

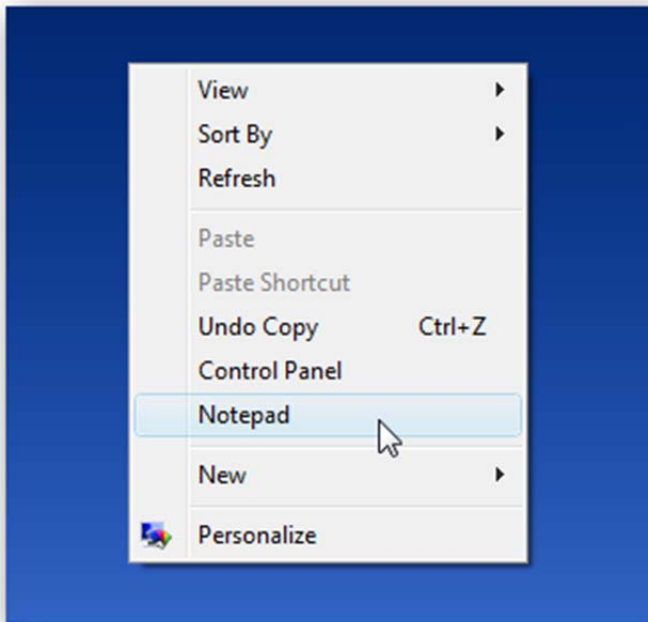


ADD ANY APPLICATION TO THE DESKTOP RIGHT-CLICK MENU IN VISTA

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We've previously written about [how to clean up your messy Windows context menu](#), and recently we've written about [how to add the Control Panel to the desktop menu](#), but instead of writing separate articles for each application I'm just going to show you how to add anything to the menu that you'd like.

If you don't know what we're talking about, I mean the menu that shows up when you right-click on the desktop:

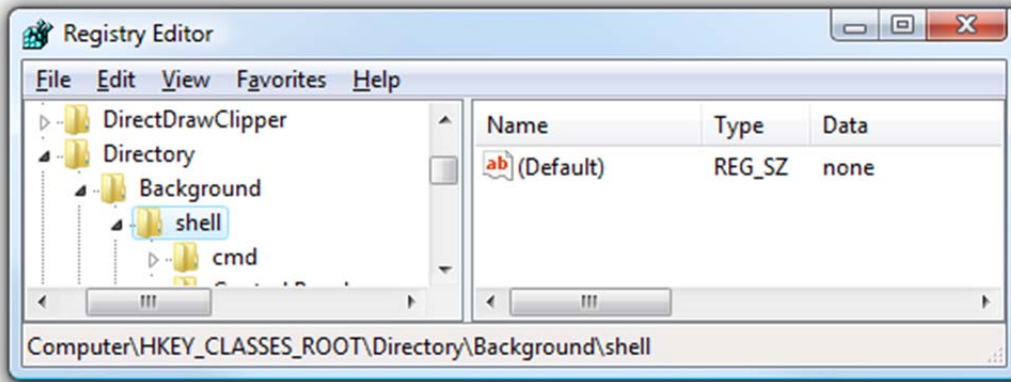


For today's lesson we'll show you how to add Notepad to the menu, but you could add any applications you want instead.

Step 1: Browse to the Registry Key

The first thing you'll want to do is open up regedit.exe through the start menu search or run box, and then browse down to the following key:

HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT\Directory\Background\shell

