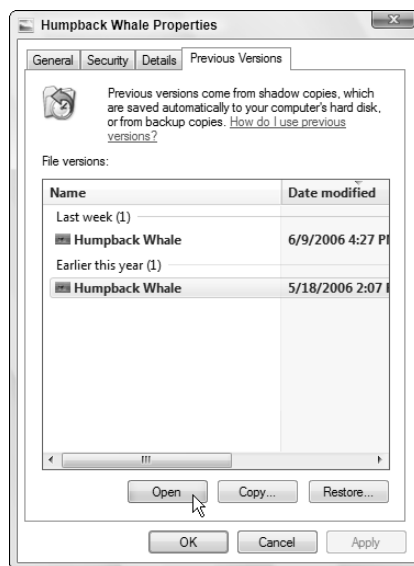
Retrieving previous versions of files and folders

Ever changed a file and saved it, only to realize that the original was much better? Ever wanted to start from scratch from a document you began changing last week? A new feature in Vista lets you dig up documents you'd long ago given up for lost.

Vista now inventories your PC's nether reaches, letting you send down a grappling hook and retrieve an old version of a file you'd long ago given up as lost.

To find and retrieve an older version of an existing file, right-click the troublesome file, and choose Restore Previous Version. In the window that appears, Vista lists all the previous versions available for that particular file, as shown in Figure 17-2.

Figure 17-2: Vista tracks previous versions of your files, letting you return to older versions in case of a mishap.



Vista lists all the previous versions available, leading to the big question: Which version is the one you want? To take a quick peek at a previous version, click its name and click Open. Vista opens the file, letting you see whether you've struck paydirt.

If you're positive that the older version is better than your current version, click the Restore button. Vista warns you that restoring the old file will delete your existing file; when you approve the deletion, Vista puts the restored version in its place.



If you're not quite sure whether the older version is better, a safer alternative is to click the Copy button, instead. Vista lets you copy the previous version to a different folder, letting you manually compare the old and new files before deciding which one to save.

Retrieving a Forgotten Password

When Vista won't accept your password at the log-on screen, you're not always locked out of your own computer. Check all these things before letting loose with a scream:

- ✔ **Check your Caps Lock key.** Vista's passwords are *case-sensitive*, meaning that Vista considers "OpenSesame" and "opensesame" to be different passwords. If your keyboard's Caps Lock light is on, then press your Caps Lock key to turn off Caps Lock. Then try entering your password again.
- ✔ **Use your Password Reset Disk.** I explain how to create a Password Reset Disk in Chapter 13. When you've forgotten your password, insert that disk to use as a key. Windows Vista lets you back into your account, where you can promptly create an easier-to-remember password. (Create a Password Reset Disk now if you haven't yet.)
- ✔ **Let another user reset your password.** Anybody with an Administrator account on your PC can reset your password. Have that person choose Control Panel from the Start menu, choose User Accounts and Family Safety, and click User Accounts. There, they can choose Manage Another Account, click your account name, and choose Remove Password, letting you log in.

If none of these options work, then you're in sad shape, unfortunately. Compare the value of your password-protected data against the cost of hiring a password recovery specialist. You'll find one by searching for the words **recover password** on Google (www.google.com) or another search engine.

My Folder (Or Desktop) Doesn't Show All My Files!

When you open a folder — or even look at your desktop — you expect to see everything it contains. But when something's missing or there's nothing inside at all, check these things before panicking:

- ✓ **Check the Search box.** Whenever you type something into a folder's Search box — that little box in the folder's top-right corner — Vista begins looking for it by hiding everything that doesn't match your search. If a folder isn't showing everything it should, delete any words you see in the Search box.
- ✓ **Make sure that the desktop isn't hiding everything.** Vista tries to “clean up” the look of your PC. And since some people like an empty desktop, Vista's happy to oblige. However, it doesn't put your toys back into the closets where they belong. It just hides everything from view. To make sure that your desktop isn't hiding things, right-click an empty part of your desktop, choose View, and place a check mark by the words Show Desktop Icons.

If everything's really gone, check out the previous versions of that folder, described in this chapter's “Retrieving previous versions of files and folders” section. Vista not only tracks previous versions of files, it keeps track of a folder's past life, as well.

My Mouse Doesn't Work Right

Sometimes, the mouse doesn't work at all; other times, the mouse pointer hops across the screen like a flea. Here are a few things to look for:



- ✓ If no mouse arrow is on the screen after you start Windows, make sure that the mouse's tail is plugged snugly into the computer's USB port. (If you have an older mouse with a round PS/2 port instead of a rectangular USB port, you'll need to restart your PC to bring the mouse back to life.)
- ✓ To restart your PC when the mouse doesn't work, hold down the Ctrl, Alt, and Del buttons simultaneously. Press Tab until the tiny arrow next to the red button is surrounded by the lines and then press Enter to reveal the Restart menu. Press your up arrow to choose Restart and then press Enter to restart your PC.

- ✔ If the mouse arrow is on-screen but won't move, Windows may be mistaking your brand of mouse for a different brand. You can make sure that Windows Vista recognizes the correct type of mouse by following the steps on adding new hardware in Chapter 11. If you own a wireless mouse (wireless mice don't have a cord), the mouse may need new batteries.
- ✔ A mouse pointer can jump around on-screen when the mouse's innards become dirty. Follow the cleaning instructions I give in Chapter 12.
- ✔ If the mouse was working fine and now the buttons seem to be reversed, you've probably changed the right- or left-handed button configuration setting in the Control Panel. Open the Control Panel's Mouse settings area and make sure that the configuration is set up to match your needs. (I cover this in Chapter 11.)

My Double-Clicks Are Now Single Clicks!

In an effort to make things easier, Windows Vista lets people choose whether a single click or a double-click should open a file or folder.

My program is frozen!

Eventually one of your programs will freeze up solid, leaving no way to reach its normal Close command. These three steps will extricate the frozen program from your computer's memory (and the screen, as well):

1. Hold down the Ctrl, Alt, and Delete keys simultaneously.

Known as the "three finger salute," this combination always catches Vista's attention, even when it's sailing o'er rough seas. In fact, if Vista doesn't respond, hold in your PC's power button to turn off your PC. After a few seconds, turn it back on to see whether Vista's in a better mood.

2. Choose Start Task Manager.

Other options let you lock your PC (a security measure used when heading to the water cooler), switch users (letting somebody else log on), log off, and change a password.

3. Click the Applications tab, if necessary, and then click the frozen program's name.

4. Click the End Task button, and Windows Vista whisks away the frozen program.

If your computer seems a bit groggy afterward, play it safe by restarting your computer from the Start menu.

But if you're not satisfied with the click method Windows Vista uses, here's how to change it:

1. **Open any folder — the Start menu's Documents folder will do.**
2. **Click the Organize button and choose Folder and Search Options.**
3. **Choose your click preference in the Click Items As Follows section.**
4. **Click OK to save your preferences.**



Don't like to follow steps? Just click the Restore Defaults button in Folder and Search Options, and Windows brings back double-clicking and other standard Windows Vista folder behaviors.

Making Older Programs Run under Windows Vista

Many programmers design their software to run on a specific version of Windows. When a new Windows version appears a few years later, some programs feel threatened by their new environment and refuse to work.

If an older game or other program refuses to run under Windows Vista, there's still hope because of Windows Vista's secret *Compatibility mode*. This mode tricks programs into thinking that they're running under their favorite older version of Windows, letting them run in comfort.

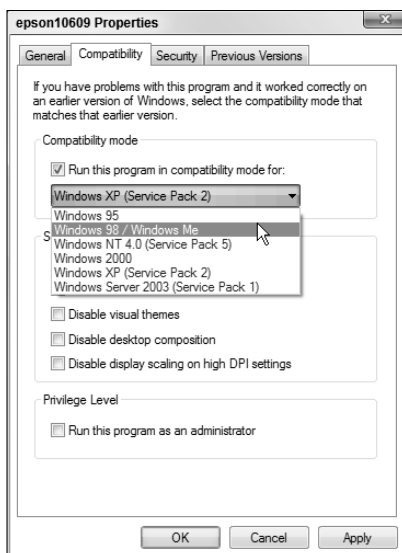
If your old program has problems with Windows Vista, follow these steps:

1. **Right-click the program's icon and choose Properties.**
2. **When the Properties dialog box appears, click the Compatibility tab.**
3. **Select the program's desired Windows version from the Compatibility mode's drop-down menu, as shown in Figure 17-3.**

Check your program's box or look at its manual to see what version of Windows it expects.

4. **Click OK and then try running your program again to see whether it's working better.**

Figure 17-3:
Compatibility mode lets you trick programs into thinking they're running on older Windows versions.



I Can't Find the Menus!

To keep things alarming, Vista hid the menus that users have come to depend on for the last decade. To make them reappear, press the Alt key. To make Vista glue them back atop every window where they belong, click the Organize button, choose Folder and Search Options, click the View tab, and click the Always Show Menus option. Click OK to save your changes.

My Computer Is Frozen Up Solid

Every once in a while, Windows just drops the ball and wanders off somewhere to sit under a tree. You're left looking at a computer that just looks back. None of the computer's lights blink. Panicked clicks don't do anything. Pressing every key on the keyboard doesn't do anything, or worse yet, the computer starts to beep at every key press.

When nothing on-screen moves (except sometimes the mouse pointer), the computer is frozen up solid. Try the following approaches, in the following order, to correct the problem:

- ✓ **Approach 1:** Press Esc twice.

This action rarely works but give it a shot anyway.

- ✓ **Approach 2:** Press Ctrl, Alt, and Delete simultaneously and choose Start Task Manager.

If you're lucky, the Task Manager appears with the message that you discovered an unresponsive application. The Task Manager lists the names of currently running programs, including the one that's not responding. Click the name of the program on the Application tab that's causing the mess and then click the End Task button. You lose any unsaved work in that program, of course, but you should be used to that. (If you somehow stumbled onto the Ctrl+Alt+Delete combination by accident, press Esc to quit Task Manager and return to Windows.)



If that still doesn't do the trick, press Ctrl+Alt+Delete again and look for the little red button in the bottom-right corner of the screen. Click the little arrow next to that button's circle, shown in the margin. Choose Shut Down from the menu that pops up. Your computer should shut down and restart, hopefully returning in a better mood.

- ✓ **Approach 3:** If the preceding approaches don't work, push the computer's reset button. If the Turn Off Computer box appears, choose Restart.
- ✓ **Approach 4:** If not even the reset button works (and some computers don't even have reset buttons anymore), turn the computer off by pushing its power button. (If that merely brings up the Turn Off the Computer menu, choose Restart, and your computer should restart.)
- ✓ **Approach 5:** If you hold in the computer's off button long enough (usually about 4 to 5 seconds), it will eventually stop resisting and turn off.

The Printer Isn't Working Right

If the printer isn't working right, start with the simplest solution first: Make sure that it's plugged into the wall and turned on. Surprisingly, this step fixes about half the problems with printers. Next, make sure that the printer cable is snugly nestled in the ports on both the printer and the computer. Then check to make sure that it has enough paper and that the paper isn't jammed in the mechanism.

