3

Introducing Windows Vista

I n this chapter, you'll discover the new interface and features of Vista. As you'll soon see, Windows Vista is quite a change from the old XP!

I'll break down the key new Vista features and show you which flavor of Vista includes which features. Then, I'll show you how to access each of these new features. If you are a longtime Windows user, you might be tempted to give this chapter short shrift—or skip it altogether—but if you want to get the most enjoyment out of your new operating system, I strongly urge you to keep reading.

17 New Look and Functionality

No matter which Windows Vista edition you choose, or have chosen, it will contain a redesigned look and functionality. The taskbar, Start menu, and the new desktop feature, called Windows Sidebar, will likely be the first noticeable changes you'll discover in Vista.

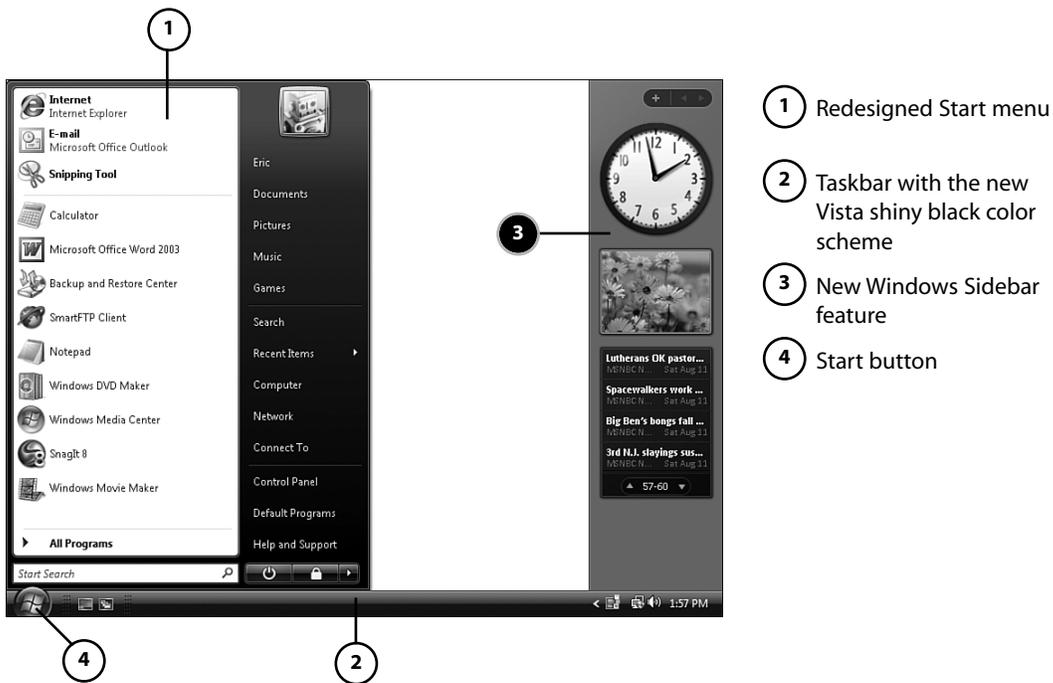Figure 3.1 shows examples of the new taskbar, Start menu, and Windows Sidebar.

1. Redesigned Start menu
2. Taskbar with the new Vista shiny black color scheme
3. New Windows Sidebar feature
4. Start button

FIGURE 3.1

New interface and look in Windows Vista.

Taskbar

Longtime Windows users might remember the drastic change in the look and feel of Windows between Windows 95/98 and XP. Microsoft has again changed the scheme in Vista. Gone is the default blue-and-green color scheme XP users know so well. In Windows Vista, Microsoft

has chosen a fading black color scheme. Although this tones down the look and brightness of Windows, the black scheme projects a sleek interface.

Another major change to the taskbar is the Start button. The usual button containing the word *start* has been replaced with a Windows logo, which you can see in Figure 3.1.

If your system is capable of running the new Aero interface, Vista offers the use of live thumbnails, which provide a preview of the open document or application, simply by hovering your mouse over an application in the taskbar (see Figure 3.2).

① Hovering your mouse over an application in the taskbar…

② …shows a live preview, making it easier to determine the contents of each open file.
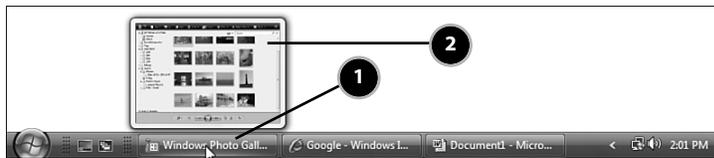

FIGURE 3.2

Example of the taskbar live thumbnails.

The time is still displayed by default on the taskbar in the lower-right corner of the screen. After clicking on the time to bring up the calendar and clock (see Figure 3.3), you'll see that Microsoft has revamped the clock and calendar.
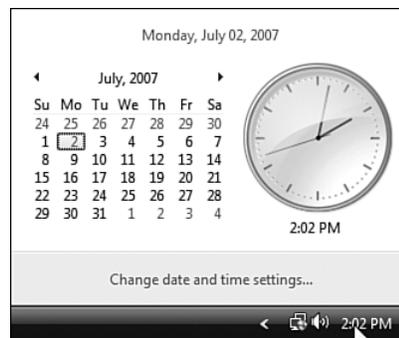
> **✎ NOTE**
>
> You might also notice that you can't change the time and date settings as easily as you could in other versions of Windows. You can, however, now set up additional clocks for other time zones or use the military (24-hour) time format if you desire. For more information, see #77, "Set Up Additional Clocks for Other Time Zones," and #78, "Use Military Time Format for the Clock."

FIGURE 3.3

Calendar and clock in Windows Vista.

Start Menu

As you can see from the example in Figure 3.1, the Start menu now contains a Search box for the new Instant Search feature. Instant Search allows you to quickly find files, programs, email messages, web favorites and history, and more. For more information, see #81, "Search from the Start Menu."

If you are a fan of the Run prompt from previous versions of Windows, you might be disappointed because it's not included on the Start menu by default. You can, however, use the Search box to run commands like you would with the Run applet found in other versions of Windows. Nevertheless, the Run prompt can be accessed in the Accessories section of the Start menu (see Figure 3.4) and can also be added back onto the Start menu if you choose. For more information, see #62, "Run Prompt."
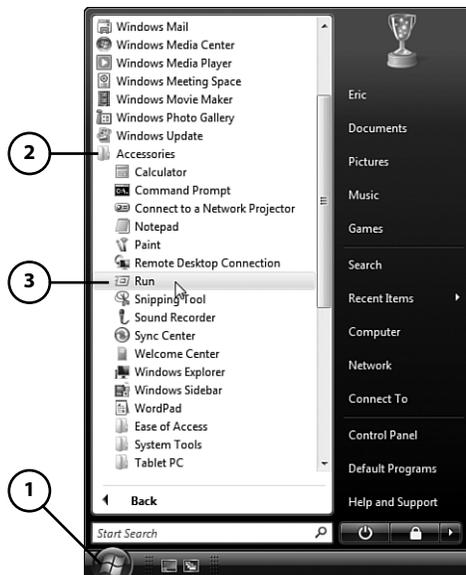
1 Click Start.

2 Choose Accessories.

3 Select Run.

FIGURE 3.4

Run's new location on the Start menu.

Another notable change you'll discover after seeing the Start menu is that the word *My* has been dropped from the names of common items and directories. For example, "My Computer" is now simply "Computer" and "My Network Places" is just "Network." In addition, the My Documents folder is now named after the Windows user. Changes to My Documents are detailed in #51, "My Documents."

🖳 TIP

You can also add these icons (such as Computer and Network) to your desktop. For more information, see #40, "Add the Main Icons."

