

# Upgrading from Windows Vista to Windows 7 (custom installation)

If you can't upgrade your computer running Windows Vista to Windows 7, you'll need to perform a custom installation. A custom installation does not preserve your programs, files, or settings during installation. It's sometimes called a "clean" installation for that reason.

A custom installation is more complex, and it can sometimes take a couple of hours to complete. We created this five-step tutorial to help guide you through the entire process each step of the way.

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## What you need

This means that before you get started, there are two very important things to understand:

- **An external hard disk.** You'll need to move your files off of your PC before you install Windows 7. To make this easier, we recommend a free download called Windows Easy Transfer, which will require an external hard disk. They're readily available at electronics and office supply stores, and they provide an easy way to add additional storage space to your computer.
- **The original installation discs or setup files for the programs that you want to use with Windows 7.** You'll need to reinstall your programs by hand after installing Windows 7. When you run Windows Easy Transfer you will get a report that lists the programs that you are currently using with Windows Vista.



*Overview of the process for upgrading to an N or KN edition of Windows 7*

## 32-bit or 64-bit: Which version of Windows 7 to install?

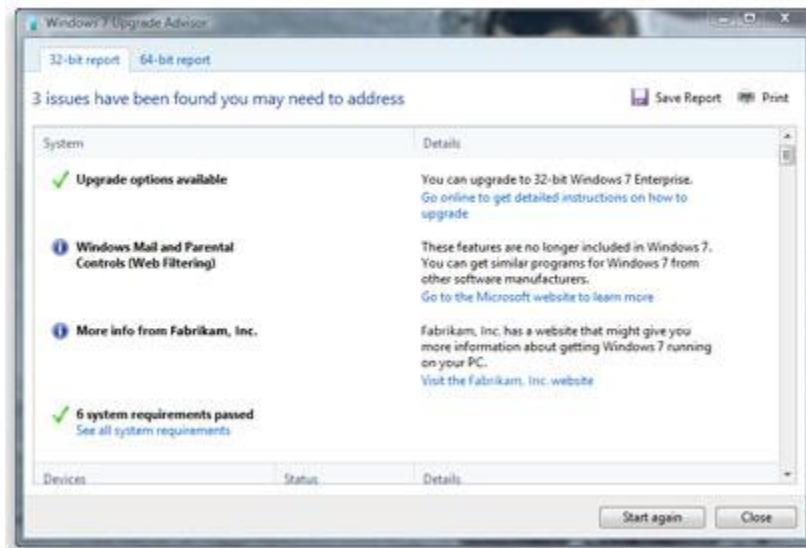
Both 32-bit and 64-bit installation discs are included in the Windows 7 package. 64-bit operating systems can handle large amounts of memory—typically 4 gigabytes (GB) of random access memory (RAM) or more—more efficiently than 32-bit operating systems. However, not all computers are 64-bit capable.

To find out which Windows 7 installation disc you can use, click the **Start** button, right-click **Computer**, and then click **Properties**.

- Next to **System type** you should see either "32-bit Operating System" or "64-bit Operating System." If you see "32-bit Operating System" listed, then you're running the 32-bit version of Windows Vista. Step 1 of this tutorial will show you how to run Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor, which can tell you if your computer is capable of running the 64-bit version of Windows 7.
- If "64-bit Operating System" is listed next to **System type**, then you're running the 64-bit version of Windows Vista and can run the 64-bit version of Windows 7.

## Step 1: Make sure that your programs and devices will work with Windows 7

Since your computer is running Windows Vista, it meets the system requirements to run Windows 7. You should still download and run the free Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor. It helps find potential issues with your devices or programs that might affect installing Windows 7, and gives recommendations on what to do.



A report lists any actions needed to prepare your computer for Windows 7.

## Download and install Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor

Follow the steps below to download the Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor.

1. Go to the *Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor* (<http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/?LinkId=160680>) webpage.
2. Click **Download the Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor**.
3. Click **Download**, and then save the installation file to your computer.
4. Double-click the installation file.

### If you're asked to install .NET 2.0

Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor requires .NET Framework 2.0. If your computer doesn't have it installed, follow these steps. If you're not asked to install .NET 2.0, you can skip this and proceed to step 5.

1. Click **Yes**.
2. Click **Next**.
3. If you agree to the license terms, click **Install**.
4. Click **Finish**.

5. If you agree to the license terms, click **Install**.
6. Click **Close**.

If you see a pre-selected check box, clicking **Close** will open Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor.

## Open and run Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor

1. If Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor isn't already running, double-click the **Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor** shortcut on your desktop.
  2. In the security warning dialog box, click **Yes**.
  3. Click **Start check**.
  4. Read the report carefully, and make note of any issues that the Upgrade Advisor finds and what the recommended steps are to fixing these issues.
  5. If you want to save the report and print it later, click **Save Report**, type a name in the **File Name** box, and then click **Save**.
  6. Click **Close**.
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## Step 2: Moving files and settings, and gathering your program discs

Windows Easy Transfer is a free download that can help you move your files and settings to another location before you install Windows 7, and then back to your PC after Windows installation is completed.



