



Getting StartED with Windows 7

Joseph Moran

Kevin Otnes



GETTING STARTED WITH WINDOWS 7

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To my Mom, who set the ball rolling by buying me my first computer many years ago, and to my wife, for all her love and support.

—Joseph Moran

To my father, who gave me writing genes, and my mother who made me blue jeans. To my wife, for sharing our dreams.

—Kevin Otnes

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About the Authors



Joseph Moran has been using Windows since the operating system was sold on a half-dozen floppy disks. He's a long time technology writer who has penned articles for numerous web sites, magazines, and newspapers, and has worked in technology public relations and as a corporate IT manager.

When he's not in front of a computer, he tries to work on his tennis game where he recently upgraded his skills from comical to competent.



Kevin Otnes is a technical writer in the Seattle, Washington area, where he has worked for Boeing, Microsoft, and EMC. At Microsoft, he wrote online help for numerous Windows releases, from Windows 95 to Windows XP. He served on the front lines of the Internet Explorer/Netscape Navigator browser wars as an award-winning writer for Internet Explorer help. During his tenure on the Windows documentation teams, he also worked on many other Windows and MSN features, including Outlook Express, MSN Mail, NetMeeting, instant messaging, chat, Windows XP Embedded, and Windows Mobile Embedded. Today, he writes documentation peacefully outside of Microsoft for a market leader in enterprise-level backup and recovery software and hardware products.

About the Technical Reviewer



Peter Membrey lives in Hong Kong and is actively promoting open source in all its various forms and guises, especially in education. He has had the honor of working for Red Hat and received his first RHCE at the tender age of 17. He is now a Chartered IT Professional and one of the world's first professionally registered ICT Technicians. Currently studying for a master's degree in IT, he hopes to study locally and earn a Ph.D in the not-too-distant future. He lives with his wife Sarah and is desperately trying (and sadly failing) to come to grips with Cantonese.

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—Joseph Moran

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Last, but most of all, thank you to my best friend, my wife Lori, for your unfaltering support every day, every year, in every way.

—Kevin Otnes

Introduction

Each time a new version of Windows comes out, it improves upon the one it replaces in some way, but we can say without hyperbole that Windows 7 is very likely Microsoft's best operating system ever, and we believe it will have as large an impact on how people use computers as Windows 95 did well over a decade ago. Windows 7 is the second new version of Windows in less than three years (Windows Vista launched in early 2007). While Windows Vista quickly developed a reputation, fairly or not, as being inferior to its predecessor in many ways, Windows 7, the first Windows version to be made available to the general public while still in beta (test) form, has made a positive impression on nearly everyone that's used it.

For the visual experience, Windows 7 brings a more efficient Taskbar that better manages program windows on your desktop, provides useful thumbnail previews of open windows, and a myriad customization options. For your peace of mind, Windows 7 continues Microsoft's ongoing improvement in security to make your PC experience safer and more secure. You'll also get improved notification from Windows when there are problems with software, devices, or security. The User Account Control now provides additional settings so that you can keep a high-level of security on your computer while making it less obtrusive to you when you are trying to do other things on your computer. Only a few years ago, homes with more than one computer were an exception. Now multiple-computer homes and home networks are becoming the norm. Windows 7 adds HomeGroups for simplified networking between computers running Windows 7 and many other networking improvements that make it easier to connect to older computers running Windows Vista or Windows XP. These network improvements are also handy for sharing your pictures, music, and videos between computers on your network. Behind the scenes, under the hood, in the background—however you want to say it—Windows 7 contains a lot of improvements in performance. It not only looks better, it runs better, faster, and safer.

Getting StartED with Windows 7 is your guide to hitting the ground running without becoming a computer geek or becoming enslaved to it. Windows 7 is fun. It's something to get excited about. You can have fun and enjoy your computer and still get your job or work done better. It was a real joy for us to explore Windows 7 and write this book. We hope you'll have just as much fun reading this book and exploring Windows 7.

Who this book is for

As the title implies, *Getting StartED with Windows 7* isn't geared toward computer enthusiasts or "techies". Rather, it's intended for those who have little to no experience with Windows and want to understand the basics of getting things done with Windows 7, or even for those who may be familiar with a prior version of Windows and want to know more about the new and improved features that Windows 7 brings.

