

# *Windows Vista*<sup>™</sup> FOR DUMMIES<sup>®</sup>

by Andy Rathbone



Wiley Publishing, Inc.



***Windows Vista***<sup>™</sup>  
FOR  
**DUMMIES**<sup>®</sup>



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by Andy Rathbone



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## Windows Vista™ For Dummies®

Published by

**Wiley Publishing, Inc.**

111 River Street

Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774

[www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com)

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Published by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana

Published simultaneously in Canada

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2006934815

ISBN-13: 978-0-471-75421-3

ISBN-10: 0-471-75421-8

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

1B/SZ/RR/QW/IN



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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 plying 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](http://www.andyrathbone.com).





# *Author's Acknowledgments*

Special thanks to Dan Gookin, Matt Wagner, Tina Rathbone, Steve Hayes, Kelly Ewing, Colleen Tetz, Dave Diamond, Joyce Nielsen, Kristie Rees, Jodi Jensen, and Amanda Foxworth. Thanks also to all the folks I never meet in editorial, sales, marketing, proofreading, layout, graphics, and manufacturing who work hard to bring you this book.

## **Publisher's Acknowledgments**

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# Introduction

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**W**elcome 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](http://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 user-name 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.

## ***Part VI: Help!***

Although glass doesn't shatter when Windows crashes, it still hurts. In this part, you find some soothing salves for the most painful irritations. Plus, you find ways to unleash the Windows Vista program's team of troubleshooters.

Stuck with the problem of moving your files from an old computer to a new one? You can find help here, as well. (If you're ready to upgrade your Windows XP computer to Windows Vista, check out the Appendix, too, which holds complete instructions.)

## ***Part VII: The Part of Tens***

Everybody loves lists (except during tax time). This part contains lists of Windows-related trivia, such as ten aggravating things about Windows Vista (and how to fix them). As a bonus for the laptopers, I've collected Windows Vista's most useful laptop tools and placed them into one chapter, complete with step-by-step instructions for most laptoping tasks.

## Icons Used in This Book

It just takes a glance at Windows Vista to notice its *icons*, which are little push-button pictures for starting various programs. The icons in this book fit right in. They're even a little easier to figure out:



Watch out! This signpost warns you that pointless technical information is coming around the bend. Swerve away from this icon to stay safe from awful technical drivel.



This icon alerts you about juicy information that makes computing easier: A tried-and-true method for keeping the cat from sleeping on top of the monitor, for example.



Don't forget to remember these important points. (Or at least dog-ear the pages so that you can look them up again a few days later.)



The computer won't explode while you're performing the delicate operations associated with this icon. Still, wearing gloves and proceeding with caution is a good idea.



Are you moving to Windows Vista from Windows XP? This icon alerts you to places where Vista works significantly differently from Windows XP.

## Where to Go from Here

Now, you're ready for action. Give the pages a quick flip and scan a section or two that you know you'll need later. Please remember, this is *your* book — your weapon against the computer nerds who've inflicted this whole complicated computer concept on you. Please circle any paragraphs you find useful, highlight key concepts, add your own sticky notes, and doodle in the margins next to the complicated stuff.



The more you mark up your book, the easier it will be for you to find all the good stuff again.

# Part I

# Windows Vista Stuff Everybody Thinks You Already Know

The 5<sup>th</sup> Wave

By Rich Tennant



"How do you like that Aero glass interface on Vista? Nice, huh?"

## *In this part . . .*

**M**ost people are dragged into Windows Vista without a choice. Their new computers probably came with Windows Vista already installed. Or maybe the office switched to Windows Vista, where everyone has to learn it except for the boss, who doesn't have a computer. Or maybe Microsoft's marketing hype pushed you into it.

Whatever your situation, this part gives a refresher on Windows Vista basics and buzzwords like dragging and dropping, cutting and pasting, and tugging at vanishing toolbars.

It explains how Vista's changed Windows for the better, and it warns you when Vista's messed things up completely.