

Access shared files on the network even when Offline

The problem with storing all files on a networked server or computer is when you leave the network, how do you access those files? Instead of using a VPN or Dropbox, you can try the Offline Files feature built into Windows.

TipsMake.com - The problem with storing the entire file on a networked server or computer is when you leave the network, how to access your files? Instead of using a VPN or Dropbox, you can try the Offline Files feature built into Windows. This feature is also known by the name of using Offline Files in Windows to Cache Offline Files online.

>>>Works with Offline Files feature

As you know, **Offline Files** is a Windows feature that allows you to access files stored on your network during times of network or files that are not available. This feature allows you to select which files or folders you want to be available when offline, then it will create local copies on your computer. These copies are called offline files and can be accessed at any time. When you connect back to your network, Windows automatically syncs these offline files to the location where they are stored on the network.

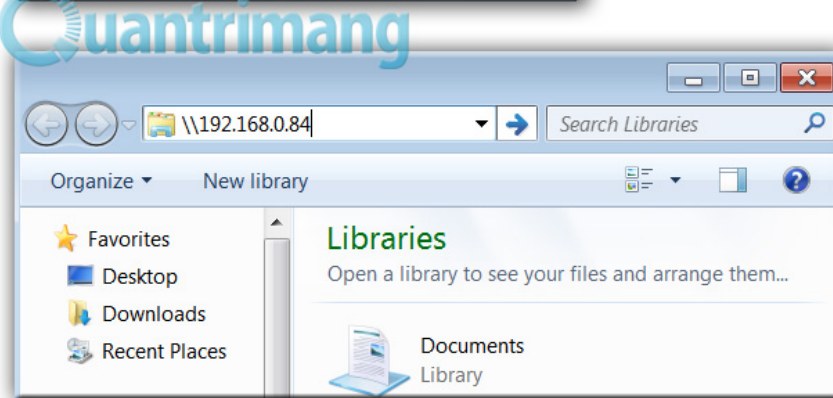
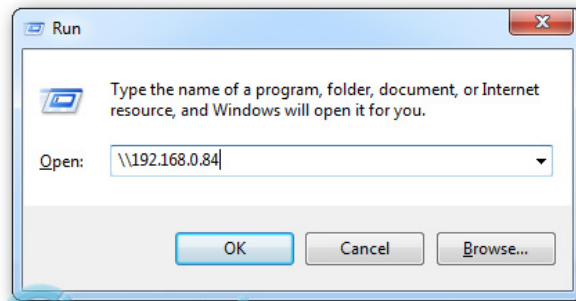
This feature is useful when you work on a laptop / netbook, then you have to use multiple locations and networks: you connect to a network, create an offline copy of your work files, cancel connect to the network, edit those files and sync them back when you connect to the same network. In that way Offline Files will provide you with additional mobility and other advantages such as network loss protection and increased efficiency when working on slow connections.

Note that you cannot use this guide to apply terabytes of data - this is not recommended because the Offline Files feature cannot store large amounts of offline data.

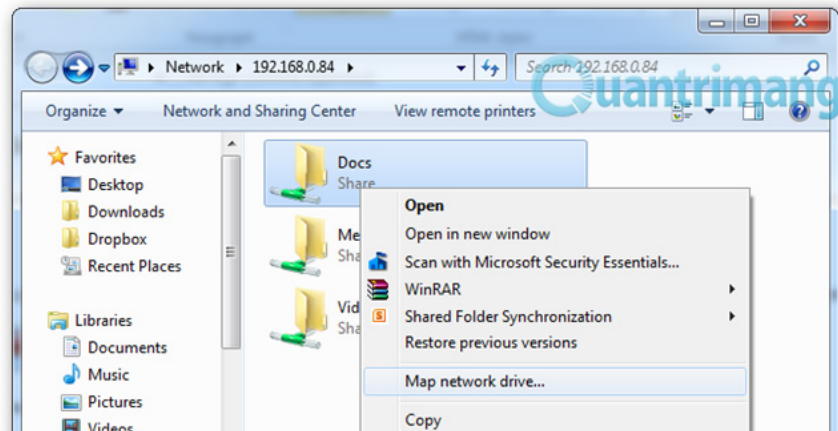
Set up Offline Files

If you are new to the network, you can refer to the article [Connecting Windows 7, Vista and Windows XP computers and Share Files and Printers between Windows 7 and Vista](#).