You won't find lots of buzzwords or technical jargon in this book. What you will find is lots of practical information about Windows 7's interface and its most important features, along with step-by-step instructions on how to get the most of the operating system by making it do the things you want it to.

How this book is structured

Whether you are new to computers, Windows, or new to Windows 7, *Getting Started with Windows 7* will help you get up and running with Windows 7 quickly. You can start this book from the beginning and read it end-to-end, or you may want to dive into an area that is most important to you at the moment. If you've been using Windows Vista, Windows 7 will be very familiar to you. If you've been using Windows XP, or an even older version of Windows, you'll find some things have been moved, rearranged, or renamed. Many people will want to start with Chapter 1 to find their way around Windows and the desktop. If you're new Windows 7 computer is replacing another computer, you may want to start with Chapter 10 to quickly move your files and settings from the old to the new computer. Here's a short summary of what you'll find:

Chapter 1 Navigating Windows 7 In this chapter, you'll get a tour of the Windows 7 user interface and see how to use it to accomplish your day-to-day computing chores. Some of the things you'll learn include how to find and run programs from the Start menu, how the Taskbar helps you manage running programs (and open new ones), and some ways to customize each. You'll also see how Jump Lists give you easy access to frequently used files and program functions, and learn how to easily manipulate and switch between program windows using keyboard and mouse commands.

Chapter 2 Managing User Accounts One of Windows 7's strengths is its ability to accommodate multiple users and allow each to customize the operating system to his or her own tastes. In this chapter you'll be introduced to the different Windows 7 user account types and understand why you should create separate accounts for different members of your household. You'll learn how to create accounts and protect them with passwords, as well as how to use parental controls to limit when and how a child can use the computer.

Chapter 3 Working with Files and Folders In this chapter, you'll see how Windows 7 sets up a series of special folders for each user (and for all users collectively) to store various forms of personal data such as documents, pictures, or music. Then you'll learn how Windows 7 uses libraries to help you organize similar types of files that are stored in different places. You will learn how to use the search feature to quickly find information like files, programs, or configuration settings.

Chapter 4 Personalizing Windows Windows 7 is more than just a new pretty face. It offers new ways to customize how Windows looks and behaves, from your desktop colors to the way your mouse works. By personalizing Windows, you can make it more fun, simpler, and convenient for you to use. In this chapter, you'll learn how to customize the appearance of Windows by changing the desktop background, Windows colors, and your screen saver. You'll also learn how to make the screen easier to use, and adjust other settings to make your computer more accessible for visual, audio, and mobility needs.

Chapter 5 Fixing Problems from A to Ctrl+Z Windows 7 is a wonderful operating system; it's easy, reliable, and safe to use. Occasionally things don't go the way you want them to. It could a problem with settings in Windows, new software you installed, or a new device you just hooked up. In this chapter, you'll learn how to use Windows features like troubleshooters, Safe Mode, System Restore, Advanced Recovery, and Help and Support Center to fix problems. You'll also learn practical tips for fixing everyday problems within programs, and practical steps for avoiding or preventing problems before they happen.

Chapter 6 Protecting Your Data It won't be long before your Windows 7 computer is filled with all kinds of important, if not irreplaceable, personal data, and this chapter will show you how to make sure that data isn't lost as the result of an unexpected computer trouble. You'll learn how to configure Windows 7 to back up your personal files and/or make a copy of the entire computer contents (including your programs and Windows 7 itself) so that you're prepared and protected in case of a problem. You'll also learn how to restore the previous version of a file in case you accidentally overwrite it with unwanted changes.

Chapter 7 Creating a Home Network Whether you use a single computer connected directly to the Internet, or connect to other computers within your home, you are using a network. Windows 7 provides new features and improvements to make it easier to connect to the Internet and other computers, and share printers, files and storage. In this chapter, you will learn how to use the new HomeGroup feature, and the improved Network and Sharing Center. You'll also learn how to set up your network to protect your files and access.

Chapter 8 Using Windows 7 Programs Windows 7 includes lots of handy built-in programs to help you with your daily computer chores, and in this chapter we'll take a look at some of them. Some of the things you'll learn include how to browse the web with Internet Explorer, how to play music and video with Windows Media Player, and how to scan documents using Windows Fax and Scan. You'll also learn how to add and remove your own programs, and how to control what program is run when you open a certain type of file. In addition, we'll tell you how to configure Windows 7 to run a particular program or perform a particular task when you use items like Audio CDs, DVD movies, or external storage devices.

