5 Upgrading to Windows 7

If you are already running a Windows operating system, you may be able to upgrade that operating system to Windows 7. Depending on which type of Windows operating system you have purchased you may be able to upgrade your existing operating system to Windows 7 and retain all your documents, settings and applications. In some cases you will not be able to do this and will need to start again from a fresh install of Windows 7. This chapter looks at how to upgrade an existing operating system to Windows 7 and what to do if no upgrade path is available.

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Buying an upgrade

Shown above are the upgrade versions of Windows 7. These can be purchased off the shelf from a retail store or online. These are provided to customers who already own Windows Vista or Windows XP. The copy of Windows XP or Windows Vista can be an OEM version or full retail version. The important thing to remember is that you must have a licensed copy of Windows Vista or Windows XP to upgrade from. The upgrade is provided at a reduced cost when compared to the more expensive full version. If upgrading from Windows Vista, you may be able to upgrade to Windows 7 and keep all existing settings, software and documents. This is what is referred to as an in-place upgrade. If no in-place option is available, you will need to start again with a new copy of Windows 7 but you will still be able to purchase the upgrade version at a reduced cost.

In-Place Upgrades supported

Listed below are all the in-place upgrades that can be available from Windows Vista.

Existing Windows Vista Operating System	Upgrade to
Windows Vista Home Basic	Windows 7 Home Basic, Windows 7 Home Premium, Windows 7 Ultimate
Windows Vista Home Premium	Windows 7 Home Premium, Windows 7 Ultimate
Windows Vista Business	Windows 7 Professional, Enterprise, Windows 7 Ultimate
Windows Vista Enterprise	Windows 7 Enterprise
Windows Vista Ultimate	Windows 7 Ultimate

* Upgrades from a 32bit version of Windows Vista to 64bit version of Windows 7 are not supported.
* Upgrades from Windows XP require a clean install as an in-place upgrade is not supported.
* Upgrades from earlier operation systems like Windows 9x and Windows 2000 require the full version of Windows 7.

Before purchasing an upgrade of Windows 7, you should check which version of windows you are currently running and also if it is a 32 or 64bit operating system. An in-place upgrade from 32bit to 64bit is not supported. Also you will need to ensure that you purchase the correct upgrade for the Windows Vista edition that you are currently running. For example, as shown in the previous table, you cannot purchase the Windows 7 Home Premium Upgrade to upgrade from a Windows Vista Operating System running the Ultimate edition.

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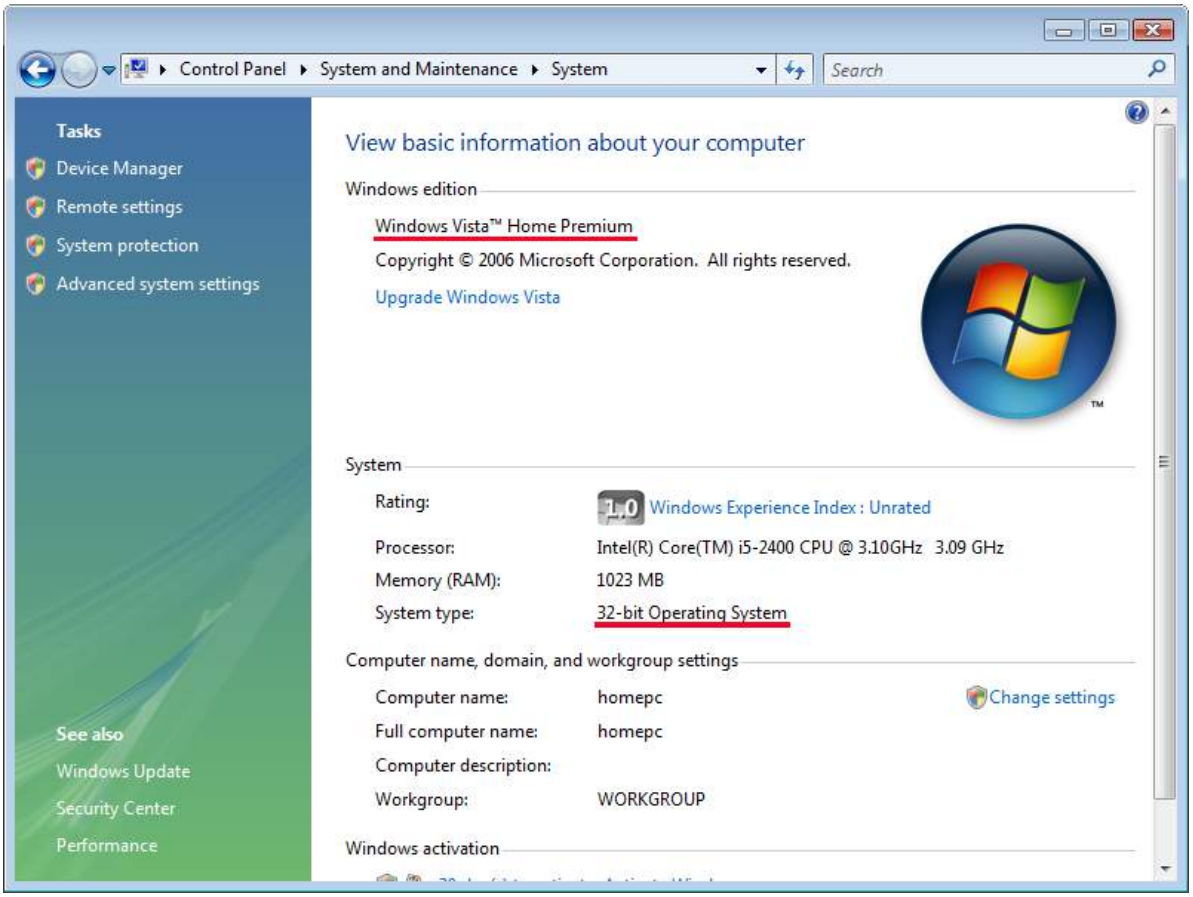

