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Your Complete Guide to Windows Vista Service Pack 1 Part Two

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The second part to our in-depth look at Service Pack 1

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CONFIRMATION The Control Panel System applet will confirm that Windows Vista has been successfully updated

Search issues

To check that Service Pack 1 had indeed been installed, we clicked **Start**, right-clicked the link to **Computer** and selected **Properties** from the menu.

The Windows Edition was given as 'Windows Vista Ultimate Service Pack 1'. Phew.

We were less happy to spot a change on the Start menu, though. The search box was still present, but the link to the full Search tool had disappeared (see 'Explore new Search settings' below). Further experimenting revealed the

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search option was no longer on the right-click menu for folders. What was going on?

It turns out that this isn't a mistake at all. Microsoft has agreed to open up the Windows Search tool in such a way that you can use third-party utilities such as Google Desktop instead of the built-in offering, and so has changed the way Search works. As a result, installing Service Pack 1 will intentionally remove the Start menu link and the option that appears in the right-click folder. No need to worry though. We soon realised there was an easy fix that would get our right-click options back the way we like them.

Run Regedit, open the **HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT** folder, and browse down the list to the **CompressedFolder** entry (scroll past the lower-case entries and you'll find a second alphabetical list with upper-case values below it). Expand the tree to **HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT\CompressedFolder\shell\find**, then right-click the **LegacyDisable** value, select **Rename**, and add **old** to the end of the name. Now repeat the process to rename **LegacyDisable** at **KEY_CURRENT_USER\Directory\shell\find** and **HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Drive\shell\find**, and that's it – the right-click Search options are back.

exFAT explained

If you often use large USB flash drives, you may have come across an annoying limitation. Most drives use a file system called FAT32, which means the maximum size of file they'll support is about 4GB. And they can't handle drive sizes larger than 32GB, either, which will become another issue within the next year or so.

Windows Vista Service Pack 1 comes to the rescue, though, by offering support for the new Extended FAT (exFAT) file system. This lifts the maximum file size to 16 exabytes, or one thousand million gigabytes, which seems like it should be enough for the moment. It gets rid of other FAT limits such as the number of files in a directory, too, and includes various optimisations that should make USB flash drives run a little faster.

It's easy to try out exFAT for yourself, but you should be careful. If your flash drive has some special built-in features, such as encryption, then reformatting will almost certainly wipe them. But if it's just a plain, ordinary block of storage, then connect it to your PC, right-click the removable drive and select **Format**. Choose the **exFAT** file system, click **Format** and wait as the disk is prepared. Once ready, you can use the drive to copy and store files just as normal.

Unfortunately, exFAT isn't backwardcompatible with previous file systems, so you'll only be able to read your flash drives in PCs running Windows Vista Service Pack 1. Still, our tests showed a small performance improvement over FAT32, so if you use flash drives a lot it's worth experimenting with exFAT to see what the new file system can do for you.

PC performance

Faster USB flash drives are all very well, but would SP1 make any real performance difference to our test PC? Microsoft certainly lists improvements in a wide range of areas. It says Service Pack 1 should be faster at copying files or extracting them from ZIP archives, that hibernate and resume

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performance should be better, and network browsing can be significantly faster. A range of other improvements include tweaks to Internet Explorer 7 that should make for zippier browsing, although the difference may be slight in practice.

We were keen to get specific figures, though, so we ran a few tests both before and after installing Service Pack 1. The good news is that file copy speeds, particularly of single large files across the network or on the same drive, proved significantly better. Startup and shutdown also showed small improvements and our gaming benchmark also gained a couple of frames per second. The not-so-good news is that copying to an external drive via USB proved fractionally slower. Still, overall our tests showed slight improvements that all help to make Service Pack 1 well worth installing.

There were some interesting improvements in a few applications, too. Our copy of Nero Burning ROM's DVD creator, NeroVision, always felt sluggish under Windows Vista, with lengthy pauses for no apparent reason. After installing Service Pack 1 these disappeared and the program felt much more responsive.

Other changes

There are one or two user interface changes in Windows Vista Service Pack 1. These are nothing major – just small tweaks and improvements. If you launch the Disk Defragmenter, for instance, you'll see it now comes with a handy 'Select volumes' button that lets you specify which drives or partitions you'd like to defragment. And BitLocker Drive Encryption (in Windows Vista Ultimate and Enterprise editions) offers a similar improvement, now enabling you to encrypt any of the volumes on your PC.

Most of the changes occur beneath the surface, though. Click **Diagnose and Repair** in the **Network and Sharing Centre**, say, and you'll launch a new version of the Network Diagnostics tool, which now helps fix common file-sharing issues as well as connection problems.

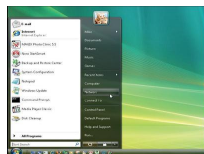
Blu-ray and HD DVD drives are now detected and displayed with new icons. The built-in backup tool in Windows Vista can now include EFS-encrypted files in the backup, and there's a new system to prevent data loss when ejecting NTFS-formatted removable discs.

A welcome release

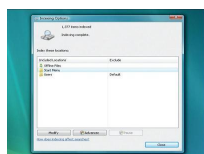
Overall, we think that Windows Vista Service Pack 1 is a small but welcome step forward, then. But if it doesn't work for you – if the upgrade causes problems for some reason – then you can at least uninstall it. Click **Control Panel > Uninstall a Program > View installed updates** then you should see the Service Pack: click it and select **Uninstall** to remove the update.

Keeping the Uninstall files does require a sizeable chunk of hard drive space, though – somewhere between 600 and 800MB. If you're running short, Service Pack 1 is causing you no trouble at all, and you're sure you'll never want to remove it, then use the tool that Microsoft has provided to clear these files. Simply click **Start**, type **vsp1cln.exe** in the Search box and press **Enter** to launch it. It'll erase your old files, free up some disk space and you can get

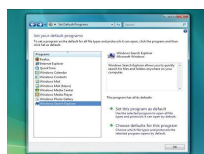
on with enjoying your faster, more reliable PC.



1 SEARCHING FOR SEARCH . You've clicked Start, you're looking for Search, but it's not there any more! This may seem like a backward step, but there are alternatives. Press the Windows key and F, or Start and F3, to launch Search, or see the main article for more ideas.



2 STOP INDEXING . A more useful search-based change gives you more control over the Windows Vista indexing service. If it's too active, it can slow down your PC. Click **Control Panel > System Maintenance > Indexing Options > Pause** and it'll stop for 15 minutes.



3 DEFAULT SETTINGS . You can even specify another program as your search tool, if you've got one installed. Click **Start > Default Programs > Set your default programs > Windows Search Explorer > Choose defaults**, select the program and click **Save**.

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