You will first want to connect to a computer that stores shared folders. There are several ways to help you do this, but the simplest is to use the combined **Windows + R** key to call the Run dialog box, then enter the two slashes () and the hostname or IP address of the computer needed connect. Of course you can do the same in the address bar of Windows Explorer:

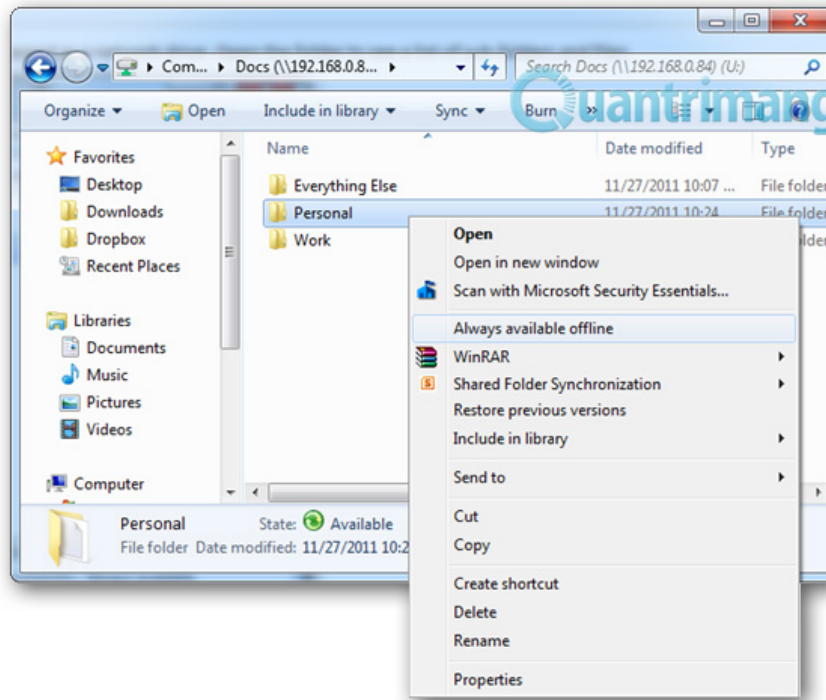


Then depending on the network settings you may need to enter the username / password. Once successfully connected, you will see shared folders from another computer. Right-click any folder and select **Map Network drive** . On the next screen, the system requires selecting a drive letter and the optional option to *Connect using different credentials* .

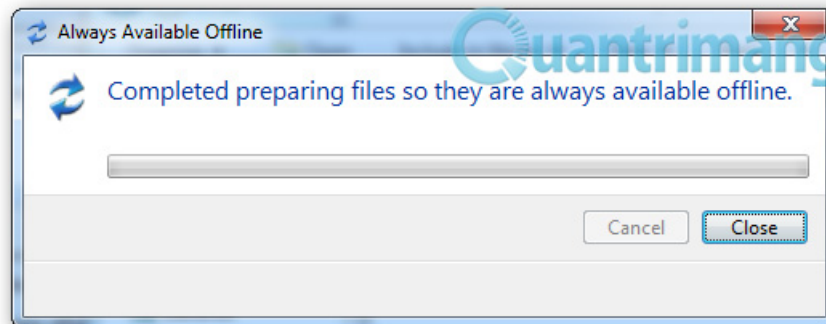


Do the same with the other folders you want.

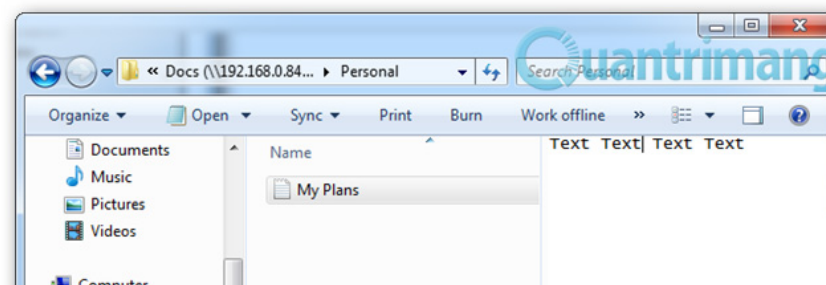
After mapping a drive and opening it in Windows Explorer, you can go to any subdirectory of the drive and select **Always available offline** from the context menu.



