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8 TIMESAVING TIPS FOR WINDOWS VISTA AND THE 2007 MICROSOFT OFFICE RELEASE

By [Stephanie Krieger, Document Production Expert](#)



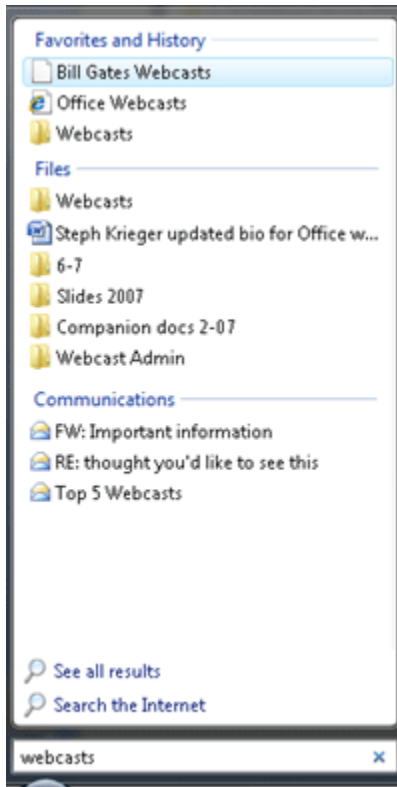
No matter what your computer experience, when you start using new versions of the software you most depend on, it can take some time to discover favorite new features and timesavers. So, think of this article as a shortcut to one great new shortcuts.

While no single article could possibly include them all, each of the tips that follow either does more than I expected at first glance or simplifies something I need to do regularly.

FIND WHATEVER YOU NEED, WHEN YOU NEED IT

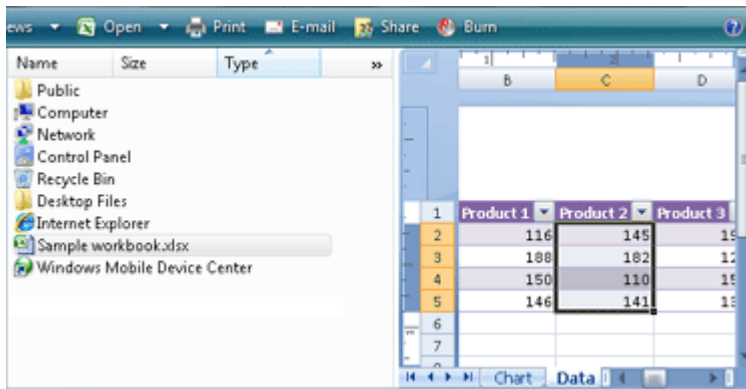
You need to find information in a document you recently reviewed, but don't recall the document name or location. Or, perhaps that information was actually in an e-mail message or on a Web site you recently visited. Windows Vista Instant Search doesn't care where your information is. Like a loyal bloodhound, Instant Search will find almost anything you seek.

Just type one or more keywords in the search box at the bottom of the Start menu and then click the magnifying glass icon that appears beside the box. Within seconds, the closest matches for your search appear right in the Start menu, categorized by type of content. For example, in the image that follows, notice that the results for my keyword webcasts include Web sites I've recently visited, some documents, and several e-mail messages. If you don't see what you need in those immediate results, click See All Results to see all relevant files, Web pages, e-mail messages, and e-mail attachments. Or, to search the Internet for your keywords, click Search the Internet and Windows Vista takes you directly to Web search results for your keywords on Live.com (Windows Live Search, formerly MSN Search).



VIEW AND COPY DOCUMENT CONTENT WITHOUT OPENING THE DOCUMENT

Need to check some figures on one of several sheets in a Microsoft Office Excel 2007 workbook or copy some content from a Microsoft Office Word 2007 document? Don't spend extra time opening the program and then opening your document. Windows Explorer in Windows Vista offers a new Preview pane that enables you to view all parts of your document, and even copy content, directly from Windows Explorer. Notice, for example, the data selected in the preview of a sample Excel workbook in the image that follows.