1 Enable Sleep mode.

2 Lock your PC.

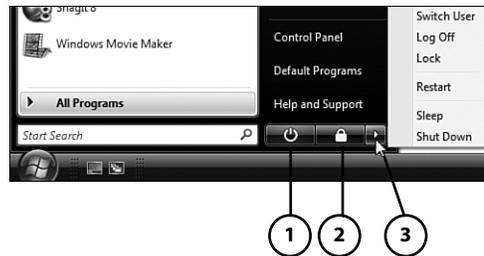**3** Click here for power options.

You'll also likely notice the Turn Off Computer and Log Off buttons have been removed and replaced with other options. The first button on the left, indicated by the power symbol, will put the PC into Sleep mode. Similar to Stand By mode in previous versions of Windows, Sleep mode powers down most of the PC and puts the session into memory so you can resume right where you left off.

The button with the lock will, of course, lock your PC. This option is best used when you want to secure your PC when leaving for short durations. To resume use of the PC, you must press Ctrl+Alt+Delete and enter the Windows account password.

Finally, the other shutdown options are accessible when hovering over the arrow on the right. Figure 3.5 shows an example.

Along with the Sleep and Lock options, this menu also provides the following: Switch User, Log Off, Restart, and Shut Down. These are straightforward, with the exception of Switch User. The Switch User option keeps the current Windows account active when opening another user account, whereas Log Off doesn't. When you switch from one user account to another, you will be prompted for a username and password on each. This is useful if several users need access to the same computer quickly, such as in a business environment.

FIGURE 3.5

New location for the power options in Windows Vista.

After you click on All Programs, you'll notice a big difference. Rather than the menus branching (opening in fly-out menus), they stay contained in the Start menu.

In addition, it now takes a click rather than just a hover to open the Start menu sections. The scrollbar can be used to browse through the items.

Desktop

Other than the slightly larger default icon size (Figure 3.6 shows an example), not much has changed with the actual desktop.
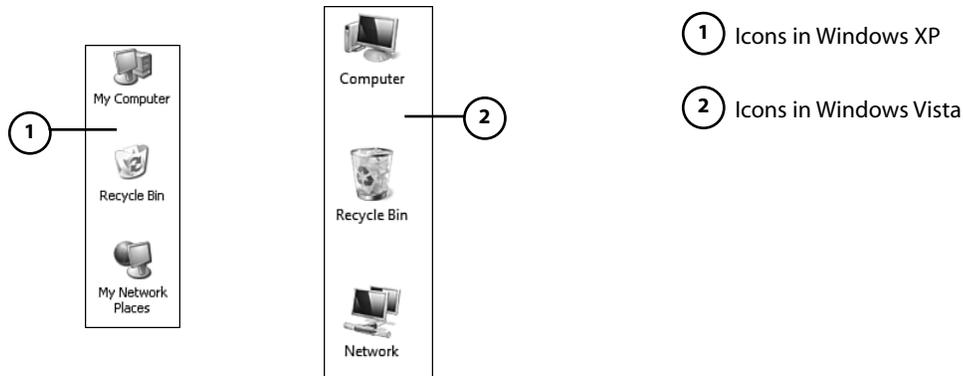

1 Icons in Windows XP

2 Icons in Windows Vista

FIGURE 3.6

Comparison of Windows XP and Vista default icons.

If you're used to having the main icons (such as My Computer and My Network Places) on your desktop, you can easily add them. See #40, "Add the Main Icons," for more information. Remember that these items have been renamed, with the *My* dropped from the name.

Windows Sidebar

Windows Sidebar is a time- and space-saving program that can be displayed on the side of your screen, as shown earlier in Figure 3.1. Windows Sidebar contains your desired gadgets that display and provide accessibility to certain things. Examples of gadgets include personalized slideshows of your photos, news and weather feeds, quick access to contacts and notes, and much more.

For more information on how to use Windows Sidebar, see #75, "Add More Gadgets to Sidebar."

18 Parental Controls

The parental controls in Vista significantly surpass those in earlier versions of Windows, which only provided website-filtering capabilities with the Content Advisor in Microsoft Internet Explorer. In addition to improved website filtering, Windows Vista allows you to

control and monitor the usage of the computer, applications, games, email, and instant messaging. Finally, you can take control of just about anything your children do on a computer, without the need for third-party software.

Controlling Capabilities

Vista's parental controls are a far cry better than those found in XP:

■ Windows Vista web filter

- Allows you to use automatic web content filtering options, including High, Medium, None, and Custom. Choosing Custom allows you to filter based upon desired categories such as Drugs, Tobacco, Pornography, and Bomb Making.

- Allows you to block certain websites and provides options to override automatic web content filtering options if the user is on the allow list.

- Allows you to block file downloads.

■ Time limits

- Allows you to specify exactly (hour by hour) when the user can be logged on to the computer

■ Games

- Allows you to specify whether the user can play games

- Allows you to block or allow games by ratings (such as Everyone, Teen, and Mature) and content types (such as Crude Humor, Blood, Language, and Online Games)

- Allows you to block or allow specific games, regardless of its rating

■ Allow and block specific programs

- Allows you to choose which programs any user on your computer can use; for instance, you might allow your spouse to run any program, but limit your children to only specific programs of your choosing

Monitoring Capabilities

Even more interesting is the monitoring and reporting capabilities of the parental controls in Vista. Figure 3.7 shows an example of the computer activity summary for a Windows user.
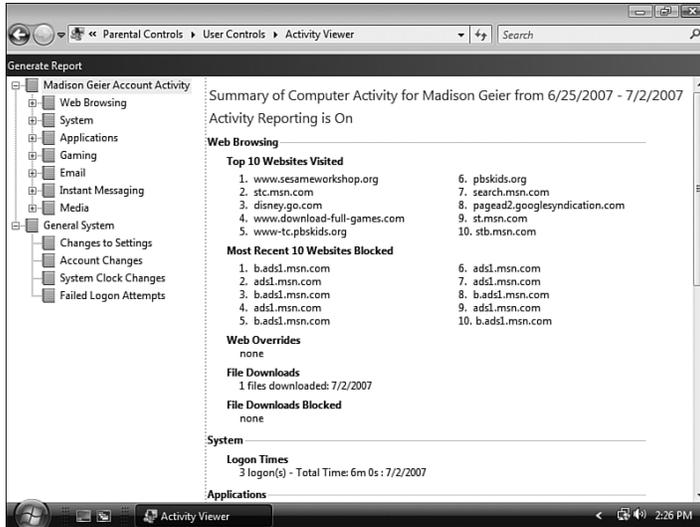
FIGURE 3.7

Example of a computer activity summary for a parental control–enabled user.

Here's a review of all the items contained in an activity report:

- ■ Web browsing
  - Most commonly and most recently visited websites
  - Websites that were blocked because of restrictions imposed by Vista's parental controls
  - Web overrides permitting a restricted action and which administrator allowed it
  - Downloaded files (filename and location on your computer)
- ■ System
  - Date, time, and duration of account sessions
- ■ Applications
  - Recently used or blocked programs
  - Overrides permitting a restricted action and which administrator allowed it

- Gaming
  - Games played on your computer, including duration of gaming session and rating of the game
- Email
  - Received emails, including pertinent details of each message
  - Sent emails, including pertinent details of each message
  - Changes to contact lists along with the details
- Details of instant messaging
  - General instant messaging sessions
  - Web Cam and audio messaging sessions
  - Messaging in games
  - Files and links exchanged during instant messaging sessions
  - SMS messages sent to mobile phones
  - Changes to contact lists along with the details
- Media
  - Media (music, movies, and so on) that were played, including details such as song and album titles and their ratings
- General system
  - Setting changes with details such as which accounts apply to the change and which account performed the change
  - Changes to Windows account settings, including details such as what was changed and which account made the change
  - Changes to the system clock
 - Failed logon attempts

Accessing the Parental Controls

The parental controls can be accessed via the icon in Control Panel.