To find out which edition of Windows you are running and if it is 32bit or 64bit, open the control panel from the start menu, select system and maintenance and then select system. As shown below, the two important pieces of information are underlined in red. In this case the edition of Windows Vista is Home Premium and the system is 32bit, so an in-place upgrade is supported to Windows 7 Home Premium and Windows 7 Ultimate. Remember that a change of architecture is not supported and thus the edition of Windows 7 must also be 32bit.

For information about an in-place upgrade see the following link.
http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows7/upgrading-to-windows-7-frequently-asked-questions

Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor

Microsoft offers a free tool called the Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor. This will check your system before performing an upgrade for any potential problems. Besides checking the computer meets the minimum specifications, the upgrade advisor can also check devices on the computer and software. These include USB devices like hard disks and printers. To download the upgrade advisor, see the link below.
http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/downloads/upgrade-advisor

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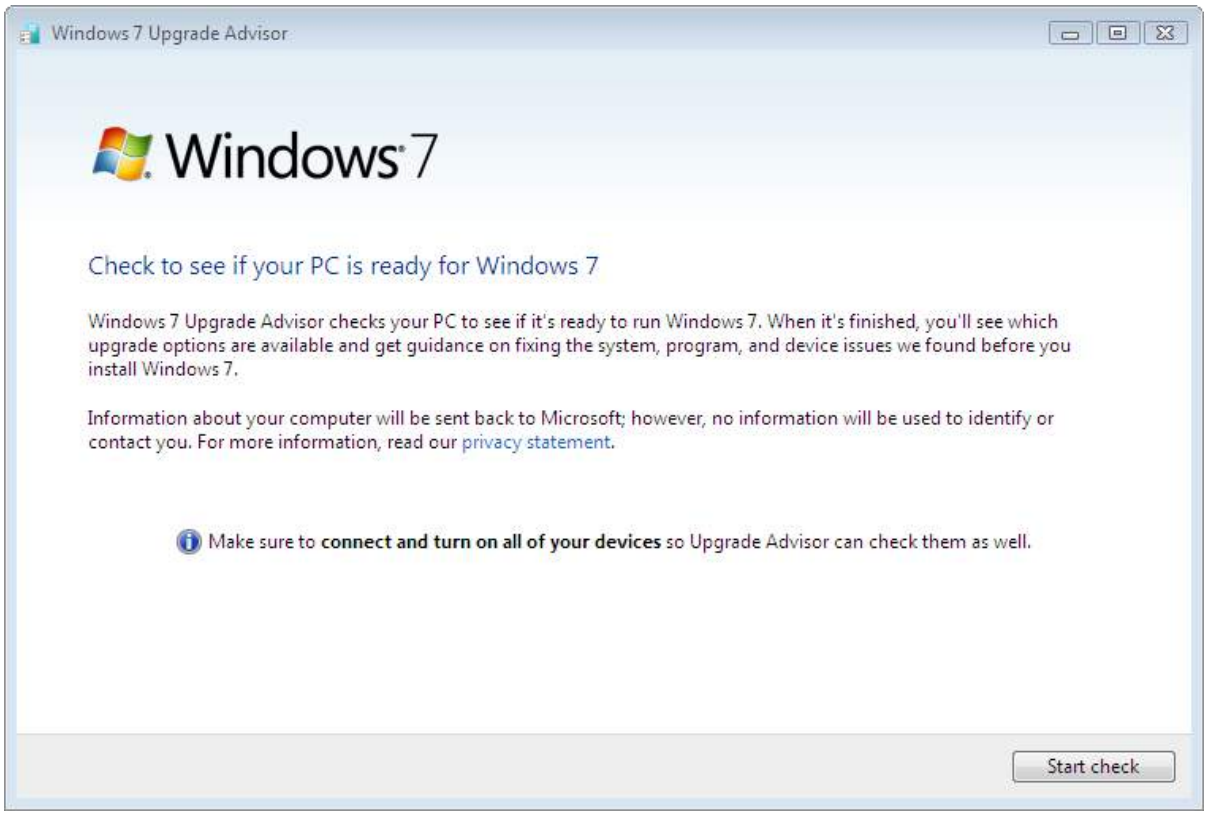
The Upgrade Advisor is supported on Windows 7, Windows Vista and Windows XP with Service Pack 2. In chapter 7 I will look at upgrading an existing Windows 7 edition to higher editions of Windows 7. If you decide to do this, the upgrade advisor can also be run on a Windows 7 computer before the upgrade to ensure that it meets the requirements for the new Windows 7 edition. If you are using the Upgrade Advisor on Windows XP, you will need to install .NET framework 2.0. This is available from the Microsoft web site.



