

How to fix File Explorer lag on Windows 11

Fortunately, a simple registry edit can prevent File Explorer from wasting time scanning files, resulting in significantly faster folder navigation.

If File Explorer on your Windows 11 seems sluggish, especially when opening folders full of documents, photos, or videos, it might not be an illusion. A default feature called auto-detect scans folder contents to determine optimal display settings, and while this sounds helpful in theory, it has caused numerous performance issues since the days of Windows XP.

Fortunately, a simple registry edit can prevent File Explorer from wasting time scanning files, resulting in significantly faster folder navigation.

What is the purpose of Windows 11's Automatic Folder Type Discovery feature?

This is a smart feature that helps File Explorer run faster.



To understand why this workaround is effective, you need to see what Windows is actually doing behind the scenes. When you double-click a folder, Windows 11 doesn't simply read the file names and display them to you. Instead, it pauses to perform a content check. It frantically analyzes the file headers to answer a question

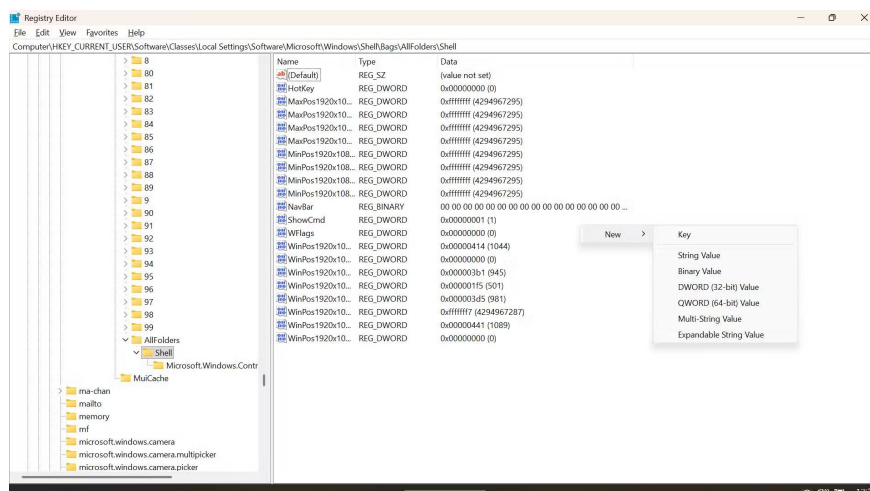
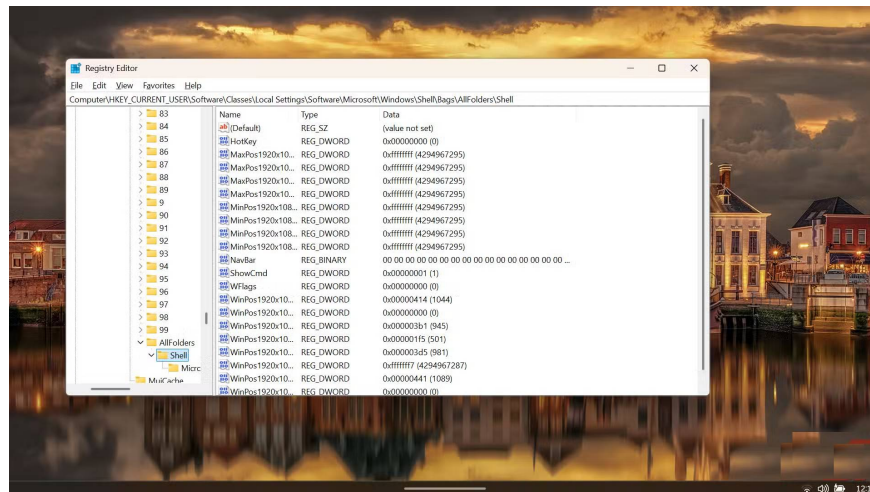
you never actually asked: Does that folder contain music, photos, documents, or videos? If it detects an MP3 file , it switches the view to Music mode; if it finds a JPEG file , it switches to Pictures mode to prioritize thumbnails.