Chapter 9 Safeguarding Your Computer This probably isn't the first chapter you wanted to read. But maybe it should be. One bad computer virus can really ruin your day. Or week. Fortunately Windows 7 comes out of the box (or onto your computer) with new and improved security features to protect you and your computer. But computer hackers are working round the clock to find new ways to attack computers. So there are several things you need to set up to keep your computer protected today and tomorrow. In this chapter, we'll cover how to use Windows 7 to protect your computer with features like Automatic Update, Windows Firewall, User Accounts, antispyware, and third party virus protection programs. You'll also learn practical ways to use your computer safely in daily use, including surfing the Internet and exchanging e-mail.

Chapter 10 Moving Files and Settings to Your Windows 7 Computer Windows 7 provides some professional help to make your move to a new computer less stressful: Windows Easy Transfer. With Windows Easy Transfer, you can copy files and settings from your old computer, even another computer running Windows 7, to your new computer running Windows 7. In this chapter, you'll go through the common tasks associated with getting a new computer, such as moving files and settings with Windows Easy Transfer or alternate methods, installing programs on your new computer, upgrading a computer to Windows 7 from a previous version of Windows, and using or disposing of your old computer.

About the Boxes in the Series

There are three tip boxes sprinkled throughout the book that we will use to call out information that we think is important for you in some way. They are: NotED, ExplainED, and LinkED, and they look like this:



NotED

A NotED box will tell you something that you might find useful, but that you don't need to know in order to get the most from this book and the subject you're learning. They contain things that are worth noting that you can use in your own projects, or that you may want to come back to when it suits you.



ExplainED

An ExplainED box will give you more information on the subject under discussion. They add more detail to the main text and explain additional concepts that you may find useful as you read. We'll also use them for recapping relevant information that you may have forgotten from previous chapters.



LinkED

A LinkED box will provide you with a link to somewhere you can find more information on a subject. This may be a reference to a website, somewhere you can see the topic you're discussing come to life, or simply a link to another chapter in the book where a discussion is continued.

Any of the boxes can be skipped if you want to focus on the chapter and come back to them at a later time, or you can pause at each one and spend some time investigating the information they give before returning to the chapter. It's up to you.

Chapter 1

Navigating Windows 7

In this chapter, you'll explore the basics of the Windows 7 interface, which is often referred to as the **desktop** (Figure 1-1). You'll learn how to use the **Start** menu to run programs, how the taskbar helps you organize and keep track of multiple running programs (and launch new ones), how the notification area provides access to system information and settings, and how to manage open windows.



Figure 1-1. The Windows 7 desktop

The Start menu

The **Start** menu will often be the first place you visit when you begin using the computer and the last place you visit when you're done, because from here

you can perform tasks such as run programs, search for and open files and folders, change system settings, shut down the system, and so on. Click the **Start** button, the round Windows logo in the lower-left corner of the screen, to display the **Start** menu (Figure 1-2).

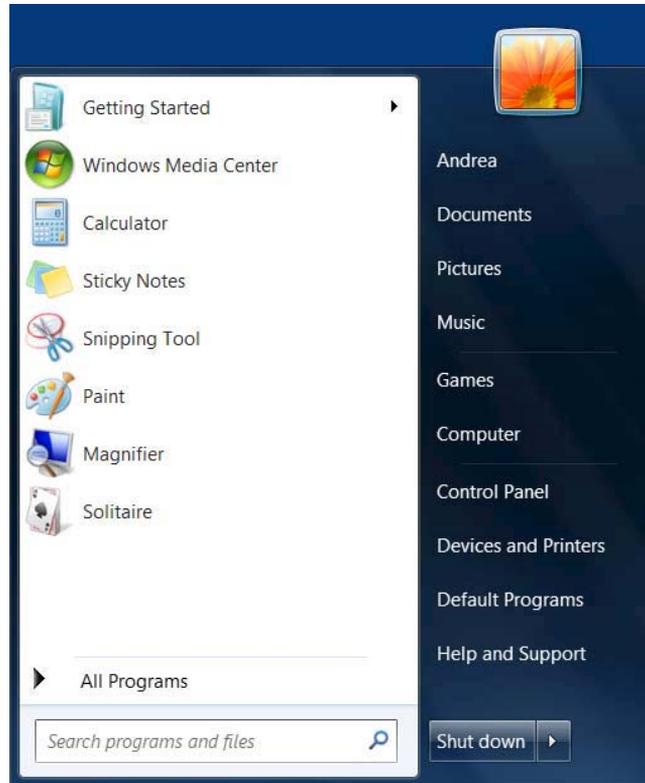


Figure 1-2. The **Start** menu is your jumping-off point for accessing programs, system settings, and more. (Note: The items displayed on the left side of your **Start** menu won't necessarily be the same as the ones shown here.)



