Setting WIN7 Default Applications

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Windows 7 offers a convenience that previous versions had – when you double-click on a file icon in its file manager, an appropriate application program starts and opens the file. However, you may disagree with Windows about what is appropriate. Fortunately, it is easy to make a one-time over-ride of the default or permanently change it to what you prefer.

Windows uses the file's extension to identify the file type and to select the application to use for it. The extension is the text that follows the last period (.) in the filename. For example, .doc or .docx identifies an MS Word file, and its default application is usually MS Word. Windows 7 is often configured to hide file extensions, but you can change this by navigating to *Control Panel* ® *Appearance and Personalization* ® *Folder Options*, selecting the *View* tab, and removing the check from the item *Hide extensions for know file types, as shown in the screen shot below.*

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Folder vie	ews You can apply the view (such as Details or Icons):	that
	you are using for this folder to all folders of this type	ð.
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Advanced	acttings:	
Files a	and Folders	
A	ways show icons, never thumbnails	ĥ
A	ways show menus	
🔽 Di	isplay file icon on thumbnails	Ξ
V Di	isplay file size information in folder tips	
Di Di	isplay the full path in the title bar (Classic theme only)	
🔒 H	idden files and folders	
	Don't show hidden files, folders, or drives	
0) Show hidden files, folders, and drives	
V H	ide empty drives in the Computer folder	
H	ide extensions for known file types	
V H	ide protected operating system files (Recommended)	-
		22
	Restore Defau	ilts

I prefer this because I can look at a list of files and immediately see which are, for example, text, music, or spreadsheets.

While using Windows Explorer, double-clicking on a filename will start an application and open the file with it. If you want to open it with a different application, right-click on the filename, then click on *Open with*. The screen-shot below shows the result, which is a list of the applications that can open the file (a JPEG image in this case). To change the application that starts when you double-click a file with this extension, click on *Choose default program* ..., and select a new default for all files with the same extension (.jpg in this case).

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🔜 Desktop	Addresses.	doc	10/23/2011 2:12 PM	Microsoft Word 9	41
Downloads Recent Places Desktop Libraries Homegroup	BW H BW In BW O CH_Lt CH_Lt CH_Lt	Preview Set as desktop background Edit Print Rotate clockwise		JPEG image JPEG image JPEG image Microsoft Word 9 Microsoft Word D Microsoft Word 9	214 212 183 30 23 31
 n2nd Computer Local Disk (C:) DVD RW Drive (D:) Backup (\\vboxsrv) (E:) Share (\\vboxsrv) (F:) Network Control Panel 	CO_Lt Follov Form. Form. Cuest Quest Remir SE Ltr	Rotate counterclockwise Scan with Microsoft Security Open with Share with Restore previous versions Send to	Essentials	Microsoft Word D Microsoft Word D Microsoft Office 2010 Paint PictureViewer Windows Media Center Windows Photo Viewer	39 32
🗑 Recycle Bin	SE_Ltr	Cut Copy Create shortcut Delete		Choose default program	

The above approach is tedious if you, for example, wanted to change the default application for all image files, not just JPEG ones. In this case, you would probably prefer the following. Use the sequence *Start* ® *Control Panel* ® *Programs* ® *Set your default programs*. You will see a list of all the programs that have been as defaults. Select one and click on Choose defaults for this program. The screen below shows the result for *Windows Photo Viewer*, which is a list of all the file types that this application can open. Note that the only image type is isn't currently assigned to is GIF image. You

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et associ	ations for a prograi	m			
elect the ext	ensions you want this pro	ogram to open by default, and then click	Save.		
Windo	ows Photo Viewer				
Micro	soft Windows				
Select All					
Name	Description	Current Default			2
Extensions					
🗷 🌉 .bmp	Bitmap image	Windows Photo Viewer			
dib. 🌉 🔽	Bitmap image	Windows Photo Viewer			
🗌 💽 .gif	GIF image	Internet Explorer			
🗾 🔜 .jfif	JPEG image	Windows Photo Viewer			
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📝 🌉 .tiff	TIFF image	Windows Photo Viewer			L
wdp. 🛃 🔽	Windows Media Photo	Windows Photo Viewer			

could change this by selecting GIF and clicking on the Save button.

This approach doesn't always work – the list of default programs is incomplete, and applications that are not already defaults won't appear. A more robust, but more tedious, approach is to go back one window and select *Associate a file type or protocol with a program* instead of *Set your default programs*. (Before taking the screen-shot, I had clicked on the heading Current Default, which sorts the display by default application, Windows Photo Viewer in this case).

O ♥ 🗹 « Pr	ograms Default Programs Set Associations	👻 🍫 Search Con	trol Panel
Associate a file Click on an extension Windows P	type or protocol with a specific program on to view the program that currently opens it by default. T	o change the default program, clic	:k Change program.
Microsoft C	orporation		Change program
Name	Description	Current Default	*
wvx.	windows iviedia Audio/ video piayiist	windows wiedla Player	
.bmp	Bitmap image	Windows Photo Viewer	
dib. 🌅	Bitmap image	Windows Photo Viewer	
ico	Icon	Windows Photo Viewer	0
🔜 .jfif	JPEG image	Windows Photo Viewer	
돌 .jpe	JPEG image	Windows Photo Viewer	
🔄 .jpeg	JPEG image	Windows Photo Viewer	
🖷 jpg	JPEG image	Windows Photo Viewer	
📭 .png	PNG image	Windows Photo Viewer	
🛃 .tif	TIFF image	Windows Photo Viewer	
🛃 .tiff	TIFF image	Windows Photo Viewer	
.wdp	Windows Media Photo	Windows Photo Viewer	1
.psc1	PSC1 File	Windows PowerShell	
•	m		•
			Close

To change a default, just select the program type, click the *Change program* ... button, and select the application. Since many different image file types appear together, it is must easier if you want to change them all. You would probably scan the entire list in case some image files were assigned a different default, and of course, you have no assurance that the application you select can actually open the file.

While we are discussing defaults, you can also select what happens when you insert a disc in your DVD drive. Use the sequence *Start* ® *Control Panel* ® *Programs* ® *Change AutoPlay settings*. The screen-shot below show the result of selecting the *Choose a default button* in the Audio CD line.

		i Panel
Choose what happens whe	en you insert each type of media or device Jevices	
Audio CD	Choose a default	-
😢 Enhanced audio CD	 Play audio CD using Windows Media Player Show songs using iTunes Player dia CD using iTunes 	Ī
JVD movie	 Play audio CD using Hunes Import songs using iTunes 	
Enhanced DVD movie	 Open folder to view files using Windows Explorer Take no action Ask me every time 	
Software and games	Ask me every time	•
Pictures	Ask me every time	•
🔳 Video files	Choose a default	-
Audio files	Choose a default	•
🚱 Blank CD	Choose a default	•
	(a) (c)	

My PC is set up to take no action, but I could pick any action on the list.

By setting the defaults you can adapt your Windows 7 computer to your own preferences and make it easier and faster to use.