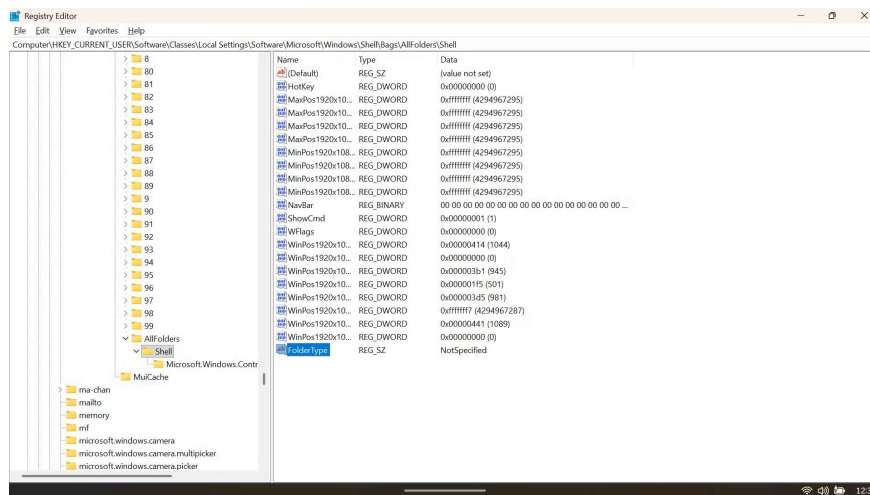
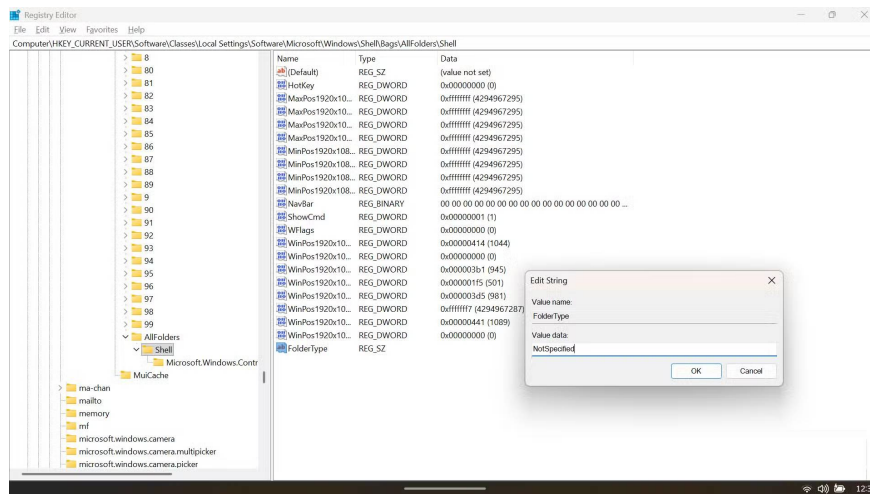
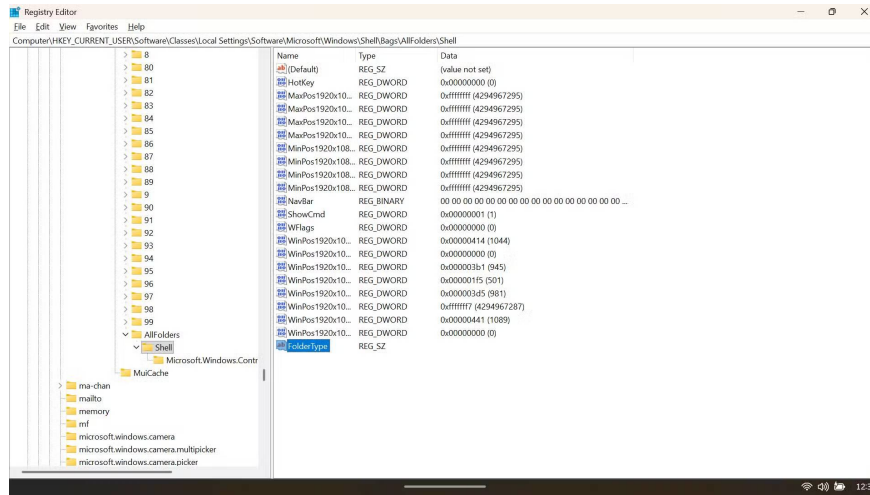
While this sounds intuitive, it's actually a performance nightmare. For folders with thousands of items, such as the Downloads folder or a large work project, this "search test" consumes a significant amount of processing time. Worse still, Windows has a habit of forgetting these options, meaning it frequently rescans the same folder multiple times in an endless loop. The delay between opening the folder and the operating system determining how it's displayed leads to frustrating lag.