NotED

*Pressing the Windows key will also open the **Start** menu.*

Running programs

You can find and run programs from the `Start` menu's left pane, where you'll see a group of default programs as well as some you've recently used. Just click a program to run it. If the program you want isn't in the list, click `All Programs` to browse through a menu listing all the programs installed on your system (Figure 1-3).

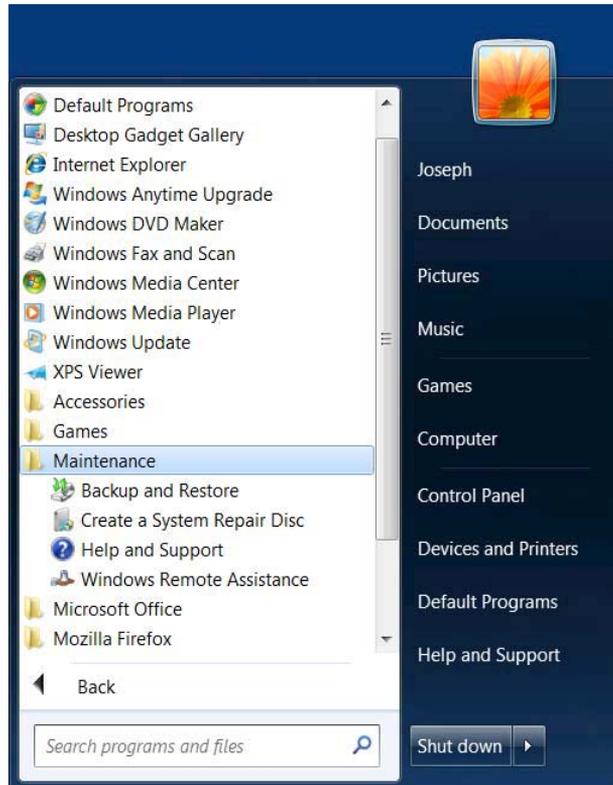


Figure 1-3. When you click `All Programs`, you can browse a menu of all the software installed on your system.



ExplainED

Start menu items with a folder icon represent a group of related items. When you click one, the list will expand to show each item in the group.

Finding programs

When you want to run a particular program but aren't sure where to find it, you don't need to wade through a series of menus looking for it because the `Start` menu's search box can help you locate it quickly. Just type in the name of the program—or even the first few letters of the name—to display a menu containing a list of full or partial matches (Figure 1-4).

You can start typing a search term as soon as you open the `Start` menu; you don't need to click the search box first. Also, the search results will update automatically as you type; click the X to clear what you've typed and start over.



ExplainED

We'll be using the `Start` menu's search box extensively throughout this book, because it can be a quick and efficient alternative to navigating through menus when you need to locate not just a program but settings, files, and folders as well. To follow along with the examples in the book, you'll want to use our suggested keywords, but we encourage you to experiment with your own as you get familiar with Windows 7.

