

Hugh's Vista Fixes

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Vista is not only more horrible than we imagine,
Vista is more horrible than we *can* imagine.
-- *Dread Boyle*

Introduction

These are the changes I've made to Vista to make it more "Windows-2000-like", a look and feel I believe represents the apex of Microsoft user interface design. In general, the changes create a more compact, less obtrusive user interface and eliminate the "Fisher Price" look.

Other changes focus on mitigating major Vista annoyances.

Many of these notes describe purely personal preferences, but I keep it all here so I don't have to update a public and private version of the document. I use it as a checklist: doing all these changes takes me about 1.5 hours.

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Install Vista SP1

After installing vista, obtain and install the service pack immediately:

Vista - SP1 Windows6.0-KB936330-X86-wave1.exe

The chances of having any trouble with the service pack are very small and it fixes some major bugs. It is *not* true that after installing SP1, some users were lifted off the ground by invisible tentacles and torn limb from limb.

Trash the Welcome Center

Get rid of this by checking the box in the lower left corner.

Reclaim the Desktop

Right-click menu

Don't align to grid.

Throw away Control Panel

(Use start menu instead.)

Throw away Internet Explorer

Use quick launch bar icon instead.

Personalize colors and styles

Windows color and appearance
Windows Classic

Effects

YES - Cleartype
YES - Show shadows
NO - Show window contents while dragging

Advanced - Desktop: Drab shade of gray!!!

General arrangement

Drag the taskbar to the top.
Trash bottom right,
"Computer" top right.

Restore normal desktop icon size

One exiting thing about Vista is that there's no detail too small for Microsoft to overlook screwing up. For example, the default size of Vista desktop icons is freaking huge even though no one ever complained about the XP desktop icons. To fix this:

Right-click on an empty area of the desktop.
Select "View" from the pop-up menu.
Select "Classic" icon size. (Or whatever size you prefer.)

Move the task bar

I put the task bar at the top of the screen, rather than at the bottom: it seems more consistent for all menus to open downward and I have a habit of looking up at the clock.

An internet rumor suggests that Microsoft started the practice of putting the task bar at the bottom to avoid being sued by Apple.

Taskbar and Start Menu Properties

Taskbar tab

UNCHECK - Lock
UNCHECK - Keep on top.
UNCHECK - Group similar items.

Start Menu Tab

UNCHECK - Store recent files
UNCHECK - Store recent programs

Classic Start menu:

Customize Classic Start Menu

CHECK - Display Administrative tools
CHECK - Expand Control Panel
CHECK - Display Run
CHECK - Expand network connections
CHECK - Expand printers
CHECK - Show small icons in Start menu
UNCHECK - Scroll programs
UNCHECK - Use personalized menus

Notification Area Tab

UNCHECK - Hide inactive icons
CHECK - Clock
CHECK - Volume
CHECK - Network

Start Menu Customize Button

CHECK - Run Command
UNCHECK - Sort by name
CHECK - System administrative tools
UNCHECK - Use large icons

Note: Using the "Expand Control Panel" option is especially important in Vista because the regular control panel window is totally disfunctional.

Close the side bar

It can be re-opened with a notification area icon.

Notification area

On the indows Sidebar properties panel:
UNCHECK - Start sidebar when Windows starts
Remove all of the gadgets so they don't run in the background.

Computer (was My Computer)

Organize - Layout

Hide the search and navigation pane.
Why?
Search is not dependable without indexing and
navigation is available in the navigation pulldown
at the top of the window. Why waste more space?

Views - Details

Sort by - Name

Tools - Folder Options

SELECT - Use Windows Classic folders

View tab:

CHECK - Always show icons, never thumbnails. (IMPORTANT!)
CHECK - Show hidden files and folders.
CHECK - Don't hide extensions for known file types.
UNCHECK - Hide extensions for known file types.
CHECK - Hide protected operating system files.
UNCHECK - Use sharing wizard

My thinking has changed about hiding the protected operating system files. Displaying them makes a mess and in most cases, even as a developer, I don't need to see them. The exception is the user's home directory, which I explicitly unhide in the next step.

Make your user home directory visible

User directories are now subdirectories of C:\Users which is a nice short path. Not so nice is the fact that your own directory is by default a hidden system directory. This means that you can't copy the path to any of your own directories from the address bar using the right-click copy url feature. (See below.) A more serious limitation is that programs such as the HTTP or FTP servers can't be configured to see anything in your home directory.