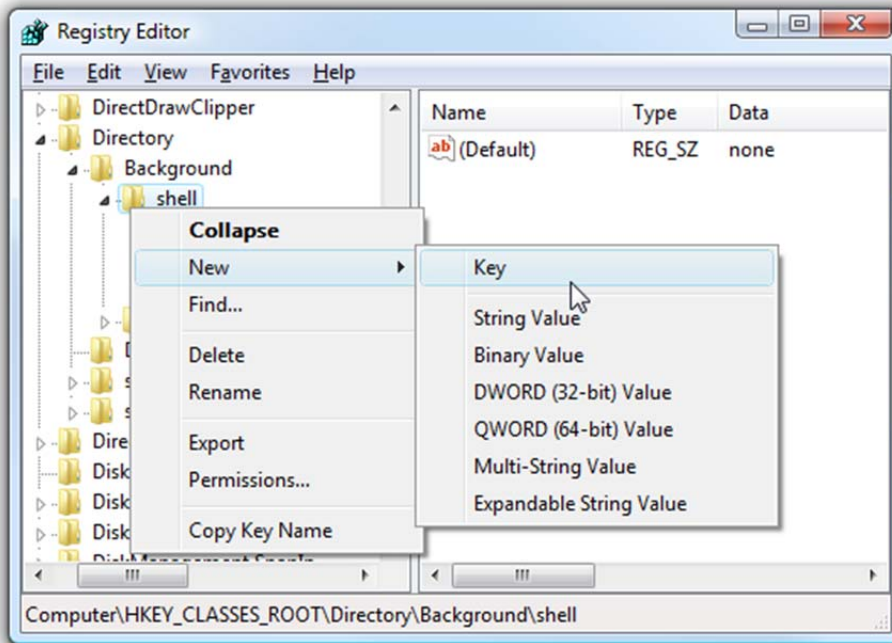


The screen should look similar to this one if you are in the right place.

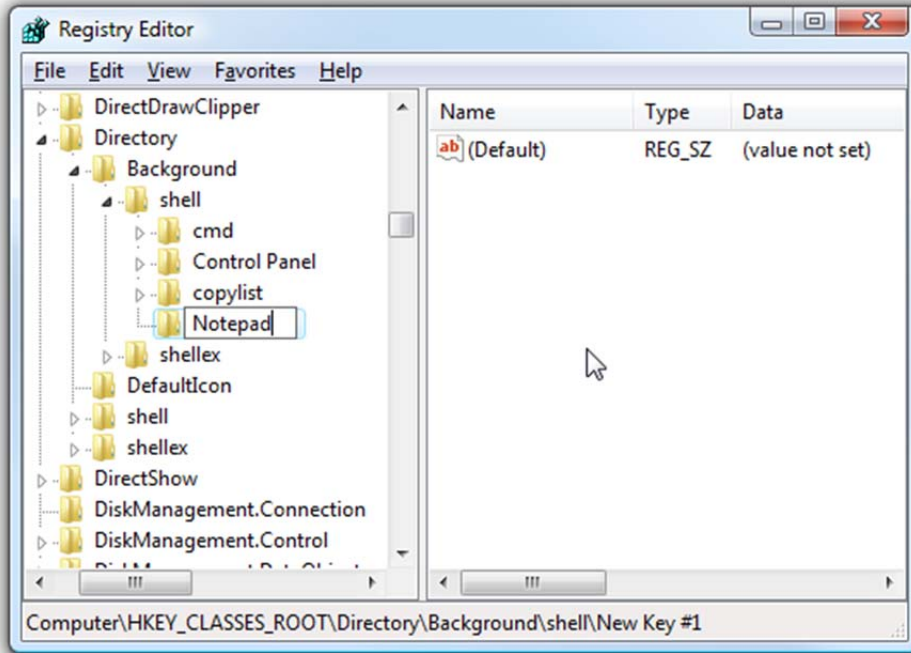
Step 2: Create the Menu Item Key Name

To complete this step we'll need to create a new key, the name of which is exactly what is going to show up on the desktop menu.

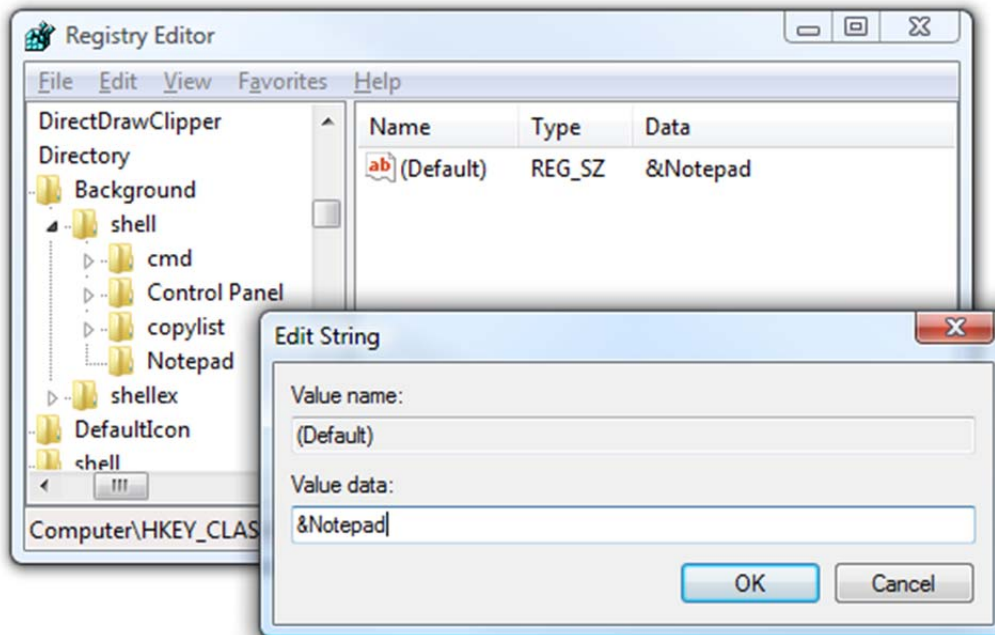
Right-click on the "shell" key, and then choose New \ Key from the menu.