The Parental Controls screen, as shown in Figure 3.8, will appear listing the Windows accounts, along with a few global tasks on the left and a link to create additional users.

Clicking on an account will open another screen, as shown in Figure 3.9, to edit its individual parental control settings.
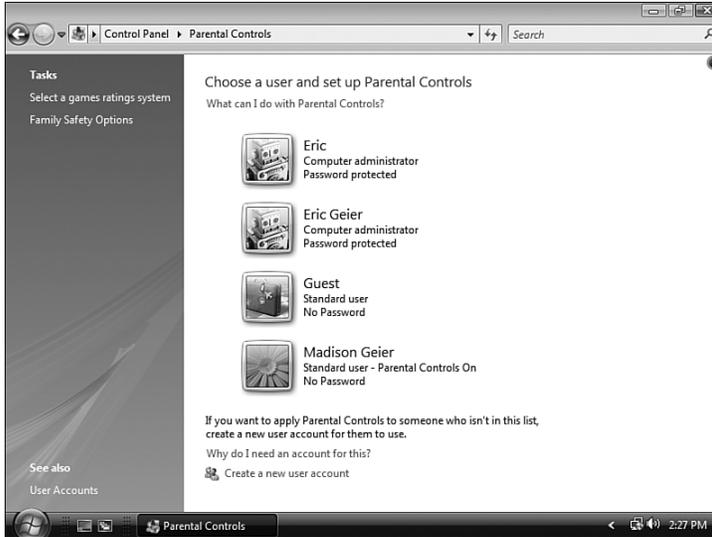
FIGURE 3.8

First screen after opening parental controls.
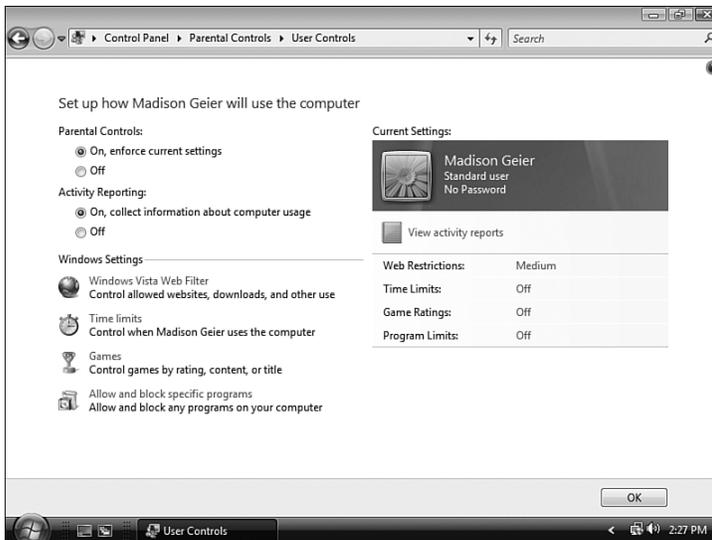
FIGURE 3.9

Screen showing a user's parental control settings.

To enable the parental controls for the chosen account, check the On, Enforce Current Settings option. Then specify if you want to record the activity and make other desired changes to the settings. You can access the settings by clicking the categories in the Windows Settings section. For quick access to certain settings, you can click on the status of the items, on the right side of the window, in the Current Settings section.

19 Windows Defender and Windows Firewall

Windows Vista includes Windows Firewall, just as Windows XP offered, which provides protection against hackers and Internet attacks by regulating inbound and outbound Internet access. Windows Vista, though, offers even more protection from Internet attackers and pests with anti-spyware and adware software called Windows Defender.

Accessing the Security Tools

Similar to Windows XP, Vista includes Windows Security Center, which provides quick status and configuration of security tools and programs. Windows Update and Internet Options are also displayed in the center with Windows Defender and Windows Firewall.

Here's how to access Windows Security Center:

1. Open the Start menu.
2. Click Control Panel.
3. Double-click the Security Center icon.

Figure 3.10 shows an example of the Windows Security Center.

You can also independently access Windows Defender and Windows Firewall via their icons in the Control Panel.


TIP

You can also use Windows Defender on Windows XP computers running Service Pack 2.

To download, go to www.microsoft.com/downloads and search/browse for Windows Defender.

1 Status of security components

2 Links to access individual security components

FIGURE 3.10

Example of the first screen of Windows Security Center.

Touring Windows Defender

After Windows Defender is opened, you can quickly see the status of the program, such as the date of the last update and scan. Figure 3.11 shows an example.
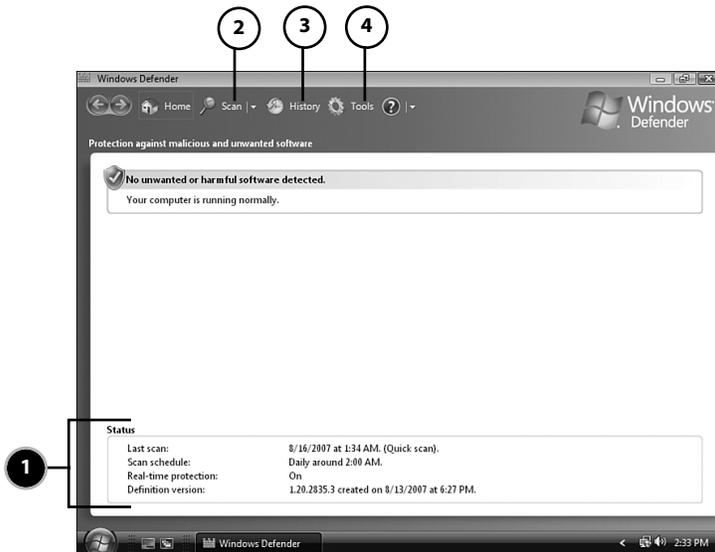
1 Status information

2 Click here for a Quick scan or use arrow for Full System or Custom scans.

3 Click here to see details of past scans and alerts.

4 Click here to change Windows Defender options.

FIGURE 3.11

Example of Windows Defender.

Clicking the Scan button will perform a Quick scan, which checks for spyware and adware in the commonly infected areas of your computer. As pointed out in Figure 3.11, Full System and Custom scans can be executed by clicking the arrow next to the Scan button and selecting the desired option.

The History page, accessed via the History button (shown in Figure 3.11), displays the details of past actions, such as scans and alerts.

Clicking on the Tools button (shown in Figure 3.11) gives you access to settings and items such as automatic scanning and action preferences, scanning exclusions, and quarantined items.

Touring Windows Firewall

Windows Firewall also gives you a quick look at its status, as shown in Figure 3.12. Windows Firewall will report whether it's enabled and providing protection. You also can see a breakdown of your current firewall settings.

1 Status information

2 Click here to configure settings.
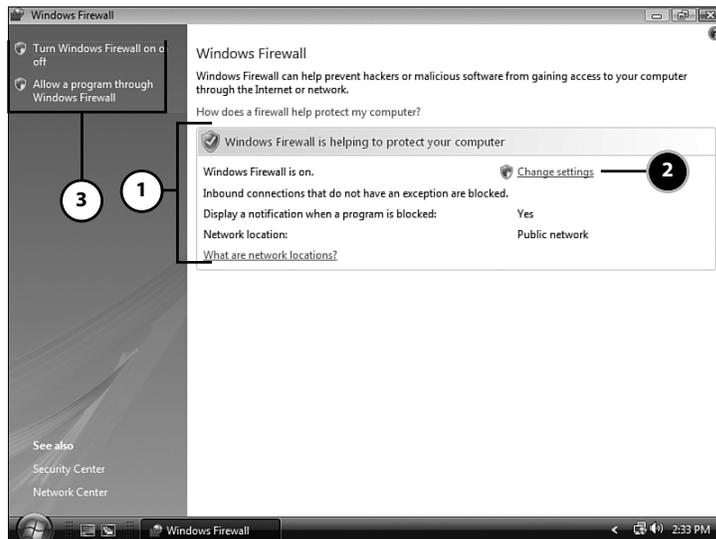
3 Shortcuts to settings

FIGURE 3.12

Example of Windows Firewall.