By applying the trick below, one of the most effective ways to fix slow Windows File Explorer, we are essentially telling Windows to stop guessing and just display the files for us. We are forcing a universal "general" view to load instantly, regardless of its contents.

How to override "NotSpecified"

Turn off Folder Type Discovery and speed up File Explorer.





Fixing this problem requires a precise attack on the Windows Registry Editor. Although the Registry often makes people apprehensive, thinking it's only for computer engineers, it's actually just a database of settings. As long as you follow the steps comfortably, it's perfectly safe.

You'll need to start by opening the Run dialog box by pressing **Win + R** on your keyboard. Type **regedit** into the box that appears, then press **Enter** to accept the prompt requesting permission to make changes.

Warning : For safety, before making any changes to the Registry, create a backup. In Registry Editor, click **File** > **Export** , select **All** in **Export Range** , choose a location, and save the backup file.

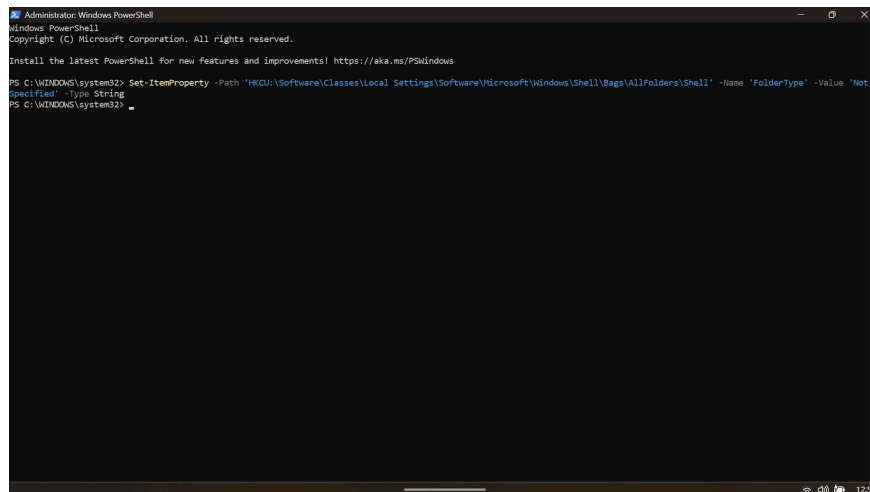
Once the editor is open, navigate to the location that controls how Windows creates its folder views. You can click on the folders on the left, but it's much easier to simply copy the path below and paste it into the address bar at the top of the Registry window.

If you paste this path and press **Enter** , you will be taken to a folder named **Shell** . Once inside the **Shell** folder , look at the large white space on the right side of the window. Right-click anywhere in that space, hover over **New** , and select **String Value** . You need to name this new value **FolderType** - remember to capitalize the **F** and **T** , and no spaces.