In this case, I have installed the Upgrade Advisor on a computer running Windows Vista 64bit. Once the Upgrade Advisor is running you will get the screen shown below. To start checking the computer to see if it can be upgraded to Windows 7 press the button start check.

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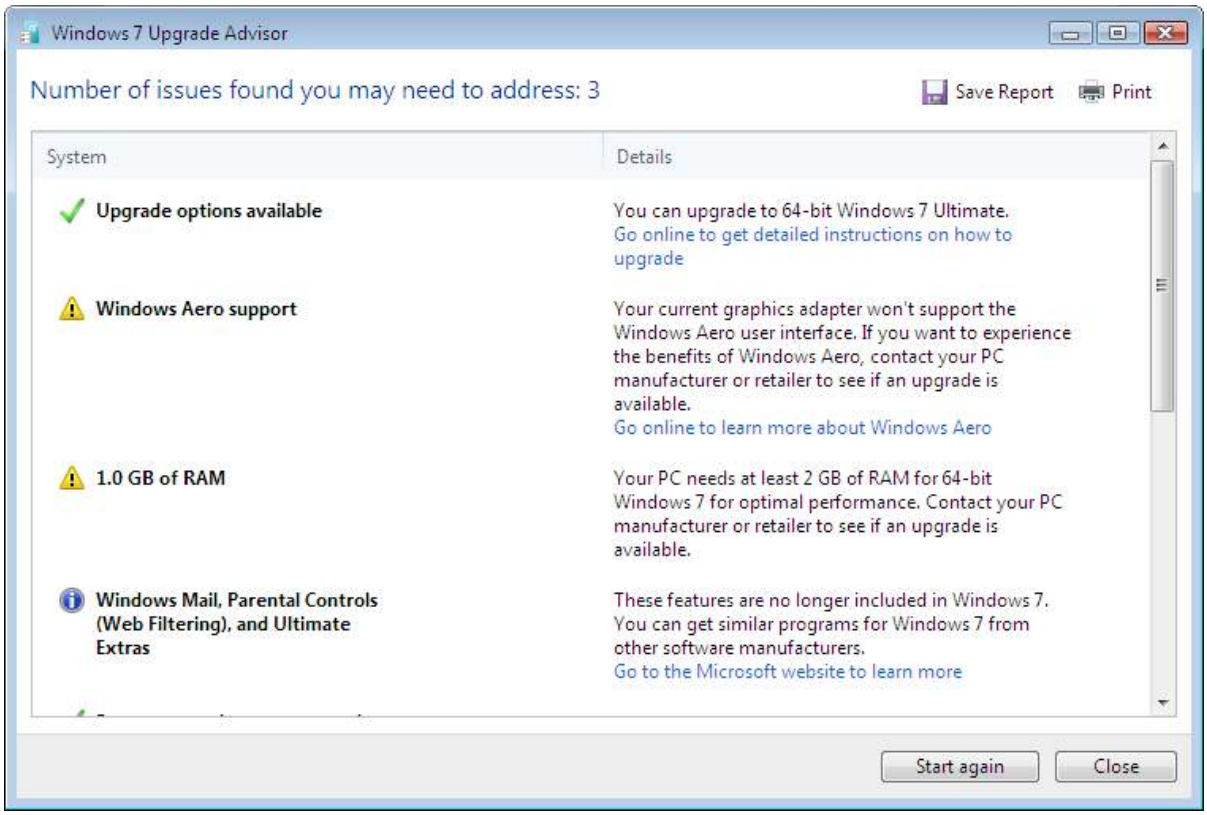