The Windows Firewall settings can be accessed by the Change Settings link, also shown in Figure 3.12. The Windows Firewall Settings window (Figure 3.13 shows an example) allows you to turn the protection on

and off, exclude certain programs and services from the firewall, and
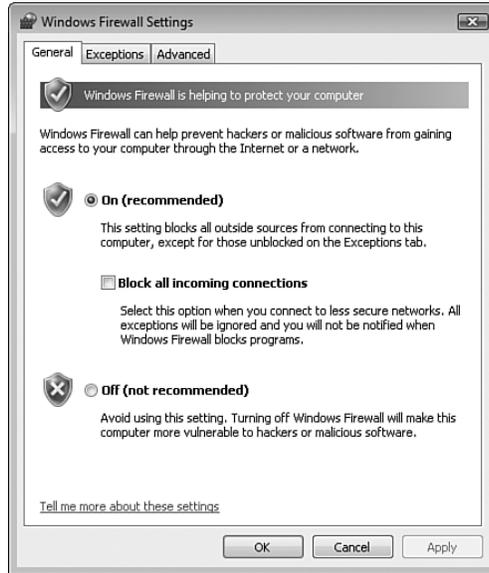choose which network connections to protect.

FIGURE 3.13

Change Windows Firewall settings here.

Figure 3.17 also points out the links that provide shortcuts to certain
Windows Firewall settings.

20   Network and Sharing Center

One of the most obvious and needed changes Microsoft made with
Vista is the increased networking security and improved intuitiveness
of its networking settings. In Windows XP, the networking configuration
features were spread between many different dialog boxes. Vista, how-
ever, consolidates all of its network settings and features under one
applet known as the Network and Sharing Center, which provides a
one-stop shop for all your networking and Internet configuration
needs.

Accessing the Network and Sharing Center

You can access the Network and Sharing Center via many methods:

- ■ Right-click on the Network Status icon in the system tray, as shown in Figure 3.14.

1 Right-click on the Network Status icon in the system tray…
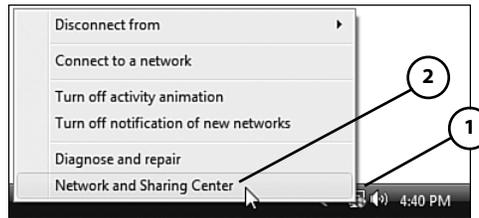
2 …and select Network and Sharing Center.

FIGURE 3.14

Accessing the Network and Sharing Center via the Network Status icon.

- ■ Double-click on the Network Status icon in the system tray.
- ■ Double-click on the Network and Sharing Center icon in Control Panel.
- ■ Click on the Network and Sharing Center button on the toolbar when viewing your network, as shown in Figure 3.15.

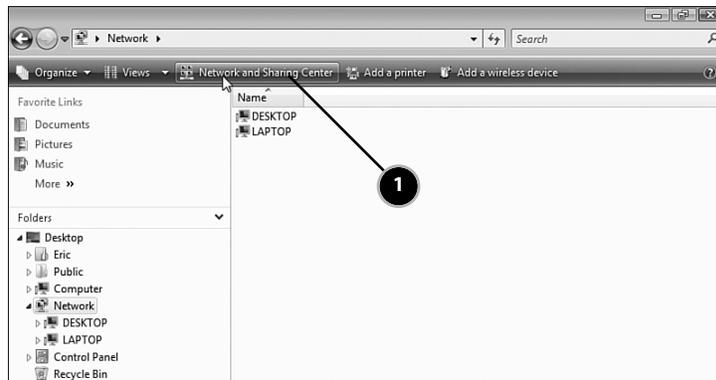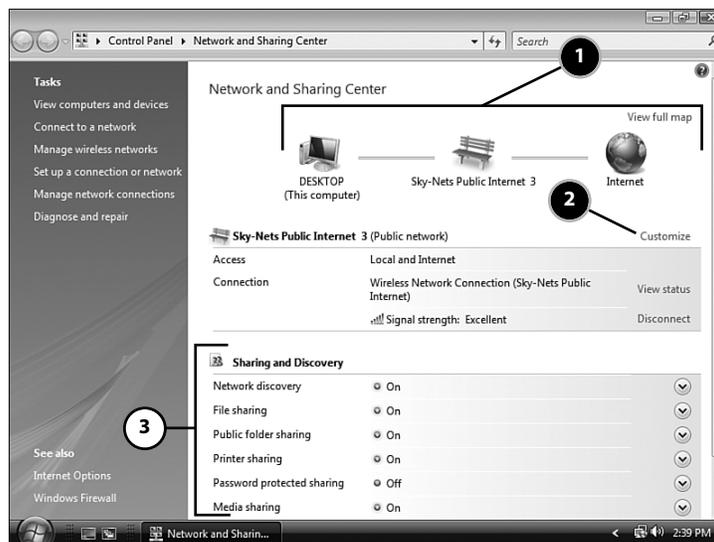**1** Click here to open the Network and Sharing Center.

FIGURE 3.15

Accessing the Network and Sharing Center via the Network window.

Touring the Network and Sharing Center

As you can see in Figure 3.16, the Network and Sharing Center provides visual diagrams and maps of your home or office network. The full map that's accessible from this center provides an easy way to access any shared resources of other PCs and devices on the network.

1 Depiction of the network

2 Click here to customize the network settings.

3 Sharing and discovery status

FIGURE 3.16

Example of the Network and Sharing Center.

Just below the network map in the Network and Sharing Center, you can view and access your connection information. The Customize link allows you to change the name of the network connection, the type (private or public), and the icon given to the network connection, such as the bench you see in Figure 3.16.

Next, you're provided with the status of all the main sharing and discovery settings and the ability to make quick changes, which is a big enhancement from XP.

Another exceptional improvement is the set of links (see Figure 3.17) at the bottom of the window, showing all the files and folders your account and computer are sharing on the network.

As a final point, the tasks pane on the left side of the window provides access to familiar connectivity settings and tasks, as well as a shortcut to the Internet Options and Wireless Firewall settings.

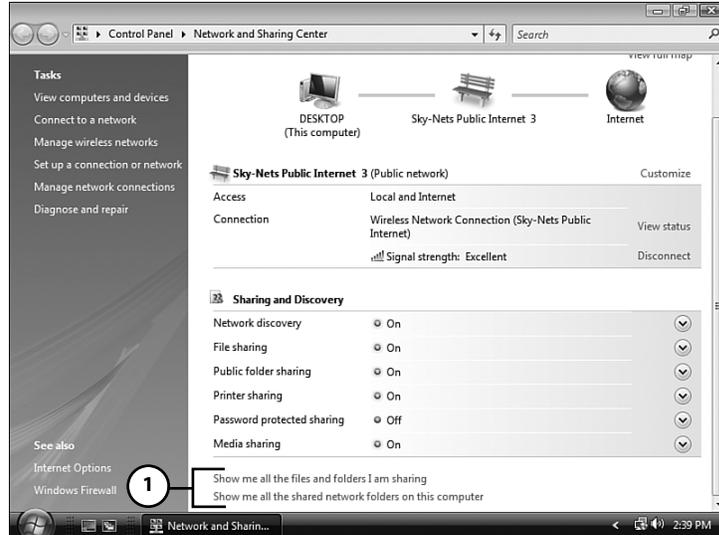① Click these links to see what you're sharing.

FIGURE 3.17

Links in Network and Sharing Center.