To fix this, open the command window at top of your C drive. You need to run it in Administrator mode. To do that, browse to the shortcut: *Start Menu - Programs - Accessories - Command Prompt*. Right-click on the Command Prompt icon and select "Run as Administrator." Then execute these incantations:

```
attrib -s -h Users
attrib -s -h Users\yourname
```

This will make your home directory behave as a normal directory in all respects. (This is important for FTP configuration. See below.)

Make your home folder desktop shortcut work normally

After installing Vista, you get a personal home folder shortcut on the desktop that points to "c:\users\yourname"

But this shortcut is special: you can't search for files with Agent Ransack or see the directory hierarchy when you open it by double-clicking in Explorer.

To fix this, open Computer\Users\Yourname. Now drag the icon from the navigation bar to the desktop. It will have a name like "Shortcut to yourname".

Now throw away the original "yourname" shortcut and rename the new one to simply "Documents". Everything will now work the way you'd expect a file system to work if it was designed by human beings.

Display super hidden files and folders

There are directories and files you can't see even when you select view options to show hidden system files. For example, when you access secure websites that prompt for a username and password, Windows offers to remember these credentials. They are saved as "super hidden" files in this directory:

```
Users\<yourname>\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Credentials
```

If you look in this folder, nothing is visible. To makes these files visible, you need to make the following registry change:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\Advanced

Change the value of *ShowSuperHidden* to 1 and then restart Explorer. It is useful to see these files because you may want to delete all of them. I do this when debugging security settings on remote websites. You might also want to erase your credentials if the computer will be used by others.

Internet time server

Right click on the clock and configure Internet Time to use the server: *132.163.4.101*
(This option is not available in Vista Home.)

Disable User Account Control

This is the *major* Vista Annoyance.

Control Panel/User Accounts/Turn User Account Control (UAC) on or off

UNCHECK: Use User Account Control (UAC) to make your computer more annoying.

Reboot.

There is an alternative to totally shutting off UAC. You will find on the web a program called TweakUAC. This will allow you to put UAC into "quiet mode". This will protect you from some evils on the internet without bothering you 24/7 with dialog boxes. It is possible to configure UAC to use quiet mode without downloading this program, but it is a Very Complex Process.

Disabling Security Center alerts

Start, Control Panel, Security Center: Hit "Change the way Security Center alerts me" and change to "Don't notify me and don't display the icon".

Stop Vista Aero

In the Administrator command window:

```
net stop uxsms
```

If you ever want it back on:

```
net start uxsms
```

Turn off Remote Differential Compression

"Remote Differential Compression" is a Vista feature that speeds up file transfers between computers linked using an acoustic coupler modem. It is enabled by default, but these modems have been quite rare since 1980. It reduces performance when transferring files on a LAN, unless you're using Dixie cups and a string instead of ethernet.

Remote Differential Compression comes into play when you copy a file to a remote destination so it replaces a file with the same name. Signatures are computed for each block on the destination side and the results are sent back so only the blocks that have changed get copied. As you might imagine, this takes far more time than it's worth 99.999993 percent of the time.

To get rid of it, open Control Panel/Programs and Features, Turn Windows features on or off, Deselect "Remote Differential Compression".

Speed up all network file transfers

This adjustment combined with the previous tip will restore network file transfer speeds to Windows XP levels. (Tests were documented on the webpage where I found this stuff.)

Run the command window, but right-click to select "Run as Administrator". In the command window type:

```
netsh interface tcp set global autotuninglevel=disabled
```

Autotuning was one of those ideas that sounded good to marketing.

You can re-degrade the performance of file transfers using this command:

```
netsh interface tcp set global autotuninglevel=normal
```

Speed up local file system performance

You can improve disk drive performance *a lot* by enabling advanced features on the drive. (Some of these features only work on SATA drives.)

Using the system control panel, open the device manager, open the disk drives section,

and select the drive you want to speed up. Right-click to open the Properties window. Select the Policies tab.

- CHECK - Enable write caching on the disk
- CHECK - Enable advanced performance

DANGER:

If you do this change, you will be a *very sad panda* if you get a power failure during disk operations. Microsoft recommends that you don't use this feature unless you have an UPS. It should NOT be used on laptops, especially if you're one of those jokers who keeps his battery in the refrigerator.

