Knowledge Base

How to Modify the List of Programs that Run When You Start Windows XP

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The information in this article applies to:

- Microsoft Windows XP 64-Bit Edition
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional

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SUMMARY

This article explains how to use the Group Policy snap-in to create or modify the list of programs that start automatically when you log on to your Microsoft Windows XP-based computer.

MORE INFORMATION

Windows XP has two separate Run policies:

- Run at Startup

  -and-

- Legacy Run at Startup

Run at Startup Policy

To create or modify the list of programs that start automatically when you log on to your computer, follow these steps:

1. Click **Start**, and then click **Run**.
2. In the **Open** box, type `mmc`, and then click **OK**.
3. On the **File** menu, click **Add/Remove Snap-in**.
4. Click **Add**.
5. Under **Available Stand-alone Snap-ins**, click **Group Policy**, click **Add**, and then click **Finish**.

   NOTE: If you do not want to edit the Local Computer policy, click **Browse** to locate the group policy object that you want. Supply your user name and password if prompted, and then click **Finish** when you return to the **Select Group Policy Object** dialog box.
6. Click **Close**, and then in the **Add/Remove Snap-in** dialog box, click **OK**.
7. In the left pane of the Group Policy snap-in, expand **Local Computer Policy**, expand **Computer Configuration**, and then expand **Administrative Templates**.
8. Expand the **System** object, click the **Logon** object, and then in the right-pane, double-click **Run these programs at user logon**.
9. Click **Enabled**, and then click **Show**.
10. Click **Add**, type the name of the executable program (.exe) file or document that you want, and then click **OK**. You must specify the path to the file unless it is located in the %Systemroot% folder.
11. Repeat step 10 to add additional items to the **Items to run at logon** list.
12. Click **OK** twice.

    The items that you added to the **Items to run at logon** list start automatically the next time that you log on to Windows on your computer. A list of these items is located in the following registry key:

    HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\policies\Explorer\Run

Legacy Run at Startup Policy

The legacy programs that are configured to start when you log on to your computer are listed in the following registry key:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run

Many third-party programs, such as RealAudio, can be included in this category.

You can either enable or disable the legacy run list. You cannot modify it directly from within the Group Policy snap-in. If you want to add items to the list of programs that start automatically when you log on to your computer, see the "Run at Startup Policy" section of this article.

To specify whether you want to start the programs on the legacy run list when you log on to your computer, follow these steps:

1. Click **Start**, and then click **Run**.

2. In the **Open** box, type `mmc`, and then click **OK**.

3. On the **File** menu, click **Add/Remove Snap-in**.

4. Click **Add**.

5. Under **Available Stand-alone Snap-ins**, click **Group Policy**, click **Add**, and then click **Finish**.

    NOTE: If you do not want to edit the Local Computer policy, click **Browse** to locate the group policy object that you want. Supply your user name and password if prompted, and then click **Finish** when you return to the **Select Group Policy Object** dialog box.

6. Click **Close**, and then in the **Add/Remove Snap-in** dialog box, click **OK**.

7. In the left pane of the Group Policy snap-in, expand **Local Computer Policy**, expand **Computer Configuration**, and then expand **Administrative Templates**.

8. Expand the **System** object, click the **Logon** object, and then in the right-pane, double-click **Do not process the legacy run list**.

9. Do one of the following:

    ○ Click **Not Configured** if you want to run legacy programs at startup.

        -or-

    ○ Click **Enabled** if you do not want to run legacy programs at startup.

        -or-

    ○ Click **Disabled** if you want to run legacy programs at startup.

    NOTE: The legacy programs that are configured to start when you log on to your computer may also be listed in the following registry key:

    HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\RunOnce

    To specify whether you want to start programs on the run-once list when you log on to your computer, follow the steps in the "Legacy Run at Startup Policy" section of this article. In step 8, click **Do not process the run once list**, and then either enable or disable the policy.

NOTE: To make the changes discussed in this article take effect, you must log off and then log back on to the system. Fast-user switching will not suffice (on a disjoined Windows XP computer).

For additional information about the Run and RunOnce registry keys, click the article numbers below to view the articles in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

179365 INFO: Run, RunOnce, RunServices, RunServicesOnce and Startup

314866 A Definition of the Run Keys in the Windows XP Registry

For additional information about the RunOnce registry key, click the article number below to view the article in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

310593 Description of the RunOnceEx Registry Key

For additional information about how to use the Group Policy Editor in Windows XP, click the article number below to view the article in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

307882 HOW TO: Use the Group Policy Editor to Manage Local Computer Policy in Windows XP

For additional information about how to use the Msconfig utility to alter the startup programs in Windows XP, click the article number below to view the article in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

310560 How to Troubleshoot By Using the Msconfig Utility in Windows XP

NOTE: For testing purposes, this may also be done by using the **Startup** tab in Msconfig.

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