*Windows Easy Transfer helps simplify moving your files and settings.*

Windows Easy Transfer creates a single file containing your files and settings. The file could be quite large depending on the amount of data you have, which is why we recommend using an external hard disk.

As you prepare to move your files off of your computer to an external storage device, remember the following:

- Windows Easy Transfer doesn't move your programs, only your files and settings. You'll need to reinstall your programs by hand after Windows 7 installation is complete. Windows Easy Transfer will provide you with a list of programs that you are currently using with Windows Vista.
- Windows Easy Transfer can't transfer files from a 64-bit version of Windows to a 32-bit version of Windows. This means that if you're running a 64-bit version of Windows Vista, but you plan to install a 32-bit version of Windows 7, you can't use Windows Easy Transfer to migrate your files and settings.

### Download and install Windows Easy Transfer

1. Download *Windows Easy Transfer* (<http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/?LinkId=160881>) from the Windows website. If you're running a 32-bit version of Windows Vista, under **For Windows Vista:**, click **Download 32-bit**. If you're running a 64-bit version of Windows Vista, click **Download 64-bit**.
2. Click **Download**, and then click **Open**.

### Run Windows Easy Transfer to save your files and settings

1. Make sure your external hard disk or other storage device is connected to your computer.
2. Click **Start**, click **All Programs**, and then click **Windows Easy Transfer for Windows 7**.
3. Click **Next**.
4. Select **An external hard disk or USB flash drive**.
5. Click **This is my old computer**, and then wait while Windows Easy Transfer scans the computer.
6. Clear the check boxes next to any user accounts that you don't want to transfer data from, and then click **Next**.
7. Enter and retype a password, and then write it down and keep it in a safe place; or leave the boxes blank, and then click **Save**.
8. Browse to the external hard disk or other storage device where you want to save your Easy Transfer file, and then click **Save**.

### Warning

- You must save the Easy Transfer file to your external hard disk or other storage device, and not to the default location **Computer**. If you don't save the Easy Transfer file to your external hard disk, the file you just created will be deleted during the custom installation of Windows 7.

9. Windows Easy Transfer will begin saving your files and settings. Do not use your computer during this time.
10. When you see the message **These files and settings have been saved for your transfer**, click **Next**.

Windows Easy Transfer displays the file name and location of the Easy Transfer file you just created. Write down the file name and location so you can easily find it when you're ready to transfer files to Windows 7.

11. Click **Next**, and then click **Close**.
12. Ensure that the file is saved to your external hard disk or storage device, and then disconnect the device from your computer.

### Gather your program discs and setup files

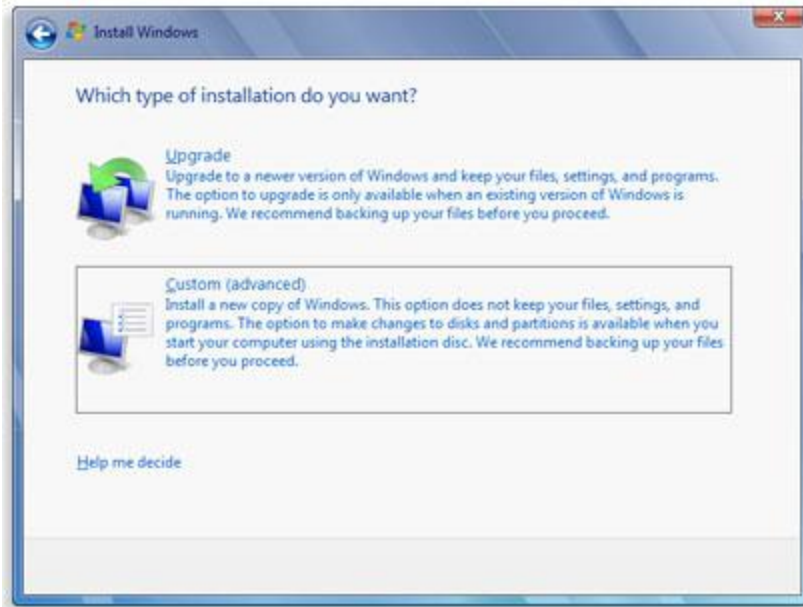
It's important to remember that the Custom installation option doesn't preserve any of your programs, so you'll need to reinstall the programs that you want to use in Windows 7.

1. Make sure you have the installation discs for the programs you want to keep using in Windows 7.
2. You might have downloaded some programs from the Internet. If you still have the installation files on your computer (often called setup.exe, install.exe, or similar), copy those setup files to your external hard disk as well. If you don't have the installation files, you'll need to download them again after Windows 7 installation is complete.

