

# TROUBLESHOOTING WINDOWS 7



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Windows7\_Troubleshoot.lwp

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**GENERAL TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS:** See my separate "TROUBLESHOOTING PC's" document for ideas not directly related to WINDOWS 7.

**WINDOWS 7 TROUBLESHOOTER:** (Click Control Panel > Action Center > Troubleshoot...)

**VISTA TROUBLESHOOTING:** If you are unfortunate enough to be troubleshooting a Vista system, keep reading as many of the tips here work for Vista as well as Windows 7.

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## ANY PROBLEM:

- a. Before any troubleshooting, make sure the PC is set to the correct Date and Time including AM/PM and Timezone. A wrong date/time can cause a myriad of issues.
- b. See the Microsoft "Fix it" center site: <http://support.microsoft.com/fixit>

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**32-BIT or 64-BIT?** If the PC will not boot, how do you determine whether to use the 32-bit or 64-bit Repair Disk? If you can boot UBCD4WIN or linux from CD, try navigating to the C Drive C:\Program files folders. If the folder C:\Program Files (x86) exists, then it is a 64-bit system.

**"ACCESS IS DENIED" message or message: "You don't currently have permission to access this Folder" when trying to open a folder or file.**

- NOTE: These tasks are best done from an "Administrator" Account. Especially if you are having trouble accessing folders brought over from another PC.
- Here is a tutorial:  
<http://www.blogsdna.com/2159/how-to-take-ownership-grant-permissions-to-access-files-folder-in-windows-7.htm>
- Gain Ownership (*Right-click the problem Folder or File > Properties > Security tab*). Click "Advanced", then go to the Owner Tab. (If asked "Do you want to continue?", click "Continue", and enter the Admin password). Click "Edit", then under "Change Owner to:", click your current User name. Click "OK", "OK", "OK" to exit. If you still do not have access to the folder, complete the next item to gain permissions.
- Gain access permissions (*Right-click the problem Folder or File > Properties > Security tab*). Click "Edit", then click "Users....." . (or if asked "Do you want to continue?", click "Continue" and enter the Admin password). If any boxes are checked in the "Deny" column, click to un-check them. Now, click the box to "Allow" Full Control. Click "OK", "OK" to exit. For details, Also see:  
<http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/cc753659.aspx> or google the keywords above.
- "Take Ownership Shell Extension" Utility <http://www.rizone3.com/archives/1271>

**AERO AND/OR TRANSPARENCY WON'T WORK:** Make sure you have a video card that is supported by Win7/Vista. If you cannot find a Win7/Vista video driver for your Video card online, you may have to buy a new video card that has a driver available.

**BLACK SCREENS (alias: KSOD <black Screen Of Death>, black screen with only a cursor)**

- If this occurs after the Welcome Screen while trying to load a user Account, first reboot and try to log into another account. If that works, go to Control Panel and try creating a new Admin level account, then run an upgrade install from the Windows 7 Install DVD.
- If you do not have any account that you can log in to, try this tip from "Michael J. Richard" [michaelj@vcn.com](mailto:michaelj@vcn.com). *I read about this on the TECH-PROS forum, but have not tried it (5-2011):*

- ✓ First try (*Control-Alt-Del* > in Task Manager click "File" > click "New Task Run" > type Control Panel > click OK)
- ✓ In Control Panel, select User Accounts and create a new Admin account.
- ✓ From the new Admin account, run an upgrade install from the Windows 7 Install DVD
- Also try: <http://www.ghacks.net/2009/12/01/windows-7-black-screen-of-death-fix/>

## **BLUE SCREENS (alias; BSOD <Blue Screen Of Death>, hangs, freezes, or hard failures)**

- Blue Screens are less common with Windows 7 than with XP but the troubleshooting approach is pretty much the same as XP.
- See "Demystifying the BSOD": <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/cc750081.aspx>
- See the BLUE SCREEN section my "TROUBLESHOOTING XP" sheet for BSOD failure tips. Many of the tips and ideas are common to XP, VISTA, and WINDOWS 7.