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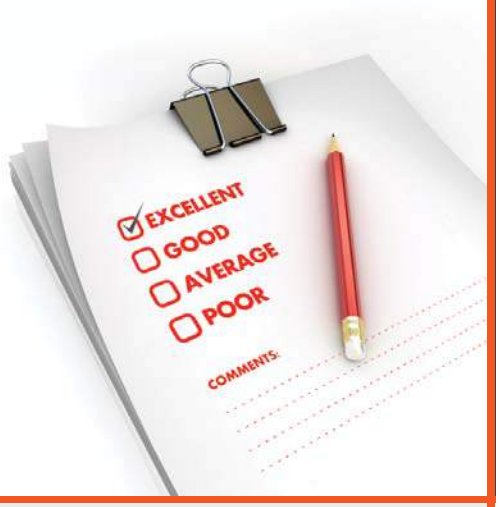

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The Upgrade Advisor may take a few minutes to run. Once complete it will give you a report of what it has found as shown below. At the top it will indicate which edition of Windows 7 you can upgrade to. In this case the only choice of upgrade is to Windows 7 Ultimate. If you were running a lower edition you would have additional options to upgrade to. The Windows Upgrade Advisor will give you an indication of potential problems which may prevent the upgrade from going smoothly. In this case the graphics adapter does not support Aero and the computer has only 1 GB of RAM. This will not prevent the computer from being upgraded, although the graphics adapter will prevent Windows 7 from using the full graphical interface, most noticeably transparency and 3D effects. The 1GB of RAM will allow Windows to run but Microsoft recommends 2GB for better performance. Lastly you can see an information message telling you that some features when upgrading to Windows 7 will now not be available that were previously available when running Windows Vista.

It is a good idea to take a good look through the report and see what problems it has found. The Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor will also check your hardware and software for any known problems. In some cases, a particular piece of software may be known not to work with Windows 7. In this case, the Upgrade Advisor will inform you of this and offer a solution. Software like antivirus software often needs to be upgraded to a newer version when changing operating systems. Before upgrading it is recommended to remove all antivirus software and reinstall the antivirus software after the upgrade as antivirus can affect the upgrade.

Performing an In-place upgrade

To start an in-place upgrade, place the DVD into the PC that you want to upgrade. The Autorun from the DVD should immediately and installation screen should appear. If this does not occur open Windows Explorer and then run the Setup Executable located on the DVD.

Once the Installation screen appears as seen below to the left, choose the option, Check compatibility online. This will take you to a webpage in which you can download the Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor, as discussed earlier in the chapter. Once you are ready to start the upgrade select the option, Install now. The next screen of the wizard, shown below on the right, will give you the option to download updates before the upgrade starts. It is recommended that you download updates before starting the upgrade. The upgrade may work fine without the updates, however if you don't install them you increase the risk of setup failing or crashing during the upgrade process.