New Network Classification Scheme

In Windows Vista, the first time you connect to a network, you must classify its location/type: Home, Work, or Public (see Figure 3.18).
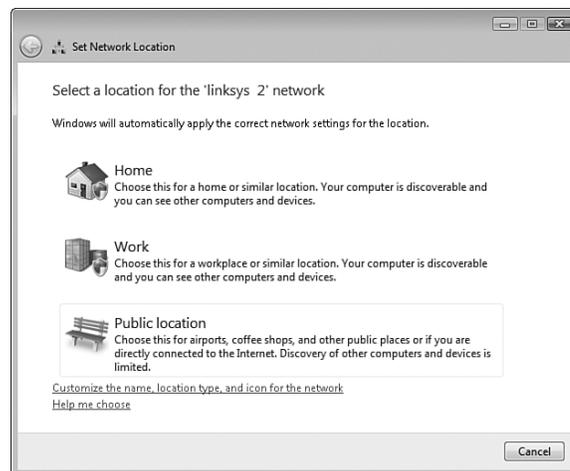

FIGURE 3.18

Example of pop-up window to classify network type.

This new scheme is extremely useful as it automatically modifies the appropriate network settings based upon the location type you choose. For example, suppose you connect to the Wi-Fi hot spot at your local café; you would choose Public location. Then, Vista will automatically disable all network discovery and sharing to protect your documents and privacy while on the unsecured network. Then, suppose you went back home and connected to your home network, naturally classified as a Home location. Windows Vista would then allow network discovery and sharing because you trust the other users on the network.
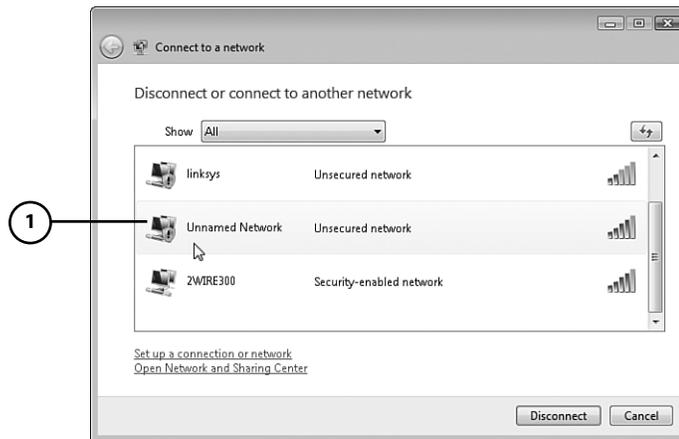
Support for Nonbroadcasting Wireless Networks

Windows Vista makes it easier to use wireless networks that do not broadcast their Service Set Identifier (SSID), also known as the network name. In Windows XP, these types of networks didn't appear on the list of available wireless networks; however, they now appear as unnamed networks in Windows Vista, as shown in Figure 3.19.

FIGURE 3.19

Example of hidden Wi-Fi networks on the Vista network list.

Instead of having to manually add a nonbroadcasting wireless network to the preferred network list to connect, all you have to do in Vista is select the Unnamed Network, click Connect, and enter the SSID when prompted (and enter the security key if encryption is enabled).

You might think that this degrades the security that hidden networks offer; however, the SSID is still needed to connect to the network. In

> **NOTE**
>
> SSID is a sequence of 32 or fewer letters and/or numbers that identifies your wireless network.
>
> As a low-level security measure, some wireless network administrators (in homes and businesses) chose not to broadcast their SSID. This prevents the average PC user with Windows XP from even knowing that their network exists, and hides the SSID from Windows Vista users.

1 Unnamed wireless networks appear in Vista.

addition, not broadcasting your SSID doesn't offer a whole lot of security anyway.

21 Instant Search and Internet Explorer 7

Windows Vista offers better searching methods than any other previous version of Windows. The Instant Search feature allows you to search through a prebuilt index or catalog of defined areas of your computer, such as documents, programs, email messages, web favorites, and history. This method allows for much quicker results. In fact, the new search features are so good, it's probable that you'll find what you are looking for before you're even done typing a keyword into the Search box.

You can use Instant Search via many locations and Windows applications, such as:

- Start menu
- Windows Explorer and Computer
- Windows Photo Gallery (see Figure 3.20)

(1) Type your search terms here and press Enter.

FIGURE 3.20

Instant Search box in Photo Gallery.

For more information on using Instant Search, see #81, "Search from the Start Menu."

Internet Explorer 7 also offers a new search method, called Live Search, for Internet searching. This feature makes it possible to search many different search engines from one field (see Figure 3.21). Not only can you add popular general search engines (Google, Yahoo!, and so on), you can add virtually any website that has search functionality. This offers a very convenient way to search through your favorite sites.

For more information on using Live Search, see #95, "Add Providers to Live Search in Internet Explorer 7."

22 Photo Gallery

Unlike earlier versions of Windows, Vista includes photo and video organization and editing software, called Windows Photo Gallery. This is particularly handy for families with digital cameras and camcorders. Although it might not include all the bells and whistles third-party software packages might offer, it can help you organize and show off those digital photos and videos you probably have scattered about your hard drive.

Figure 3.22 and the following bullets give you a look into the main functions of Windows Photo Gallery.
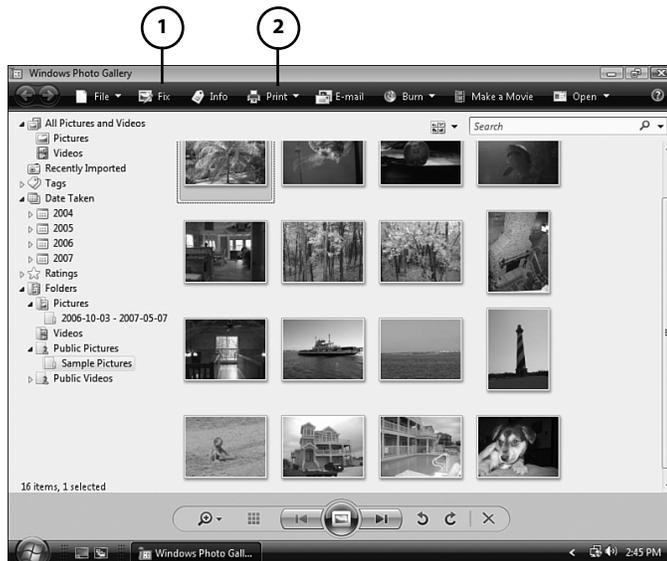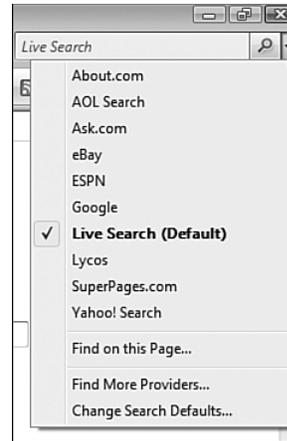
FIGURE 3.21

Example of using Live Search in Internet Explorer 7.

1 Click here to edit and enhance the selected photo.

2 Click here to print selected photos.

FIGURE 3.22

Example of Windows Photo Gallery.

■ **Viewing and organizing**: You can effortlessly browse through your photos and videos in a Thumbnails view, navigating by assigned tags and ratings, date taken, folders, or simply all available media. Hovering over a photo or video will display a larger image for better viewing. In addition, double-clicking on them brings them into the dedicated viewer and is where you can assign the tags and ratings. You can also organize the photos into separate folders by right-clicking on the folders and creating subfolders.

■ **Fix**: Selecting a photo and clicking the Fix button allows you to fine-tune the image by adjusting exposure and color, cropping, and removing red eye. In addition, an auto adjust feature can make automated enhancements.

■ **Print**: Windows Photo Gallery doesn't just offer simple photo printing; it can automatically adjust for printing various sizes, including 4x6, 5x7, 8x10, and wallets. Simply choose a photo (or multiple photos), select the Print menu, and click Print to get started.