Then try printing from different programs, such as WordPad and Notepad, to see whether the problem is with the printer, Windows Vista, or a particular Windows program. These tests help pinpoint the culprit.



For a quick test of a printer, click the Start button, choose the Control Panel, and select Printers from the Hardware and Sound category. Right-click your printer's icon, choose Properties, and click the Print Test Page button. If your printer sends you a nicely printed page, the problem is probably with the software, not the printer or Windows Vista.

You can find more information about printing, including troubleshooting information, in Chapter 7.

Chapter 18

Strange Messages: What You Did Does Not Compute

In This Chapter

- ▶ Understanding taskbar messages
 - ▶ Deciphering messages in Internet Explorer
 - ▶ Responding to messages on the desktop
-

Most error messages in life are fairly easy to understand. A VCR's flashing clock means that you haven't set its clock yet. A car's beeping tone means that you've left your keys in the ignition. A spouse's stern glance means that you've forgotten something important.

But Windows Vista's error messages may have been written by a Senate subcommittee, if only they weren't so brief. The error messages rarely describe what you did to cause the event and, even worse, what to do about it.

In this chapter, I've collected some of Windows Vista's most common messages. Match up an error message's subject or picture with the ones here and then read your appropriate response and the chapter covering that particular problem.

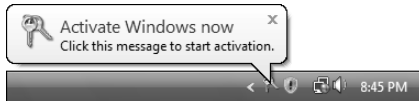
Activate Windows Now

Meaning: Figure 18-1 means if you don't activate Windows, Windows will stop working in a few days.

Probable cause: Microsoft's copy-protection scheme requires every person to activate his or her Vista copy within a few weeks after installing or upgrading to Vista. Once activated, your copy of Vista is linked to your particular PC so that you can't install it onto another computer, including a laptop.

Solutions: Click the message and let Windows connect to the Internet to activate itself. No Internet connection? Then dial the activation phone number and talk to the Microsoft people personally. **Note:** If you never see this message, then your copy of Windows has already been activated by the PC's manufacturer. Don't worry about it.

Figure 18-1:
Windows
needs to be
activated.



Check Your Computer Security

Meaning: Figure 18-2 appears when your PC has security problems.

Probable cause: Your antivirus program isn't working. The message can also appear if Windows Firewall isn't turned on, Windows Defender isn't running, Windows Update isn't working, Internet Explorer's security settings are too low, or User Account Control (the perpetrator of all those permission screens) isn't turned on.



Solutions: Click the balloon to see the exact problem. If the balloon disappears before you have a chance to click it, click the little red shield icon (shown in the margin) in the taskbar. Windows points out the problem and offers a solution, which I cover in Chapter 10.

Figure 18-2:
A security
problem
with your PC
needs
attention.



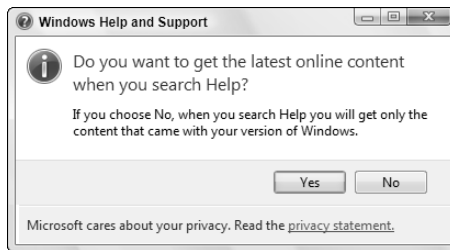
Do You Want to Get the Latest Online Content When You Search Help?

Meaning: Figure 18-3 means Vista's asking permission to connect with the Internet and search for Microsoft's databases for more helpful information.

Probable cause: Everybody sees this message when first searching for help in Vista's Help program, which I cover in Chapter 20. Click Yes, as Microsoft's databases contain much more up-to-date information than Vista's built-in Help program. Clicking No keeps the Help program off the Internet, but also freezes its content to late 2006, when Microsoft finalized the Help program.

Solutions: To make sure that Vista's Help program checks in with the Internet for up-to-date help, open Help and Support from the Start menu, click the Options menu, and choose Settings. Then turn on the check box called Include Windows Online Help and Support When You Search for Help.

Figure 18-3:
Do you want
Vista to
connect to
Microsoft's
Web site for
answers?



Do You Want to Install (Or Run) This File?

Meaning: Are you sure that this software is free from viruses, spyware, and other harmful things?

Probable cause: You've downloaded a file from the Internet, and now you're trying to run or install it.

Solutions: If you're sure the file is safe, click Install in Figure 18-4. But if this message appears unexpectedly, or you think it may not be safe, click Cancel. To be on the safe side, scan everything you download with an antivirus program. I cover safe computing in Chapter 10.

Figure 18-4:
Do you think
this
software is
safe?



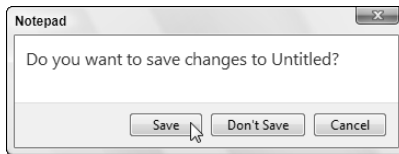
Do You Want to Save Changes . . .

Meaning: Figure 18-5 means you haven't saved your work in the program you're trying to close.

Probable cause: You're trying to close an application, log off, or restart your PC before telling a program to save the work you've accomplished.

Solutions: Look in the window's title bar for the program's name — Paint, in this case. Find that program on your desktop (or click its name on the taskbar to bring it to the forefront). Then save your work (unless you don't want to save changes) by choosing Save from the File menu or clicking the program's Save icon. I cover saving files in Chapter 5.

Figure 18-5:
Do you want
to save your
work?



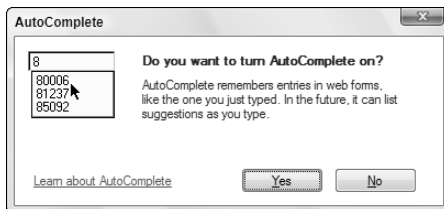
Do You Want to Turn AutoComplete On?

Meaning: Internet Explorer's AutoComplete feature, shown in Figure 18-6, guesses what you're about to type and tries to fill it in for you.

Probable cause: Every Windows user is eventually asked whether to turn on AutoComplete or leave it turned off.

Solutions: AutoComplete handily fills in some online forms with words you've used previously. Although a timesaver, AutoComplete poses a potential security problem for some people: It lets others know what words you've previously typed into forms. To see or change its settings, open Internet Explorer, click Tools, choose Internet Options, and click the Content tab.

Figure 18-6:
Auto-
Complete
helps by
filling in
words as
you begin to
type them.



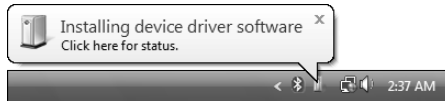
Installing Device Driver Software

Meaning: Windows recognizes a newly installed computer part and is trying to install it automatically.

Probable cause: Figure 18-7 usually appears after you plug something new into your computer's USB port.

Solutions: Relax. Windows knows what's going on and will take charge. If Windows can't find a driver, however, you need to find one on your own. I describe that tiresome process in Chapter 12.

Figure 18-7: Windows finds a new gadget.



The Publisher Could Not Be Verified

Meaning: Windows can't verify that the software you're about to install was created by its claimed publisher.

Probable cause: Microsoft's *digital signature* program works like a name tag. Windows compares the digital signatures of both the software and its claimed publisher. If they match, everything's fine. If they *don't* match, beware: The software may be trying to trick you. But most often, you'll see messages like the one shown in Figure 18-8 because the publisher simply ignored Microsoft's digital signature system, leaving Windows in the dark.

Figure 18-8: Windows doesn't recognize the software publisher.



Solutions: Many small companies skip the digital signature process because of Microsoft's testing delays or fees, leading to these messages. If this message pops up from a reputable company, you're probably still safe. But if you see it when trying to run software from a large well-known software company, don't run the software. It's probably trying to trick you.

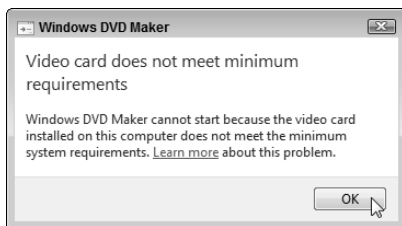
Video Card Does Not Meet Minimum Requirements

Meaning: Figure 18-9 appears when your PC isn't powerful enough to display one of Vista's fancy graphics modes. Vista either gives up completely or switches to a lower quality display. Similar messages include This Program Can't Run Because It Requires a Newer Video Card or One that's Compatible with Direct3D, and Would You Like to Disable Desktop Composition?

Probable cause: The graphics circuitry inside your laptop or PC isn't powerful enough to display Vista's graphics-intensive displays.

Solutions: You can't do much, if anything, about a laptop. But if you upgrade your PC with a new graphics card costing between \$100 and \$200, you can avoid the messages, speed up your display, and see Vista's special effects.

Figure 18-9:
Your PC isn't powerful enough to display these graphics.



Windows Cannot Open This File

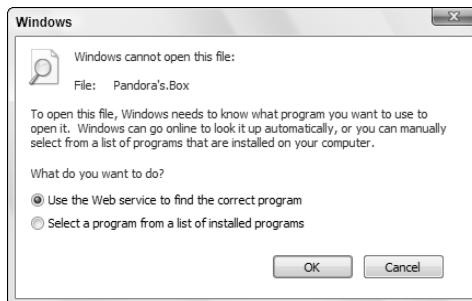
Meaning: Figure 18-10 appears when Windows doesn't know which program created the file that you double-clicked.

Probable cause: Windows Vista usually sticks secret hidden codes, known as *file extensions*, onto the ends of filenames. When you double-click a Notepad text file, for example, Windows Vista spots the file's secret, hidden file extension and uses Notepad to open the file. But if Windows doesn't recognize the secret code letters, it complains with this error message.

Solutions: If you know what program created the mysterious file, choose Select a Program from a List of Installed Programs and choose that program from Vista's list. Then select the check box for Always Use the Selected Program to Open This Kind of File.

If you're stumped, however, choose Use the Web Service to Find the Correct Program. Windows examines the file, consults with the Internet, and offers suggestions and links for downloading the right program for the job. (I cover this problem in Chapter 5.)

Figure 18-10:
Windows doesn't know what program should open this file.



Windows Needs Your Permission to Continue

Meaning: Figure 18-11 appears when you're trying to do something that's only available to people with Administrator accounts.

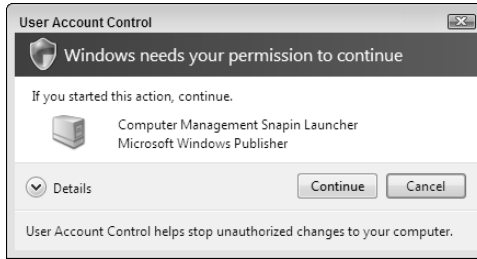
Similar messages include You Need to Provide Administrator Credentials, Windows Needs Your Permission to Continue, You Don't Currently Have Permission, A Program Needs Your Permission to Use This Program.

Probable cause: The action you're trying to take may potentially damage your files or your PC or lessen your PC's security. That's not to say it *will*, but it could if used in the wrong way. The action's more like picking up a crowbar than pushing the Explode button.

Solutions: If you're sure the action is something you want to do, click Continue (if that button's available) to move on. If the message requests a password, summon an Administrator account holder to walk over to your PC and type his or her password, as I describe in Chapter 10.

Figure 18-11:

You need an Administrator account to open this program.