Task Manager access

The old standby Control-Alt-Delete no longer displays the task manager, but rather a large screen-filling display of mostly-useless options. The new combination to open the task manager is:

Control-Shift-Escape

You can also access the task manager from the right-click menu popup on the task bar.

Windows Features

There is a nice GUI where you can turn off lots of interesting things:

Control Panel/Programs and Features/Turn windows features on or off.

- TFTP Server
- Service for NFS (Client, but no server)
- Subsystem for Unix-based Applications
- Telnet server
- Telnet client
- Windows Ultimate Extras (Should this be removed?)
- Indexing service (You may want to turn this off. See below.)
- Removable Storage Management (Disabled by default)
- Internet Information Services - We use FTP
- Remove Differential Compression (I disabled this.)

Turn off Windows Hibernation

Windows hibernation background services can use a large amount of system resources. If you don't use the Hibernate feature on a regular basis you may want to disable it to give Vista a performance boost.

Start, Control Panel, Power Options, Change Plan settings, Change Advanced Power Settings, Sleep, Hibernate after, reduce number of minutes down to 0 (never). UPDATE: "Never" is now the default after a new installation. (At least this was true on a tower.)

Remove Mysterious 'Start Menu' folder from the desktop

This is a mysterious problem that crops up when you fiddle too much with the start menu. The fix is easy:

Right click the desktop, click 'Personalize' at the bottom of the menu, click 'Change desktop icons' on the left side, in the window that pops up click 'Restore default', press 'Apply', then press 'Ok'.

IF the Apply button is greyed out, change something such as displaying the control panel or one of the other check boxes. Then you can press apply. As soon as the mysterious "Start Menu" shortcut goes away, you can uncheck whatever you changed.

Disable useless system services

Vista runs many processes in the background that may not be useful in your situation. Here are a few that I like to turn off:

Open Services under Administrative Tools.

Telephony

You don't need this if you don't use a modem.

Shell Hardware Detection

This will disable autoplay when you insert CDs and memory stick.

Server

You need this if you run the IIS webserver or FTP server.

Remote Access Connection Manager

You don't need this unless you allow remote access.

Program Compatibility Assistant

A horrible stupidity that doesn't work.

Portable Device Enumerator Service

You don't need this UNLESS you use the mp3 player synchronization features built into Windows Media Player. Using the sync feature may expose you to Microsoft's evil DRM crap, so you probably don't want this service.

IPSec Policy Agent

Only needed if you 1) Use a VPN 2) Want to be hassled by local

security policy settings every time you connect.

IP Helper
Only needed if you're using IPV6. You probably aren't.

Internet Connection Sharing
This is a useful feature if you want to run a mini-LAN with your host as the gateway. Otherwise, you don't need it.

Distributed Link Tracing Client
Watches folders you've mounted remotely to see if the files have been moved by someone else. You can live without this feature because any explorer windows you open to the remote location will update the listing anyway.

Diagnostic Policy Service
Almost all Windows diagnostics don't work even for stupid people: "Check to make sure your computer is turned on..."
Stopping this service doesn't disable the messages, it just turns off the policy interface that admins use to keep you from disabling them.

A very nice site that describes what all the Vista services do along with prescriptions for removing them is at [Speedy Vista](#).

Compensate for the missing address bar

In XP, you could see the path to the current folder in the address bar. Vista shows a sequence of menus instead. To get the old view, left click in an empty part of the address bar. You will see the file path XP-style. If you just want to copy the path to the clipboard, right-click on an empty area of the address bar and select: "Copy address as text"

Remove 'Shortcut to' prefix when creating shortcuts

When you create a shortcut, the name gets a default prefix "Shortcut to" appended. Shortcuts are easily identified by their arrow overlay, so the extra text is simply annoying.

```
[HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer]
"Link"=hex:00,00,00,00
```

Fix forgotten folder view settings

After a mysterious delay, Vista ignores your folder settings and/or rearranges Explorer settings in random ways.