Now that the value exists, you need to assign a command to it. Double-click the **FolderType** entry you just created. In the box labeled **Value data** , enter the word **NotSpecified**. Again, this must be a word with capitalized **N** and **S**. **Click OK** to save. You have created an effective breakpoint for the folder search process.

To see the results, you don't even need to restart your entire computer . You just need to restart the file browser. There are several ways to restart File Explorer without restarting the entire computer; typically, you open Task Manager , find **Windows Explorer** in the list of running processes, right-click on it, and select **Restart** . Your taskbar might disappear for a moment, but it will quickly reappear.

There are faster ways to do this.



```
Administrator: Windows PowerShell
Windows PowerShell
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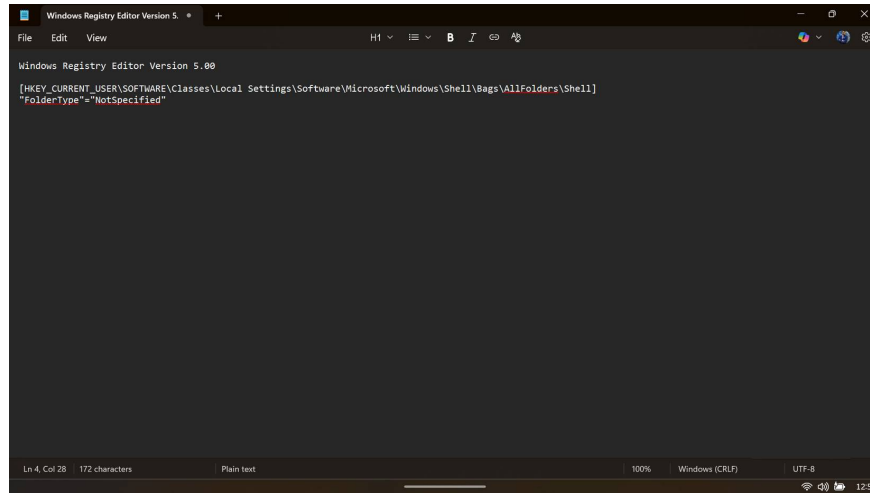
Install the latest PowerShell for new features and improvements! https://aka.ms/PSWindows

PS C:\WINDOWS\system32> Set-ItemProperty -Path 'HKCU:\Software\Classes\Local Settings\Software\Microsoft\Windows\Shell\Bags\AllFolders\Shell' -Name 'FolderType' -Value 'NotSpecified' -Type String
PS C:\WINDOWS\system32>
```

For a quicker approach, open PowerShell with administrator privileges and run this command:

```
Set-ItemProperty -Path 'HKCU:\Software\Classes\Local Settings\Software\Microsoft\Windows\Shell\Bags\AllFolders\Shell' -Name 'FolderType' -Value 'NotSpecified' -Type String
```

After executing the command, open Task Manager (**Ctrl + Shift + Esc**), find **Windows Explorer** in the **Processes** section , right-click on it and select **Restart** to apply the changes without restarting the entire system.

A screenshot of the Windows Registry Editor application. The title bar reads "Windows Registry Editor Version 5.00". The menu bar includes "File", "Edit", and "View". The main window displays the following registry path and value:

```
Windows Registry Editor Version 5.00
[HKEY_CURRENT_USER\SOFTWARE\Classes\Local Settings\Software\Microsoft\Windows\Shell\Bags\AllFolders\Shell]
"FolderType"="NotSpecified"
```

The status bar at the bottom shows "Ln 4, Col 28", "172 characters", "Plain text", "100%", "Windows (CRLF)", "UTF-8", and the time "12:54".

You can also create and use a .reg file by pasting the following code into Notepad:

```
Windows Registry Editor Version 5.00 [HKEY_CURRENT_USERSOFTWAREClassesLocal Sett
```

Save the file with the .reg extension, double-click the file, and confirm the security prompt to merge the changes.

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