## **BOOT FAILURE**

- BSOD: If the boot fails with a BLUE SCREEN, use the the information on the BSOD to troubleshoot the boot failure. See the section on BLUE SCREENS above.
- BOOTLOG:
  - ✓ If the boot just hangs with a blank screen or a blinking cursor, and Safe-Mode does boot, try the BOOTLOG.
  - ✓ If booting into Safe-Mode works, use msconfig to create a bootlog on the next regular boot.
  - ✓ After the failure, boot back into Safe-Mode and look at the bootlog file. (C:\bootlog.) ???
  - ✓ See what the last driver that started was. That driver or hardware device is what is failing.
- STARTUP REPAIR: This is a WINDOWS 7 Recovery Tool that can be used to repair some problems. It is best loaded from a WINDOWS 7 Install DVD. If you do not have one (as is most common), try loading per the following Microsoft Article: <http://windowshelp.microsoft.com/Windows/en-US/Help/5c59f8c1-b0d1-4f1a-af55-74f3922f3f351033.mspx>
- RUN CHKDSK FROM CD/DVD to scan & fix corrupted system files using a Windows 7 Install DVD or Win 7 Repair CD. Boot the CD/DVD and when asked, select Repair. Then when a menu comes up, select command prompt. Enter `chkdsk c: /f /r` . If it says volume is locked, add the /x switch.
- See the BOOT FAILURES section of my "TROUBLESHOOTING XP" sheet for more Boot failure tips. Many of the tips and ideas are common to XP, VISTA, and WINDOWS 7.

## **CDBURNERXP: NOT RECOGNIZING SATA CD/DVD Drives:**

- Error message "No compatible drives" occurs on Intel systems with SATA CD/DVD Drives connected in AHCI mode. Drives work with some programs, but CDBurnerXP does not recognize them.
  1. Fix: Download and install the "Intel Matrix Storage Manager" drivers from: [http://downloadcenter.intel.com/Detail\\_Desc.aspx?agr=Y&DwnldID=17882](http://downloadcenter.intel.com/Detail_Desc.aspx?agr=Y&DwnldID=17882)
  2. Fix: Also, switching the BIOS SATA settings from AHCI to IDE Mode will make it work. If you fix it this way, you cannot use SSD hard-drives. They need AHCI for the Trim command to work.

**CERTIFICATE ERRORS:** This includes Certificate errors of any kind, whether while browsing or while attempting to log-in to a wireless router: Check the Time/Date on the affected PC and on the Router itself. This includes Year, Month, Day, Time, AM/PM. *Some routers have their own clock inside which must be set.*

**CHKDSK: TO ERROR CHECK THE HARD-DRIVES:** Run this on all your hard-drives if you experience any strange problems. See my WINDOWS 7 TIPS sheet for details on how to run chkdsk.

**COMMAND PROMPT.** If programs will not run from a Command Prompt, make sure that you first right-click on the Command Prompt Icon and select "Run as Administrator".

**DESKTOP ICONS MOVING** after reboot or refresh. Apparently this is a bug in WINDOWS 7 (& Vista).

Three tricks to try:

1. A Dell tech recommended this one:
  - a. Arrange your desktop icons the way you want them
  - b. Right-click on the desktop > View > click to un-check "Show Desktop Icons"
  - c. Right-click on the desktop > View > click to check "Show Desktop Icons"
  - d. Re-boot the PC.
2. Try turning off "Align Icons to Grid":
  - a. Right-click on the desktop > View > click to un-check "Align Icons to grid".
  - b. If in the future, you want the Icons lined up nicely again, turn on "Align Icons to grid" and then turn it off again.
3. Here is a workaround. Download & install a free Utility called "Icon Restore 1.0" from [http://www.download.com/Icon-Restore/3000-2347\\_4-10163499.html](http://www.download.com/Icon-Restore/3000-2347_4-10163499.html) . Then right-click most any Icon on the Desktop and select "Save Desktop Icon Layout". Then when the bug shows up, you can restore the Icon positions by right-clicking an Icon and selecting "Restore Desktop Icon Layout". *Not much of a fix but it helps.* PS: This download works on all versions of Windows.

**ERROR ANALYSIS:** See these sites for help defining a Windows error: [errorgoblin.com](http://errorgoblin.com), [errorkey.com](http://errorkey.com), [errorhelp.com](http://errorhelp.com), and [eventid.net](http://eventid.net).