You Don't Currently Have Permission to Access This Folder

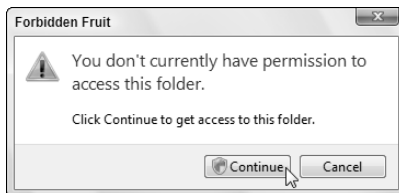
Meaning: Figure 18-12 means Vista won't let you peek inside the folder you're trying to open. (The folder's name appears in the message's title bar.)

Probable cause: The computer's owner hasn't given you permission.

Solutions: Only a person with an Administrator account — usually the computer's owner — can grant permission to open certain folders, so you need to track down that person. (If you're the administrator, you may grant access to others by copying or moving the folder or its contents into the Public folder, described in Chapter 14.)

Figure 18-12:

Find somebody with an Administrator account to open the folder or file.



Chapter 19

Moving from an Old Computer to a New One

In This Chapter

- ▶ Copying your old PC's files and settings into your new PC
 - ▶ Using Windows Easy Transfer
 - ▶ Transferring files through a cable, network, drive, CDs, or DVDs
 - ▶ Getting rid of your old computer
-

When you bring home an exciting new Vista computer, it lacks the most important thing of all: your *old* computer's files. How do you copy everything from that drab old Windows XP PC to that exciting new Windows Vista PC? How do you even *find* everything you want to move? To solve the problem, Microsoft stocked Vista with a virtual moving van called Windows Easy Transfer.

Windows Easy Transfer grabs not only your old computer's data but also settings from many of your programs: your favorite Web sites, for example, and your e-mail from Outlook Express. It even grabs your e-mail settings, to save you the chore of setting up your new mail program.

Not everybody needs Windows Easy Transfer. If you're upgrading your Windows XP PC to Vista, for example, Vista automatically transfers your files and settings during Vista's installation process. You won't need the transfer program, nor this chapter.

But when you need to copy information from one PC to another, this chapter introduces the program and guides you through your mission.

Note: Windows Easy Transfer doesn't work with older Windows versions like Windows Me or Windows 98.

Preparing to Move into Your New PC

Like any other moving day, the event's success depends on your preparation. Instead of rummaging for boxes and duct tape, you must do these two things to prepare your PCs for Windows Easy Transfer:

- ✓ Choose the method for transferring the information between the PCs
- ✓ Install your *old* PC's programs onto your *new* PC

The next two sections explain each topic in more detail.

Choosing how to transfer your old information

PCs are very good at copying things, much to the concern of the entertainment industry. They're so good, in fact, that they offer a zillion different ways to copy the same thing.

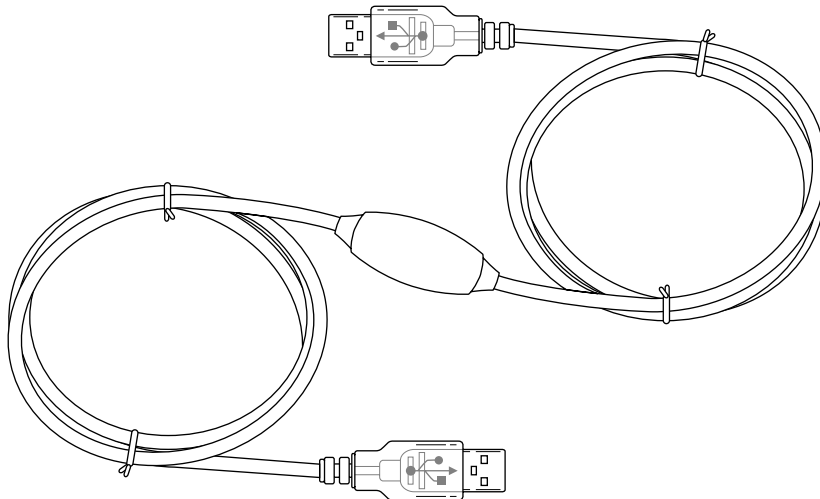
For example, Windows Easy Transfer offers *four* different ways to copy your old PC's information into your new PC. Each method works at a different speed and level of difficulty. You must choose one of these four:

- ✓ **Windows Easy Transfer Cable:** Every PC has a USB port, so a Windows Easy Transfer cable is the fastest and simplest solution. Often sold in stores as an Easy Link, Direct Link, USB Bridge, or simply Linking USB cable, this special cable looks like a regular USB cable that's swallowed a mouse: The cable bulges in the middle, as shown in Figure 19-1. These cables cost less than \$30 at most electronics stores or online.
- ✓ **Network:** Vista can suck your old PC's information through a network, if you've already created one between your two PCs. Creating a network requires *much* more work than plugging in an Easy Transfer cable, but I tackle the job in Chapter 14.
- ✓ **DVDs or CDs:** If both PCs have CD or DVD burners, you can transfer information by burning boatloads of discs. But be prepared for a *long* evening's work feeding discs to your PCs. Unless you're transferring a handful of files, this method is your slowest and most labor-intensive option.
- ✓ **Portable hard drive:** Costing between \$100 and \$200, a portable hard drive works well for transferring information from one PC to another. Most portable drives plug into both a wall outlet and your PC's USB port. (An empty iPod will work as a portable hard drive, in a pinch, if you know how to store files on it.)



When your PCs live more than a cable's reach apart, a portable hard drive is your best transfer option. Choose one that's almost as large as the hard drive inside your PC. After transferring the files, put the hard drive to work backing up your files each night, an extremely prudent task I describe in Chapter 12.

Figure 19-1:
A Windows
Easy
Transfer
USB cable
bulges in
the middle.



Installing your old PC's programs onto your new PC

Windows Vista can transfer your PC's *data* — your e-mail, digital photos, letters, and other things you've created — as well as your programs' *settings*: your e-mail account settings, for example, and your Web browser's list of favorite Web sites.

But Vista can't copy the *programs* themselves. That's right: All of your old PC's programs must be reinstalled onto your new PC. And you need to install those programs *before* running the Easy Transfer program to ensure that the programs will be ready to accept their incoming settings.

To install the old programs, dig out their installation CDs and any copy protection codes you may need to reenter. The codes are usually printed on either the CD itself, the CD's packaging, or a sticker on the program's manual. (If you purchased a program online, you may be able to retrieve the copy-protection code from the manufacturer's Web site.)

Copying Windows Easy Transfer to your old PC

Windows XP doesn't come with the Windows Easy Transfer program. That's no obstacle if your PC has a DVD drive. Just insert Windows Vista's installation DVD into your Windows XP PC's DVD drive. At the opening screen, choose Transfer Files and Settings from Another Computer, and Windows Easy Transfer hops onto the screen.

But if your decrepit Windows XP PC lacks a DVD drive, install the Windows Easy Transfer program by following these steps:

1. Open Windows Easy Transfer on your Vista PC and click Next at the program's opening screen.

Click Start, choose All Programs, click Accessories, click System Tools, and click Windows Easy Transfer. If asked, click Close All to close any currently running programs.

2. Choose Start a New Transfer.

Vista asks whether you're running the program on your new PC or your old one.

3. Choose My New Computer.

Vista asks whether you have an Easy Transfer cable.

4. Choose No, Show Me More Options.

Choose this counterintuitive option even if you *do* have a Windows Easy Transfer cable.

5. Choose No, I Need to Install It Now.

Vista offers to copy the Windows Easy Transfer program to a CD, USB flash drive, external hard drive, or shared network folder.

6. Make your choice, and Vista creates a copy of the program to run on your old PC.

Vista stores the program in a folder named MigWiz. To run the program on your Windows XP PC, navigate to the MigWiz folder, open it, and double-click the program's cryptic name: migwiz or migwiz.exe.

Transferring Information Between Two PCs with Windows Easy Transfer

Windows Easy Transfer works in just a few steps or a lengthy string of steps, depending on your chosen transfer method. First, you tell the program how to transfer your information, be it through a cable, network, or on discs. Second, you tell Vista what information to collect from your old PC: Everything from your own user account? From everybody's user accounts? Or perhaps just a few important files?

After dispensing with those details, the program gets to work, grabbing everything you've chosen from your Windows XP PC and stuffing it into the correct places inside your new Vista PC.

The next section describes how to make Windows Easy Transfer copy through an Easy Transfer USB cable, network, or storage area like CDs, DVDs, or a portable hard drive.



Be sure to log on with an Administrator account; Limited accounts don't have the authority to copy files. And take your time: You can always return to a previous screen by clicking the blue arrow in the window's top, left corner.

1. Start both PCs and log on to each PC.

If you plan to use a USB Easy Transfer Cable, install the Easy Transfer Cable's bundled program onto your Windows XP PC now. That program lets poor ol' Windows XP understand what type of cable you're about to plug in. (Don't install the Easy Transfer Cable's bundled program on your Vista PC, as Vista already knows how to use a USB Easy Transfer Cable.)

2. Run Windows Easy Transfer on your Windows XP PC and click Next.

Insert Windows Vista's installation DVD into your Windows XP PC's DVD drive. At the opening screen, choose Transfer Files and Settings from Another Computer, and the program hops onto the screen.

If your Windows XP PC doesn't have a DVD drive, read the sidebar, "Copying Windows Easy Transfer to your old PC." It explains how to copy the program to your old PC.

3. On your Windows XP PC, choose how to transfer files and settings to your new Vista PC.

The Easy Transfer program offers three options, shown in Figure 19-2:

- **Use an Easy Transfer Cable (Recommended).** If you choose this quick 'n' easy option, connect the Easy Transfer cable between USB ports on your Windows XP PC and your Windows Vista PC. When Windows Easy Transfer opens automatically on your Windows Vista PC, jump to Step 11.
- **Transfer Directly, Using a Network Connection.** If you choose to transfer through your PC's network, move to Step 5.
- **Use a CD, DVD, or Other Removable Media.** If you choose this option, move to the next step.

4. Choose how to transfer your files and settings.

The program offers three options:

- **CD or DVD:** This option works if your old PC can burn CDs or DVDs *and* your new PC has a CD or DVD drive for reading them. Be prepared to spend a long evening in front of both PCs, though, copying discs and feeding them to your new PC.

- **USB Flash Drive:** Much quicker than CDs or DVDs, USB flash drives are plagued by small sizes. They work for transferring a few files, but aren't nearly large enough to hold all your old PC's information.
- **External Hard Disk or Network Location:** External hard disks (also called portable hard drives) plug into your PC's USB port to give it a big dose of storage space. They're your fastest and most reliable choice. If both PCs can connect to the same network location — a Public or Shared Documents folder on another PC — you may choose that option, as well.

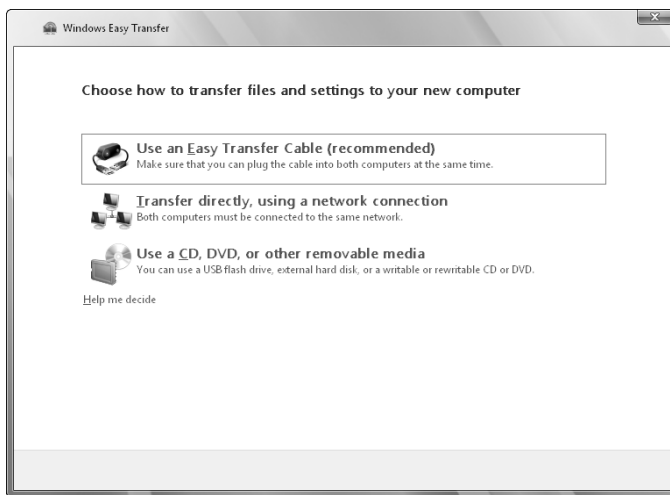


Figure 19-2:
Choose how to copy files and settings from your old PC to your new PC.

