6   Migrating to Windows 7

In some cases you may want to upgrade to Windows 7 but there is no In-place upgrade available. For example you may want to upgrade from Windows Vista 32bit to Windows 7 64bit. Another common scenario is if you purchase a new laptop to replace an old one. When no direct upgrade path is available you can perform what is called a migration. A migration copies files and settings from one computer to another. This chapter looks at two methods of migrating documents and settings. These are Side by Side and Wipe and Load. Side by Side is generally performed when the two computers are next to each other, although it is not necessarily a requirement. Wipe and Load is when all the files and settings are backed up from the computer and the computer is physically erased when a new operating system is installed. Once the new operating system is running, the backed up files and settings are transferred from the backup to the new operating system.

Migrating to Windows 7

Migrations are often performed for the following reasons.

1) The operating system is before Windows Vista and thus no upgrade is supported.
2) The operating system is not the same architecture, e.g. one is 32bit and the other is 64bit.
3) A new computer is purchased, for example a new laptop to replace the old one.
4) The user wants to start afresh with a new operating system. This will ensure any problems with the old operating system are not carried over to the new operating system.

When you are facing one of these situations, you will need to copy your documents and settings over manually or use a transfer tool like Windows Easy Transfer.

Windows Easy Transfer

Windows Easy Transfer was formally called File and Settings Transfer Wizard in Windows XP. File and Settings Transfer Wizard is not compatible with Windows Vista or Windows 7. You can get the latest copy of Windows Easy Transfer for Windows Vista and Windows XP from the following web site. http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows7/products/features/windows-easy-transfer

It is a good idea to check you have the latest version of Windows Easy Transfer before using it. Windows 7 comes with Windows Easy Transfer installed by default. If your computer is up to date with the latest software updates from Microsoft, Windows Easy Transfer should also be up to date.

Windows Easy Transfer can copy your files and settings from one computer to another; it will not copy over your applications. Once you have copied over your files and settings you will also need to reinstall any applications.

Windows Easy Transfer can transfer the following:

- Files and folders – This includes documents, photos, music and email
- Users accounts
- Application settings
- Windows configuration settings

It should be noted that while a lot of application settings are copied over with Windows Easy Transfer, some non-Microsoft applications may not copy over using Windows Easy Transfer.

Windows Easy Transfer supports the following methods of transferring the files from one computer to another.

- USB-to-USB bridge cable known as the easy transfer cable
- CD/DVD, USB flash drive, external hard disk
- Wired or wireless network

Easy Transfer Cable

The easy transfer cable is a USB to USB cable that can be purchased from many computer shops. An example of an easy transfer cable is shown below. To use the cable, one end of the cable is plugged into the computer that you want to transfer from and the other to the computer you want to transfer to. It does not matter which end is plugged into which computer. The easy transfer cable provides a physical path to transfer data between the two computers.

Wired networking

If you have a network you can simply plug both computers into the same network to perform the transfer. A lot of home DSL devices allow multiple computers to be plugged into the same device, allowing them to communicate with each other. If you do not have any devices that allow your computer to be networked like a network switch, you can attempt to plug one computer into the other directly using a network cable. A standard network cable sends and receives data over the same wires. In order for a standard network cable to work, one of the network cards needs to support swapping it sending and receiving wires over. All modern network cards should support this feature and only one computer needs to support this feature in order for this to work. If this does not work, you will need to use a special network cable called a cross over cable. A cross over cable switches the send and receive wires over inside the cable allowing the computers to communicate with each other. If both computers are configured to automatically configure their networking they should detect each other without an issue. If they do not, try rebooting both computers.

Wireless networking

If both computers are connected to the same wireless hot spot they can transfers data using the wireless network. In some cases one of the computers may be connected to a wired network and the other to the wireless. As long as the computers have a direct networking path between each other Windows Easy Transfer will work. If no wireless hot spot is available, the two computers can be configured to talk directly to each other by creating an Ad-Hoc network. An Ad-Hoc network is when multiple computers are connected to each other without a centralized wireless access point.

