

MAKE YOUR WINDOWS VISTA FLY!

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This article is a guide how to convert your sluggish Windows Vista into frisky OS that it is supposed to be in the first place.

NOTICE: Please bear in mind that some of the procedures I will describe in this guide in specific conditions might result in you losing your data. On the other hand, it is equally plausible that you will lose your sanity trying to write a text document in word processing application on unmodified Windows Vista. No warranties whatsoever. All trademarks that are mentioned in this guide are property of their respective owners.

UPDATE: unusually enough, it seems that 64bit version of Microsoft Windows Vista does not show any of the problems described below. And not only that, all the features work several times better than they do in 32bit version on the same machine capable of executing 64bit instructions. However, it is not excluded that same problems might occur in with 64bit version, so tools and methods described here perfectly apply.

I will suppose that that you haven't turned off UAC (User Account Control), and that you use English copy of Vista. For localized versions everything is the same, but with another (local) name.

Also, you must be aware that nothing is **wrong** with your Windows Vista. You just need to tune it a bit.

D**N STUP*D VISTA!

Damn, I was pissed off!

Having a PC with two cores running at 3GHz, 4GB of RAM, a graphic card with more processing power than Pentagon twenty years back and with hard drives that are faster than server ones only few years ago, I thought that Vista (32bit version) will perform like a charm...

Yeah, right.

OK, at first my copy of Vista Ultimate did perform fantastically, as it was supposed to. I have accepted the hardware price that I had to pay for beautiful appearance and many new features that came with this OS, but after only a day or two all hell broke loose on me.

What happened? – Well, I had to install a lot of programs. And then I have poured about one hundred gigabytes of My Documents from a backup to the new installation. And voila! – You have a snailPC, instead a computer that you could run climate prediction software on.

Guys at Microsoft surely wanted to do it right. And they succeeded with 98% of stuff. And that other 2% is responsible for so much bad karma Vista got.

I am writing this guide to help You, the common user, to optimize your computer running Windows Vista, so you can safely and effectively use it. Many of the stuff from this guide are time-tested and proven in enterprise environment.

Also, although you can use tips from this guide to speed up any Vista installation, I will go with the assumption that you have hardware that works OK, and all Vista drivers in place.

WINDOWS VISTA PERFORMANCE SETTINGS

Microsoft Windows Vista is gorgeous. It has user interface that is at the same time both usable and beautiful. Heck, Vista UI is even prettier than Mac one. I actually never used an OS with effects mumbo-jumbo on, but with Vista that isn't the fact.

So – we want all that stuff on, and we won't touch it. Vista Aero isn't actually a big deal; there are some much more troublesome stuff buried deep inside.

IN MEDIAS RES, OR SOLVE THE VISTA SPEED PROBLEM

I would bet on the fact that if you are reading this you experienced next scenario:

1. You install Vista
2. Everything works perfectly
3. OK, I suppose I could wait for a while Vista finishes its stuff
4. ...
5. ...
6. ...
7. Few days later: OK, this is unbearable!!
8. You delete Vista and install XP.

I have also gone through about two weeks of swearing and reinstalling until I finally gotten what the problem actually is. The Problem is that in fact that there is no problem with Vista itself, but with the programs you install later.

The problem is neither in the programs you install; it is just that some stuff gets bungled up in the system and continuously execute itself, killing the HDD and causing all that sluggishness many of you experience.

And no, for the most part the problem is not Superfetch [sic], File Indexing, etc. - stuff simply gets bungled up, and that's it. The solution is also completely simple:

Go to: <http://www.safer-networking.org/> and download and install Spybot Search and Destroy, Spybot S&D in short.

Run the program -> click "Mode" -> chose "Advanced mode" -> click "Yes".

Now you have some more tabs.

Click "Tools" -> click "System Startup".

Now you see a list of stuff that gets started up with Windows Vista.

