

Instructions for configuring computers for multiple users

In this article, we will look at how user accounts work in Windows XP, Vista and 7 and how to best utilize it.

QuanTriMang - **User accounts are a great way to share a computer. Each user who owns an account can fully customize the way Windows works for their account along with the Desktop interface.**

They can keep their favorite websites online and save them to a folder in My Documents that others cannot open. User accounts also allow owners to implement management methods of what others can do with the computer, by preventing them from installing new software or adding hardware devices.



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Introducing user accounts

Windows does the job by creating a user account called **Administrator** or **Owner** . If you are the only person using the computer, this account is enough for you to use: use your account to access Windows, install and run software, surf the web, send email, edit data, . .

Of course, you don't even realize you're using such an account. However, the advantage of using an **Administrator** account becomes clearer when someone wants to share a computer - and a copy of Windows on it.

Users with **Administrator** accounts can create new user accounts or change the settings of the current account.

In addition to Administrator account, there are 2 other types of user accounts you should know: **Standard** (XP called **Limited**) and **Guest** .

Standard accounts are designed for everyday use (for example, to share computers with other family members), while **Guest** accounts are designed for people who only want to borrow computers for a short period of time. (to check email for example).

Personalize the Administrator account

We will start by renaming and representing the Administrator account. We will also create a password for it so that unauthorized users cannot login.

Click **Start** , then **Control Panel** . Windows XP users will click the **User Accounts ? User Accounts link** (or just double-click it if in **Classic View**); Windows Vista and 7 users will click the **Add or remove user accounts link** under **User Accounts and Family Safety** heading .

If this is the first time you access the **User Accounts** management area, there will be only 2 entries displayed: **Administrator** and **Guest** . If necessary, click the **Administrator** account icon.

The next window provides more options, including the ability to rename the account, create a password (or change your existing password) or select a new avatar. Click on the account name option (the descriptive word will vary between versions of Windows). Next, on the next screen, fill in a name and click the **Change Name** button.

Next, if you haven't used a password yet, create it by clicking on the link then typing in the password, repeating it to confirm the spelling and accents. Click **Create Password** .

Finally, click on the option to change your avatar and choose one of the images available there or click **Browse for more pictures** and choose one of the photos in the computer hard drive. Then, click **Change Picture** when done and then close the open windows.



Create and use Standard account

Open the **User Accounts** dialog box described above. However, this time click on the link to create a new account (again, it must be mentioned that the description description will be different for each version of the Windows operating system). Enter a name for the new account, click **Next** and then select the Radio **Limited** (XP) or **Standard user** (Vista / 7) button and click **Create Account** .

Once you have created an account, it is now ready to personalize just like you did with the Administrator account in the above section by changing the avatar and creating a password protection.

So what happens if Windows starts? At this point, you will have an Administrator account with a Standard / Limited account. Click the **Start** button then select **Log Off** - XP and Windows 7 has a separate button for this option on the **Start** menu, while Windows Vista users need to click the pointing arrow to the right and select **Shut Down** .

In Windows XP, in the next dialog box, select **Switch User** and click on the newly created account name. Vista and Windows 7 users will be directed to the login screen: click on the account you need and enter the password needed to login.



After a few seconds, Windows will start working. You will see the icon on the Desktop returned to default, along with background Desktop. If this is the first time this account is used, you will see a lot of welcome messages using Windows.

Standard account users will have their own Documents, Music, Videos and Pictures folders.

Types of user accounts

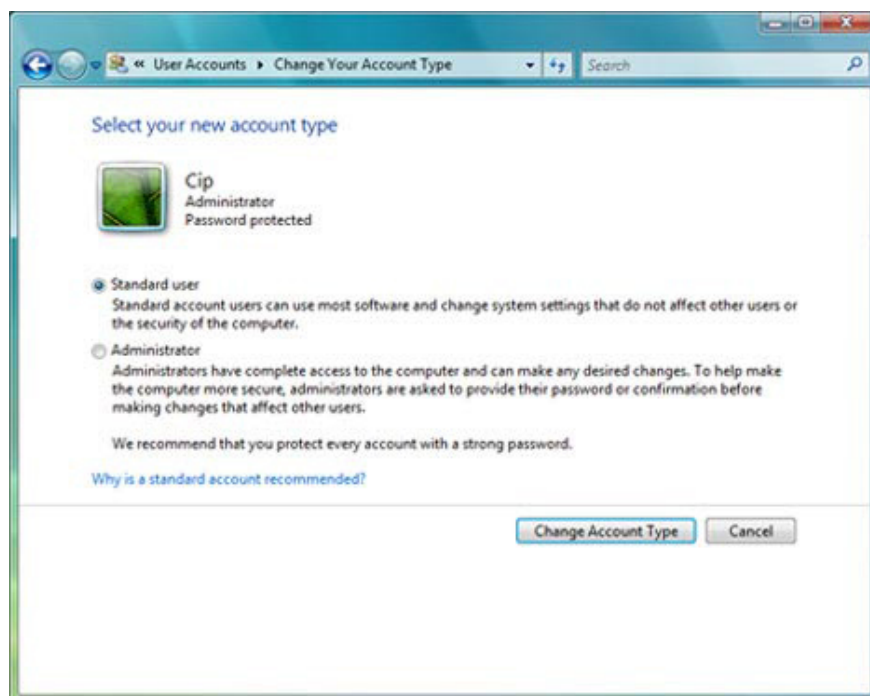
Users need to understand the differences between different types of accounts, as well as the limitations associated with them. Users with Administrator accounts can perform or view anything on the computer, from viewing files and folders of other users to the ability to delete user accounts.

Those who log into **Standard** (Vista / 7) or **Limited** (XP) accounts can view other users' folders, but they cannot open them or view any files, even though the files are stored in folders. **Shared** or **Public** .

Such types of user accounts cannot also make changes that may affect other users, such as changing the security settings for Windows or installing (removing) the software.

Guest account is for temporary users. They do not require a password and are restricted from accessing the computer. **Guest** accounts can run software and surf the web.

In Windows XP and Vista, when a user logs off from the **Guest** account, all information, including the data they have just created, will be deleted. Windows 7 retains such data.



Safe use

There are many things to discuss about user accounts, but what we provide above is enough for you to use. However, if you share a computer with others, we recommend that users set a password to protect their account for each user to keep their data safe. Along with that, you, in the role of Administrator, will have to pay attention to regularly monitor the activities that occur on the computer.

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