CD/DVD, USB Flash Drive, External Hard Disk

All the above methods involve a side by side migration, in which two computers communicate with each other. Using media like CD/DVD, Flash Drive or external hard disks data can be stored for later use. This data can be used with a Wipe and Load migration. Storing data on media separate to the computer means the computer can then be reformatted. After the computer has been formatted and a new operating system installed, the data and settings can then be transferred to the new operating system.

USB flash drives tend to have a small amount of space, compared with other storage. However, if you are transferring only a small amount of files, then a USB flash drive may be large enough.

Demonstration transferring using the network

In this demonstration I will transfer documents and settings from a computer running Windows XP to Windows 7. In this scenario, there is no In-place upgrade available to upgrade a system running Windows XP to Windows 7. A work around is to upgrade the Windows XP system to Windows Vista and then Windows 7, however this is not recommended. A workaround like this will not be possible if one system is running a 32bit operating system and the other is running 64bit. It is also not possible to do this if the new computer is replacing the old computer, for example if you purchase a new laptop to replace an older laptop.

First of all I will run Windows Easy Transfer on the old computer. Since the computer is running Windows XP I need to download and install the Windows Easy Transfer from the following web site. http://windows.microsoft.com/en-au/windows7/products/features/windows-easy-transfer

Windows XP comes with software called Files and Settings transfer wizard. This software is not compatible with Windows 7 and should not be used.

Once installed run Windows Easy Transfer, you be given the screen shown below on the left. This screen reminds you that Windows Easy Transfer can transfer user accounts, documents and settings but not applications. Once past the welcome screen, the next screen shown below on the right, will ask how you want to transfer the settings. If you have an easy transfer cable, plug this into the two computers. If you are using the network, ensure that both computers are connected to the same network or connected directly to each other using a network or cross over cable. If the computers are not able to be directly connected to each other, you can store the data from Windows Easy Transfer to a temporary location like an external hard disk or flash drive. In this example, both computers are connected via the same network so I will choose the option, "A network."
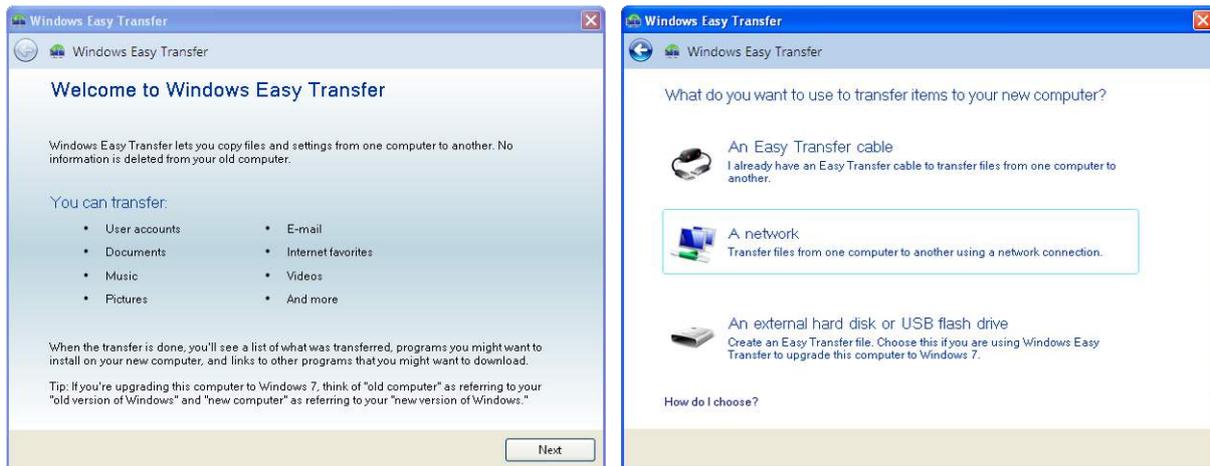
The next screen of the wizard shown below on the left, asks if this computer is the old computer or the new computer. Since this computer is running Windows XP it cannot be the new computer so the option "This is my new computer" is hidden. You could also use Windows Easy Transfer to transfer documents and settings from one Windows 7 computer to another. This is useful for example, if you use a desktop PC and later purchase a laptop. The next screen of the wizard shown below on the right gives you a security code. One this code has been entered in on the other computer a connection between the two computers can be established.