■ **Make CD and DVD movies**: Windows Photo Gallery makes it easy to export photos and videos to Windows Movie and DVD makers. This allows you to create movies and presentations of images and clips, which make incredible keepsakes and gifts. You can either select particular media and choose Data-disc or Video DVD from the Burn menu, or click the Make a Movie button.

➡ NOTE

The Windows DVD Maker and other DVD capabilities are only included with the Home Premium and Ultimate editions of Windows Vista. However, when using other editions, you can still use Windows Movie Maker, which you can use to create video CDs or export to your PC.

23 Windows Aero and Windows Flip

All editions of Windows Vista include a new look and functionality, as discussed earlier in #17, "New Look and Functionality." However, if you've chosen Home Premium or better and meet certain system requirements, the Windows Aero interface provides even more enhanced looks and features.

Figure 3.23 shows examples of some appearance enhancements of Windows Aero, such as the live thumbnails on the taskbar, task switch, and translucent title bars on opened windows.

Another feature gained when using Windows Aero is Windows Flip 3D, which offers a method to quickly switch among opened windows and applications. As you can see in Figure 3.24, it gives you live images of the windows you can flip through.
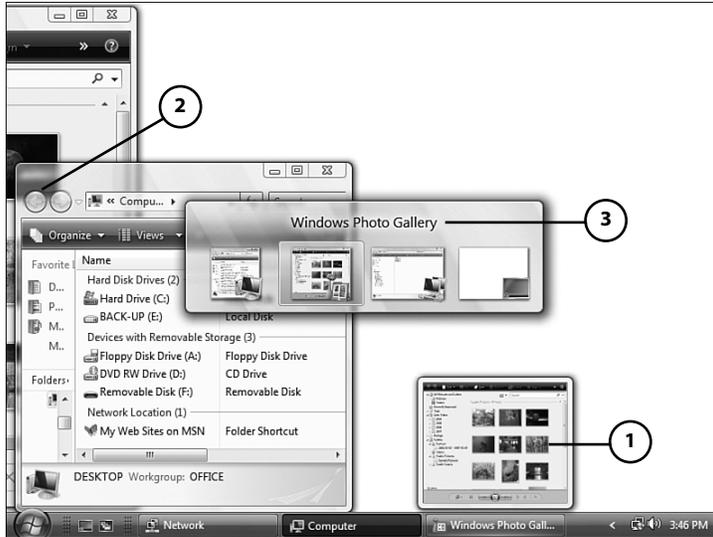
1. Hover over applications for the live thumbnails.

2. Translucent title bars

3. Press Alt+Tab for live thumbnails of opened applications.

FIGURE 3.23

Interface and appearance enhancements to this version of Windows.
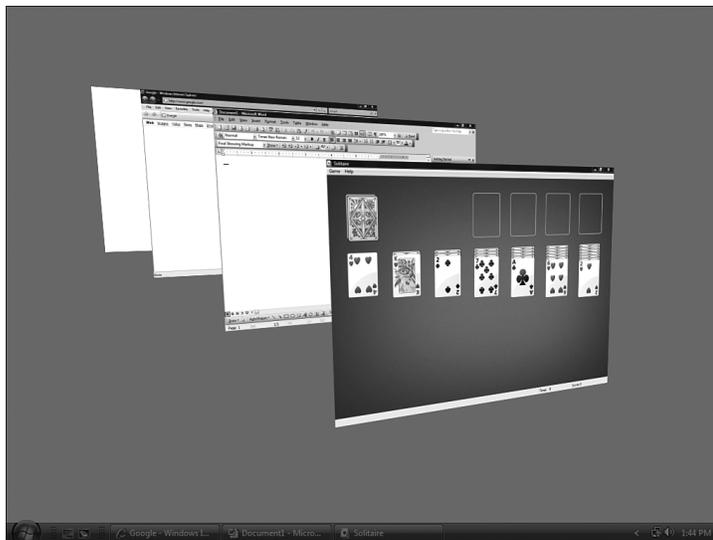

FIGURE 3.24

Example of Flip 3D.

The old method of switching among applications using Alt+Tab is also enhanced by Windows Aero. Instead of just showing the icon and titles of opened windows, it also gives you a live thumbnail image. See Figure 3.23 for an example.

For more information on using Windows Flip 3D, see #94, "Change Windows Using Flip 3D."

24 Windows Mobility Center and Tablet PC Support

Windows Mobility Center and Tablet PC support provides for a better mobile computing experience. Windows Mobility Center is a one-stop shop for settings and preferences related to mobile computing, available on laptops running on all Windows Vista editions except Home Basic.

This center provides access to power management settings, which can help you save battery life and customize your Power buttons. It also contains settings for multiple monitors so you can use an external display for a presentation or extend your desktop among multiple monitors. In addition, specific presentation and network projection features are included to give you a quicker and seamless presentation experience.

Windows HotStart is another feature gained from the Windows Mobility Center. This allows you to specify HotStart buttons on your mobile computer to open particular media files or applications. HotStart buttons can even be used when the computer is sleeping, hibernating, or off, enabling quick access to media and applications, while saving battery life.

Here's how to access the Windows Mobility Center:

1. Open the Start menu.
2. Click Control Panel.
3. Double-click the Windows Mobility Center icon.

Windows Vista provides better Tablet PC support with enhanced handwriting error detection and automatic learning. By using your mouse to write or using an onscreen keyboard, you can enter text without using a standard keyboard. As shown in Figures 3.25 and 3.26, these Tablet PC tools emulate the feel of real keyboarding with Tablet PCs.

FIGURE 3.25

Tablet PC keyboard.
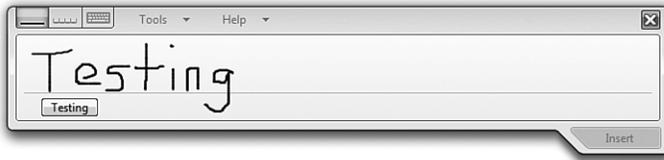
FIGURE 3.26

Tablet PC handwriting to text device.

You can access the Tablet PC tools on the Start menu:

1. Open the Start menu.

2. Click All Programs.

3. Click Accessories.

4. Click the Tablet PC directory.

25 Windows Meeting Space

Windows Meeting Space, available in all Vista editions except Home Basic, allows you to connect with others around you to share files, applications, or control of your entire computer. Although Windows Meeting Space doesn't support connections over the Internet, it is very useful for in-person meetings or a meeting with all participants in the same building.

For example, instead of several people in a meeting gathering around a PC or laptop trying to see the screen, Windows Meeting Space allows people to see the live image of the screen on their own computer, as

shown in Figure 3.27. You can connect with each other over a wired or wireless network or by using a peer-to-peer (ad hoc) wireless connection.
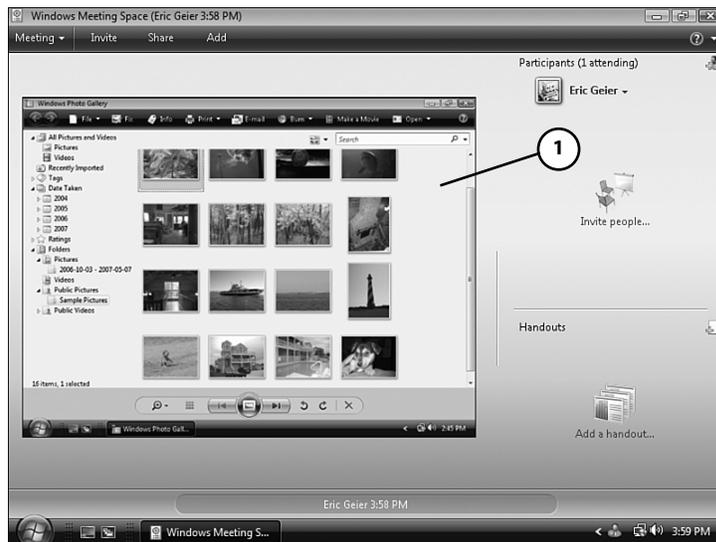
(1) Remote PC's desktop

FIGURE 3.27

Example of viewing the desktop of a participant in a Windows Meeting Space session.