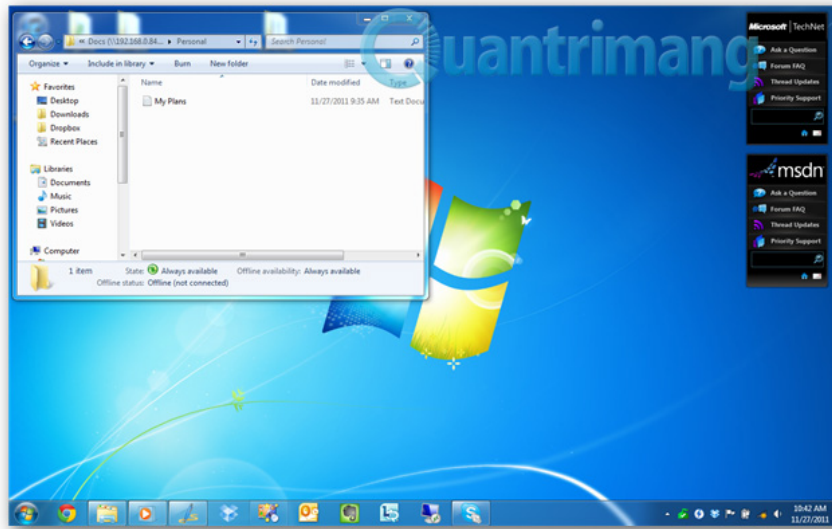
Once all the files have been processed, you will receive a message telling us that they will be available when offline. This message will disappear automatically even if you do not click **Close** .



For example, here we have done on the **Personal** folder so that it is available in offline, inside contains a text file named **My Plans** with the content ' *Text Text Text Text* ' as shown below:



Now even if you disconnect from the network, you can access this file normally:

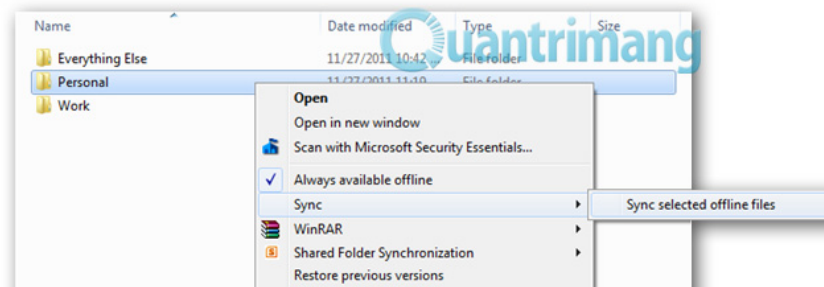


Note that you can see a list of other directories, because it has cached a list. But if you try to open a folder that is not available in offline, an empty window will appear until you connect to the network again.

The offline files are now set and we can open the files to change them.

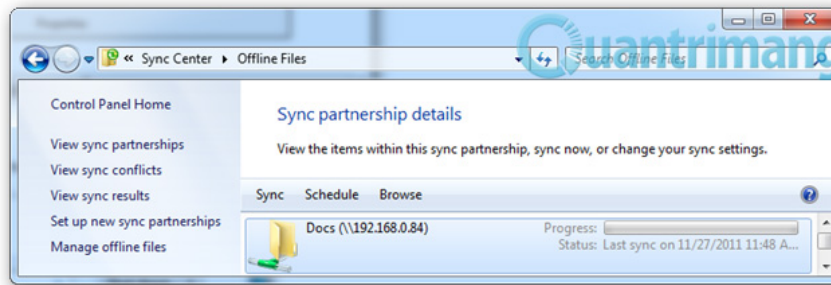
Manually initialize a Sync

While at most times you always want your synchronization process to be done automatically, you can still do this manually if you choose, by right-clicking on the folder that contains offline files, select **Sync** -> **Sync selected offline files** from the context menu.