Now search for stuff in "Command line" that sounds "stupid", like "mIJDOfC.dll,c", "pbfhfohl.dll,b" and similar. Deselect them from startup and restart your Vista.

Any change? :-)

As a rule of thumb check the startup speed of your Internet Explorer 7. It should be only a BIT slower than on the XP on the same machine.

Also, don't worry about the dependencies, as you can always turn something you disable back on.

If your Microsoft Vista already got terribly slow – than you are most probably just a few minutes away from reinstalling your PC while reading this article. In this case – just turn everything off. And than gradually turn back on stuff until you find the ones that caused the slowness.

Just for a comparison, my Microsoft Vista Ultimate, with all fancy features turned on don't take more than few percent of CPU for itself, often being at 0% CPU usage. But before that I had a sluggish dinosaur for a computer, so I went into the wild to find what is happening.

Most of the other stuff described in this article isn't too important, as they might but usually won't improve the speed of your system.

Good luck!

(And what if it still doesn't work that well? Well, then scroll to the bottom of the page and read "And what if it still doesn't work that well?" section.)

VISTA SUPERFETCH SERVICE

Superfetch service is intended to optimally use your RAM in a way that it preloads your often used programs, so they start faster. At the same time, if some application needs more RAM, cache is simply flushed out. A great feature. Why would you leave all that system RAM unused?

On the other hand, Superfetch is usually an annoying cause of bad performance of your Windows Vista if you happen to have installed more than few software applications. This is true especially with notebooks, as they have very slow hard disc drives.

To turn Superfetch off:

Click START (Vista orb) -> right click on "Computer" -> click "Manage" -> click "Continue" (UAC) -> expand "Services and applications" -> click "Services" -> scroll to "Superfetch" service and right click on it -> click "Properties" -> click "Stop" and then set "Startup type" to "Disabled" -> click "OK" and restart computer.

Voila. No more constant disk activity on your notebook PC and Vista is much speedier now. Have in mind that turning off this feature you might lower start up speeds on some of your software programs, but rise the overall system speed and responsiveness. And don't worry about returning to the old setting - you can easily turn the feature back on.

WINDOWS VISTA SEARCH INDEXING

Windows search is really a nice feature – don't turn it off, as it is really useful and finishes quickly to a point. Leave a computer turned on overnight and it will index everything.

I wouldn't recommend installing Google Desktop Search along with Microsoft Vista Search, as your system speed might decrease, but you can try and see which one you like better.

DISABLE VISTA SYSTEM RESTORE

I have personally never used this feature, even on Windows XP, as there is Safe Mode to fix stuff, and common sense (don't install stuff that smell funny).

Click START (Vista orb) -> click "Control panel" -> double click "System" -> click "System protection on the left" -> click "Continue" (UAC) -> deselect all drives, and then click "Turn System Restore Off" button -> click "OK" and then restart computer.

You now have freed some HDD space and increased performance.

CAUTION: This setting causes deletion of all of your old system restore files and further on there are no restore points to which you can roll back your device drivers or restore your computer. You can set this option on at any time later, when the system will create the restore point for you. If you are inexperienced user, or if you do use system restore, it might work best for you if you simply leave this feature on.

DISABLE VISTA SYNCHRONIZATION CENTER (TO FIX LAN RELATED PROBLEMS)

Synchronization center is one of those features you check last when you have problems, and then you find that exactly those are the ones causing your LAN problems. Synch doesn't work (well), deal with it. This little "feature" can cause your Windows Vista to generate enormous amounts of network traffic due to many unknown bugs.

I have had a few situations where there was an enormous LAN traffic generated by Microsoft Windows Vista Business PCs, who constantly tried to synchronize large amounts of data with the server, and never finished the task.

So turn the bugger off! (And later go and ask your network administrator to buy you a lunch, as you just solved your LAN traffic problems.)

REMOVE FEATURES YOU *REALLY* DON'T NEED

Apparently, Microsoft Vista must be adapted to many kinds of users, therefore there are many, MANY features included. Some of them completely unneeded.