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## Step 3: Installing Windows 7

When you choose the Custom option during installation, you install a new copy of Windows on your PC.



The options for Windows 7 installation

## Before you begin

- Connect your PC to the Internet so you can get installation updates during the installation process. (If you don't have an Internet connection, you can still install Windows 7.)
- Select either the 32-bit or 64-bit Windows 7 installation disc, depending on whether you want to install the 32-bit or 64-bit version of Windows 7.
- Find your 25-character Windows product key. You can find it on the installation disc holder inside the Windows package.

## Perform a Custom installation of Windows 7

1. With your computer on and Windows Vista running, do one of the following:
  - If you have a Windows 7 installation disc, insert the disc into your computer. Setup should start automatically. If it doesn't, click **Start**, click **Computer**, open the Windows 7 installation disc on your DVD drive, and then double-click **setup.exe**.
  - If you purchased Windows 7 online, open the installation file. Purchasing Windows 7 online is the easiest way to install Windows 7 on a netbook. For more information, *Installing Windows 7 on a netbook* (<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows7/installing-windows-7-on-a-netbook>).
2. On the **Install Windows** page, click **Install now**.
3. On the **Get important updates for installation** page, we recommend getting the latest updates to help ensure a successful installation, and to help protect your computer against security threats. Your computer will need to be connected to the Internet during Windows 7 installation to get these updates.

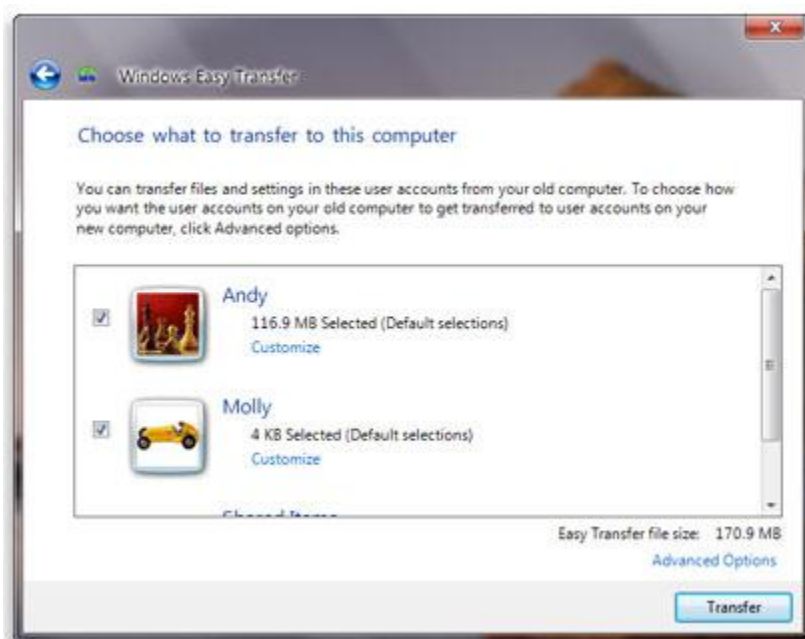
4. On the **Please read the license terms** page, if you accept the license terms, click **I accept the license terms**, and then click **Next**.
5. On the **Which type of installation do you want?** page, click **Custom**.
6. Choose the partition containing Windows Vista (this is often the computer's **C:** drive), and then click **Next**. (Do not select your external USB hard drive.)
7. In the **Windows.old** dialog box, click **OK**.
8. Continue to follow the instructions to finish installing Windows 7, including naming your computer and setting up an initial user account. You can use the same names that you used in Windows Vista, or choose new ones.

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## Step 4: Moving your files and settings back to your computer

After you've installed Windows 7, now you're ready to run Windows Easy Transfer again and move your files and settings back to your computer.

Be sure you run Windows Easy Transfer before you reinstall your programs. That's because Windows Easy Transfer moves your files back to where your old programs will expect them to be when you reinstall them.



*User accounts from Windows Vista are moved to Windows 7.*

## Move files and settings back using Windows Easy Transfer

1. Make sure your external hard disk or other storage device that contains your Windows Easy Transfer migration file is connected to your computer.



2. Click the **Start** button, click **Computer**, and under **Hard Disk Drives**, double-click your storage device.
3. Browse to the location where you saved the Easy Transfer file, called **Windows Easy Transfer – Items from old computer**, and double click the file.

If you gave the file a different name when you originally created it, browse to that file and double-click it.