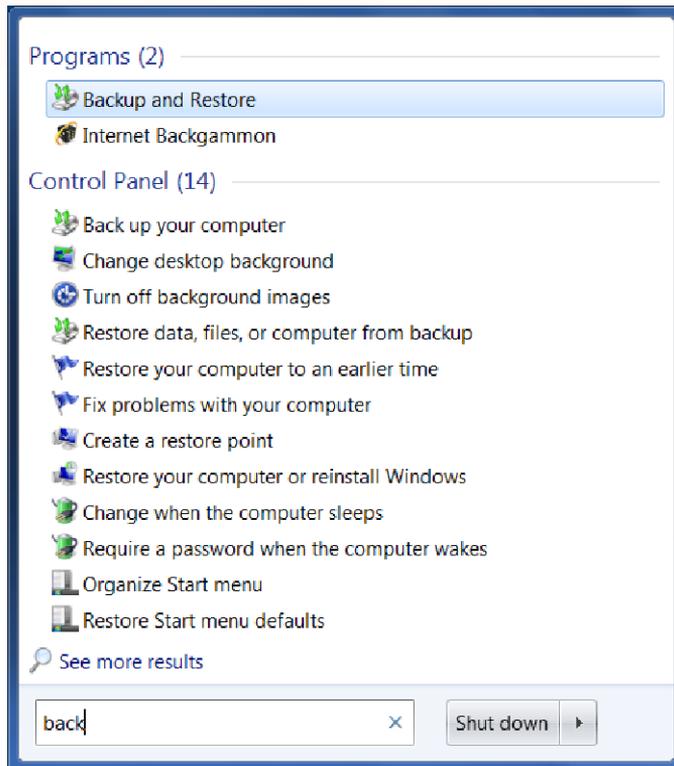


Figure 1-4. Type all or part of a program (or setting or filename) into the Start menu's search box to get a list of matches.

In Figure 1-4, for example, you'll notice that typing `back` produces program matches for both `Backup and Restore` and `Internet Backgammon`, along with a variety of setting matches. If there were any files or folders with `back` in the name, they'd appear in the list of search results as well.

Linked

For more on searching for files and folders, see Chapter 3.



Customizing the program list

One way to ensure your favorite programs are easily accessible is to make them immediately visible when the Start menu appears by **pinning** them to the Start menu. To pin a program to the Start menu, pick the program you want—it can be in the recently used list, it can be in the All Programs menu, or you can find it with the search box. Then right-click the program and choose **Pin to Start Menu** (Figure 1-5).

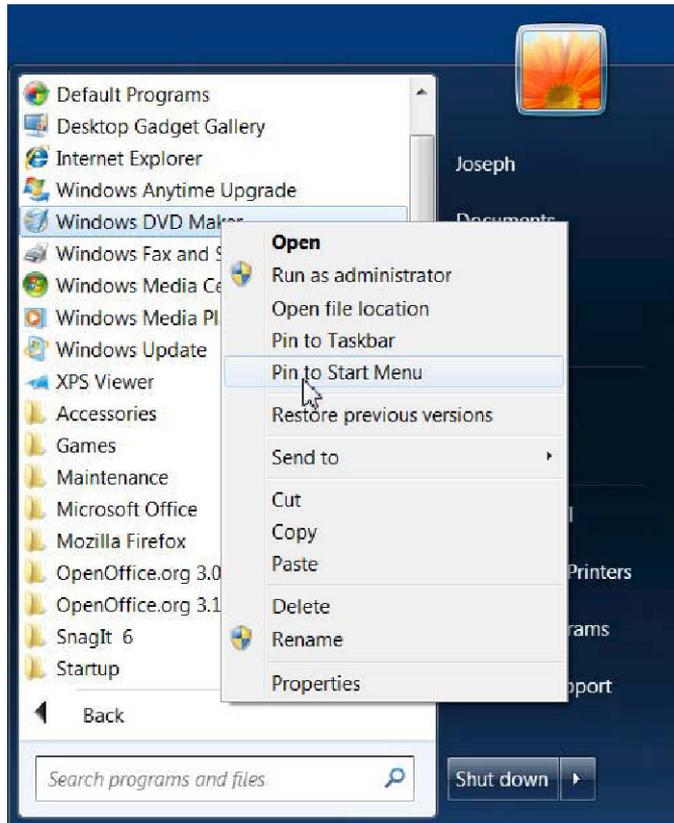


Figure 1-5. Right-click a program's icon and choose **Pin to Start Menu** to permanently add it to the top of the menu.

Programs that are pinned to the Start menu will appear at the top of the program list and be separated from other programs by a thin line, as shown in Figure 1-6.



Figure 1-6. In this Start menu, both Windows DVD Maker and FreeCell are pinned.

You can also pin a default or recently used program to the Start menu by dragging its icon toward the top-left corner of the Start menu until the icon displays a Pin to Start menu label, as shown in Figure 1-7.