## **EVENT VIEWER:**

- (Control Panel > System and Security. Under "Administrative Tools", click "Event viewer > Windows Logs"). Look at both System errors and Application errors. The event viewer displays all errors detected by Windows 7.
- Help analyzing Event Errors (Some features are free and some require a subscription): <http://eventid.net/>

**FIREWIRE DRIVE RUNS SLOW** (See *USB DRIVE RUNS SLOW*)

**HIBERNATE DOES NOT APPEAR IN START MENU:** If the Hibernate option is not there; Open a Command prompt window (Run it Administrator mode), type: `powercfg -h on` <enter>, then: `exit`.  
*NOTE: You may have to turn off Hybrid Sleep in the Advanced Power settings for Hibernate to work.*

## **HOT (CPU or GPU RUNS HOT):**

- Gauge the actual temperatures with the SPEEDFAN Utility.
- Desktops: Clean out any dust with a blower of some kind. Not a vacuum. (Static electricity).
- Laptops: Let a professional clean out the dust or you may damage the fan/s.
- WARNING: CPU's, especially laptop CPU's, can overheat when running a 64-Bit Operating system at full speed. There are usually BIOS options to slow down the max speed (IE: Disable Turbo mode). Windows 7 "Advanced Power Options" also allow you to limit the maximum CPU speed.
- Run SPEEDFAN again to see if it is cooler.
- If a hard-drive is running hot, it needs to be replaced. *Probably a bad bearing.*

## **ICONS: PROGRAM ICONS ARE WRONG OR GENERIC**

- If the Icon for a program is Generic instead of the proper Icon, try this:
  1. If the Icons are in a folder, first drag them to the Desktop
  2. Force a refresh of the Icon Cache with this trick. Go to (Control Panel > Default Programs > Set Your default programs). Pick a program like IE or Firefox and set it as default. This should refresh the entire cache.
  3. Drag any Icons back to their folder.

## INSTALL OF PROGRAM OR DRIVER FAILS.

- When you double click a file to install any software, you must be running in an Administrator User Account. Many programs and drivers just do nothing when double click the file if you are running in a Standard User Account, and do not ask you for the Admin Password as they should.
- See this tutorial: <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/2438651/>

## INTERNET EXPLORER 8 (IE8):

- Cannot connect to the internet to some websites or any strange problems. Try resetting IE back to factory defaults:
  - ✓ Open (*IE8 > Tools > Internet Options > Advanced Tab > click "Reset"*). Then on the Reset IE Settings window, select Reset, then click OK. When done, click "close & restart IE8".
  - ✓ If that does not work, then open IE8 > Tools > Internet Options > Advanced Tab > click "Restore Advanced Settings".
- SLOW TO START: There are problems with IE8 and SpyBot Search & Destroy. On the SpyBot "Immunize" window, you need to remove all IE protections ending with the words (Domains) or (Secure Domains). For more details, here is a link to the spybot forums: <http://forums.spybot.info/showthread.php?t=48815>
- SLOW and OTHER PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS including Cursor Latency: Clear the Java cache and then set the Java cache size to 50 MB. (*Control Panel > Java > General tab > Temporary Internet Files "Settings"*). Click "Delete Files, then set Disk Space = 50 MB. Click <OK>, <OK> to save the new value and exit. (Note: The default is 1000 MB)
- CERTIFICATE ERRORS: Make sure the Date and Time are correct on your PC.
- Repair IE: Try this utility "SF IE Restorator": [http://majorgeeks.com/SF\\_IE\\_Restorator\\_d6521.html](http://majorgeeks.com/SF_IE_Restorator_d6521.html)

**KSOD:** See BLACK SCREENS

## LAPTOP LCD DISPLAY IS DIM:

Go to the Power Plan settings and set the default LCD Brightness higher. (*Control Panel > System and Security > Power Options*). Click "Show additional Plans", then choose a "Power Plan". Set to "⊙ High Performance" (unless you run a lot on batteries). Customize other settings as desired.

## MEMORY DIAGNOSTICS TOOL (*Control Panel > System and Security > Administrative tools > Memory Diagnostics Tool*).

- This Tool tests your RAM.
- Click "Restart now and check for problems". During the Restart, a set of memory tests will run. It could take 30 minutes or more to run. **Do not interrupt the process!**
- When done, it will restart Windows and display test results in the Taskbar Notification Area.

## NETWORKING PROBLEMS:

- The easiest way to get a Windows 7 PC to network with XP PC's is to disable the Homegroup and make sure the Workgroup name matches the XP PC's.
  1. "Leave the Homegroup", then set up sharing manually for each PC (Win7, Vista, or XP) on your network. (*Control Panel > Network and sharing Center > click Homegroup (on the left) > click "Leave the homegroup"*).
  2. To change the Workgroup Name: (*Right-click Computer > Properties > "Change Settings" > click "Change" > enter the desired the workgroup name > click OK.*)
- The harder way is to set up Homegroups to network between Win 7, Vista, and XP PC's. Use this TUTORIAL: <http://blogs.techrepublic.com.com/window-on-windows/?p=1910>
- Share Files and Printers between Windows 7 PC's and XP PC's. Tutorial: <http://www.howtogeek.com/howto/windows-7/share-files-and-printers-between-windows-7-and-xp/>
- For more ideas, see my separate "NETWORKING TIPS" document.