Schedule Sync work

If you want to automate everything, you can set the synchronization to happen automatically. To do this, enter **Sync Center** into the **Start** menu (not the Run dialog box) and press **Enter**. When the **Sync Center** window is opened, select the **View sync partnerships link** in the left pane, then double-click the offline files that appear in the right pane to get a list of available offline files.

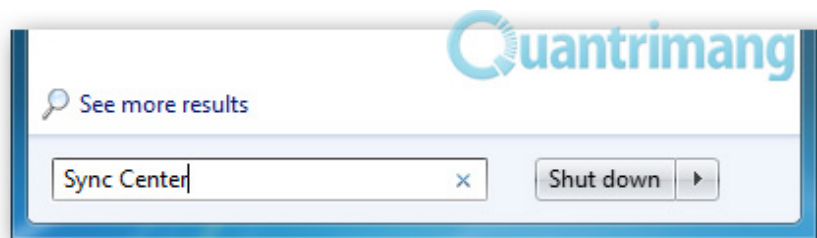


Select the folder to schedule for synchronization, press the **Schedule** button right above the menu bar. The next screen asks for the directory you want to schedule it for, and a wizard will help you complete this configuration process.

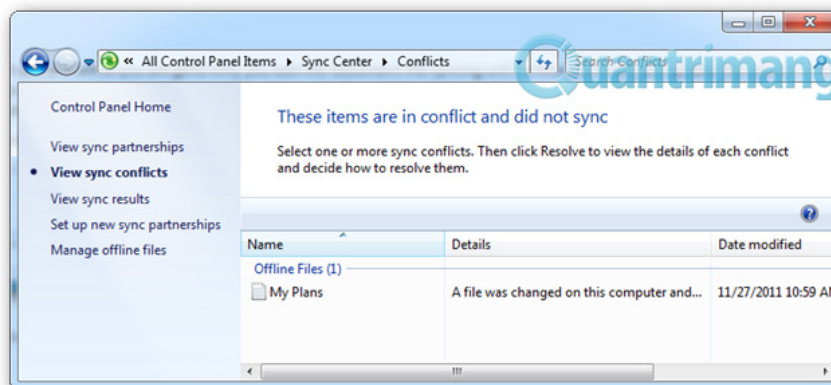
Resolve conflicts

If you edit a file while offline, and someone on your network does the same, there will be a conflict that we need to consider and resolve. Windows will ignore the synchronization and mark them as a conflict, but we can fix it easily!

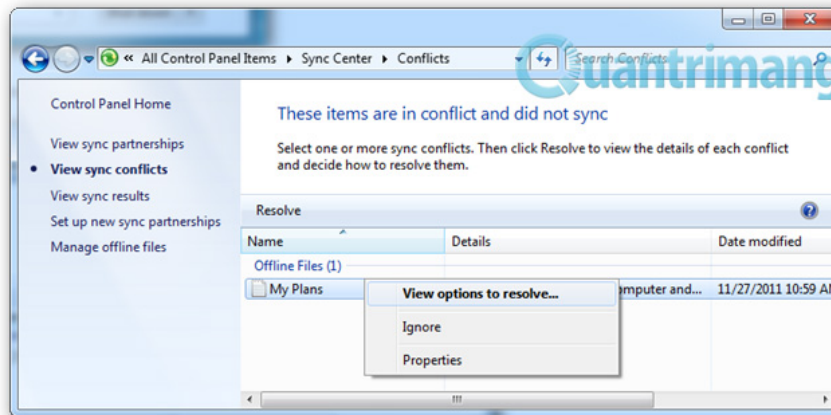
Enter **Sync Center** into the **Start** menu and press **Enter** .



