

Connect Windows 7, Vista and Windows XP computers

In this article, I will show you how to connect to the network between different versions of Windows operating systems.

Network Administration - How to upgrade a network computer to Windows 7 when there are still Windows XP and Vista computers? In this article, I will show you how to network between different versions of Windows operating systems.

Like many of us, you probably own a network of computers with Windows XP and Vista operating systems, but someday you buy a new computer and the computer is already pre-install Windows 7 operating system. Although you can start Windows 7 and all computers can automatically see each other, sometimes you may encounter some problems during work, then surely you will be confused with these issues.

In this article, we will give you an introduction so that you can make these computers exchange data, share files, printers and media together.

Verify that you are using NTFS format on hard drives

Your old computers may be using a less secure file system: FAT32. Therefore you should ensure that you are using NTFS (New Technology File System).

Make sure the file and printer sharing feature is enabled

Although Windows will automatically install and activate the protocol for file and printer sharing, it may be inadvertently disabled. Because of this, you have to check whether you currently have a sharing problem.

In the properties dialog of the network connection (see Figure 1), make sure the **File and Printer Sharing for Microsoft Networks** and **Client for Microsoft Networks** protocols are enabled.

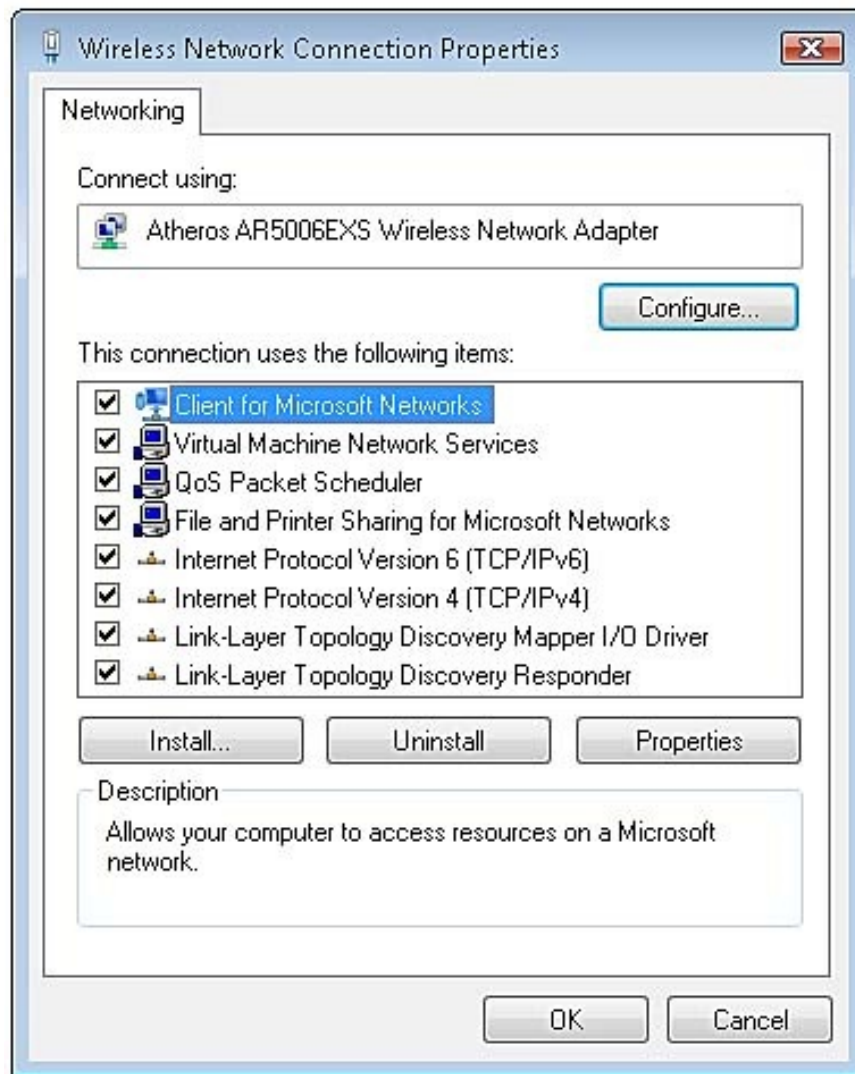


Figure 1

To appear the Properties dialog of the network connection in Windows XP, click **Start > Connect to > Show all connections** . Then right-click the network connection and select **Properties** .

Here's how to do it in Vista: Open the **Network and Sharing Center** and click on the **Manage network connections link** in the left pane. Then right-click the network connection and select **Properties** .

In Windows 7, open the **Network and Sharing Center** , click the **connection name** link in the active network area. In the connection status window, click **Properties**.