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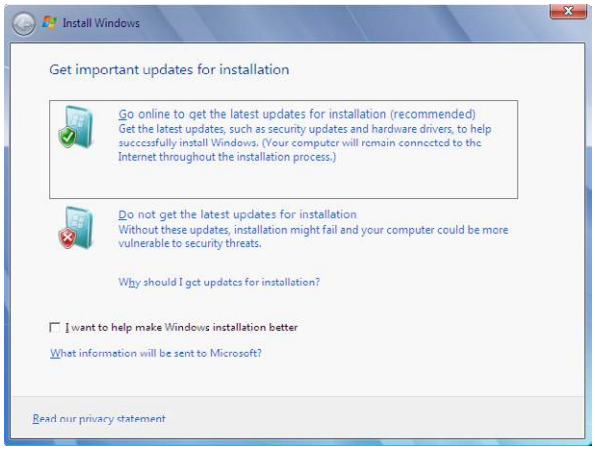
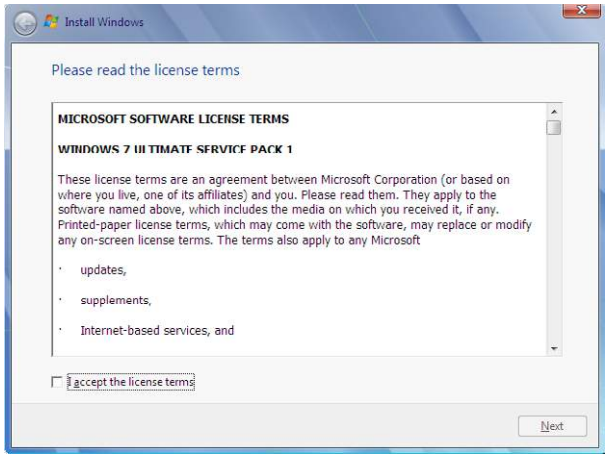
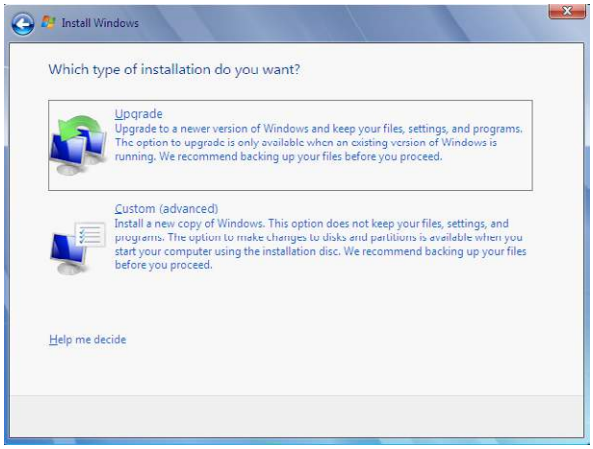


Once setup has begun the upgrade process, you will be asked to accept Microsoft's licensing agreement on the next screen, seen below to the left. Once you have ticked the option to accept the license, the next screen will give you the option to perform an Upgrade or a Custom install. The Custom install option is essentially a clean install of Windows 7. If you select this option, the old Windows directory will be moved to a directory called windows.old. None of your settings or programs will be kept. To perform an In-place upgrade simply select the top option Upgrade. If you boot off the DVD rather than running the setup from the operating system, this option will also be available, but when selected it will advise setup needs to be run from the operating system that you want to upgrade from.





In some cases you may get an additional dialogue like the one shown below to the left. This is an indication that features like ultimate extras have been discontinued in Windows 7 and will no longer be available after the upgrade. As seen on the screen below to the right, Windows will start copying the files for Windows 7 and transfer your settings and software to Windows 7. The process may take up to a few hours to complete.

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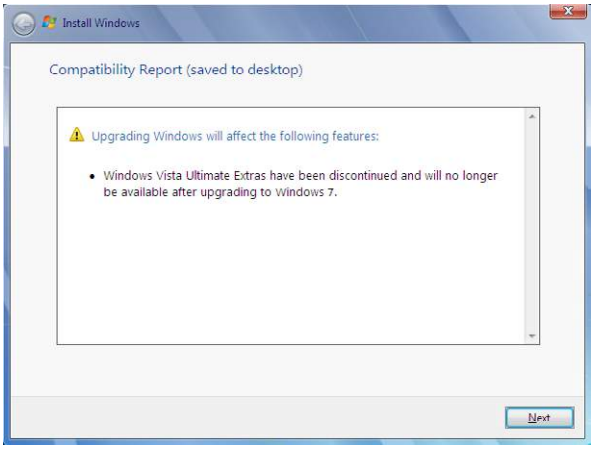

During the upgrade process the computer may reboot several times. Once the upgrade process is complete Windows will restart and prompt you for the product key as shown below on the left. You can enter in the product key here or press skip to enter it later. If you don't enter a product key you still have 30 days in which enter to enter one and active Windows. If you do not do this, after the 30 days has lapsed Windows 7 will change to reduced functionality mode. In this mode you will not be able to do much at all other than activate the operating system with Microsoft. The next screen, shown below to the right will ask you to select the time zone for Windows and set the date and time.