Click START (Vista orb) -> click "Control panel" -> double click "Programs and Features" -> click "Turn Windows features on or off" (on the left) -> click "Continue" (UAC) -> deselect:

- "Remote differential compression"
- "Tablet PC optional components"
- "Windows DFS replication service"
- "Windows meeting space"

-> click "OK" -> wait for the process to finish and restart your PC.

Please note that "Remote differential compression" and "Windows DFS replication service" might be needed / used under your domain. On the other hand, turning off these two features could save you from many network related problems (slow file copying from Vista, but everything performs OK on Microsoft Windows XP or 2000 on the same LAN).

RESTORE VISTA START MENU TO ITS FULL GLORY

Didn't your Vista start menu performed great at first? And now is unbearably sluggish? No problems:

Right click on Taskbar (opens "Taskbar and Start Meny Properties") -> click on "Start Menu" -> click "Customize" -> scroll down to the "Highlight newly installed programs" -> click "OK" two times.

Voila! Vista Start menu performs fast and snappy again!

SECURITY PROGRAMS AND SETTINGS

In this section I will guide you through one more performance tweak (Windows Defender) and will go over installing and setting up three essential security programs. Spybot Search & Destroy, Spywareblaster and ESET NOD32.

DISABLE WINDOWS DEFENDER

Windows Defender is more a resource hog than an efficient spyware remover and preventer (that is, it is a very poor one). In this guide, we will replace Windows Defender with NOD32 who actually does work well.

First turn off Windows Defender:

Click START (Vista orb) -> click "Control panel" -> double click "Windows Defender" -> click "Tools" -> click "Options" -> deselect:

- "Automatically scan my computer" (at the top)
- "Use Windows Defender" (on the bottom)

-> click "OK" -> click "Continue" (UAC).

Windows Defender is now disabled. Not a big deal, as we will now install ESET NOD32.

ESET NOD32

ESET NOD32 is the best antivirus software available on the market. NOD performs well with almost no impact on system resources and silently does its job. That is why most of the enterprises in the end choose NOD, and not some other software available. Other antivirus software can cause a lot of problems of different flavors, and although NOD is not immune to them, working with NOD32 is a breeze compared with headaches other ones can cause.

Go to ESET site and either download free trial version ([link](#)), or buy yourself one NOD32 license ([LINK](#)).

Now, supposedly that you don't have any other antivirus or anti spyware software installed (if you have, uninstall or disable them) - install NOD32 on your computer.

NOD integrates itself very well into Windows Security Center as the antispayware and antivirus solution, and from this point on; you probably won't need to touch anything NOD related.

For detailed NOD32 Installation, please refer to NOD32 installation guide available at ESET web pages ([LINK](#)).

SPYBOT SEARCH & DESTROY

Spywareblaster Search & Destroy is irreplaceable security tool, and it is completely free for personal use.

Download and install Spybot Search & Destroy, but do not allow it to integrate with security center, as it might cause some annoying problems. I won't go into much detail here, as the program is very straightforward.

From time to time, run Spybot Search & Destroy, check for problems, update the software and immunize your system.

SPYWAREBLASTER

I have always regarded Spywareblaster and Spywareblaster Search & Destroy as related software, as they are both free for personal use, perform fantastically and really saves you from a lot of Internet junk.

Surfing with unprotected Windows Vista with latest service pack and all patches **will** get a **lot** of "diseases" from the net to your PC in just a few days. Spywareblaster is a tool that populates Internet Explorer list of "bad" web places and in that way freeing you to do just what you want, and not to click through the forest of ads.

Also, you **can** use Firefox or Opera, later being fastest and most advanced browser on the market, but sometimes you will just need Internet Explorer, and both Spywareblaster and Spywareblaster Search & Destroy immunize both Internet Explorer and Firefox (Spybot S&D also immunizes Opera).