Fixing this requires a simple registry hack. Copy the lines between the ***s to a notepad file "doit.reg"

```
*****
Windows Registry Editor Version 5.00

; Modify the storage space to 10000 for saving of up to 10000 folder settings.
[HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Classes\Local Settings\Software\Microsoft\Windows\Shell]
"BagMRU Size"=dword:00002710
*****
```

Save the file, right-click on the icon and select "Merge". You have to reboot and you may have to fiddle with your settings one more time. Make the changes you want to the top level "Computer" view and then "Tools - Folder Options - View - Apply to Folders"
This should be a permanent fix. You might want to combine this fix with the next one:

Normalize folder behaviour

Vista has a feature that causes folders to take on special behaviors when they contain files of special types. For example, if you store an mp3 file in folder, it becomes a "music" folder and all of the listing headers change. If you store an image file in a folder, it becomes a "picture" folder and all sorts of useless features are enabled. This concept is annoying beyond human comprehension: What happens if you have a project folder with a mixture of file types? The people who design GUI software at Microsoft obviously don't use a computer for any personal projects. Instead, they try to imagine how a complete moron would organize a very small number of files. "Duh... Lemme see. These are my Word documents. All them go in here. These are my pictures. All them go in there. These are my songs. They all go down there. O.K. Me ORGANIZED!"

This fix will make all folders act like normal file folders no matter what kind of files you store inside.

```
Windows Registry Editor Version 5.00

[-HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Classes\Local Settings\Software\Microsoft\Windows\Shell\BagMRU]
[HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Classes\Local Settings\Software\Microsoft\Windows\Shell\BagMRU]
[-HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Classes\Local Settings\Software\Microsoft\Windows\Shell\Bags]
[HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Classes\Local Settings\Software\Microsoft\Windows\Shell\Bags\AllFolders\Shell]
"FolderType"="NotSpecified"
```

Open a command window in a selected directory

"Command Window Here" was available as a shell extension installed by a Windows XP PowerToy. It gave you a context menu selection to open a command window with the default directory set to the selected directory.

It turns out this is built into Vista: Hold the shift key down when you right-click on a folder. A selection for "Open Command Window Here" will appear in the context menu.

But having to hold down the shift key is obviously an intolerable annoyance: Here's a quick registry fix that will make it visible all the time as it was in XP:

```
Windows Registry Editor Version 5.00

[HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT\Directory\shell\cmd]
"Extended"=-

[HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT\Drive\shell\cmd]
"Extended"=-
```

In the unlikely event that you would like to undo this change, the original value of Extended is an empty string:

```
"Extended"=""
```

Use the built-in screen clipping tool

Vista comes with an Accessory to clip rectangular areas of the screen. This is nice for documenting applications. (You can still do CTL-ALT-PrintScreen to clip the entire window.)

To start the Snipping Tool, select it from the Start Menu - Programs - Accessories menu. You can now click and drag a selection rectangle to capture any part of the screen to the clipboard.

Disable Windows Search Service

This is a system service that indexes all your files so they can be searched with the useless Windows Desktop Search feature. Unfortunately, it won't search or even recognize the kinds of text files programmers create. Since I can't rely on it, I prefer to use the free program "Agent Ransak" and do away with the overhead of indexing the whole computer.

```
Run: Administrative Tools/Services/Windows Search Service
```

Stop it if it is running and then set the startup type to "manual" so it won't start again.

Fix the Recycle Bin

Ah Vista! Is there nothing it cannot break?

You will soon discover that it takes *nearly freaking forever* to empty the trash. The origins of this defect have conflicting reports and I must confess that I don't have a perfect fix. On my systems, I disable the holding feature of the recycle bin: Right-click on the Recycle Bin, select Properties and select: "Do not move files to the Recycle Bin. Remove files immediately when deleted." Of course doing this eliminates the possibility of recovering a file if you make a mistake. I prefer this sacrifice to locking up the desktop for half an hour at unexpected times.

Change meaningless network interface names

Most people put up with names like "Local Area Connection", but when you have several network cards, it becomes difficult to remember where they are going.

You can rename "Local Area Connection" to "Office LAN", and so on with your other interfaces. I often have a second card called "ControllerLAN" for example. Just right-click on the name you see on the network control panel and select Rename.

Add the FTP or HTTP Server

The software management control panel is called "Programs and Features". There is a button to "Turn Windows Features on or off". On the Windows Features panel, open "Internet Information Services" and open the section "FTP Publishing Service". Inside, check "FTP Management Console" and "FTP Server".

After installation, you need to make the associated system service start automatically. Open Administrative Tools/Services, select "FTP Publishing Service", right click and change the startup type to "Automatic."

