

Windows XP/Vista/7 Directory Structures

System Partition	
NTLDR	Controls the operating system boot selection process and hardware detection before the actual Windows Kernel is launched.
boot.ini	Contains the contents of the boot menu displayed by NTLDR. This file contains the default operating system selection, the timeout period for the selection, and an ARC name or pathname for each listed operating system boot selection.
ntdetect.com	Detects the major components of the computer before NTLDR selects a configuration and loads the Kernel.
bootsect.dos	Present only on dual-boot systems.
hiberfil.sys	Available if hibernation is enabled on the computer.
pagefile.sys	The page file the Windows NT virtual memory system uses.
Boot Partition	
Boot	Boot folder
Documents and Settings (XP)	This folder is used to hold the configurations for each user who access the system.
Inetpub	IIS folder (if installed)
PerfLogs	Created by Windows Performance Information and Tools
Program Files	This folder is the default installation location for Windows applications.
Program Files (x86)	Program files for x86 (32 bit) programs on a x64 Windows.
Program Data (Vista/WIN7)	Program data.
Recovery	System Recovery Information
System Volume Information	This folder stores all disk permission and security information.
Recycler (XP)	This is the system-controlled temporary repository for deleted files in Windows XP.
\$Recycle.BIN (Vista/WIN7)	This is the system-controlled temporary repository for deleted files in Windows Vista/7.

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Users (Vista/WIN7)	This folder is used to hold the configurations for each user who access the system.
Windows	This is the main folder containing all the Windows system files.
Documents and Settings Directory Sub-Folders	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Data • Cookies • Desktop • Favorites • Local Settings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet History • Temp • Temporary Internet Files • My Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Pictures • My Music • My Videos • Start Menu • NTUSER.DAT Registry
Users Directory Sub-Folders	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AppData <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explorer (Thumbcache files) • History (Internet History) • Temporary Internet Files • Windows Mail • Temp • Roaming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cookies • Recent Items • Contacts • Desktop • Downloads • Favorites • My Documents • My Music • My Pictures • My Videos • Searches • NTUSER.DAT Registry

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Program Files Directory Sub-Folders	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Common Files. This folder contains files shared with the Microsoft applications.• ComPlus Applications. This folder contains files used by ComPlus applications. If there are no ComPlus applications installed on your XP machine, this folder will be empty. COM+ builds on the Microsoft Component Object Model (COM) integrated services and features, making it easier for developers to create and use software components in any language, using any tool.• Internet Explorer. This folder contains the files and executables for Internet Explorer, a Web-browsing tool.• Messenger. This folder contains files and executables for the new Windows Messenger Service. This service combines features found in MSN Messenger with an improved communications infrastructure.• Movie Maker. This folder contains the files and executables for the Movie Maker application.• MSN. This folder contains the files and executables for MSN Explorer, the new Internet connectivity tool from Microsoft that combines Web, e-mail services, and Internet setup services.• MSN Gaming Zone. This folder contains the files and executables for the MSN Gaming Zone.• NetMeeting. This folder contains all the files used by Microsoft NetMeeting.• Online Services. This folder contains files used to establish Internet connectivity. These files enable you to set up Internet access through MSN or to select another available Internet service provider.• Outlook Express. This folder contains all the files and executables needed by Microsoft Outlook Express, a simple e-mail application.• Uninstall Information. This is a hidden folder containing files and information for uninstall services.• Windows Media Player. This folder contains

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	<p>the Microsoft Media Player application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Windows NT. This folder contains any applications that have been ported over from other Windows operating systems (such as Pinball). This folder has empty folders in it if the ported components were not selected during installation.• Windows Update. This folder contains all the files used by the Windows Update Service.
Windows Directory Sub-Folders	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Addins. ActiveX controls files.• AppPatch. Contains application compatibility .dlls and Appfix packages.• Config. Contains configuration .idf files used by the MIDI sound system. Depending on system configuration, this folder might be empty.• Connection Wizard. Files used for establishing Internet connectivity. Can be an empty folder.• CSC. The Client Side Cache is where contents of mapped network drives are cached so that the contents of these drives will be available offline. By default, this folder contains empty folders.• Cursors. Contains static and animated cursor files. You can use these files by configuring the Mouse applet.• Debug. Contains .log files that can be used to debug network connectivity and other setup functions.• Downloaded Program Files. Contains ActiveX controls and Java applets that have been downloaded from the Internet.• Driver Cache. Contains a platform subdirectory and a copy of the <i>driver.cab</i> file so that new devices can be easily installed without needing the Windows XP CD. Might contain SP1.cab if installing an integrated copy of the operating system.• Fonts. Contains all installed fonts.• Help. Contains the help files used by the Windows Help system and all its native utilities.

