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make Vista behave
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Andy Rathbone

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About the Author

Andy Rathbone started geeking around with computers in 1985 when he bought a 26-pound portable CP/M Kaypro 2X. Like other nerds of the day, he soon began playing with null-modem adapters, dialing computer bulletin boards, and working part-time at Radio Shack.

He wrote articles for various techie publications before moving to computer books in 1992. He's written the *Windows For Dummies* series, *Upgrading and Fixing PCs For Dummies*, *TiVo For Dummies*, *PCs: The Missing Manual*, and many other computer books.

Today, he has more than 15 million copies of his books in print, and they've been translated into more than 30 languages. You can reach Andy at his Web site, www.andyrathbone.com.

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Introduction

Welcome to *Windows Vista For Dummies*, the world's best-selling book about Windows Vista!

This book's popularity probably boils down to this simple fact: Some people want to be Windows whizzes. They love interacting with dialog boxes. Some randomly press keys in the hope of discovering hidden, undocumented features. A few memorize long strings of computer commands while washing their hair.

And you? Well, you're no dummy, that's for sure. But when it comes to Windows and computers, the fascination just isn't there. You want to get your work done, stop, and move on to something more important. You have no intention of changing, and there's nothing wrong with that.

That's where this book comes in handy. Instead of making you a whiz at Windows, it merely dishes out chunks of useful computing information when you need them. Instead of becoming a Windows Vista expert, you'll know just enough to get by quickly, cleanly, and with a minimum of pain so that you can move on to the more pleasant things in life.

About This Book

Don't try to read this book in one sitting; there's no need. Instead, treat this book like a dictionary or an encyclopedia. Turn to the page with the information you need and say, "Ah, so that's what they're talking about." Then put down the book and move on.

Don't bother trying to memorize all the Windows Vista jargon, such as Select the Menu Item from the Drop-Down List Box. Leave that stuff for the computer enthusiasts. In fact, if anything technical comes up in a chapter, a road sign warns you well in advance. Depending on your mood, you can either slow down to read it or speed on around it.

Instead of fancy computer jargon, this book covers subjects like these, all discussed in plain English:

- ✓ Keeping your computer safe and secure
- ✓ Finding, starting, and closing programs
- ✓ Locating the file you saved or downloaded yesterday
- ✓ Setting up a computer for the whole family to use
- ✓ Copying information to and from a CD or DVD
- ✓ Working with your digital camera's photos and making slide shows
- ✓ Scanning and printing your work
- ✓ Creating a network between PCs to share an Internet connection or printer
- ✓ Fixing Windows Vista when it's misbehaving

There's nothing to memorize and nothing to learn. Just turn to the right page, read the brief explanation, and get back to work. Unlike other books, this one enables you to bypass the technical hoopla and still get your work done.

How to Use This Book

Something in Windows Vista will eventually leave you scratching your head. No other program brings so many buttons, bars, and babble to the screen. When something in Windows Vista leaves you stumped, use this book as a reference. Look for the troublesome topic in this book's table of contents or index. The table of contents lists chapter and section titles and page numbers. The index lists topics and page numbers. Page through the table of contents or index to the spot that deals with that particular bit of computer obscurity, read only what you have to, close the book, and apply what you've read.

If you're feeling spunky and want to find out more, read a little further in the bulleted items below each section. You can find a few completely voluntary extra details, tips, or cross-references to check out. There's no pressure, though. You aren't forced to discover anything that you don't want to or that you simply don't have time for.

If you have to type something into the computer, you'll see easy-to-follow bold text like this:

Type **Media Player** into the Search box.

In the preceding example, you type the words *Media Player* and then press the keyboard's Enter key. Typing words into a computer can be confusing, so a description follows that explains what you should be seeing on the screen.

Whenever I describe a message or information that you see on-screen or a Web address, I present it this way:

www.andyrathbone.com

This book doesn't wimp out by saying, "For further information, consult your manual." Windows Vista doesn't even *come* with a manual. This book also doesn't contain information about running specific Windows software packages, such as Microsoft Office. Windows Vista is complicated enough on its own! Luckily, other *For Dummies* books mercifully explain most popular software packages.

Don't feel abandoned, though. This book covers Windows in plenty of detail for you to get the job done. Plus, if you have questions or comments about *Windows Vista For Dummies*, feel free to drop me a line on my Web site at www.andyrathbone.com.

Finally, keep in mind that this book is a *reference*. It's not designed to teach you how to use Windows Vista like an expert, heaven forbid. Instead, this book dishes out

enough bite-sized chunks of information so that you don't *have* to learn Windows.

And What about You?

Chances are you already own Windows Vista or are thinking about upgrading. You know what *you* want to do with your computer. The problem lies in making the *computer* do what you want it to do. You've gotten by one way or another, hopefully with the help of a computer guru — either a friend at the office, somebody down the street, or your fourth-grader.

But when your computer guru isn't around, this book can be a substitute during your times of need. (Keep a doughnut or Pokémon card nearby in case you need a quick bribe.)

How This Book Is Organized

The information in this book has been well sifted. This book contains seven parts, and I divide each part into chapters relating to the part's theme. With an even finer knife, I divide each chapter into short sections to help you figure out a bit of Windows Vista's weirdness. Sometimes, you may find what you're looking for in a small, boxed sidebar. Other times, you may need to cruise through an entire section or chapter. It's up to you and the particular task at hand.

Here are the categories (the envelope, please).

Part I: Windows Vista Stuff Everybody Thinks You Already Know

This part dissects Windows Vista's backbone: its opening screen and username buttons, the mammoth Start button menu that hides all your important stuff, and your computer's desktop — the background where all your programs live. It explains how to move windows around, for example, and click the right buttons at the right time. It explains the Windows Vista stuff that everybody thinks that you already know.

Part II: Working with Programs and Files

Windows Vista comes with bunches of free programs. Finding and starting the programs, however, often proves to be a chore. This part of the book shows how to prod programs into action. If an important file or program has vanished from the radar, you discover how to make Windows Vista dredge your computer's crowded cupboards and bring it back.

Part III: Getting Things Done on the Internet

Turn here for a crash course in today's computing playground, the Internet. This part explains how to send e-mail and globetrot across Web sites. Best yet, an entire chapter explains how to do it all safely, without viruses, spyware, and annoying pop-up ads.

A section explains Internet Explorer's security toolbar. The toolbar stops evil phishing sites from tricking you and keeps Web parasites from attaching themselves to your board as you Web surf.

Part IV: Customizing and Upgrading Windows Vista

When Windows Vista needs a jolt, fix it by flipping one of the switches hidden in its Control Panel, described here. Another chapter explains computer maintenance you can easily perform yourself, reducing your repair bills. You discover how to share your computer with several people in a family or shared apartment — without letting anybody peek into anybody else's information.

And when you're ready to add a second computer, head to the networking chapter for quick instructions on linking computers to share an Internet connection, files, and a printer, as well.

Part V: Music, Movies, Memories (and Photos, Too)

Turn here for information on playing music CDs, DVDs, digital music, and movies. Buy some cheap CDs and create your own greatest hits CDs from your favorite tunes. (Or just copy a CD so that your favorite one doesn't get scratched in the car.)

Digital camera owners should visit the chapter on transferring pictures from your camera to your computer, organizing the pictures, and e-mailing them to friends. Bought a camcorder? Head to the section that explains how to edit out the dopey parts and save your completed masterwork onto a DVD the relatives will *enjoy* for a change.