Give the new key the name that you want to show up on the desktop context menu. For this example we'll be using Notepad.



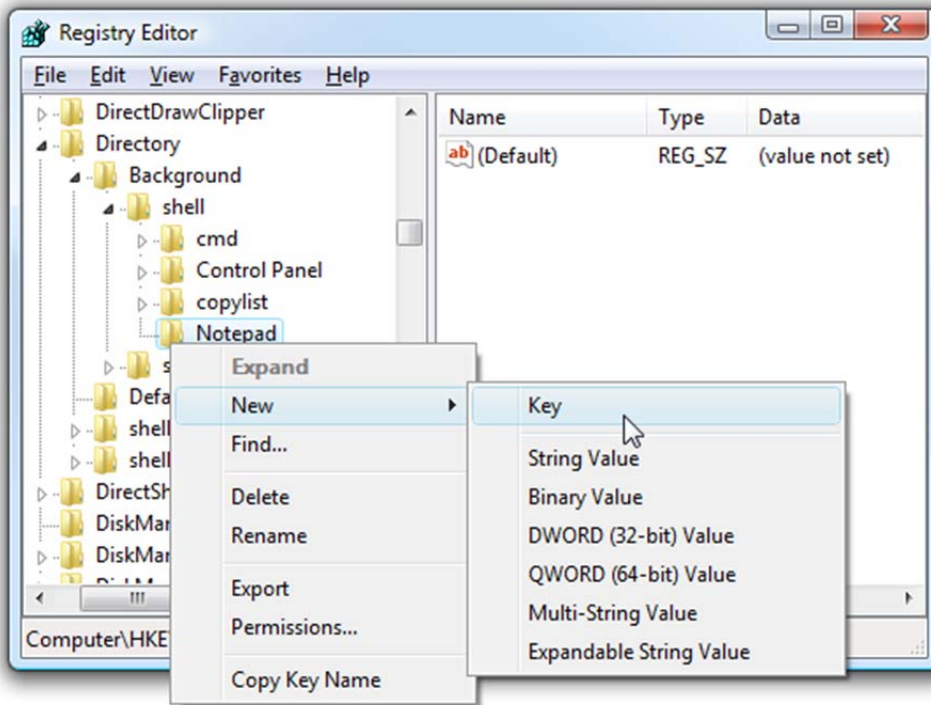
Optional Step: If you want to assign an "Alt" key to this menu entry for quicker access, you can change the (Default) value on the right and put an & character in front of the key you want to use. For instance, if you wanted to be able to just use the N key to launch Notepad once the desktop context menu pops up, you can do this:



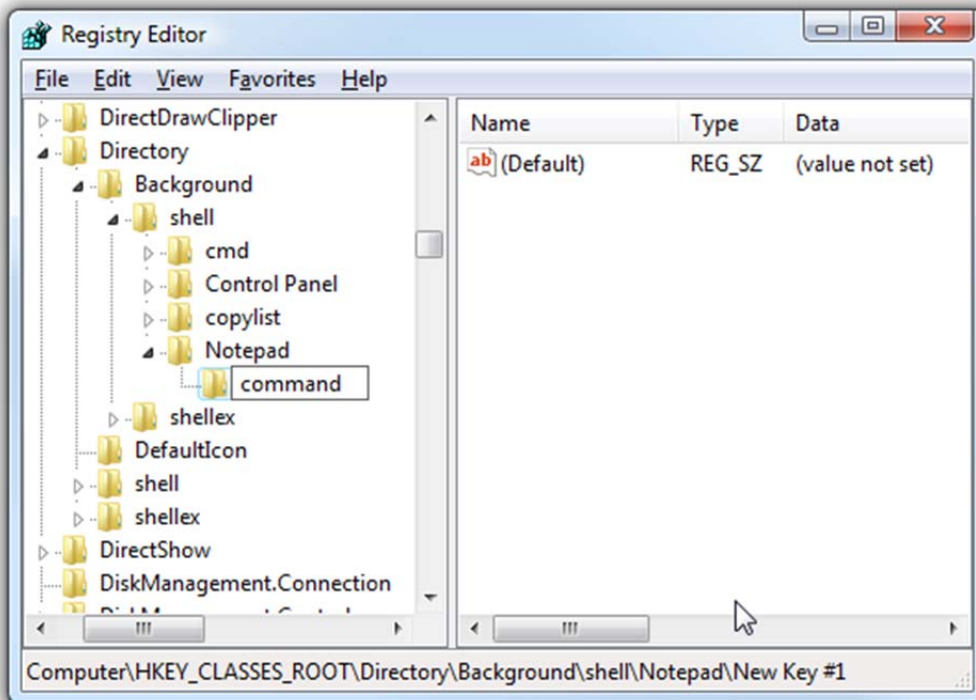
Personally I don't find this terribly useful since you have to use the mouse to right-click on the desktop... may as well just use the mouse to click the item. Still, for completeness I've included it.