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That's it for the Old computer running Windows XP. To finish the transfer, Windows Easy Transfer next needs to be run on the new computer. Like the Old computer, you need to skip the welcome screen and select the network option when asked. Once past these two screens, like the Old computer you will be given the screen below on the left. Since this is the new computer I need to select the option, "This is my new computer." The next screen of the wizard shown below on the right asks to confirm that Windows Easy Transfer has been installed on the other computer. Assuming that it has been installed, select the option, "I already installed it on my old computer."
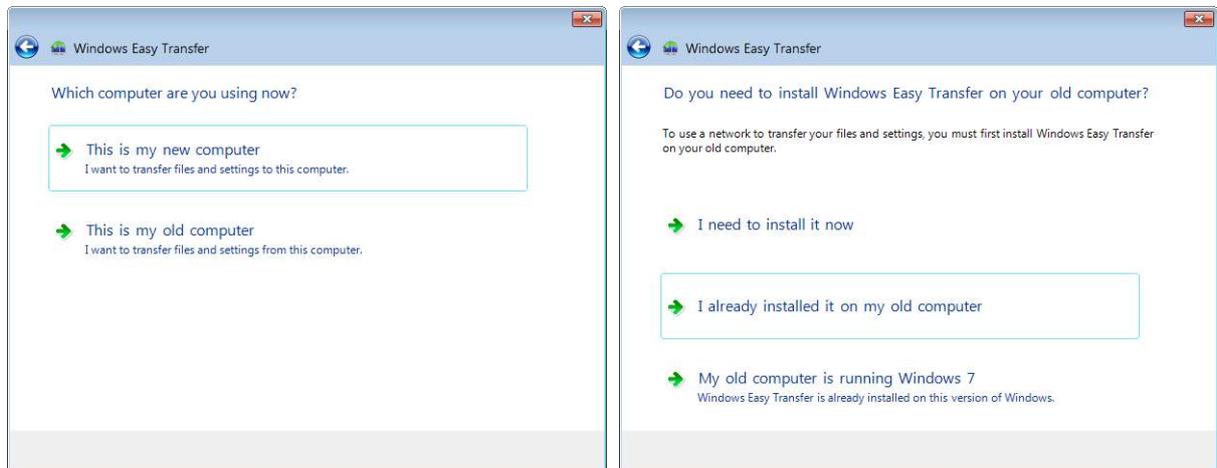
The next screen of the wizard shown below on the left, asks you to confirm that the Easy Transfer Wizard is running on the old computer. If it is not, you can still install and run it on the old computer before pressing next. The next screen of the wizard shown below on the right asks for the transfer key. This is displayed on the old computer and is used to create a secure connection between the two computers.
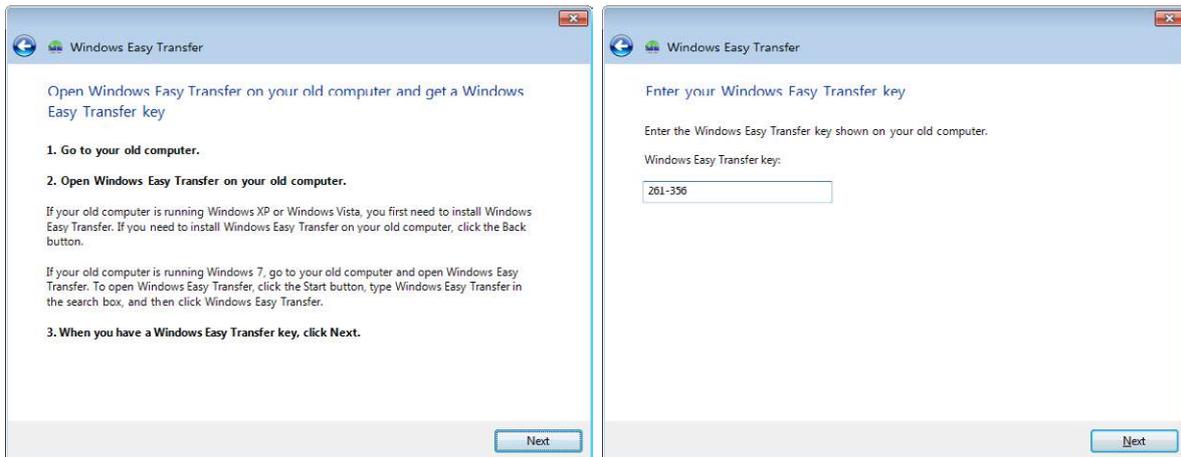