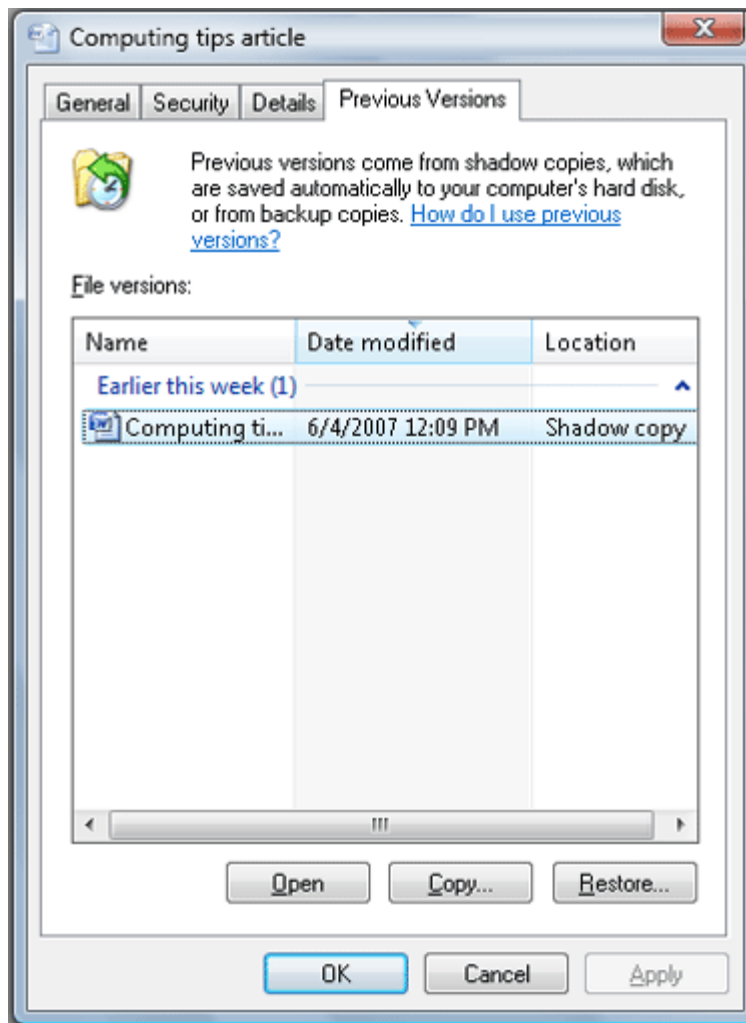
To open the Preview pane, on the Start menu click Computer to open a Windows Explorer window, or press Windows+E. On the Windows Explorer toolbar, click Organize, point to Layout, and then click Preview. Note that once the Preview pane is open, you can drag the left edge of the pane to reduce or increase its size.

RESTORE PREVIOUS FILE VERSIONS

You're revising an important document and realize that the content you deleted an hour ago is information you still need. Are you out of luck? Do you have to recreate it? If you're running Windows Vista Ultimate or Business editions, you could be in luck. These editions of Windows Vista include a shadow copy feature that enables you to access or restore previously saved versions of a document.

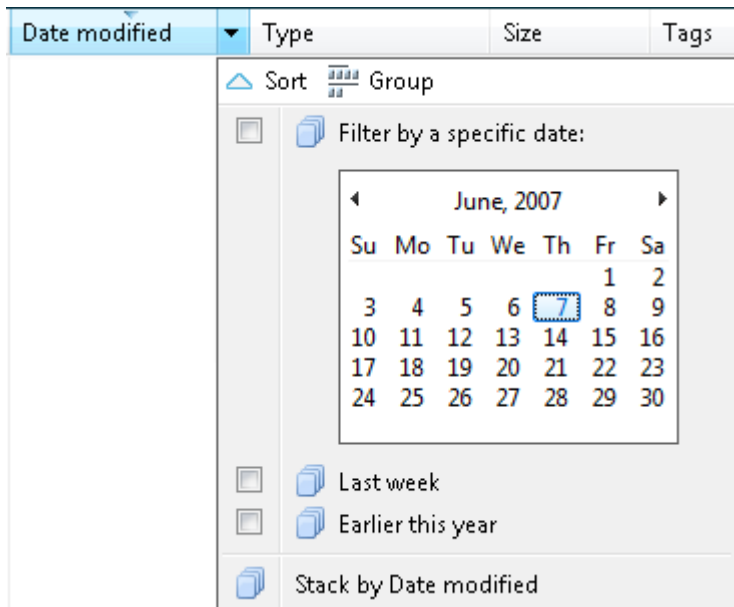
To see if a shadow copy exists for your document, do the following in Windows Explorer:

1. Right-click the document and then click Properties. (Note that you can also access Properties from the Organize button on the Windows Explorer toolbar.)
2. In the Properties dialog box, if the shadow copy feature is available in your edition of Windows Vista, you'll see a Previous Versions tab. When you click the Previous Versions tab, Windows Vista searches for available shadow or back-up copies of your file, as you see in the image that follows.



FIND FILES MORE EASILY WITH NEW SORT AND FILTER OPTIONS

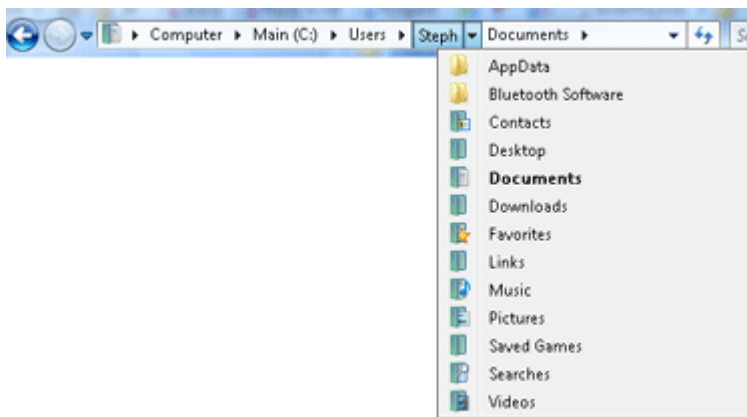
If you're like most computer users, including myself, you may often save documents and other files to the same folders, so that you have a tremendous amount of files in a single location. Windows Vista has a number of new tools to help you organize and locate folder content more easily, but my favorite is the set of new sort and filter options you get for any folder. When you open a folder in a Windows Explorer, point to any column heading (such as Name or Date Modified) and you'll see a dropdown arrow. Click that arrow for a pop-up menu of options including the ability to sort, filter, group, and stack the files. For example, take a look at the options available for the Date Modified fields shown in the following image.



BROWSE FOLDERS QUICKLY AND EASILY

In addition to pop-up menu options for Windows Explorer column headings, Windows Explorer in Windows Vista categorizes the file path for you in the Address Bar, so that you can easily find your way to or from any folder on your system.

As you see in the image that follows, just click the dropdown arrow beside any folder name in the file path to access a list of available subfolders.



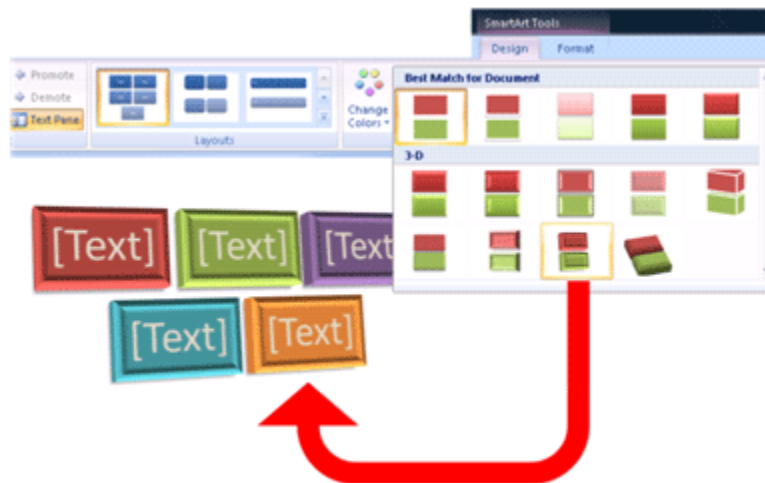
To access or copy the full path name in traditional format, just click the empty space in the address bar to the right of the last folder in the path. When you click, the full path name will appear, selected, as you see in the next image.