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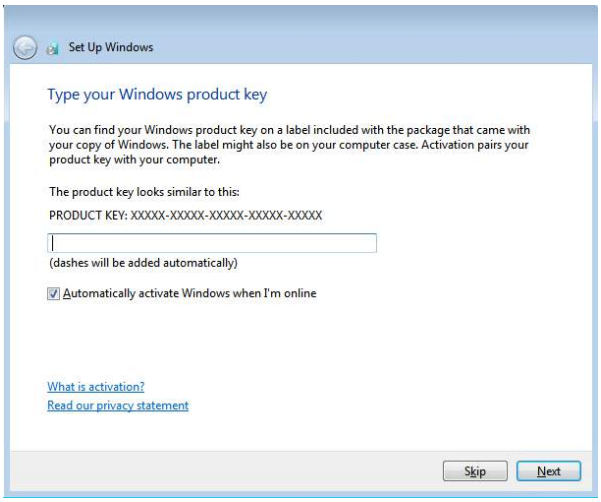
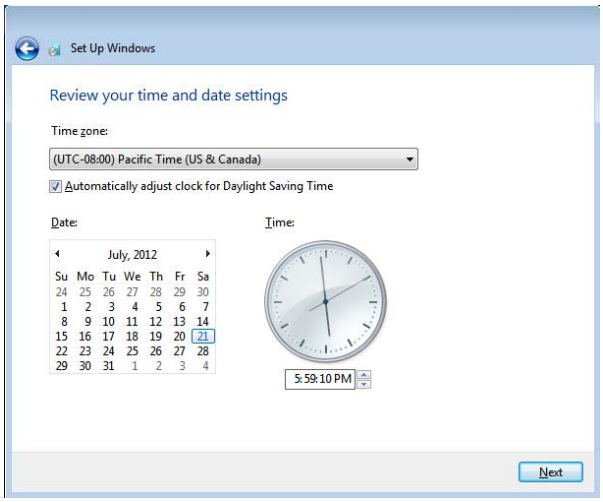
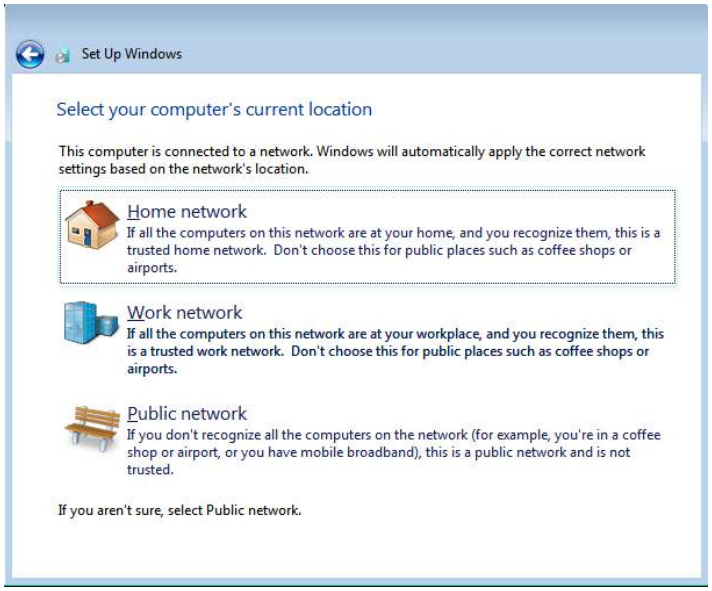




If a network adapter is detected, Windows will prompt you to select the firewall settings that are to be used for that network adapter. Home and Work use the same settings, allowing you to easily use a work pc on a home network. If your network adapter is connected to a public network like a wireless hotspot, you should select the option public network. This option offers additional security by blocking all incoming connections. You should not select public network on a home or work network as this may prevent other computers on the network accessing that computer.



After the computer has been upgraded to Windows 7, the old installation of Windows can be found in a directory called Windows.old. If the upgrade process fails, setup will use the data in this directory to roll back to the previous installed version of Windows. Be warned however, once you login into Windows 7 for the first time, you will not be able to roll back to the previous operating system.

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