Disable the File-Sharing interface

Windows XP Professional and all versions of Vista and Windows 7 have advanced sharing settings. When using this advanced method, you can better control sharing by using Permissions.

Plus you can use the same method on your computers, regardless of their version of Windows.

Here's how to disable the sharing interface

1. Open **Computer** or **My Computer**
2. Click **Tools** and select **Folder Options** .
3. If you don't see the file menu in Vista or Windows 7, press the **Alt** key.
4. Click the **View** tab
5. Scroll down and uncheck the **Use Sharing Wizard** (in Vista or Windows 7) or **Use Simple File Sharing** (in XP).
6. Click **OK** to save the changes.

Verify that everyone is on the same Workgroup

In home and small business networks, computers must be assigned to a Workgroup. You should put all the computers you want to share together into the same group.

Because some versions of Windows have different default workgroup names, you should decide to use a name and verify that the computers are all set up the same.

To find the current Workgroup of a Windows XP, Vista or Windows 7 computer, right-click the **My Computer** or **Computer** shortcut from the desktop or from the **Start** menu and select **Properties** . Now you will see the computer name, domain and workgroup settings on the System window.

Check the network location in Vista and Windows 7

A network location feature that first appeared in Windows Vista, allowing you to specify the network type (Home, Work and Public) after the connection, this feature automatically applies the appropriate sharing settings.

For example, if you connect to a Wi-Fi hotspot and mark it as a Public network, then Windows will automatically disable file sharing.

To verify that you have selected the correct network location for your network, call the Network and Sharing Center.

Windows Vista will list the network locations to the right of the network name section, as shown in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2

If you need to make changes, click the **Customize** link on the right.

In Windows 7, location is listed under the network name, as shown in Figure 3.

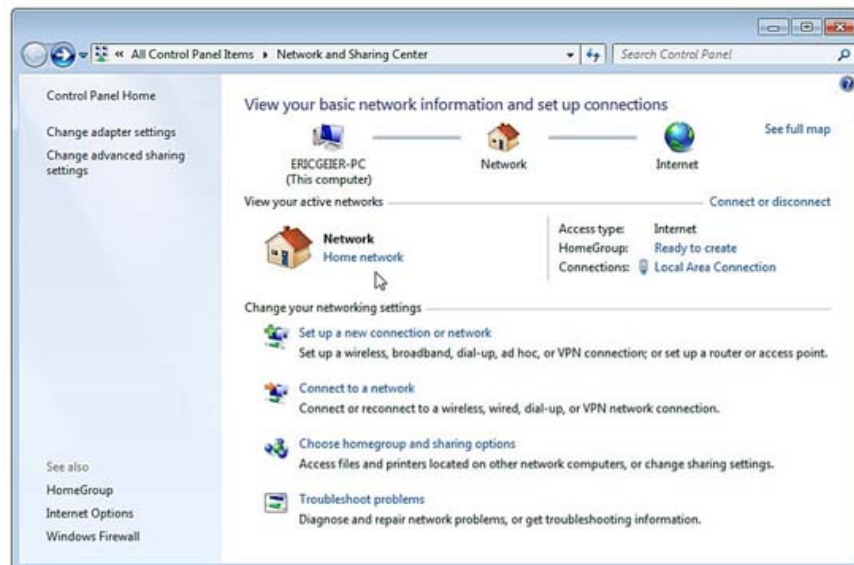


Figure 3

Then click on the location to change it.

View network settings in Vista and Windows 7

Microsoft has also added sharing settings and network connections to Windows, starting with Vista. If they are not set up correctly, these settings may prevent your file sharing; so it should be checked correctly.

Start testing by calling the **Network and Sharing Center** .

In Vista, you will see the **Sharing and Discovery settings** on the bottom right of the connection details, as shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4

If you want to share files, enable the minimum of the first options.

In Windows 7, these settings have been transferred. In Network and Sharing Center, click the **Change advanced sharing settings link** on the left panel.

With the Home or Work location (see Figure 5), you need to make sure to select at least the first two options.