4. If you entered a password when creating the Easy Transfer file, type the password, and then click **Next**.

#### Note

- If you receive an error that you don't have enough free disk space to migrate your files back to your computer using Windows Easy Transfer, you can use Disk Cleanup to delete temporary files left over from your Windows 7 installation and free up additional disk space. To learn how to do this, read the "Post-install clean up (optional)" section at the end of **Step 5: Reinstall your programs and update drivers**.
5. On the **Choose what to transfer to this computer** page, you can decide how the user accounts from Windows Vista are transferred to in Windows 7.
    - To accept the current account mapping, click **Transfer**.
    - To change how the Windows Vista accounts are mapped in Windows 7, click **Advanced Options**.
  6. On the **Your transfer is complete** page, click **See what was transferred** to view a list of the user accounts and files that were moved from Windows Vista to Windows 7. Click **See a list of programs you might want to install on your new computer** to view what was previously installed on Windows Vista.
  7. Click **Close**. If you are prompted to restart your computer, click **Restart now**.

If you transferred more than one user account, you might be prompted to change the password the next time you log on. If you're prompted to do so, click **OK**, and in the dialog box that appears, do one of the following:

- If you want to give the user account a password (recommended), type a new password, retype it, and then press Enter. There's no need to type the old password from Windows Vista.
  - If you don't want to give the user account a password, leave the boxes empty, and then press Enter.
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## Step 5: Reinstall your programs and update drivers

After you've run Windows Easy Transfer and your files and settings are back on your computer, you can reinstall your programs and check for new or updated drivers.

Windows Easy Transfer provides a report detailing the programs you used in Windows Vista that you might want to reinstall. To reinstall your programs, you'll need to use the installation discs or setup files that you gathered earlier.



A report lists programs that you might want to reinstall.

If your computer came with several programs pre-installed, you might see programs listed in the report that you've never used before or rarely used. When you begin reinstalling programs, start with the ones that you know and use regularly, especially new antivirus software for your computer. If you don't have new antivirus software for your PC running Windows 7, you can look for new programs online at the *Windows 7 Compatibility Center* (<http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/?LinkId=160679>).

#### Note

- Some programs such as Windows Mail are no longer included in Windows 7. If you used Windows Mail or Outlook Express as your e-mail program, you'll need to install a new e-mail program to read your saved messages or to send and receive e-mail. You can get similar programs from other software manufacturers or from the *Windows Live Mail* website (<http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/?LinkId=160882>).

## Update drivers

A driver is software that allows your computer to communicate with hardware or devices. Without drivers, the hardware you connect to your computer—for example, a video card or a printer—won't work properly.

In most cases, drivers come with Windows, or you can find them by using Windows Update and checking for updates. Click the **Start** button, click **All Programs**, and then click **Windows Update**.

If Windows doesn't have the driver you need, you can usually find it on the disc that came with the hardware or device you want to use, or on the manufacturer's website. For more information, see

*Update a driver for hardware that isn't working properly* (<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows7/Update-a-driver-for-hardware-that-isnt-working-properly>).

## Netbooks and drivers

Some netbooks and laptops that were running Windows Vista might not have specific Windows 7 drivers for features such as function buttons. If Windows Update doesn't find a driver, visit your computer manufacturer's website and search for a download or support page where you can search for drivers for your PC.

You can try to install a driver made for Windows Vista onto your PC running Windows 7. If the Windows Vista driver won't install, you can run the Program Compatibility troubleshooter to try and fix the problem.

1. Download or copy the driver installation file to your computer.
2. Right-click the file, and then click **Troubleshoot compatibility**.
3. Follow the steps in the Program Compatibility troubleshooter to change the compatibility settings for the driver.

## Post-install clean-up (optional)

During Windows 7 installation, if you don't format the partition, files that were used in Windows Vista are stored in the Windows.old folder. The type of files in this folder depends on your computer.

After you've used Windows 7 for a while, for example one or two weeks, and you're confident that your files and settings are back to where you want them to be, you can safely reclaim disk space and use Disk Cleanup to delete the Windows.old folder.

You can also delete the Windows.old folder if you receive an error during **Step 4: Moving your files and setting back to your computer** that indicates that you don't have enough free disk space to transfer your files and settings back to your computer.

### Warning

- Before you use Disk Cleanup, make sure that all of your files and settings migrated correctly to Windows 7 where you expected them to be. Deleting the Windows.old folder can't be undone.
1. Click the **Start** button, and in the search box, type *Disk Cleanup*. In the list of results, click **Disk Cleanup**.  
If you're prompted to choose a drive, choose the drive you just installed Windows 7 on, and then click **OK**.
  2. Click **Clean up system files**. If you're prompted for an administrator password or confirmation, type the password or provide confirmation.  
If you're prompted again to choose a drive, choose the drive you just installed Windows 7 on, and then click **OK**.
  3. Select **Previous Windows installation(s)** and any other categories of files you want to delete.
  4. Click **OK**, and then click **Delete Files**.