After making your choice, choose the drive letter of your CD/DVD burner, USB flash drive, external hard disk, or the path to your network location, and then create an optional password to keep your information secure. (You'll need to reenter that password on your Windows Vista PC to access the information.) Click Next and jump to Step 11.

5. Choose how to transfer files and settings over a network.

The program offers two options:

- **Use a Network Connection:** The most likely choice for small home networks, this option pipes the information straight from your Windows XP PC to your Windows Vista PC. If you choose this one, move to the next step, Step 6.
- **Copy to and from a Network Location:** Choose this option for more esoteric networks where your PCs can't communicate directly, but they can both access the same location on the network. If you choose this, select the network location, choose an optional password and move to Step 11.

6. Choose whether or not you have a Windows Easy Transfer key.

Choose No, I Need a Key and then write down the key on a piece of paper. You'll need to enter that key later on your Vista PC. (Vista's *very* security conscious.)

7. Move to your Windows Vista PC, run Windows Easy Transfer, and click Next.

Just as with Windows XP, Windows Vista lets only Administrator account holders use Windows Easy Transfer.

Vista's Easy Transfer program asks whether you want to start a new transfer or continue one that's in progress.

8. Choose Continue a Transfer in Progress.

The program asks whether the computers are connected to a network.

9. Choose Yes, I'll Transfer Files and Settings Over the Network.

The program asks you to type your Easy Transfer Key.

10. Type the key you received in Step 6, click Next, and return to your Windows XP PC.

Don't have the key? It's still displayed on the monitor of your Windows XP computer. Type the key, and click Next. Vista connects to your Windows XP PC.

Then return to your Windows XP PC and move to Step 11.

11. On your Windows XP PC, choose which accounts and information to transfer to the new Vista PC.

Windows Easy Transfer offers three ways to transfer your information, shown in Figure 19-3:

- **All User Accounts, Files, and Settings:** The best and simplest option for families moving to a newer PC, this option transfers information from every user account to the new PC.
- **Only My User Account, Files, and Settings:** This choice copies only information from your *own* user account. This option works well if you shared a PC with others, but now want to move your information to your own shiny new laptop or new PC.
- **Advanced Options:** Tossed in for the techies, this option lets you pick and choose exactly which files and settings to move. Today's PCs contain an overwhelming amount of files and settings, so it's not for the faint of heart.

If you're piping your information into your Windows Vista PC through an Easy Connect cable or network cable, sit down at your new Vista PC and jump to Step 16.

But if you're transferring your information in the other, more labor intensive methods, move to the next step.

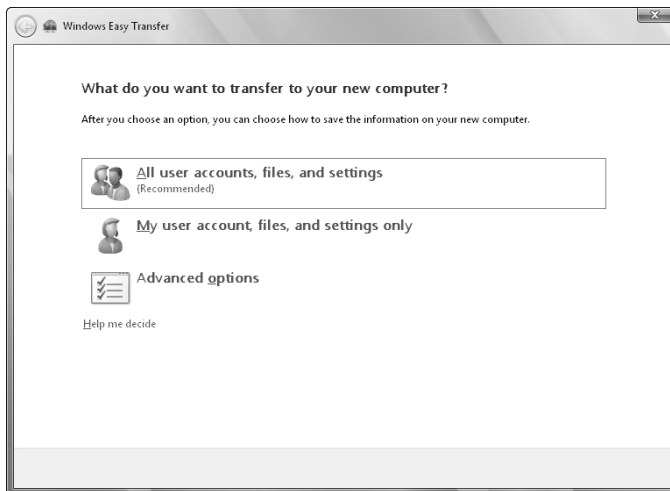


Figure 19-3:
Choose which information to move to your new PC.

12. Review your selected files and settings and click Transfer.

The program lists all your selected files and settings, shown in Figure 19-4. Note the size of your transfer, listed above the Transfer button. Click Customize to jump back to Step 11 for further fiddling; otherwise, click Transfer to keep the ball rolling.

Vista begins gathering your old PC's information with your chosen method:

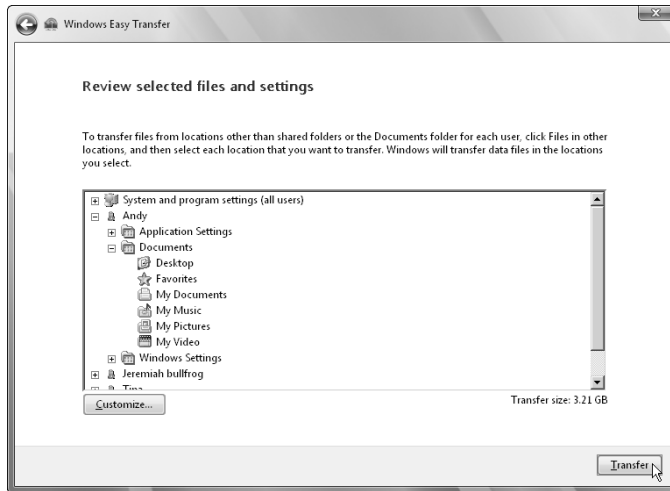
- **Direct Network Connection:** If you chose this method, jump to Step 17.
- **CDs or DVDs:** Vista leads you through burning discs on your old PC to insert, in order, into your new PC. As you create each disc, write a number (CD1, CD2, CD3, . . .) on its printed side with a felt pen.
- **Drive:** Insert your portable hard drive or flash drive, if necessary, to store your precious data.
- **Network Location:** The program begins moving the information to the network location for your Vista PC to grab it.

When your PC finishes stashing that last bit of information, move to the next step to copy it all to your new PC.

13. Go to your new Vista PC, open Windows Easy Transfer, and click Next at the opening screen.

If the program complains about any open programs, choose Close All to close them. The program then asks whether it should Start a New Transfer or Continue a Transfer in Progress.

Figure 19-4:
Click
Transfer to
copy all your
selected
files and
settings.



14. Choose Continue a Transfer in Progress.

Vista asks whether you're transferring the files through a network.

15. Choose No, I've Copied Files and Settings to a CD, DVD, or other removable Media.

Vista asks where you've stored the incoming files.

16. Choose the location of the disc or drive containing the files and click Next.

Tell the program the incoming files' exact location: the letter of your CD or DVD drive, for example, the drive letter of your USB flash drive or external hard drive, or, if you've saved the information someplace on a network, the path to the network location.

Enter your password, if you password-protected the files.

When you make your choice, Vista immediately begins looking in that spot to make sure that the information's there.

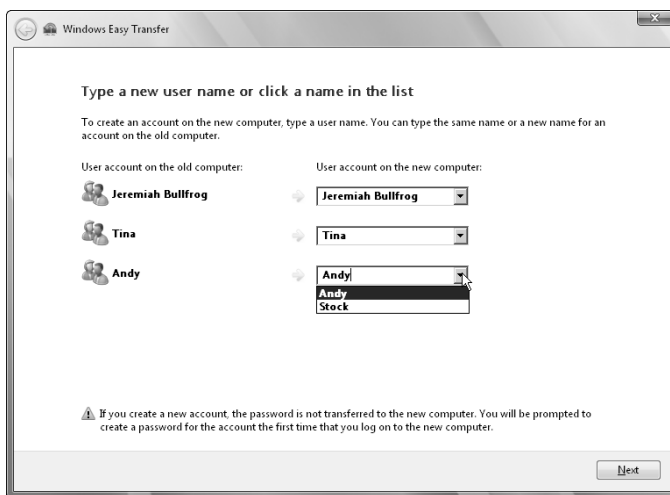
If you choose CDs or DVDs, Vista leads you through inserting CDs or DVDs, in order, into your new PC.

17. Choose names for the transferred accounts and click Next.

Vista needs to know where to put the incoming user account information. The window lists the names of the incoming user accounts on the left, and the PC's existing user accounts on the right, shown in Figure 19-5. That leaves you three possible scenarios:

- **Same user account names:** If you've used the same user account names on both your old and new PCs, this step is easy: Vista automatically lines up the accounts on the two PCs so that they go to the right places.

Figure 19-5:
Match the existing user account on the left with its new destination on the right.



- **Different user account names:** If some or all account names are *different* on both PCs, tell Vista which information goes into which account. Use the drop-down menus to match up the old PC's user account name with the new user account names on the new PC.
- **New user account names:** To transfer a user account's files to a brand-new account, type that new account name into the top of the adjacent drop-down menu. The Easy Transfer program creates that new account on your new Vista PC.

18. Review your selected files and, depending on your transfer option, click Next or Transfer.

Vista begins copying your chosen information into your new PC, creating new accounts as needed. Depending on the amount of information, your transfer method, and your PCs' processing power, the job can take from minutes to several hours.

The program ends by summing up all the information it moved, leaving you wondering how you'd ever get by without it.



If you transferred your information with CDs or DVDs, stash the discs in a safe place so they can serve as emergency backups. If some disaster befalls your new PC, you'll at least have your old PC's information safe.

Disposing of the Old Computer

After you've transferred everything of value from the old computer to the new, what do you do with the old computer? You're left with several options.

Many people simply pass their old computers down to the kids, much like the oldest child's clothing moves down to the next oldest child. Kids don't need powerhouse computers for typing term papers.

Others donate them to charities, although charities have grown pickier about what they'll accept. Make sure that the computer's still working well and has a monitor.

You can simply throw it in the trash. An increasing number of cities and states ban this option, however, to keep hazardous waste out of the landfills. It's illegal to throw away PCs or monitors in California, Texas, and other states, for example.

Recycle it. Dell, for example, will recycle your old Dell computer for free. Dell even recycles competitors' PCs when you buy a new Dell computer. Even if you're not buying Dell, visit the recycling page (www.dell.com/recycling) at Dell's Web site for lots of general recycling information. Ask your IBM dealer about its recycling plan as well.

Erasing the old computer's hard drive

A freshly donated hard drive can be a thief's delight. If it's like most hard drives, it contains passwords to Web sites, e-mail accounts, and programs; credit-card numbers; identifying information; and possibly financial records. None of this information should fall into the wrong hands.

If your hard drive contains particularly sensitive information, purchase a data destruction program, available in the Utilities section of most

computer stores. These specially designed programs completely erase the hard drive and then fill it up again with random characters. (Many programs repeat that process several times to reach the required government privacy specification.)

Alternatively, take it out to the street and hit it with a sledgehammer until it's beyond repair. (Dan Gookin, author of *Word For Dummies*, shoots his old drives with a shotgun.)

Freecycle it. When your old PC is no longer loved by either you or your friends, visit the Freecycle Network (www.freecycle.org). The Web site lets you post goods you no longer value so that strangers can swing by and take them off your hands. A starving student may still find some value in your old PC.



Keep your old computer around for a few weeks while you use your new computer. You might remember an important file or setting on the old computer that hasn't yet been transferred over.