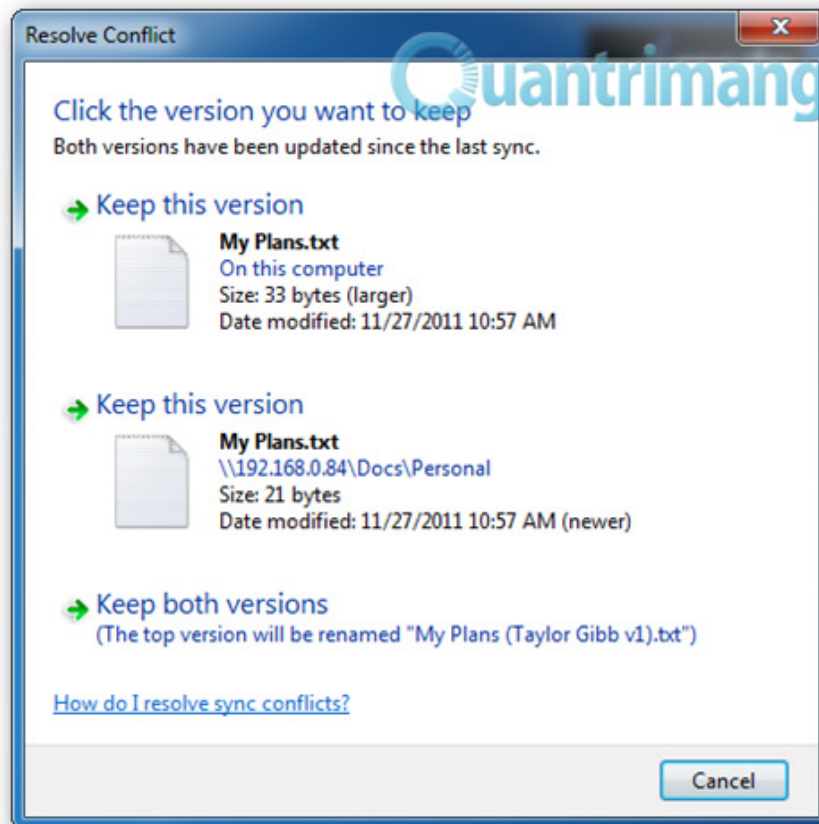
At the Sync Center window, click the **View sync conflicts** link, on the right, you will see a list of all files that are not synchronized.



To resolve this conflict, right-click the required file and select **View options to resolve** . from the context menu.



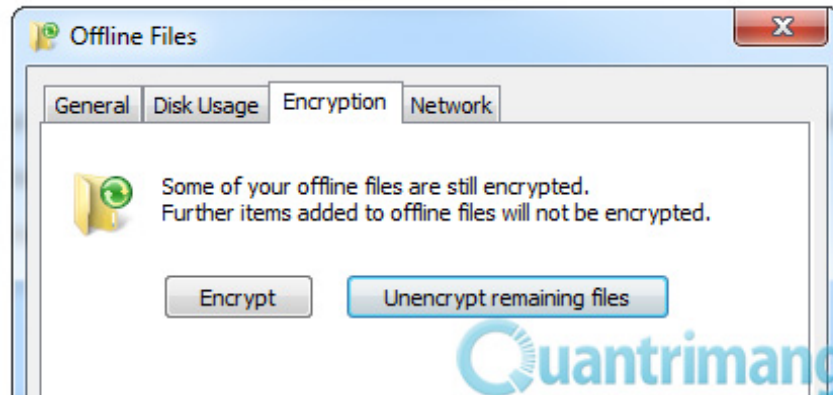
This will provide options to either keep the version you created while away, either keep the version on the server that someone is editing, or keep both versions and rename them:



Add some security

To enhance the security of shared files, you can add a layer of security for your offline files using **EFS** (Encrypting File System), which is disabled in the default mode, so you need to activate for it. Note that this only encrypts offline files, not the entire file on the server.

To activate offline files, enter **Sync Center** into the **Start** menu and press **Enter** . In the Sync Center window click on the **Manage offline files link** . The new dialog box appears, switches to the **Encryption** tab and presses the **Encryption** button:



The offline files feature is not the same as Dropbox, it is definitely a useful feature for those who regularly use folders in the network.

You finished reading the article "**Access shared files on the network even when Offline**" edited by the [TipsMake](#) team. We hope this article has provided you with many useful tech tips and tricks. You can search for similar articles on tips and guides. Thank you for reading and for following us regularly.