Step 3: Create the Command Key

Next you'll need to create the command key that will actually hold the command used to launch the application. Right-click on the new Notepad key, and then choose New \ Key from the menu.

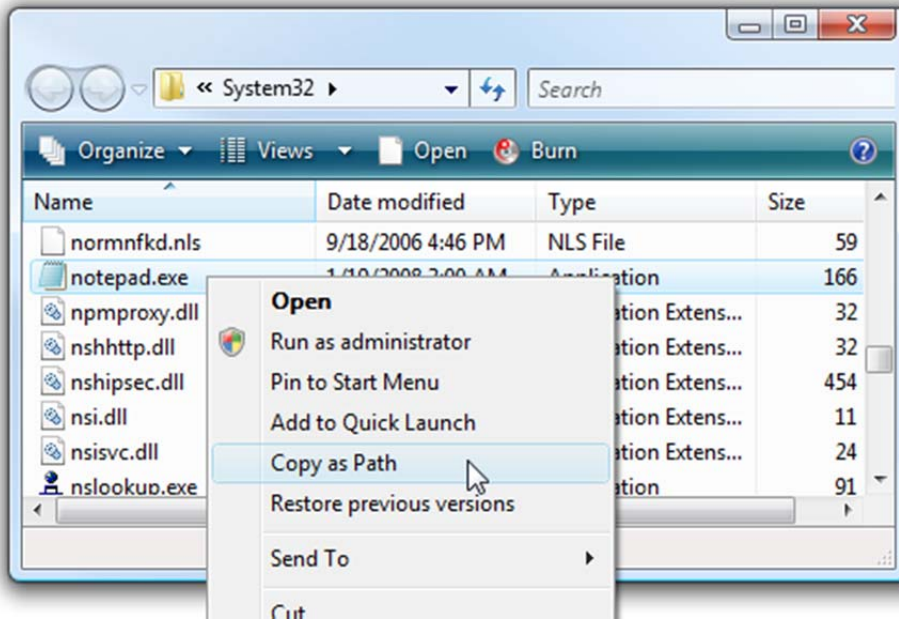


Give this key the name "command" in lowercase.