Chapter 20

Help on the Windows Vista Help System

In This Chapter

- ▶ Finding helpful hints quickly
 - ▶ Finding help for a particular problem or program
-

Don't bother plowing through this whole chapter for the nitty gritty: Here are the quickest ways to make Windows Vista dish out helpful information when you're stumped:



- ✓ **Press F1:** Press your keyboard's F1 key from within Windows or any program.
- ✓ **Start menu:** Click the Start menu and choose Help and Support.
- ✓ **Question Mark:** If you spot a little question mark icon near a window's top-right corner, pounce on it with a quick click.

In each case, Vista fetches its Help and Support program, newly beefed up with tables, charts, and step-by-step instructions for you to follow.

This chapter explains how to wring the most help from Windows Help and Support.

Consulting a Program's Built-In Computer Guru

Almost every Windows program includes its own separate Help system. To summon a program's built-in computer guru, press F1 or choose Help from

the menu. To find help in Windows Mail and start asking pointed questions, for example, follow these steps:

- 1. Choose Help from the program's menu and choose View Help (or press F1).**

The Windows Help and Support program opens to its page dedicated to Windows Mail (see Figure 20-1). There, the program lists the topics that give people the most headaches.

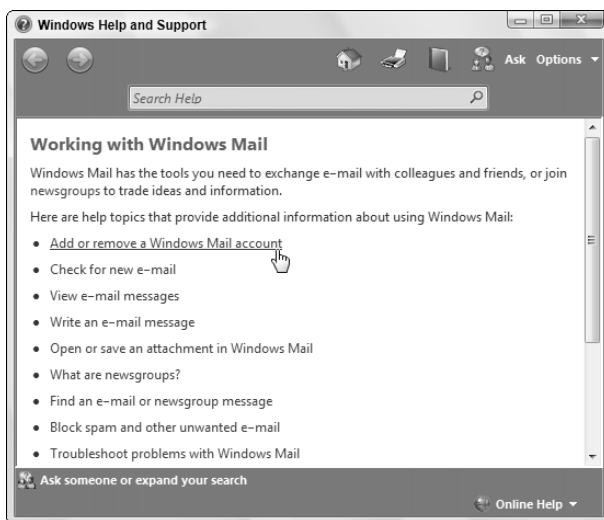


Figure 20-1:
Choose the
topic con-
fusing you
in Windows
Mail.



The Search box at the top of the screen lets you search the Help program's index. Typing a few words describing your question often fetches the exact page you need, saving you a few steps.

- 2. Click the topic where you need help.**

For example, clicking Add or Remove a Windows Mail Account tells Vista to explain more about setting up or deleting mail accounts.

- 3. Choose the subtopic that interests you.**

After a brief explanation about the topic, the Help page offers several subtopics: You can choose between either adding an e-mail account or removing one, for example. But don't miss the "See also" topics at the page's bottom. They fetch related information you may need.

- 4. Follow the listed steps to complete your task.**

Vista lists the steps needed to complete your task or fix your problem, sparing you from searching through the menus of your other problematic program. As you scan the steps, feel free to look at the area below them; you often find tips for making the job easier next time.



Confused about an odd term used in the Help window? If the term appears in a different color and sprouts an underline when you point at it with the mouse, click it. A new window pops up, defining the word.



Try to keep the Help window and your problematic program open in adjacent windows. That lets you read each step in the Help window and apply the steps in your program without the distraction of the two windows covering each other up.

The Windows Vista Help system is sometimes a lot of work, forcing you to wade through increasingly detailed menus to find specific information. Still, using Help offers a last resort when you can't find the information elsewhere. And it's often much less embarrassing than tracking down the neighbor's teenagers.



If you're impressed with a particularly helpful page, send it to the printer: Click the Printer icon (shown in the margin) at the page's top. Windows Vista shoots that page to the printer so that you can keep it handy until you lose it.

Finding the Information You Need in Windows' Help and Support Center

When you don't know where else to start, fire up Vista's Help and Support center and begin digging at the top.

To summon the program, choose Help and Support Center from the Start menu. The Help and Support Center rises to the screen, as shown in Figure 20-2.

The program offers three sections: Find an Answer, Ask Someone, and Information from Microsoft. Start with the Find an Answer section, as it summons help about these topics:






✓ **Windows Basics:** If you're new to computers and Windows, head here first. It walks you through the information covered in Chapter 1: Understanding the mouse, keyboard, desktop, Start menu, taskbar, files, folders, and other Windows things everybody thinks you already know.



✓ **Security and Maintenance:** This area offers things people put off until something's wrong: ensuring that your PC's security systems are turned on, for example; diagnosing potential problems Vista's noticed with your PC; and making sure that your PC's stocked with the latest fixes from Windows Update.



✓ **Windows Online Help:** Don't click here unless you're connected to the Internet, as it tells the Help program to display Vista's online Help page at Microsoft's Web site. That site's often more up-to-date than Vista's built-in Help program, but it uses more technical language.

- 
Table of Contents: Just as you'd expect, clicking here brings up a table of contents listing every subject. Click any subject to see subheadings, letting you branch off in the direction you're after.
- 
Troubleshooting: The spot to head when something's not working, this lets you diagnose and fix problems with networking, the Internet, e-mail, and the way your PC's parts interact with Vista.
- 
What's New?: Windows XP users who are curious as to why they upgraded can click here for a rundown on what's new in their particular version of Vista, be it Home Basic, Ultimate, or somewhere in between.

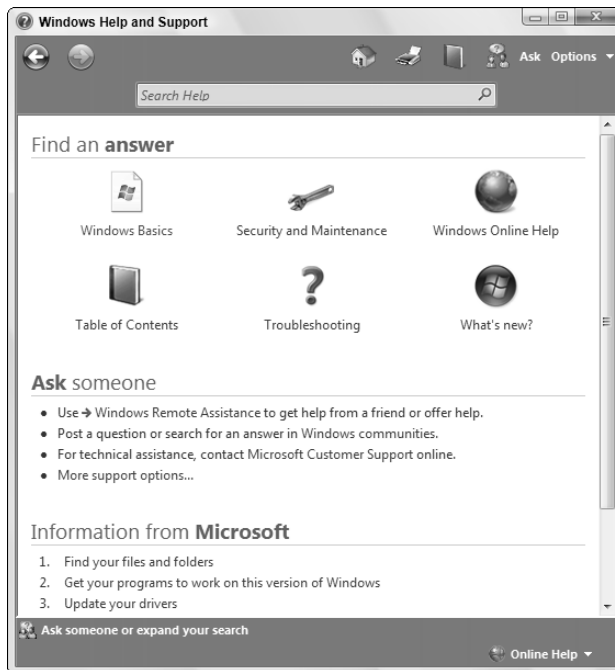


Figure 20-2:
The Windows Help and Support Center offers assistance with Windows and your computer.

Don't bother with the Ask Someone section. It offers Remote Assistance, helpful only when you've found that rare individual who's willing to connect to your PC over the Internet and sort out your problems. The Ask Someone section's Windows Communities choice takes you to the newsgroups, a complicated online relic from the Internet's early years. The section's last option, Contact Microsoft Customer Support Online, takes you to Microsoft's Knowledgebase, a database of Windows problems written for Internet professionals.

The Help and Support section's last area, Information from Microsoft, lists the top questions asked at Microsoft's Vista online support site. It's worth a try only on the rare chance you spot your question among the three listed.



Start your quest for help in the Search box by typing in a few keywords. Type **e-mail**, for example, to see every help topic dealing with e-mail. If Vista comes up blank, move to the Table of Contents. Find your troublesome subject, click it, and begin narrowing down the search for pertinent information.



The Windows Help and Support program works much like a Web site or folder. To move back one page, click the little blue Back arrow in the upper-left corner. That arrow helps you out if you've backed into a corner.

Summoning Windows Vista's Troubleshooters

When something's not working as it should, the Troubleshooting section of Windows Vista's Help and Support program may sleuth out a fix. Sometimes it works like an index, narrowing down the scope of your problems to the one button that fixes it. Then it displays the button on the Help page for your one-click cure.

Other times, a magic button isn't enough. If your wireless Internet signal isn't strong enough, for example, the Troubleshooter tells you to stand up and move your laptop closer to the transmitter.

To summon the troubleshooting program, follow these steps:

- 1. Choose Help and Support from the Start menu.**

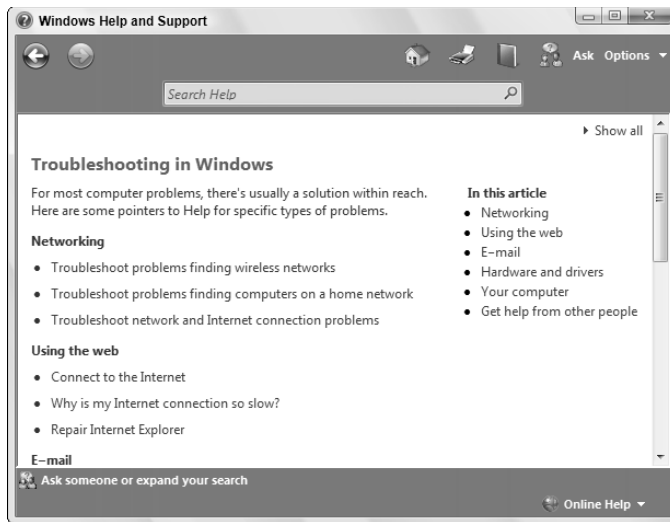
The Help and Support program opens, shown earlier in Figure 20-2.

- 2. Choose Troubleshooting from the opening screen.**



The Troubleshooting icon (shown in the margin) lives in the Find an Answer section of the Help and Support program's opening screen (refer to Figure 20-2). The Troubleshooting in Windows page, seen in Figure 20-3, is ready to tackle a wide variety of problems, from general to specific.

Figure 20-3:
The Troubleshooter programs help to solve a wide variety of problems.



3. Click the subject that troubles you.

The Troubleshooting section offers these five topics:

- **Networking:** This topic offers help on finding wireless “hotspots” for connecting on the road, fixing home networks, and troubleshooting network and Internet connection problems.
- **Using the Web:** Here’s where to find help with Internet connections, including sharing one connection with several PCs.
- **E-mail:** This area covers Windows Mail and attachments, as well as sending pictures and video through e-mail.
- **Hardware and drivers:** When something’s wrong inside your PC, Vista can show the symptoms. This area shows how to diagnose driver problems, the biggest cause of bickering between Vista and things plugged into or inside your PC.
- **Your Computer:** A catch-all section for everything else, this helps out with security and improving your PC’s performance.

Click a topic, and Vista whisks you to the page dealing with that subject’s most common problems. Keep clicking the subtopics until you find the one dealing with your particular problem.

4. Follow the recommended steps.

Most of the time, you’ll stumble onto numbered steps that solve your problem. Follow the steps one at a time to finish the job.

Part VII

The Part of Tens

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



"Well, the first level of Windows Vista security seems good-I can't get the shrink-wrapping off."

In this part . . .

No *For Dummies* book is complete without a Part of Tens section: Lists of ten easy-to-read informational nuggets. Of course, the lists don't always contain exactly ten, but you get the general idea.