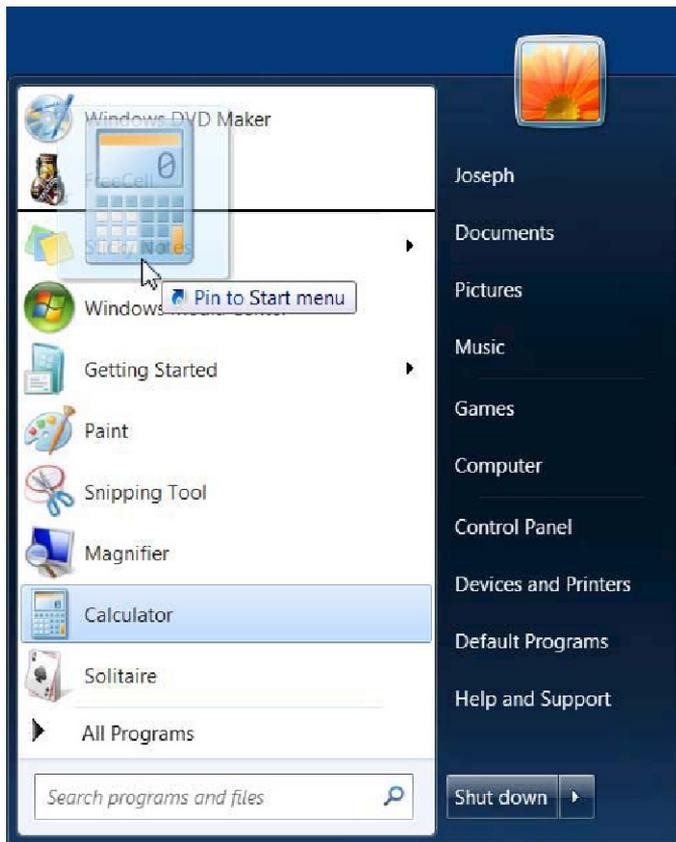


Figure 1-7. You can pin programs by dragging them toward the upper left of the Start menu.



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*To remove a pinned, default, or recently used program from the Start menu, right-click the item and choose *Remove from this list*.*

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Another way to keep programs within easy reach is to pin them to the taskbar, which we'll outline later in this chapter.



Using Jump Lists to open files and run programs

Sometimes a program listed in your `Start` menu will include a small right arrow. This arrow means the program has a **Jump List**—a special menu that offers convenient access to recently used files (and, in some cases, common tasks that are related to the program).

To view a Jump List, just leave the mouse pointer over the program listing for a moment. The Jump List in Figure 1-8, for example, lists images recently opened with the Paint program.

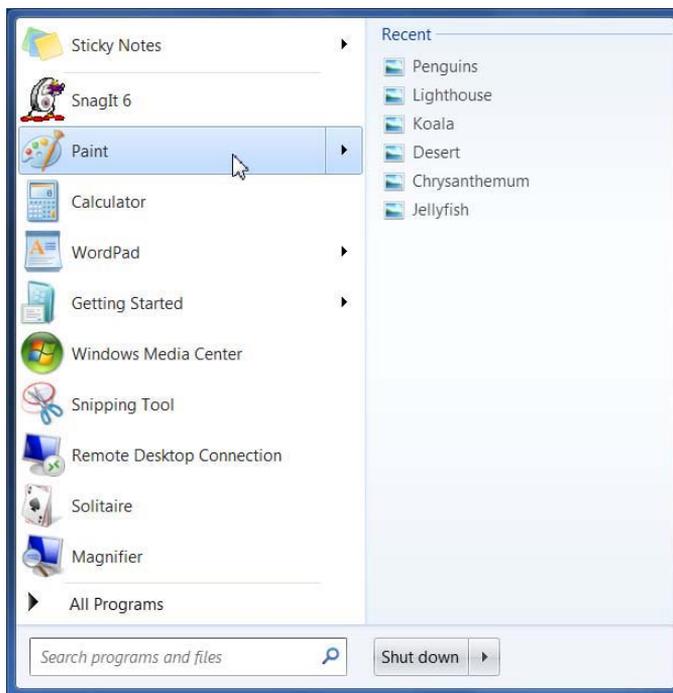


Figure 1-8. Jump Lists provide convenient access to a program's recently used files.

Jump Lists don't appear when you use the *Start* menu to search for programs.



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To have an item permanently appear on the Jump List, highlight it and click the pushpin icon that pops up.

Browsing folders and settings

The *Start* menu's right pane provides numerous shortcuts to commonly used areas of Windows 7. The top section (the portion above the first horizontal line) contains a shortcut to a user's personal account folders—click the account name in the upper right to view them (Figure 1-9). You can also click the three individual shortcuts for direct access to Documents, Pictures, or Music.