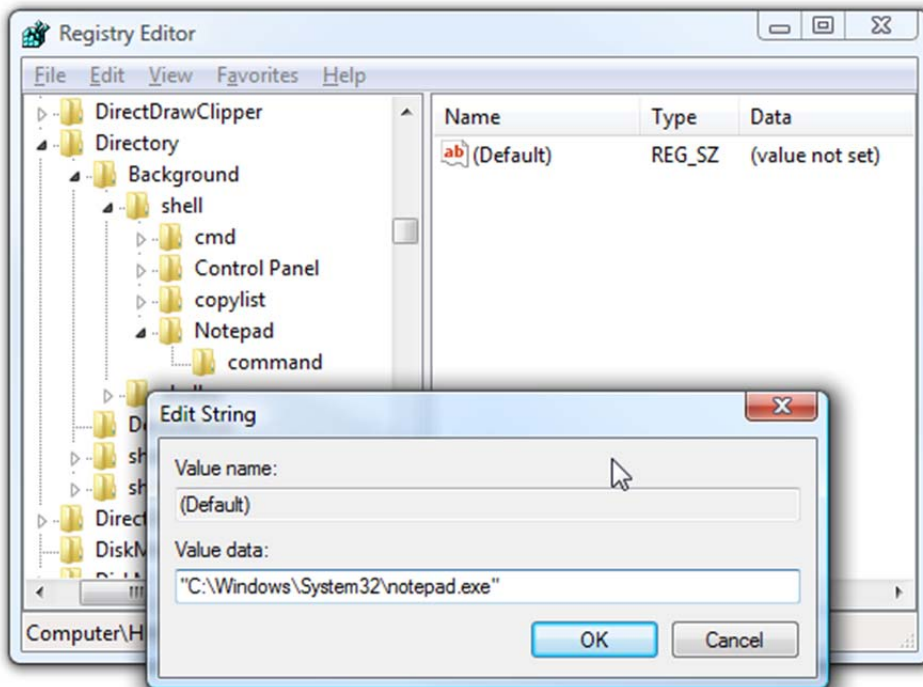


Step 4: Add in the Full Application Executable Path

To complete this step you'll need the full path to the application that you want to launch. You can use Shift + Right-Click to get the Copy as Path menu item to find this more quickly.

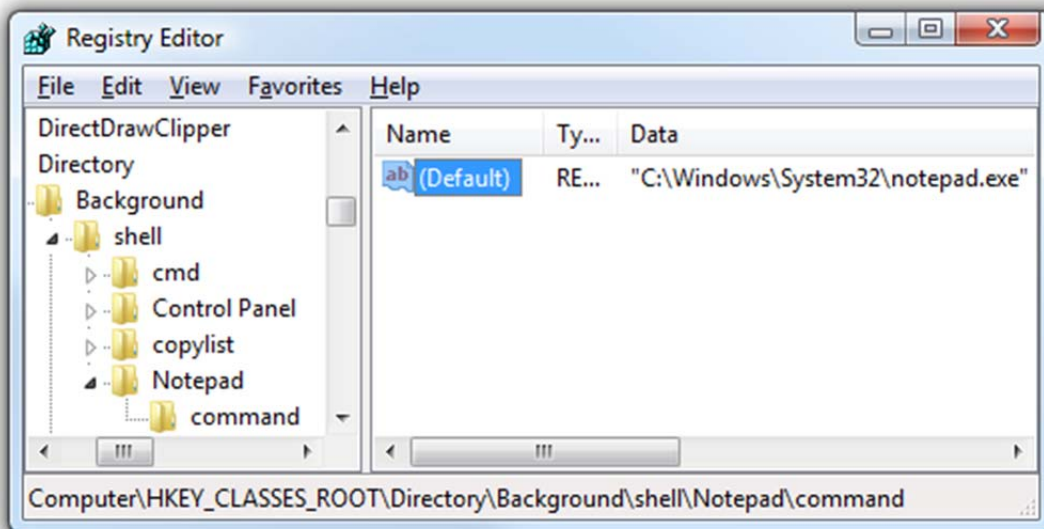


Now click on "command" on the left side, and then double-click on the (Default) key in the right side to edit the string value.

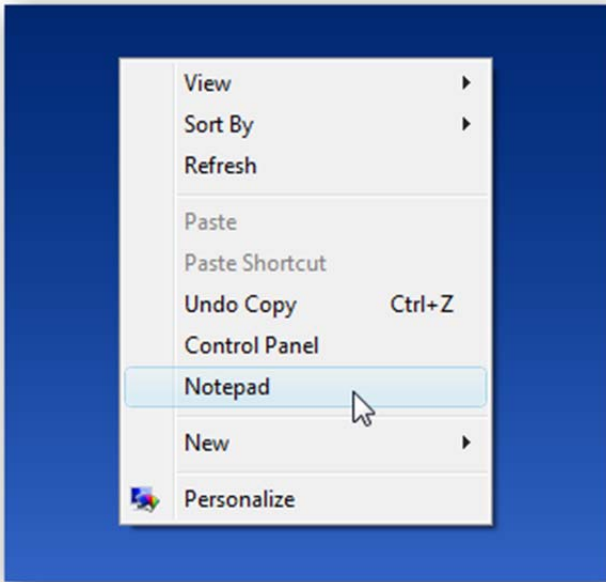


Paste in the full path to the executable that you got from the "Copy as Path" step above, or you can put in the full path yourself if you'd like.

Once it's done, it should look like this:



And right-clicking on the desktop will produce the new menu item... naturally, using this menu item should launch Notepad.



You can add as many applications to the desktop context menu as you'd like, just repeat the steps 2-4 again with a new menu item name.



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