The first list explains ten things you'll absolutely hate about Vista (followed by ways to fix those problems). The next list balances out the first with ten things you'll love about Vista (and how to improve them).

The last list contains tips exclusively for laptops. It explains how to change how your laptop reacts when you close its lid, for example, as well as quick ways to adjust screen brightness, volume, and turn on that built-in wireless adapter. I also throw in step-by-steps for tasks laptopppers repeat constantly: logging onto the Internet in different ways and setting the clock for a new time zone.

Chapter 21

Ten or So Things You'll Hate about Windows Vista (and How to Fix Them)

In This Chapter

- ▶ Stopping the permission screens
 - ▶ Finding Vista's menus
 - ▶ Turning off Aero Glass to speed up your PC
-

Windows Vista would be great if only . . . (*insert your pet peeve here*). If you find yourself thinking (or saying) those words frequently, read this chapter. Here, you find not only a list of ten or so of the most aggravating things about Windows Vista, but also ways you can fix them.

I Can't Stand Those Nagging Permission Screens

You can take either of two approaches to Vista's nagging permission screens:

- ✓ **Microsoft's preferred approach:** Before automatically clicking the Continue button, ask yourself this question: Did *I* initiate this action? If you deliberately asked your PC to do something, click Continue for the PC to carry out your command. But if the permission screen pops up unexpectedly, click Cancel, because something's wrong.
- ✓ **The easy way out:** Turn off the permission screens, as I explain in Chapter 17. Unfortunately, that leaves your PC more susceptible to viruses, worms, spyware, and other evil things tossed at your PC during the course of the day.

Neither option is perfect, but that's the choice that Microsoft's given you with Vista: Listen to your PC nag you or turn off the nags and instead trust your own antivirus and antispyware programs.

I recommend Microsoft's preferred approach — it's much like wearing a seat-belt when driving: It's not as comfortable, but it's safer. Ultimately, though, the choice lies with your own balance between comfort and safety.

I Can't Copy Ripped CDs and Purchased Music to My iPod

You won't find the word "iPod" mentioned in Vista's menus, help screens, or even in the Help areas of Microsoft's Web site. Microsoft's competitor, Apple, makes the tremendously popular iPod, and Microsoft's ignoring it in the hopes it will go away.

What won't go away, though, are the problems you'll face if you ever try to copy Media Player's songs into an iPod. You face two hurdles:

- ✔ Songs purchased from Media Player's music store, URGE, only come in a copy-protected WMA (Windows Media Audio) format, and iPods can't play them.
- ✔ Songs copied from CDs with Media Player won't play on your iPod, either. They're also stored in a WMA format.

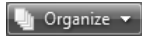
The second hurdle has a solution: Tell Media Player to convert your CD's music to MP3 files, which *any* portable music player can play — even an iPod. Follow these steps to make the switch:

- 1. Open Media Player by clicking the Start menu, choosing All Programs, and choosing Windows Media Player.**
- 2. Press Alt, choose Tools from the drop-down menu, and select Options.**
- 3. Click the Rip Music tab and choose MP3 instead of Windows Media Audio in the Format drop-down menu.**
- 4. Click OK to save your changes.**

By ripping your music to the MP3 format, you'll ensure that your library of ripped music will be compatible with any music player you buy now or in the future. (I cover Media Player in Chapter 15.)

The Menus All Disappeared

In Microsoft's zeal for giving Vista a clean look, the programmers swept away the folder menus used for the past decade. To reveal a folder's missing menus, press Alt. The menus appear, letting you choose the option you're after.



To keep the menus from disappearing again, click the Organize button (shown in the margin), choose Layout, and choose Menu Bar from the pop-up menu.

Parental Controls Are Too Complicated

Vista's new Parental Controls let you control exactly what your kid can and can't do on the PC. (I explain the detailed options in Chapter 10.) But if you just want Vista to hand you a synopsis of what your kid's been up to on the PC, follow these quick steps:

- 1. Click the Start button, click Control Panel, choose User Accounts and Family Safety, and choose Parental Controls.**

The Parental Controls window appears, listing each account holder's name.

- 2. Click the name of your child's user account.**

The Parental Controls Settings window appears, showing a list of buttons.

- 3. In the Parental Controls section, click On, Enforce Current Settings.**
- 4. In the Activity Reporting section, click On, Collect Information about Computer Usage.**

- 5. Click the OK button.**

Each week or so, check out your child's activity report by following Steps 1 and 2 in the preceding steps, but, in Step 3, choose View Activity Reports. There, Vista shows you a quick, one-page synopsis of what your kid's been up to on the Net.

To zero in on suspicious areas, click your child's Account Activity area in the task pane along the left. It's all there: names of people sending and receiving your child's e-mail and instant messages, the songs and videos played, the Web sites visited, names of any downloaded programs, log-on and log-off times, the number of hours spent at the keyboard, and similar information.

The “Glass” Effects Slow Down My Laptop

One of Vista’s much touted special effects, Aero Glass, may be too special to be practical. Aero Glass lets you see bits and pieces of your desktop in each window’s frame. The effects also let some programs, like Vista’s chess game, “float” in the air, letting you watch the game from all angles.

But the calculations required for those visual gymnastics slow down PCs that don’t have high-powered graphics — and that includes many of the current crop of laptops. With Aero Glass, Windows XP’s once snappy Freecell may crawl across the screen of your laptop.

Even worse, it may drain your batteries to a fraction of their battery life. If you don’t like the extra burden Aero Glass dumps on your PC, turn it off by following these steps:

- 1. Right-click a blank part of your desktop and choose Personalize to summon the Control Panel.**
- 2. Choose Window Color and Appearance.**
If you spot the words Open Classic Appearance Properties For More Color Options, click them. Otherwise, move to Step 3.
- 3. Choose Windows Vista Basic as the Color Scheme and click OK.**

If that’s *still* too slow, try choosing Windows Standard or even Windows Classic in Step 3.

To turn Aero Glass back on for impressing your friends, follow the first two steps in the preceding list, but choose Windows Aero in Step 3.



If Vista’s *still* not snappy enough, right-click Computer on the Start menu, choose Properties, and select Advanced System Settings from the task pane on the left. Click the Settings button in the Performance section, choose Adjust for Best Performance, and click OK.

I Can’t Figure Out How to Turn Off My PC

Windows XP’s Start button offered a convenient Turn Off Computer button. Vista, by contrast, places *two* buttons in that convenient spot, and neither one turns off your PC. The one on the left puts your PC in a “low power state,” and the other quickly password protects your account when you walk away for a short period.

To turn off your PC, click the arrow on the right of the two buttons and choose Shut Down. (I explain all the power button's options in Chapter 2.)



To transform the left button (shown in the margin) into a simple On/Off switch, follow these steps:

1. **Click the Start button, choose Control Panel, choose System and Maintenance, and choose Power Options.**
2. **In the task pane along the left, click Choose What the Power Buttons Do.**
3. **Select Shut Down from the Power Button's pull-down menu, and click Save Changes.**

Windows Makes Me Log On All the Time

Windows offers two ways to return to life from its swirling and churning screen saver. Windows can return you to the opening screen, where you must log back on to your user account. Alternatively, Windows Vista can simply return you to the program you were using when the screen saver kicked in.

Some people prefer the security of the opening screen. If the screen saver kicks in when they're spending too much time at the water cooler, they're protected: Nobody can walk over and snoop through their e-mail.

Other people don't need that extra security, and they simply want to return to work quickly. Here's how to accommodate either camp:

1. **Right-click a blank part of your desktop and choose Personalize.**
2. **Click Screen Saver.**

Windows Vista shows the screen saver options, including whether or not Windows should wake up at the opening screen.

3. **Depending on your preference, remove or add the check mark from the On Resume, Display Logon Screen box.**

If the box *is checked*, Windows Vista is more secure. The screen saver wakes up at Vista's opening screen, and users must log on to their user accounts before using the computer.

If the box *isn't checked*, Windows Vista is more easygoing, waking up from the screen saver in the same place where you stopped working.

4. **Click the OK button to save your changes.**



If you don't *ever* want to see the opening screen, then use a single user account without a password. That defeats all the security offered by the user account system, but it's more convenient if you live alone.

The Taskbar Keeps Disappearing

The taskbar is a handy Windows Vista feature that usually squats along the bottom of your screen. Sometimes, unfortunately, it up and wanders off into the woods. Here are a few ways to track it down and bring it home.

If your taskbar suddenly clings to the side of your desktop — or even the roof — try dragging it down: Instead of dragging an edge, drag the taskbar from its middle; as your mouse pointer reaches your desktop's bottom edge, the taskbar will suddenly snap back into place. Let go of the mouse, and you've recaptured it.

Follow these tips to prevent your taskbar from wandering:

- ✔ To keep the taskbar locked into place so that it won't float away, right-click the taskbar and select Lock the Taskbar. Remember, though, that before you can make any changes to the taskbar, you must first unlock it.
- ✔ If your taskbar drops from sight whenever the mouse pointer doesn't hover nearby, turn off the taskbar's Auto Hide feature: Right-click a blank part of the taskbar and choose Properties from the pop-up menu. When the Taskbar and Start Menu Properties dialog box appears, click to remove the check mark from the Auto-Hide box on the Taskbar tab. (Or, to turn on the Auto Hide feature, add the check mark.)
- ✔ While you're in the Taskbar and Start Menu Properties dialog box, make sure that a check mark appears in the Keep the Taskbar on Top of Other Windows check box. That way, the taskbar always rides visibly on the desktop, making it much easier to spot.

I Can't Keep Track of Open Windows

You don't *have* to keep track of all those open windows. Windows Vista does it for you with a secret key combination: Hold the Alt key and press the Tab key, and the little bar appears, displaying the icons for all your open windows. Keep pressing Tab; when Windows highlights the icon of the window you're after, release the keys. The window pops up.



Or, if your PC has powerful enough graphics, click the Flip 3D button (shown in the margin) next to the Start button. Vista “floats” all the open windows on-screen. Click the window you want to bring to the forefront. Or, flip through them all by pressing Tab or your keyboard's arrow keys.

Or, use the taskbar, that long strip along the bottom of your screen. Covered in Chapter 2, the taskbar lists the name of every open window. Click the name of the window you want, and that window hops to the top of the pile.

In Chapter 6, you find more soldiers to enlist in the battle against misplaced windows, files, and programs.

I Can't Line Up Two Windows on the Screen

With all its cut-and-paste stuff, Windows Vista makes it easy for you to grab information from one program and slap it into another. With its drag-and-drop stuff, you can grab an address from a contact's address card and drag it into a letter in your word processor.



The hardest part of Windows Vista is lining up two windows on the screen, side by side, to make for easy dragging. *That's* when you need to call in the taskbar. First, open the two windows and place them anywhere on the screen. Then turn all the other windows into icons by clicking their Minimize button (shown in the margin).

Now, right-click a blank area of the taskbar and then choose either Show Windows Stacked or Show Windows Side By Side. The two windows line up on the screen perfectly. Try both to see which meets your current needs.

It Won't Let Me Do Something Unless I'm an Administrator!