Spywareblaster is also a straightforward program, as the only things you need to remember and do occasionally is to update the program and to enable all protection. You can even automate entire process if you choose to license the software.

AND WHAT IF IT STILL DOESN'T WORK THAT WELL?

****This section is for users with higher amount of computer and Vista related knowledge, or just pissed enough so that they would try everything that could help.***

Have in mind that reinstalling your Windows Vista **will not** fix your problem from reoccurring, nor it will make stuff work better on fresh installation. Vista works great, unfortunately some stuff ***** ** * **** *
***** things occasionally (please replace stars "*" with swears of preference).

There are many things that might cause Microsoft Vista to get slow, and if disabling weird start up stuff doesn't help, your best friend when that happens is Google Search [LINK](#).

Speed comparison that I stated before (IE7 lurching speed on XP) should be your guideline, and **HDD led should blink only occasionally. There are no services in Windows Vista that need constant HDD access.** It is almost certain that your Windows Vista got some glitch if you are experiencing constant HDD activity on your computer.

It is normal though, that Windows Vista take some time to boot up. There are a lot of services that get started up and loaded into the memory, and if you have a larger amount of RAM, Superfetch service will preload your programs in it, and if you use ReadyBoost [sic] it will also take some time. Also, Microsoft Vista Search Indexing service is not such a resource hog as many think, so don't blame that one when some other stuff cause problems.

Now you will have to do a bit of research, so do some research with some software tools:

After Google Search, your second best friend is Process Monitor, from Sysinternals.

Go to Sysinternals website and download "Process Monitor" (<http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/bb896645.aspx>). Use the Process Monitor tool to see which services are trashing your Hard Drive, and do a bit of searching (<http://www.google.com>) what that service/program is and how to disable it if you don't need it.

Have in mind that some troublesome programs you disable can occasionally get back on after installation of some other program. I think that the installation engine is responsible for that, so when at one point your Windows Vista suddenly becomes again more than slow, just go back to "System startup" under Spybot Search and Destroy and look for the "crazyfiles" that got back into the startup list.

Most of the stuff that runs at boot time of your Windows Vista aren't actually essential and cumulatively they do produce significant slowdown effect. You won't miss most of them, and using Spybot Search and Destroy, this setting is completely revertible, so play around to learn what is best for you. It is almost 95% certain that you will be able to solve your problem by preventing some program to load during Windows Vista start up.

CAUTION: Disabling programs to start up during boot up time will cause them not to work, and if some services are dependent on those programs, that services also won't work. Disabling and stopping services that are important for Windows might cause problems, halt your PC, etc. Proceed with caution, and use Google Search.

Now, if you **haven't** succeeded to fix your Microsoft Windows Vista, have all startup items disabled in Spybot Search and Destroy, and when you have done that, restart your PC. It might be that some service is causing problems, and in that case **Process Explorer** from Sysinternals <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/bb896653.aspx> might be a lifesaving tool.

Download and run Process Explorer and then observe carefully what is happening. You can easily Right click – Suspend any service, so do so with those you find using a lot of CPU.

Of course, you must have system clean of viruses and malware stuff, for this to be effective, but we have covered that BEFORE.

If you have found some particular service causing problems with your Windows Vista, go to Services AS DESCRIBED BEFORE and disable it (right click, and select Disable In the drop down menu).

It is highly unlikely:

- That some software that came from Microsoft caused your problems
- That something causing problems is needed

Therefore, proceed with confidence.

If by some case, menu that displays after right click show after a long delay, do this:

Download ShelExView: <http://www.nirsoft.net/utils/shexview.html>

Run the program and sort entries by "Type". Scroll to "Context Menu" and select all entries. Right click, and select "Disabled selected items".

Now restart your PC, and see if right click menu got faster. If this helped, gradually turn on stuff one by one, until you find the one causing problems.

Windows Vista is in the same time both unusually robust and tended operating system. Just like a bonsai tree.

That's it. I hope you will succeed to make your Windows Vista a pleasant working environment.

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