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- **Ime.** Files to support the Input Method Editor. Provides language support for Windows.
- **Inf.** Contains the .inf (system information) files used to install software components. This is a hidden folder.
- **Installer.** The location for temporary files used by the Windows Installer program. This is a hidden folder.
- **Java.** Folder structure for Java files.
- **Media.** Contains media files (sound and video) used by sound themes.
- **Msagent.** Microsoft agent files, which are software services that support using animated characters in the Windows interface to assist users in manipulating the operating system.
- **Msapps.** Contains files for backward-compatibility with applications that use shared components.
- **Mui.** MUI (Multilingual-User Interface) Packs give companies flexibility in making language options available to users.
- **Offline Web Pages.** Any Web pages designated as offline accessible are stored in this folder, along with any images and other files that go with it.
- **PCHEALTH.** Contains files and subfolders to support the Microsoft Help Center Service. These files support all the Windows Help services, including features such as Remote Desktop Assistance.
- **Prefetch.** Contains the files that is tracking for prefetch execution. Caching frequently used files decreases startup time for applications and optimizes performance.
- **Registration.** Contains files that support COM+ applications.
- **Repair.** Contains backup copies of the permanent Registry hives. The NTBackup program updates this directory with the System State option.
- **Resources.** Contains files to support the user's shell interface.
- **Security.** Contains subfolders and files related to security. Includes log files that define the default security applied during

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	<p>setup and templates for assigning new security privileges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Srchasst. Contains files and subfolders for Search Companion. Includes files to support an indexing function that improves search performance. • System. Contains 16-bit versions of protected and real mode drivers and .dll files used by applications. These files are provided for backward-compatibility with older applications. Additional 16-bit driver files can be stored in this folder. • System32. Contains the core operating system files and subfolder trees. • Tasks. Contains scheduled tasks that run without operator intervention. • Temp. Contains any temporary files used by the system and applications. • Twain_32. Contains files to support Twain technology, enabling a scanner document to be inserted into a file. • Web. Contains files and subfolders to support Internet printing and document access. • WinSxS. A folder to store the shared components of side-by-side applications. These can be multiple versions of the same application or the same assembly.
System 32 Directory Sub-Folders	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1025, 1028, 1031, 1033, etc. Contains locationization languages files. Most of these folders will be empty. The English language is 1033. • CatRoot. Contains security catalog files. • CatRoot2. Contains catalog database files. • Com. Contains COM object information. • Config. Contains the Registry hives used during bootup and is the storage location for the System, Security, and Application log files viewed through Event Viewer. Config now contains a new folder called \systemprofile that holds a standard profile for the local system. • DHCP. This is an empty folder used to hold Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP) database files if the host becomes a

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	<p>DHCP server.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DirectX. Contains files to support the accelerated performance features of game devices.• Dllcache. Contains backup copies of the operating system files that are under the Windows File System Protection system.• Drivers. Contains driver files (.sys); the \etc folder contains sample copies of the TCP/IP text-based configuration files, such as Hosts and LMHosts files.• Export. This is an empty folder.• IAS. If there is no Internet connection capability, this is an empty folder used to hold configuration files for the Internet Authentication Service. This service is typically found on servers. If the machine has a device capable of connecting to the Internet, the IAS folder should not be empty. It will contain two files: DNARY.MDB (used to phrase IAS log files) and IAS.MDB (used to store remote access policies).• Icsxml. Contains files for Universal Plug and Play.• IME. Contains files for Input Method Editors.• Intsrv. Contains files used by the World Wide Web service. This folder is empty.• Macromedia. Contains a subfolder with the Shockwave Flash .ocx file.• MsDTC. Contains Microsoft Distributed Transaction Coordinator files that control transaction output and message delivery between two different applications or processes.• MUI. Contains Multilingual-User Interface files that are created by applications, such as Service Pack 1.• Os2. Contains drivers used by the OS/2 subsystem.• NPP. Contains files to support collecting network traffic from an PC by a Network Monitor server.• Oobe. Contains "Out of Box Experience" files that prompt users to complete product activation and registration and to create a new
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	<p>user other than Administrator. This feature is activated only after setup.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ras. Contains the default scripts used by Dial-Up Networking.• Restore. Contains a list of files to be monitored and saved to an alternative location in case of file corruption. The System Restore service takes snapshots of the XP system periodically to enable the system to be restored from a previous set of data. This folder also contains the machine GUID.• Setup. Contains setup files for additional services, such as FrontPage Server Extensions and Microsoft Fax.• ShellExt. By default, this folder is empty.• Spool. Used by the printing system to store spooled print jobs and related files. The Printers subfolder is used to store spool files. The other folders found here vary based on printer drivers and configuration.• USMT. USMT stands for User State Migration Tool. This folder contains files to support both USMT and the File and Settings Transfer Wizard. Both tools enable user files and settings to be copied to another PC.• WBEM. Used by Web Based Enterprise Management to store its data and executable files and utilities. The Microsoft implementation of WBEM is the Windows Management Instrumentation (WMI) Service. With WMI, programmers can create applications that control network devices, using the same commands regardless of platform.• Wins. Contains files to support the Windows Internet Name Service (WINS).
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