Windows Vista gets really picky about who gets to do what on your computer. The computer's owner gets the Administrator account. And the administrator usually gives everybody else a Standard account. What does that mean? Well, only the administrator can do these things on the computer:

- ✓ Install programs and hardware.
- ✓ Create or change accounts for other users.
- ✓ Install some hardware, like some digital cameras and MP3 players.
- ✓ Read everybody else's files.

People with Standard accounts, by nature, are limited to fairly basic activities. They can do these things:

- ✓ Run installed programs.
- ✓ Change their account's picture and password.

Guest accounts are meant for the babysitter or visitors who don't permanently use the computer. If you have a broadband or other "always on" Internet account, guests can browse the Internet, run programs, or check their e-mail. (As I describe in Chapter 13, Guest accounts aren't allowed to *start* an Internet session, but they can use an existing one.)

If Windows says only an administrator may do something on your PC, you have two choices: Find an administrator to type his password, authorizing the action; or convince an administrator to upgrade your account to an Administrator account, covered in Chapter 13.

I Don't Know What Version of Windows I Have

Windows has been sold in more than a dozen flavors since its debut in November 1985. How can you tell what version is really installed on your computer?

Open the Start menu, right-click Computer, and choose Properties. Look in the Windows Edition section at the top to see which version of Windows Vista you own: Home Basic, Home Premium, Business, Enterprise, or Ultimate.

In earlier versions of Windows, look beneath the word *System* to see the Windows version.

My Print Screen Key Doesn't Work

Windows Vista takes over the Print Screen key (labeled PrtSc, PrtScr, or something even more supernatural on some keyboards). Instead of sending the stuff on the screen to the printer, the Print Screen key sends it to Windows Vista's memory, where you can paste it into other windows.

If you hold the Alt key while pressing the Print Screen key, Windows Vista sends a picture of the current *window* — not the entire screen — to the Clipboard for pasting.

If you *really* want a printout of the screen, press the Print Screen button to send a picture of the screen to its memory. (It won't look like anything has happened.) Then click Start, choose All Programs, select Accessories, open Paint, and choose Paste from the Edit menu. When your picture appears, choose Print from the File menu to send it to the printer.

Chapter 22

Ten or So Tips for Laptop Owners

In This Chapter

- ▶ Adjusting your laptop's settings on-the-fly
 - ▶ Changing your time zone
 - ▶ Dialing a modem in a different location
-

For the most part, everything in this book applies both to PCs and laptops. Vista offers a few settings exclusively for laptops, however, and I cover those items here. I also throw in a few tips and quick references to make this chapter especially suited for laptop owners who need information in a hurry.

Adjusting Your Laptop's Settings Quickly

Vista offers a quick way for laptop owners to see the things that most affect their little PC's on-the-go lifestyle. Called the Mobility Center, it's a one-stop shop for tweaking your laptop's main settings. To open the Mobility Center, follow these steps:

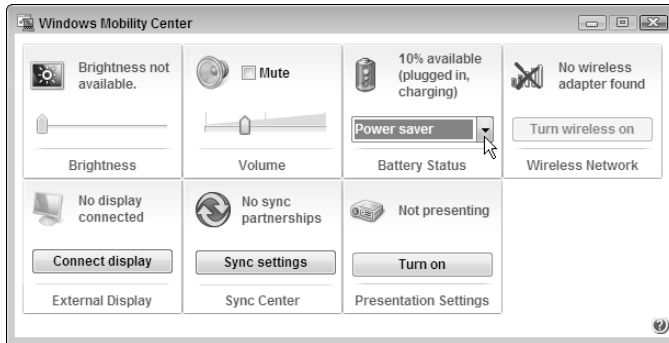
- 1. Click Start and choose Control Panel.**
- 2. Choose Mobile PC and select Windows Mobility Center.**

Windows Mobility Center, seen in Figure 22-1, rises to the screen. In the future, you can jump here quickly by holding down the Windows key and pressing X.

- 3. Make your adjustments.**

As seen in Figure 22-1, Mobility Center lets you make quick adjustments to your laptop's main settings, as described in the following list. Don't think something's wrong if you don't spot all these options on your laptop. Manufacturers customize the center's options to match each model's features.

Figure 22-1: Windows Mobility Center puts a laptop's most common adjustments on one panel.



- **Brightness:** A simple sliding control lets you dim your laptop in low-light situations (or simply to save battery power) or increase the brightness when working outdoors.
- **Volume:** Tired of your laptop's annoying blast every time you turn it on? Slide down the volume level here. (Or click the Mute check box to turn it off completely, saving batteries and letting you turn it on only when needed.)
- **Battery Status:** Choose Balanced for everyday work, switch to Power Saver when working away from outlets for several hours, and switch to High Performance when plugged in.
- **Wireless Network:** If your laptop offers it, here's an easy-to-find On/Off switch for your laptop's wireless network adapter. Leave it turned off to save batteries, and turn it back on when you're ready to connect.
- **External Display:** Ever plug your laptop into a larger monitor or projector for giving presentations? Head here to set it up.
- **Sync Center:** Vista lets you keep your laptop or PC in synchronization with a compatible portable music player or cell phone, automatically updating them with each other's information. (Unfortunately, you can't sync your laptop with your desktop PC, or with an iPod.) This switch brings you to the Sync Center, where you can set up a partnership with sync-compatible gadgets and click the Sync All button for them to exchange information.
- **Presentation Settings:** This option lets you control what appears on the projector when you hook up your laptop. With the click of one button, you can turn your desktop's wallpaper into something business-safe, turn off your screen saver, adjust the PC's volume, and squelch any other distractions.

Although some buttons take you to yet more areas full of settings, the Mobility Center works well as a launching pad. It's your first stop to customize your laptop to match its surroundings.

Choosing What Happens When You Close Your Laptop's Lid

Closing the laptop's lid means that you're through working, but for how long? For the night? Until you get off the subway? For a long lunch hour? Vista lets you tailor exactly how your laptop should behave when you latch your laptop's lid.

To start tweaking, follow these steps:

1. **Click Start, choose Control Panel, and then choose System and Maintenance.**
2. **Choose Power Options and then select Choose What Closing the Lid Does from the left pane.**

Shown in Figure 22-2, Vista offers different lid-closing settings for whether your PC is plugged in or running on its batteries: Do Nothing, Hibernate, or Shut Down.

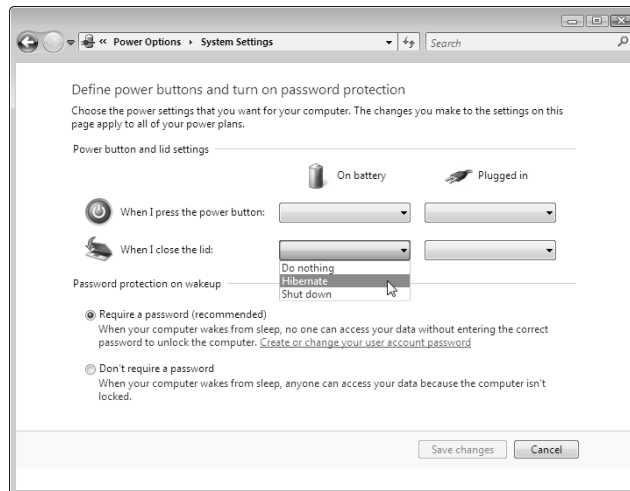


Figure 22-2:
Change your laptop's reactions when plugged in or on batteries.

Generally, choose Hibernate, as it lets your laptop slumber in a low-power state, letting it wake up quickly so that you can begin working without delay. But if you'll be shutting down your laptop for the evening, turning it off is often a better idea. That option lets the laptop conserve its battery power and, if plugged in overnight, wake up with fully charged batteries.

Also, you can choose whether or not your PC should require you to enter a password when it's turned back on. (Passwords are always a good idea.)

This window also lets you choose what happens when you click the Power and Lock buttons at the bottom of your Start menu. I cover power options more fully in Chapter 2.

3. **Click Save Changes to make your changes permanent.**

Adjusting to Different Locations

PCs don't move from a desktop, making some things pretty easy to set up. You need only enter your location once, for example, and Vista automatically sets up your time zone, currency symbols, and similar things that change over the globe.

But the joy of a laptop's mobility is tempered with the agony of telling the thing exactly where it's currently located. These sections supply the steps you need to change when traveling to a different area.

Changing your time zone

Follow these steps to let your laptop know you've entered a new time zone:

1. **Click the clock in the taskbar's bottom-right corner.**
A calendar and clock appear in a small window.
2. **Choose Date and Time settings.**
The Date and Time dialog box appears.
3. **Choose Change Time Zone, enter your current time zone in the Time Zone pull-down menu, and click OK twice.**



If you frequently travel between time zones, take advantage of the Additional Clocks tab in Step 3. There, you can add up to two extra clocks; to check the time quickly in Caracas, just hover your mouse pointer over the taskbar's clock. A pop-up menu appears listing your local time, as well as the time in the additional locations you've entered.

Dialing a modem from a new location

I give a detailed explanation of how to connect with a dialup modem in Chapter 8. Here, I'm assume that you're setting up a connection in a *different* city, where you must enter a different phone number, area code, calling card, or other differences. Follow these steps to connect to a dialup Internet connection in a new location.

1. Click the Start button and choose Connect To.

Vista lists all previous dialup Internet connections you've added in the past — including the first one you set up.

If you need to change the phone number, add a number that reaches an outside line, change the area code, or enter a calling card number, move to Step 2.

2. Right-click your existing dialup location and choose Properties.

Vista lists the settings for your current dialup connection.

3. Click the Use Dialing Rules check box and click Dialing Rules.

The Dialing Rules dialog box appears, listing the names of locations you've entered when setting up different dialup connections. The setting called My Location is the one Vista created when you set up your first dialup connection.

4. Click New and enter the changed settings for your new location.

When the New Location dialog box appears, enter the name of your new location, as well as the changes required for dialing in that location: a different area code or access number, a hotel that makes you dial 9 for an outside line, or perhaps a code to disable call waiting.

As you enter your changes, the bottom of the New Location dialog box lists the number Vista will dial to make the connection.

5. Click OK when you finish, then click OK to exit the Phone and Modem Options dialog box, and click OK to exit the Properties dialog box.

Vista leaves you back at the Connect to a Network dialog box that names your dialup connection.

6. Click Connect.

Vista dials the Internet number using the new settings you've entered. If you need to dial a different phone number, head to Chapter 8 for instructions on setting up a dial-up account. However, your newly entered region settings will be waiting for you there.

Connecting to a wireless Internet hotspot

Every time you connect to a wireless network, Vista stashes its settings for connecting again the next time you visit. I explain wireless connections completely in Chapter 14, but here are the steps for quick reference:

1. Turn on your laptop's wireless adapter, if necessary.

You can often turn it on with a click in the Mobility Center, shown in Figure 22-1. Some laptops offer a manual switch somewhere on the case.

2. Choose Connect To from the Start menu.

Vista lists every way it can connect with the Internet — including any wireless networks it finds within range.

3. Connect to the wireless network by clicking its name and clicking Connect.

Your PC should connect immediately. But if your laptop asks for more information, move to Step 4.