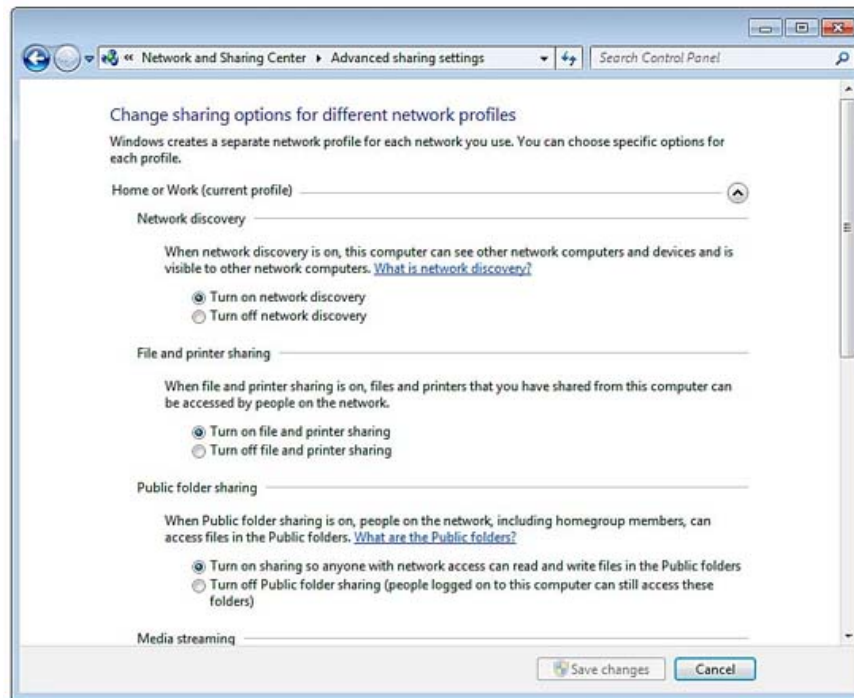


Figure 5

Verify that the firewall allows traffic to pass through

Windows will automatically modify Windows Firewall settings to allow traffic to share files and printers when you enable sharing.

However, you can still disable the firewall rule or stop all network traffic, two of which prevent your computers from communicating. Therefore, please check these settings carefully.

In Windows XP, open **Windows Firewall** from **Control Panel** . In the Windows Firewall dialog box, make sure it is selected **On** , but do **not tick the Don't allow exceptions option**.

Click the **Exceptions** tab, scroll down and find the **File and Printer Sharing option** , then make sure it is checked.

In Windows 7 and Vista, open the **Network and Sharing Center** and click on the **Windows Firewall** link in the lower left panel.

In Vista, click the **Change settings** link on the first Windows Firewall window. In the settings dialog, make sure it is selected as **On** , but do not check the option **Block all incoming connections**.

Click the **Exceptions** tab, scroll down and find the **File and Printer Sharing option, making sure it is checked**.

In Windows 7, click the **Turn Windows Firewall link on or off** to make sure it is turned on (On) but does not lock all incoming connections, as shown in Figure 6.

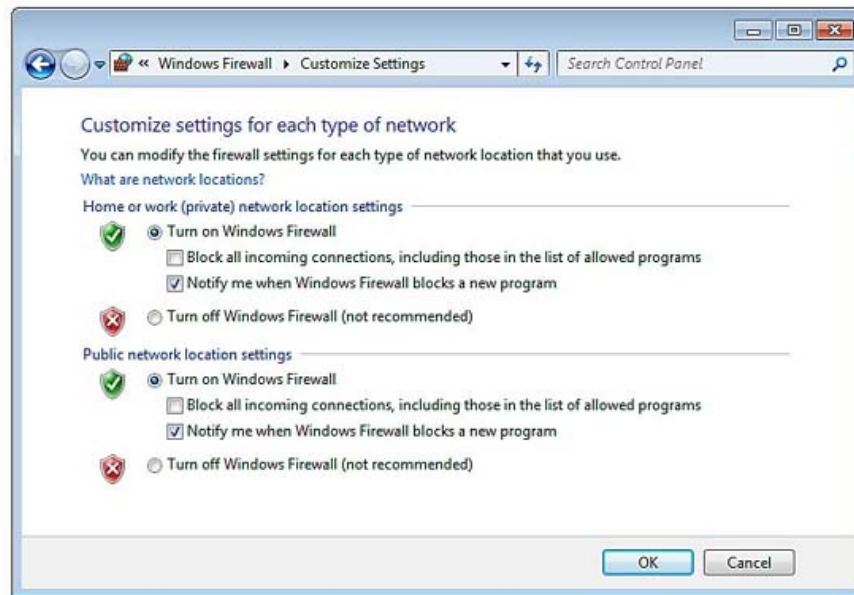


Figure 6

Return to the first Windows Firewall window and click the **Allow a program link or feature through Windows Firewall** at the top left of the window.

Make sure that the **File and Printer Sharing option** is checked for Home / Work locations.

If you have installed a third-party firewall utility, this firewall may be part of an Internet security suite, check it out. Sometimes they have their network connection protection features. For example, some require you to mark certain networks as secure networks to provide sharing.

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