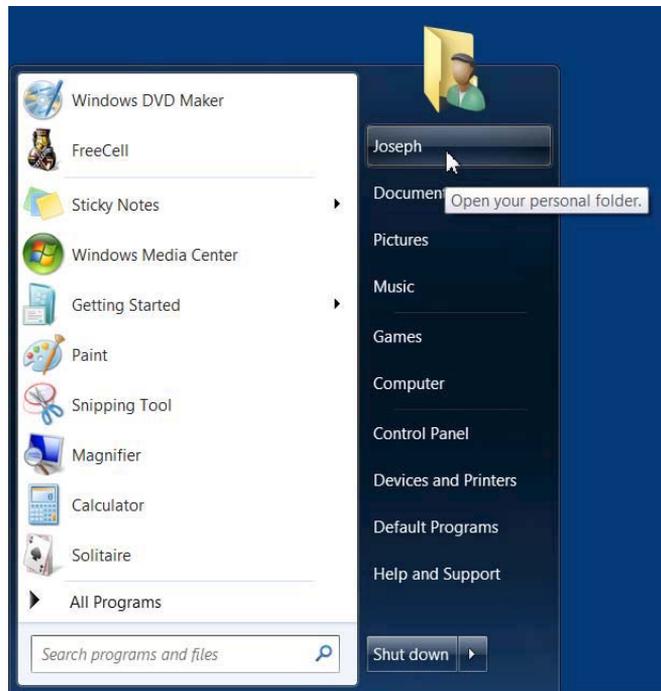


Figure 1-9. Click the name in the upper right of the *Start* menu to view the account's personal folders.

After you click the account name, a window will open displaying a group of account folders (Figure 1-10). Double-click a folder to view its contents.

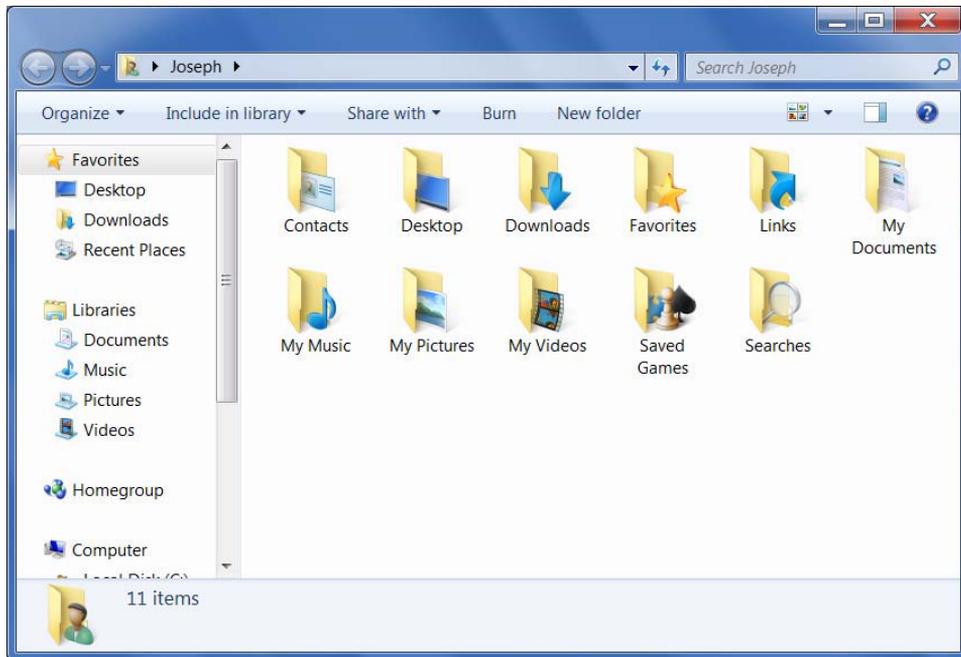


Figure 1-10. The personal folders for an account

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For more information about Windows 7 account folders, see Chapter 3.



Beneath the account-specific links in the `Start` menu are several more that you can use to perform tasks such as browse storage devices (`Computer`), find system settings (`Control Panel`), get help, and more. Figure 1-11 shows the `Control Panel` window that opens when you click the `Control Panel` link.