You can access Windows Meeting Space on the All Programs section of the Start menu.

26 Windows SideShow

Windows SideShow is a new technology developed by Microsoft to enable real-time viewing of information, data, and media from your computer, on secondary displays and mobile devices. For example, you could check your email, contacts, and appointments without turning on your main computer.

Windows SideShow is available in all Vista editions except Home Basic.

Compatible Devices

Devices and products compatible with this technology should have a Windows SideShow logo displayed on the box.

The following are a few examples of devices that could support Windows SideShow:

- Laptop lid displays, as shown in Figure 3.28

FIGURE 3.28

Example of a laptop with external Windows SideShow-compatible display; courtesy of ASUS Computer, Inc.

- Keyboards
- Mobile phones
- Digital picture frames, as shown in Figure 3.29

FIGURE 3.29

Example of a Windows SideShow-compatible digital picture frame; courtesy of I-Mate, PLC.

Gadgets

Gadgets (or add-ons) give Windows SideShow devices their functionality. Windows Mail and Windows Media Player are two gadgets that are automatically included with Windows Vista. Using the Windows Mail gadget, for example, allows you to view your email messages from Windows Mail on your Windows SideShow device.

There are many more gadgets you can install for additional functionalities, such as the following:

- Picture viewers
- Weather applications (such as WeatherBug)
- Feed and RSS readers
- Support for email services (such as GMail)
- Stock market tickers

Keep in mind that the compatibility of gadgets is dependent upon the Windows SideShow device.

## Installing and Setting Up Devices

For Windows SideShow devices separate from your computer, you must install/set up the device with your computer. You should follow the vendor or manufacturer directions. Then after the device installation, you can customize your device and configure the gadgets.

Here's how to access the Windows SideShow settings:

1. Open the Start menu.
2. Click Control Panel.
3. Double-click the Windows SideShow icon.

27 Windows Automatic Backup

For Windows Vista Home Basic and Home Premium users, Windows Automatic Backup (shown in Figure 3.30) is included to help protect your personal files and documents against accidental deletion and loss. You can set up Windows Automatic Backup to periodically copy your personal files and documents to another location, such as a secondary hard drive, flash drive, or network folder.
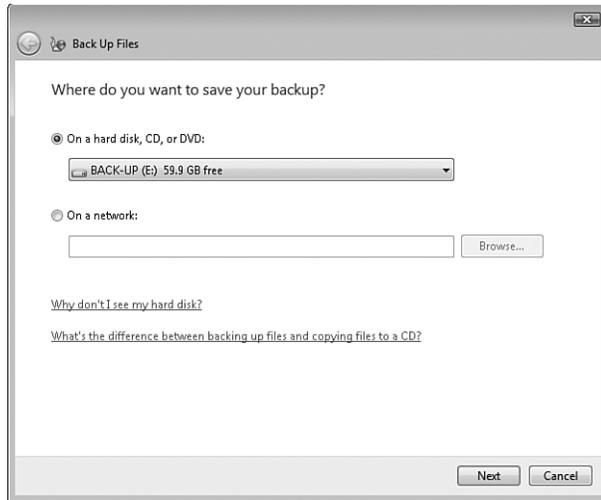
FIGURE 3.30

Windows Automatic Backup.

Your computer's system and program files, Windows settings, and applications are not included in the backup. This is because Windows Vista and your applications should be able to be reinstalled with your CDs and DVDs, whereas your personal files and documents might not be replaceable.

If you do experience system problems or discover you accidentally deleted or modified a file, you can also use the restore functionality of Windows Automatic Backup.

Here's how to access the Windows backup features:

1. Open the Start menu.

2. Click Control Panel.

3. Double-click the Backup and Restore Center icon.

> **TIP**
>
> Keep in mind another feature called System Restore basically provides the backup and protection of your system files, which is skipped in Windows Automatic Backup.
>
> You can quickly access this feature by entering "System Restore" into the Search box on the Start menu and pressing Enter.

28 Windows Complete PC Backup and Restore

For Windows Vista Business and Ultimate edition users, Windows Complete PC Backup and Restore (shown in Figure 3.31) is included to

help protect your system against accidental deletion and loss. Unlike Windows Automatic Backup (for lower Vista editions), Windows Complete PC Backup and Restore provides total backup capabilities. The system files and your applications can also be preserved with your personal files and documents.
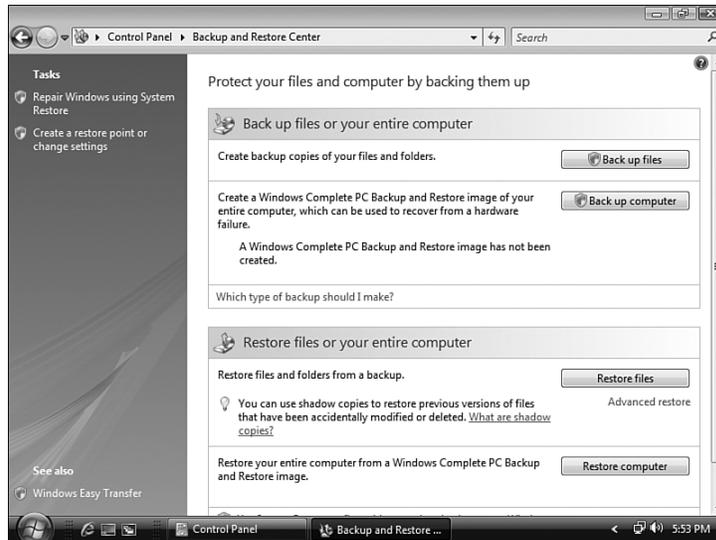

FIGURE 3.31

Windows Complete PC Backup and Restore.

In addition to restoring your entire system in an event of a serious system issue, you can also apply the backup to another PC. This is convenient if you need to send your PC in for repair or you would just like to change PCs.

Here's how to access the Windows backup features:

1. Open the Start menu.
2. Click Control Panel.
3. Double-click the Backup and Restore Center icon.

29 Windows Media Center

Windows Media Center is an innovative application, available in the Home Premium and Ultimate editions, that takes your media viewing

and presentation to another level. Beyond the photo slideshows that make images come to life and the music explorer that displays the album art and information, Windows Media Center allows you to record TV and movies. If you don't have a TV tuner loaded in your PC to do the recording, you can still view previews and clips from many popular shows and cable networks.

You can even display the media from your computer to your TV, using a wireless or wired network and an additional piece of hardware called a Media Center Extender. You then can use Windows Media Center on your TV, just like you would in front of your PC. However, you can more practically display and present your pictures and videos, from the comfort of your living room.

Accessing Windows Media Center

You can open Windows Media Center from the Start menu:

1. Open the Start menu.
2. Click All Programs.
3. Click Windows Media Center.

Touring Windows Media Center

Windows Media Center will open to the main menu (shown in Figure 3.32), where you can choose the desired media type. You can use the arrows that appear when hovering on the top and bottom of the list to scroll through the media types. Then, you can use the left and right arrows to scroll through the options for the particular media type.

You can use the left arrow, in the upper-left corner of the screen to return to the previous screen. In addition, you can return to the main menu by clicking the Windows Media Center icon.

