

Windows ^{xp} Q&As



Q When I'm listening to a CD while working in Microsoft Word or using the internet, the mouse sometimes becomes very sluggish and jumpy. Have you any idea why?

A Something is using so much processor power that the mouse messages aren't getting recognised. There are only two explanations for this. The first is that your CD drive is configured to use programmed I/O (PIO) mode. To check this, right-click My Computer and choose Properties. Select the Hardware tab, click Device Manager and expand IDE ATA/Atapi controllers. Select and right-click the primary and secondary IDE channels in turn, click Properties and then select the Advanced Settings page.

For best performance, Transfer Mode should be set to 'DMA if available'. If this setting is selected but the current transfer mode is PIO, there may be a hardware problem preventing DMA from being used. If so, try changing the drive cables so that the CD drive is on a different IDE channel.

The other possibility is that you're using Media Player with one of the animated graphical visualisations running (shown right). These use a lot of processor power so choose a static graphic like Album Art or use the Classic skin.

Q I like to use the Details view in Windows Explorer but I have to set it each time I open a folder. How can I make this view the default?

A Open a folder and select Details view. Ensure that the details you want are displayed by right-clicking the column header and clearing or setting checkboxes. Click on Tools, Folder Options and select the View tab then click the 'Apply to all folders' button. Under Advanced options you should also ensure that the 'Remember each folder's view settings' option is checked.

Unfortunately, Windows can only remember the settings for a limited number of folders. If you explore different folders, you may find that it forgets the settings of those you haven't used for a while. In this case you'll need to repeat the above steps from time to time.



Q A DOS program I'm trying to run requires that its directory is listed in the Path environment string. How do I set this under Windows XP?

A Open Control Panel, choose Performance and Maintenance, System. Select the Advanced tab then click the Environment Variables button. Select Path in the list then click Edit and add the path of your program to the existing path string, separated by a semicolon. Using much the same technique you can easily add or edit other environment strings, should your program need them.

Q Under Windows 98 there was a handy tool named winipcfg that let me see what my IP address was when I was connected to the web. This tool doesn't appear to be present under XP. Can you suggest an alternative?

A You can download the Windows NT version of winipcfg from www.microsoft.com/windows2000/techinfo/reskit/tools/existing/wntipcfg-o.asp. After you've installed it, type wntipcfg to run it. Alternatively, type ipconfig /all from a command prompt.

Q Windows never remembers my passwords even though I always check the relevant box.

A If the problem relates to passwords for websites then this is due to your cookies policy. Usernames and passwords for websites are usually stored in cookies, so if your browser security options don't allow cookies, or if you delete cookies on a regular basis, your passwords won't be remembered.

Passwords for things such as network or internet access are saved by Windows in a special protected storage area of the Registry. If this isn't working, check that the protected storage service is running. Click Start, Run, type services.msc and hit Enter. Locate Protected Storage in the list of services (shown opposite), right-click it and select Properties. Ensure the startup type is Automatic then click Start.

Stop Regedit remembering its last state

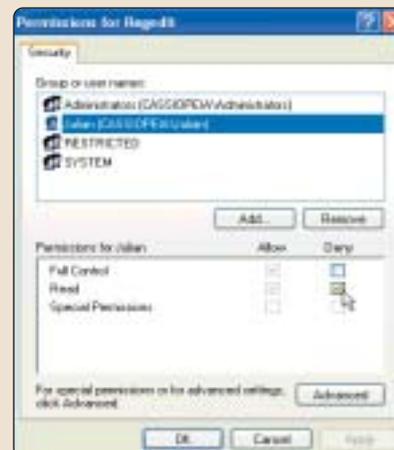


If you're a programmer checking how your program interacts with the Registry, it's useful to have the Registry Editor open showing the key you last looked at. For everyone else, though, it's a pain. If you'd prefer the Registry Editor to start up showing only the root key folders, just like it did in Windows 9x, then follow these simple steps.

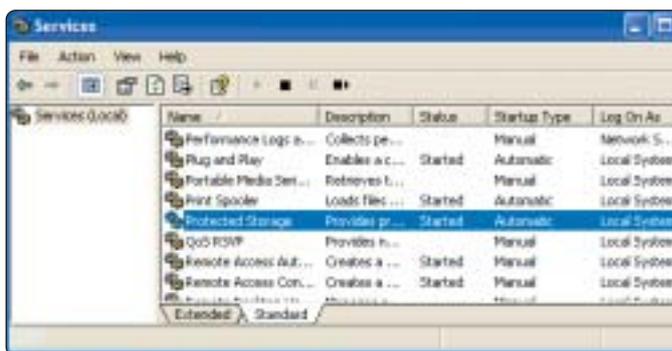
Start the Registry Editor, expand Hkey_Current_User\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Applets and select Regedit. Double-click the value named LastKey in the righthand pane, delete the text and click ok.

Select the Regedit folder again then right-click it and select Permissions. Choose your username from the 'Group

or user names' list. In the list of permissions for that user, tick the checkbox to deny read access. Click Apply, click ok to dismiss the security warning message then close the permissions dialog box by clicking ok once more.



→ Windows XP won't remember your passwords if Protected Storage isn't running



If this doesn't solve the problem the protected storage area may be corrupted, so try deleting it. Ensure you are logged in under a username with Administrator privileges then start the Registry Editor and expand Hkey_Current_User\Software\Microsoft. Select the Protected Storage System Provider folder then right-click it and select Permissions.

On the Permissions dialog box click Advanced and select your username. If the permissions for this username don't include Full Control click Advanced, Edit to change them.

Repeat the permissions-checking steps for each of the subfolders. Now select the Protected Storage System Provider folder, right-click it and select Delete. Click Yes to confirm the operation then close the Registry Editor. Your passwords should now be remembered in future.

 My computer has Windows XP SP1. I installed the game Mafia but when I ran it I was greeted by a pop-up telling me to go to www.ligos.com/

indeo.htm and download Indeo XP for Windows. I understand that a number of games need this to run, and that the problem only affects new PCs and clean installs of XP. Do I have to pay to get this download or can I get it elsewhere?

A With Windows XP SP1, Microsoft suspended distribution of Indeo codecs as part of the operating system. Codecs are software decoders and they are required to enable video images to be displayed. Reputable software developers

usually provide free downloads of codecs for Windows XP SP1 users, but there doesn't seem to be anything of this nature on the Mafia website.

What you do now depends on how honest you are. The only legal option is to pay \$15 and download Indeo XP. This will get you the latest version, Indeo 5.2.

Indeo 5.1 is in the original version of Windows XP, so you could copy the files from a system running this version (or extract them from the installation CD) and register them by dragging and dropping them on to the program regsvr32.exe.

The files you need are ir50_32.dll, ir50_qc.dll, ir50_qcx.dll and iac25_32.ax. They should all be in the Windows System32 folder.

Alternatively, you could try installing an update provided by another manufacturer of a package that requires Indeo codecs. Roxio has provided such an update for users of VideoWave Movie Creator. You can find it by logging on at www.roxio.com/en/support/videowave_mc/software_updates.jhtml. ■

Eliminate persistent tooltips



Tooltips pop up when you place your mouse pointer over a certain icon or tool. However, depending on your graphics card and whether transition effects is enabled, these useful informers can sometimes refuse to go away. To resolve the issue, disable transition effects. Right-click the desktop and select Properties, choose the Appearance tab and click the Effects button. On the Effects dialog box clear the checkbox 'Use the following transition effect for menus and tooltips' then click ok to complete.