# TROUBLESHOOTING WINDOWS 7

## **“PASSWORD EXPIRED” message comes up from time to time, forcing a new password.**

- Password timeout: Windows 7 Pro/Ultimate/Enterprise systems have a default password age of 42 days. Windows 7 Home premium passwords do not expire by default. After the expiration period, a “Password Expired” message pops up during log-on to the User Account. You are then prompted to enter a new password. (*Note: You can enter the same old password if desired as Windows 7 does not look to see if it is different*).
- To disable password expiration, see my WINDOWS 7 TIPS sheet under PASSWORDS.

**PING: UNABLE TO PING PC SOMETIMES:** (*Go to Device Manager > Network Card > Properties*). Make sure any power saver modes are OFF.

**PSR (Problem Steps Recorder)** This is a utility that is built into Windows 7. It allows you to collect (Record) a series of print screens to automatically Zip to a file so you can mail to a support person. (*click Start > Run > type psr.exe > OK*)

**REPAIR DISK (Windows 7 Repair CD).** See my WINDOWS 7 TIPS sheet.

**SFC:** See System File Checker below:

### **SLEEP/HIBERNATE PROBLEMS:**

- Some hardware drivers can hang and keep a PC from going into Sleep or Hibernate or coming out of Sleep/Hibernate. If the PC works OK in safe mode, it is probably a driver issue.
- If a PC will not come out of sleep. On the Taskbar tab, under Taskbar appearance, clear the box for "Auto-hide the taskbar", and then click OK.  
<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows7/Show-or-hide-the-taskbar>

### **SLOW STARTUP (Slow to Boot):**

- Hold down the Shift Key while booting. This takes you to a semi-safe (diagnostic mode) mode.
- Run msconfig or Starter. Try removing various programs from Startup.

**START MENU PROBLEMS:** See my separate sheet on Customizing the Windows 7 Start Menu.

### **SYSTEM FILE CHECKER: (SFC)**

- This Utility will find missing or corrupt WINDOWS 7 System Files. You may be required to insert your Windows DVD to continue the program. (*Start > Run > enter: SFC /scannow > OK*). If it does not run, go the Command Prompt (In “Run as Administrator” mode, and run it from there. *Note; If it runs successfully, you get no warm fuzzy messages. It just goes away.*
- If Windows will not boot at all, then boot an Install DVD (or the the Repair CD??) and get to the command prompt. From there, enter: SFC /scannow /offbootdir=c:\ /offwindir=c:\Windows  
*Note: This works for Vista as well.*

### **SYSTEM HEALTH REPORT**

(*Control Panel > System and Security > Performance Information and Tools > Advanced Tools*). Read the info on this screen and then click "Generate a system health report" . Best run by an Administrator Account.

### **TASK MANAGER:**

- If the task Manager will not start, it is probably caused from Malware. You can manually re-enable the Task Manager by following these instructions, but they may not work if the malware is still active. <http://antivirus.about.com/od/windowsbasics/ht/taskmanager.htm?nl=1>
- If the Task Manager starts, but is in limited view and the Tabs do not show up, try double clicking the top edge of the Task Manager Windows. If that does not help, then malware is the cause and must be removed.

**USB DRIVE RUNS SLOW (FIREWIRE also):** From an Admin user account, go to (*Device Manager > Disk drives > right-click on desired drive > Properties > Policies Tab*). Change the policy for the drive from “Quick removal” to “Better performance”. *Warning, after this change it is imperative that you never ever unplug the drive without first doing the “Safe removal” process.*

**WINDOWS 7 REPAIR CD:** See my WINDOWS 7 TIPS sheet

**WINDOWS UPDATE PROBLEMS:**

- See the Windows 7 Troubleshooter: (*Click Control Panel > Action Center > Troubleshoot...*)
- See the “TROUBLESHOOTING PC’s” document at [www.jimopi.net](http://www.jimopi.net)

**XP VIRTUAL MACHINE PROBLEMS (Also called XP MODE, VIRTUAL XP MODE, or XPM):**

See the section called “XP VIRTUAL MACHINE in the my “WINDOWS 7 TIPS” sheet at [www.jimopi.net](http://www.jimopi.net)