> **TIP**
>
> You can choose from many brands of Media Center Extenders. You can use networked digital media players, such as an Xbox 360 or other digital media receivers (DMR) from brands like D-Link and Linksys.
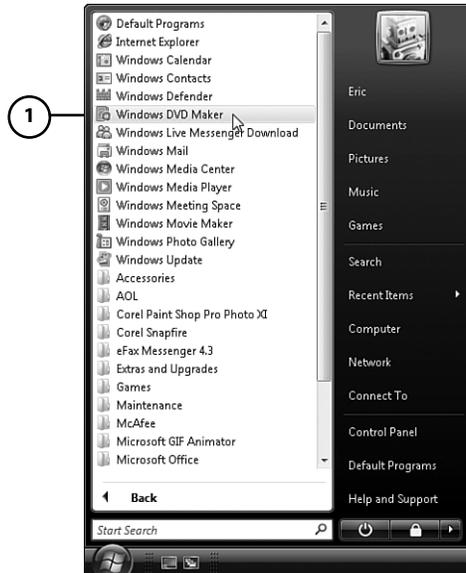
FIGURE 3.32

Windows Media Center.

30 Windows DVD Maker

Windows Vista Home Premium and Ultimate editions come with the Windows DVD Maker. This application allows you to create DVDs of video and photo slideshows to view from your TV. You can even create custom menus and play your favorite tunes during the slideshows. These DVDs can make irreplaceable keepsakes and gifts for the family.

You can access the Windows DVD Maker on the Start menu:

1. Open the Start menu.

2. Click All Programs.

3. Click Windows DVD Maker, as shown in Figure 3.33.

① Click here to open
   Windows DVD Maker.

FIGURE 3.33

Opening Windows DVD Maker.

31 Games

Even the long-beloved Windows games (such as Solitaire and Minesweeper) have been redesigned and enhanced with better graphics and sound effects.

The following games are included with all Windows Vista editions:

- Freecell
- Hearts
- Minesweeper
- Purble Place
- Solitaire
- Spider Solitaire

All the games except Purble Place (see example in Figure 3.34) were in Windows XP. This is a nice addition to the Windows games as it's great for younger users, 6 years and up. The three different games challenge your memory and matching skills.

> **NOTE**
>
> The Internet games that were included with Windows XP have been removed from Windows Vista. You can, however, still access those games and more at http://zone.msn.com.

FIGURE 3.34

Purble Place game included with Windows Vista.

Four new premium games are also included with Windows Vista Ultimate and Home Premium editions:

- Chess Titans
- Mahjong Titans
- InkBall
- Windows Hold'em (Ultimate only)

You can access all the Windows games from the Start menu:

1. Open the Start menu.
2. Click All Programs.
3. Click the Games directory.

32 Windows Fax and Scan

Available in the Business and Ultimate editions, Windows Fax and Scan (shown in Figure 3.35) is an improved and enhanced version of the fax

services Windows XP offered. You can now create cover sheets onscreen to be used with your fax or include files to be faxed. Of course, scanning capabilities have also been integrated. In addition, improvements have been made, such as support for scanning documents to include with faxes and support for network-connected scanners.
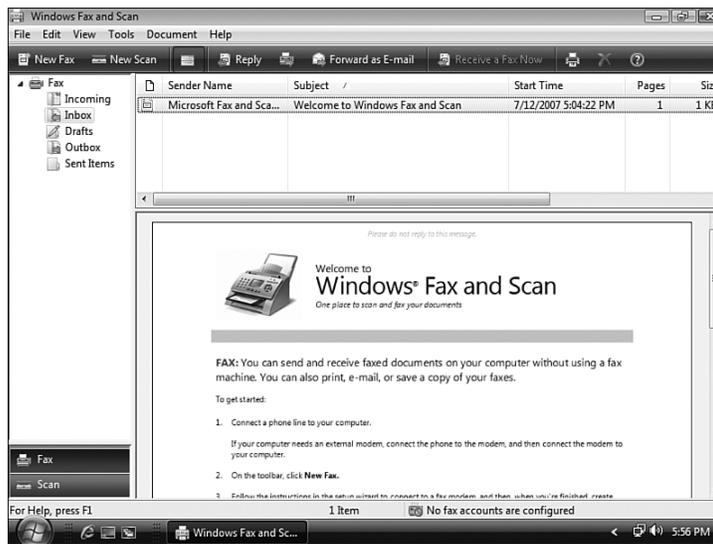

FIGURE 3.35

Windows Fax and Scan.

33 Remote Desktop Connection

Another feature only available to Windows Vista Business and Ultimate users is Remote Desktop Connection, shown in Figure 3.36. Just like in Windows XP Professional, Remote Desktop Connection allows you to connect to other PCs on your network or over the Internet.

Remote Desktop Connection takes network sharing to another level. Rather than just being able to view and use files from other computers, Remote Desktop Connection allows you to view a remote computer's desktop just as if you were sitting in front of the computer. Therefore, you could use applications in addition to files and documents.

FIGURE 3.36

Remote Desktop Connection.

For example, you could periodically work from a laptop in your home or office, but use applications and files from your desktop PC.
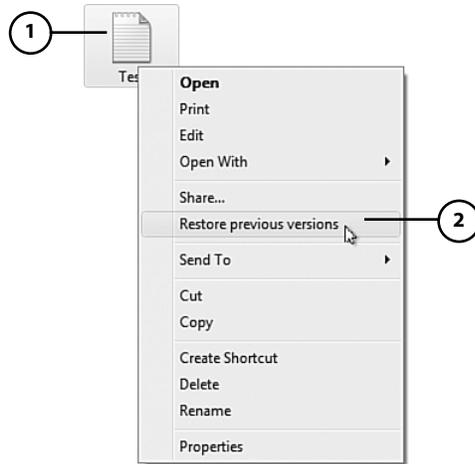
34 Shadow Copy

Another data-protection tool you can use among other traditional system backup and safeguard techniques is Shadow Copy. It is available and enabled by default in Windows Vista Business and Ultimate editions. Shadow Copy is particularly useful in helping recover previous versions of files. For example, when you accidentally save over a file or notice you've made changes to files that you now regret, you can easily revert to other saved versions. A few clicks and the file will appear just as it did back when it was saved days or months ago.

Shadow Copy works in conjunction with System Protection, and its System Restore features. Therefore, System Protection must be enabled for Shadow Copy to work. Shadow copies of files are made when restore points are saved, typically every day.

TIP

The System Protection features are hard-drive independent; therefore, you would need to turn on System Protection for each hard drive and/or partition.

To access the System Protection settings, right-click the Computer icon on the Start menu or desktop, select Properties, and click the System Protection link under the Tasks pane on the left.

Here's how to access the Shadow Copy feature:

1. Right-click on the file or folder to restore.

2. Select Restore Previous Versions, as shown in Figure 3.37.

① Right-click on a file or folder.

② Select Restore Previous Versions.

FIGURE 3.37

Using the Shadow Copy feature for a particular file or folder.

35 Windows BitLocker Drive Encryption

Windows BitLocker Drive Encryption, only available in Windows Vista Ultimate, helps secure your data and documents in case your computer is lost or stolen. By encrypting the entire Windows volume, BitLocker Drive Encryption ensures no one can break into Windows and retrieve user information and documents.

This feature is incredibly valuable if you store sensitive data on your computer, such as business and customer data or personal banking information, especially on laptops, which can be easily stolen or misplaced.

Here's how to access the Windows BitLocker Drive Encryption settings:

1. Open the Start menu.

2. Click Control Panel.

3. Double-click the BitLocker Drive Encryption icon.

36 Language Packs

The language packs offered by Microsoft for Windows Vista Ultimate allow you to set the entire interface of Windows to another language. It is even user account specific, so you can set different languages for the individual users on the same PC.

The language packs can be downloaded from the Windows Ultimate Extras section on the Windows Update website:

www.update.microsoft.com

Here's how to access the language settings (such as to remove a language pack):

1. Open the Start menu.
2. Click Control Panel.
3. Double-click the Regional and Language Options icon.
4. Click the Keyboards and Languages tab.
5. Refer to the Display language section, as shown in Figure 3.38.

FIGURE 3.38

Display language section.