Both computers will now establish a connection between each other. As shown below on the left, Windows Easy Transfer will give you the option of which files you want to transfer. If you have multiple users on the old computer, you will be given the option to select which users that you want to transfer. There are also advanced options if you want to have more control over what gets transferred. Once you have decided what to transfer, the next screen of the wizard shown below on the right will show you what was transferred and what software it detected is not on the new computer that is on the old computer. It is worth taking the time to have a look at this list to determine which software you will need to reinstall on the new computer. In a lot of cases, Windows Easy Transfer has copied the settings over for that software, so once the software has been installed it may be able to use these settings.
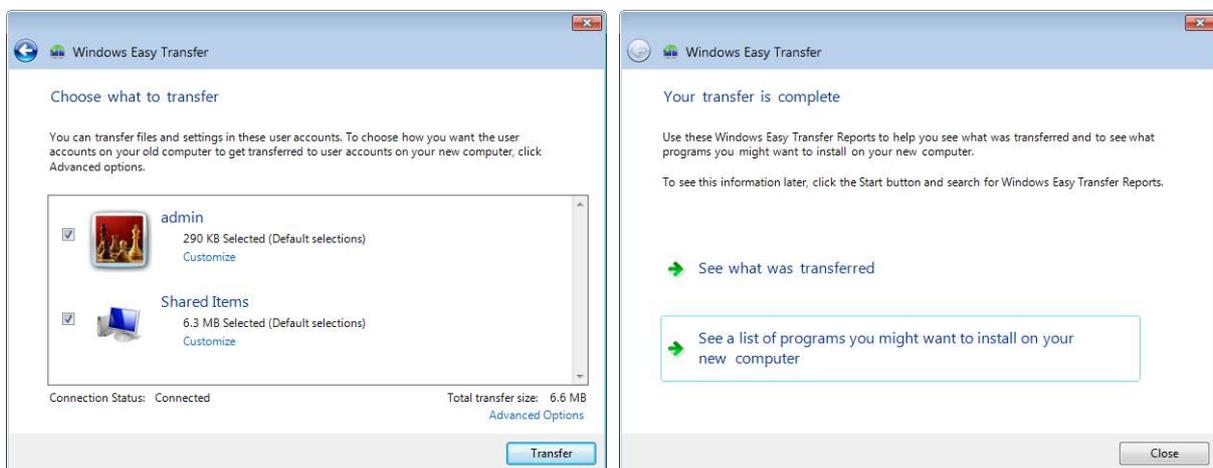
This concludes how to transfer documents and settings to your new Windows 7 computer using Windows Easy Transfer. It is great software that can help you upgrade to Windows 7 when an In-place upgrade is not available or when you need to transfer your document and settings to a completely new computer.