4. Enter the wireless network's name and security key/passphrase, if asked, and then click Connect.

Some secretive wireless networks don't broadcast their name, so Windows lists them as Unnamed Network. If you spot that name, track down the network's owner and ask for the network's name and security key or passphrase to enter here.

When you click Connect, Vista announces its success. Be sure to click the two boxes, Save This Network and Start This Connection Automatically, to make it easier to connect the next time you come within range.



When you're through online, turn off your laptop's wireless adapter to save your laptop's batteries.

Backing Up Your Laptop Before Traveling

I explain how to back up a PC in Chapter 12, and backing up a laptop works just like backing up a desktop PC. Please, please remember to back up your laptop before leaving your home or office. Thieves grab laptops much more often than desktop PCs. Your laptop can be replaced, but the data inside it can't.

Keep the backed up information at home — not in your laptop's bag.

Appendix

Upgrading to Windows Vista

In This Appendix

- ▶ Preparing for Vista
 - ▶ Installing Windows Vista
-

New computers today come with Windows Vista preinstalled — it's practically unavoidable. If you're reading this chapter, then your computer is probably still running Windows XP. If it's running Windows 98 or Windows Me, don't bother trying: Vista requires a powerful PC with cutting-edge parts.

To beef up your PC's power to get the most out of Vista, pick up another of my books, *Upgrading & Fixing PCs For Dummies*. It explains how to upgrade the graphics, add more memory, and perform other chores to satisfy Vista's craving for power.

One warning: Upgrading to Vista from Windows XP is a one-way street, because you can't return to Windows XP once you've installed Vista. Don't upgrade unless you're sure you're ready for Vista.

Preparing for Windows Vista

Windows Vista usually runs well on computers purchased within the past three or four years. Before upgrading, make sure that you've run through the following checklist:

- ✓ **Computer power:** Make sure that your computer is strong enough to run Windows Vista. I cover Vista's requirements in Chapter 1.
- ✓ **Compatibility:** Before upgrading or installing, insert the Vista DVD and choose Check Compatibility Online. When Vista takes you to Microsoft's Web site, download and run Microsoft's Windows Vista Upgrade Advisor. The program alerts you beforehand what parts of your computer may not run well under Windows Vista. You can find the Upgrade Advisor on Microsoft's Web site at www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/getready.

- ✔ **Security:** Before upgrading to Windows Vista, turn off your antivirus software and other security programs. They may innocently try to protect you from Windows Vista's upgrade process.
- ✔ **Backup:** Back up all your important data on your Windows XP PC.

Installing the Windows Vista Upgrade

Follow these steps to upgrade your copy of Windows XP to Windows Vista:

- 1. Insert the Windows Vista DVD into your DVD drive and choose Install Now, as shown in Figure A-1.**

Vista churns away, preparing to install itself.



Figure A-1:
Choose
Install Now
from the
Windows
Vista
installation
screen.

- 2. Choose Go Online to Get the Latest Updates for Installation (Recommended).**

This step tells Vista to visit Microsoft's Web site and download the latest updates — drivers, patches, and assorted fixes — that help make your installation run as smoothly as possible.

- 3. Type your product key and click Next, as shown in Figure A-2.**

The *product key* usually lives on a little sticker affixed to the CD's packaging. No product key? You're stuck. You can't install Windows Vista without a product key. (If you're reinstalling a version of Vista that came pre-installed on your PC, look for the product key printed on a sticker affixed to the side or back of your PC.)



Figure A-2:
Type the
product
key and
click Next.



Don't click the check box called Automatically Activate Windows When I'm Online. You can do that later, once you know Vista works on your PC.

Write your product key on top of your Windows Vista DVD with a felt-tip pen. (Write on the side of the CD that's *printed*.) That way, you'll always have your valid product key with your CD.

Windows Vista's Activation feature takes a snapshot of your computer's parts and links it with Windows Vista's serial number, which prevents you from installing that same copy onto another computer. Unfortunately, the Activation feature may also hassle you if you change a lot of parts in your computer.

4. Read the License Agreement, click the check box next to I Accept the License Terms, and click Next.

Take an hour or so to read Microsoft's 25-page License Agreement carefully. You need to select the I Accept the License Terms check box option before Microsoft allows you to install the software.

5. Choose Upgrade and click Next.

Upgrading preserves your old files, settings, and programs. If this option's grayed out, it means your hard drive isn't big enough. It needs up to 15GB of free space to install Vista.

Vista's Compatibility Report lists any software or pieces of your PC that Vista can't handle. Write them down so that you can update them later.

6. Choose your country, time and currency, and keyboard layout, and click Next.

If you live in the United States, click Next. If you live outside the U.S., choose your country, time and currency, and a keyboard language to match your language.

7. Choose Use Recommended Settings.

Vista's recommended security settings keep Vista automatically patched and up-to-date.

8. Choose the current time and date and click Finish.

After rummaging around inside your PC for a few more minutes, Windows Vista appears on the screen, leaving you at the logon screen. But don't rest yet. Run through the following steps to complete the process:

- **Use Windows Update.** Visit Windows Update, described in Chapter 10, and download any security patches and updated drivers issued by Microsoft.
- **Make sure that Vista recognizes your software.** Run all your old programs to make sure that they still work. You may need to replace them with newer versions or drop by the manufacturer's Web site to see whether they offer free updates.
- **Check the user accounts.** Make sure that your PC's user accounts work correctly.

Welcome to Windows Vista!

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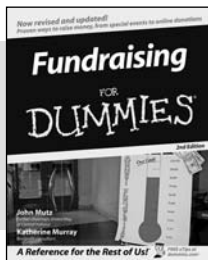
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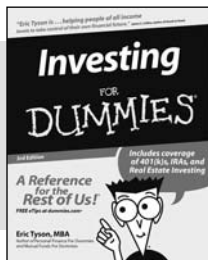


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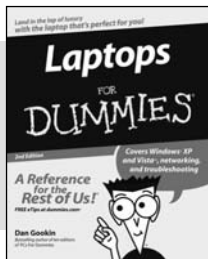
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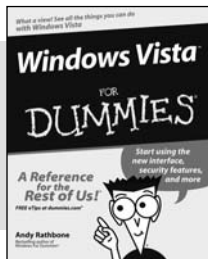
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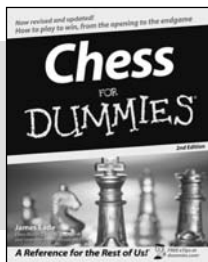
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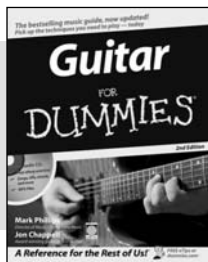
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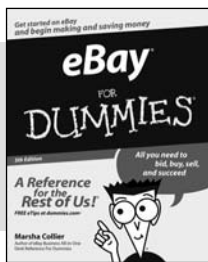
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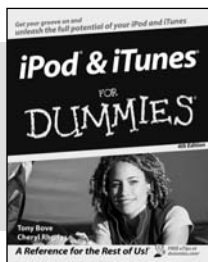
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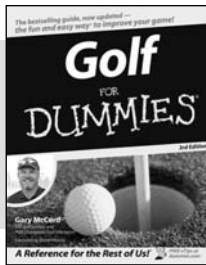
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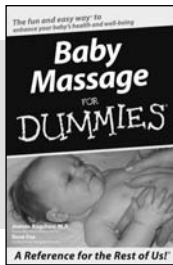
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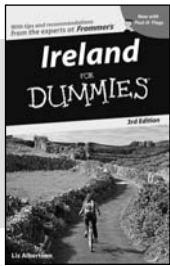


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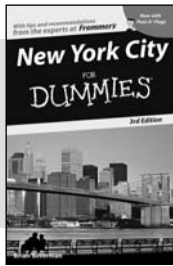
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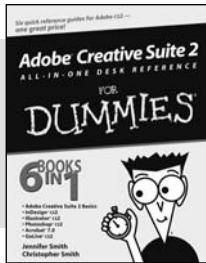


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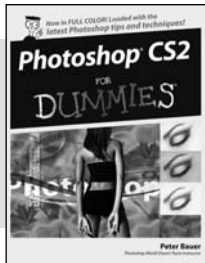
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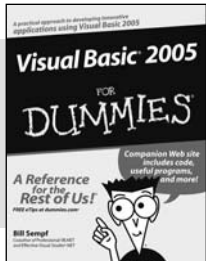


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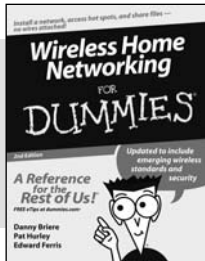
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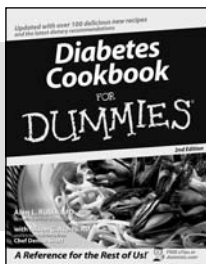
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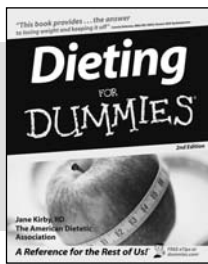
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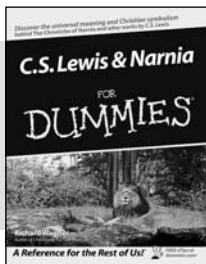
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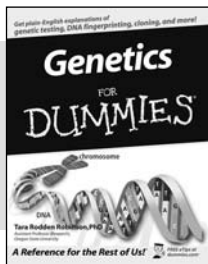
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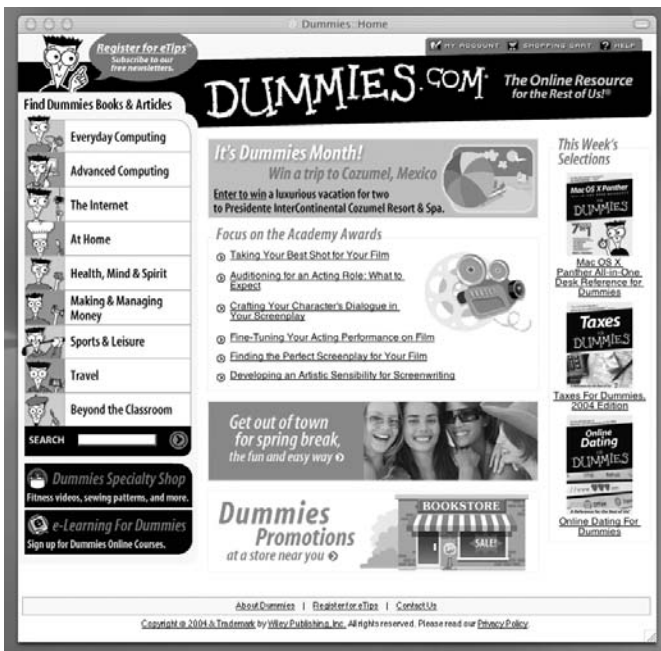


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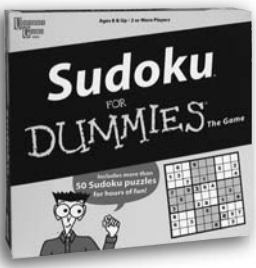
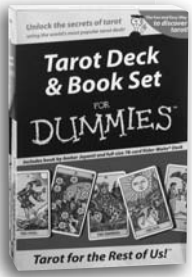


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