SEE YOUR FORMATTING BEFORE IT HAPPENS

If you're already using the 2007 Office release, you know that Windows Vista does not have an exclusive on cool, new features. One of my favorite new timesaving tools in the 2007 Office release is Live Preview.

Just point to an entry in most formatting galleries across Word, Excel, and PowerPoint to automatically see what that selection will look like applied to your document. For example, point to a document theme in the Themes gallery (available on the Page Layout tab in Word or Excel, or the Design tab in PowerPoint) to see how applicable theme colors, fonts, and effects will look applied to your active document. Or, select a SmartArt diagram and then point to an entry in the SmartArt Styles gallery to see how that style will look applied to your diagram.



With Live Preview, you no longer have to apply formatting to see how it will look in your document. Just point to entries until you see the one you like, and then click once and you're done.

MIX AND MATCH YOUR FORMATTING ACROSS OFFICE 2007 PROGRAMS

In previous versions of Microsoft Office, you could copy Word styles from one

document to another, copy colors from one Excel workbook to another, or copy masters from one PowerPoint presentation to another. But, what if you wanted to use the same formatting that's in your Word document in a related PowerPoint presentation or Excel workbook? You'd need to recreate that formatting, of course.

The 2007 Office release introduces Document Themes, which enable you to apply coordinated sets of colors, fonts, and graphic effects to an entire Word, Excel, or PowerPoint document with just a click. The same themes (including custom themes you create) are available in all three programs, so that you can easily coordinate all of your documents. What's more, you can apply a theme from any existing 2007 release Word, Excel, or PowerPoint document to any other document in any of the three programs.

To do this, on the Page Layout tab in Word or Excel, or the Design tab in PowerPoint, click Themes and then click Browse for Themes as you see here.



The Choose Theme or Themed Document dialog box will open, where you can select any Word, Excel, or PowerPoint file, as well as any theme file, to apply its theme to your active document.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO DIVE IN: WHAT YOU FIND MIGHT AMAZE YOU

Getting up to speed on a new version of a software program can be daunting in the midst of your everyday deadlines. But, as you use Windows Vista and the 2007 Office release, don't be afraid to explore new features. So many new timesavers and additional capabilities exist that you're bound to find your own new favorites and perhaps open up some surprising new

possibilities. For a few examples, check out the 2007 Office release features that follow.

- Excel: Convert a data range to an Excel table in just two clicks and get a myriad of new tools for working with data, such as the ability to add a formula to an entire column of data in one step.
- Word: Build a document more quickly than you may have ever imagined. Just click to insert a complete formatted cover page, header, or table of contents. Using the new Document Building Blocks capability, you can build a document using pre-created pieces of content, including custom content that you can save and reuse.
- PowerPoint: Using the new PowerPoint Photo Album feature, you select your photos and your preferred layout, and PowerPoint automatically creates the album for you.



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Stephanie Krieger is a Microsoft Office System MVP as well as author of the books *Advanced Microsoft Office Documents 2007 Edition Inside Out* (February 2007) and *Microsoft Office Document Designer*. As a professional document consultant, she has helped many global companies develop enterprise solutions for Microsoft Office and taught numerous professionals to build great documents by understanding how the Office programs “think.” Stephanie writes regularly for several Microsoft Web pages and frequently delivers Microsoft webcasts. Visit her blog, arouet.net, for Microsoft Office tips as well as information about new and upcoming publications and webcasts.