In Vista, you must explicitly open the firewall for FTP access on the firewall control panel. A checkbox exists for the ftp protocol.

Enable anonymous access to FTP resources

After installing the IIS FTP server, you can enable anonymous access, which will let the

controller log in with username "anonymous" and password "guest". This eliminates the need to create a new user account.

To do this, select the "Security Accounts" tab on the IIS FTP server panel and check "Allow anonymous connections." You may also want to disable write access using the same panel. After this change, remote users can log in with the username "anonymous". The password can be any string. Remote users will only be able to see the FTP directory you designate.

This has nothing to do with the Windows Guest account, which you may choose to leave disabled.

Specify alternative FTP home directories

If you keep your projects in your home folder, you will notice that you can't browse to this location when setting the FTP server home directory.

For example, for a user named "Goop" the directory `c:\Users\Goop` exists, but you can't see it using Explorer.

To fix this problem, open the command window in the `C:\Users` directory and type this command:

```
attrib -s -h Goop
```

Now you can configure the ftp server to use directories inside projects you keep in your home directory.

To access a directory via anonymous ftp, one more step is required to set the security attributes. To make a directory called "bin" the ftp home directory:

```
Right click on "bin" and select Properties.
Select the Security tab.
Press the Edit button under the Group or user names pane.
Press the Add button.
In the box "Enter the object names to select" type this
expression:
```

```
mycomputer\users
```

```
Where "mycomputer" is the name of your computer as
shown on the System control panel.
```

After you have the ftp home directory configured, you can throw away the top level directory `c:\inetpub` (Unless you have the webserver running from that location.)

Replace HyperTerminal

You miss HyperTerminal???

A very good terminal emulator, open source and actively supported, is "Putty". It does serial, telnet, and SSH. It comes with an SFTP client as well. I've used this for many years and nothing else comes close.

Configuring Putty as a VxWorks serial terminal:

Run the application, which will display a configuration dialog. Putty a concept called sessions which are sets of configuration values.

```
Connection type: Serial
Serial Line: COM1 (or whatever you have connected.)
Speed: 9600
Terminal Keyboard: Backspace Key: Control-H
```

Select the Session item on the left side to get back to the top pane.

Type in a name for the session in the "Saved Sessions" box such as "Com1". Press the Save button.

When you run putty, you can select the saved session and then press Open, but this is a pain. Putty stores the configurations you save internally, so there is no such thing as a document you can simply launch from the desktop. Instead, create a desktop shortcut to putty with these parameters:

```
Target: "Path to Putty.exe" -load Com1
```

This shortcut will open the saved session called Com1 and give you a terminal window ready to use.

You can also create telnet sessions to connect to running VxWorks systems. The procedure should be obvious from the serial example.

Get rid of Microsoft Office

Get OpenOffice instead. Configure it to open and save Microsoft Office formats and

you'll forget you don't have office.

Enable file and printer sharing

The procedure is a little different with Vista:

Control panel - Network and Sharing Center

Network discovery: On

File sharing: On

Printer sharing: On

Password protected sharing: Off

Improve font rendering so web pages don't look awful

Internet Explorer - Advanced - Multimedia
CHECK - Always use ClearType for HTML

Appearance Settings - Effects... - Use ClearType

Note: Under some conditions I don't yet understand, Vista will not render cleartype fonts on web pages that specify font styles explicitly in the html. On my own web pages, I simply deleted references to font-style in the css and they started rendering with cleartype. Internet Explorer 7 on Windows XP seemed to work much better. But then again, what didn't?

Install favorite free programs

Here are a few basic programs I always install. All are free.

Agent Ransack
Windows file searching is broken. This is a superior alternative.

TweakUI
A replacement for TweakUI.

Free42
A nice HP42 calculator.

Putty
A terminal emulator with serial, telnet, and SSH.

Tortoise SVN
Manage software projects.

ESB Units Converter
Furlongs per fortnight to mph, etc.

Open Office
Microsoft Office alternative.
Less obtrusive. Better layout. More features. Free.

PSPad
A very nice notepad replacement and programmer's editor.

CDBurnerXP
Burn CDs or DVDs without the operating system trying to copy the entire source to a temp directory.

IrfanView
A photo viewer.

Adobe Reader
Display pdf files.

IZArc
An essential tool for zip and other archives.
Integrates with explorer context menu.

Fix webdav access

This only useful if you have webdav directories set up on a remote server. Webdav won't work at all with Vista or Vista SP1, but Microsoft has published a secret patch:

<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/907306>

I saved a copy as:

Vista - Webfldrs-KB907306-ENU.exe

After this fix, you can mount webdav resources with no fuss:

<https://myserver.mydomain.com/webdav>

You DO NOT have to meddle with the url by adding port numbers, etc. You DO need to have an SSL certificate and https configured on the server. Note that mounted webdav, ftp, and other remote network directories appear in the desktop Computer folder, NOT the Network folder as in XP.

With this patch, Vista webdav actually works better than XP.

Remove unused items from the Start Menu

I like a very minimal Start Menu. It doesn't take long to do these because most of them are in the same key. You can make a ".reg" file following the pattern shown in the "Fix forgotten Folder View Settings" section that will do all of the changes at once. (Right-click "Merge" on the .reg file.)

Don't show - Balloon tips

```
[HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Explorer]
"NoSMBalloonTip"=dword:00000001
```

Start Menu Items

You can show or hide most of the items in the Start Menu using 1 or 0 in the following registry values. The settings listed are the ones I prefer. The default state shows nearly all of them.

```
[HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\Advanced]
"Start_AdminToolsRoot"=dword:00000001
"Start_LargeMFUIcons"=dword:00000000
"StartMenuFavorites"=dword:00000000
"Start_SearchInternet"=dword:00000000
"Start_ShowControlPanel"=dword:00000001
"Start_ShowHelp"=dword:00000000
"Start_ShowMyComputer"=dword:00000001
"Start_ShowMyDocs"=dword:00000000
"Start_ShowMyPics"=dword:00000000
"Start_ShowMyMusic"=dword:00000000
"Start_ShowMyGames"=dword:00000000
"Start_ShowNetPlaces"=dword:00000000
"Start_ShowNetConn"=dword:00000001
"Start_ShowPrinters"=dword:00000001
"Start_ShowRecentDocs"=dword:00000000
"Start_ShowRun"=dword:00000001
"Start_ShowSearch"=dword:00000000
"Start_ShowSetProgramAccessAndDefaults"=dword:00000000
"Start_ShowUser"=dword:00000000
"Start_TrackProgs"=dword:00000000
"Start_TrackDocs"=dword:00000000
```

Reorganize the Start Menu

The start menu contains only shortcuts, which you are free to reorder to suit your needs, rather than the needs of insane marketing goobs (IMGS) who want to flog you with the name of their company. Take control of your computer.

Right click on the start menu and select "Explore All Users" Create a new folder in the Programs directory called "Start Menu Refuse".

Drag everything else in the Programs menu into this folder. Now create your own category folders and put in only the startup shortcuts for the programs you actually use.

Here is my current Start Menu. Obviously your preferences will be different, but this illustrates how a functional layout is created, rather than accepting the default "marketing" layout.

```
Accessories
  As supplied by Microsoft.
Administrative Tools
  As supplied by Microsoft.
Engineering
  Matlab
  ESB Units Converter
Games
  As supplied by Microsoft.
Graphics
  Adobe Reader
  Irfan View
Internet
  Internet Explorer
  Windows Mail
  Problem Reports and Solutions
  Windows Remote Assistance
  Windows Update
Multimedia
  Windows Media Player
  Windows Movie Maker
  Windows DVD Maker
  FLV Player
Open Office
  Base, Calc, Draw, Impress, Math, Writer
Programming
  MSDN
  TortoiseSVN
  Visual Studio
Start Menu Refuse
  Everything that was or will be automatically
  put into the top level of the start menu by
  installers.
Startup
  Normally empty
Utilities
  Backup and Restore Center
  Default Programs
  Unlocker Assistant
  Putty
  TweakVI
Windows
  Ilth
  Help and Support
  Windows Calender
  Windows Contacts
  Windows Defender
```

Windows Fax and Scan
Windows Meeting Space
Windows Photo Gallery
Windows Ultimate Extras
Windows Web Site

After you install new software, drag whatever new things appear in the start menu into the Start Menu Refuse folder. Then copy out only the shortcut(s) you need to the appropriate category folder. I keep the Start Menu Refuse folders intact in case I leave something out I find necessary later.