Windows 7: Load and Configure Windows XP Mode

By setting up the virtual Windows XP mode within Windows 7, you can greatly extend the functionality of your new environment.

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Windows XP mode is one of the more flexible and useful aspects of Windows 7. If you do indeed have a supported version of Windows 7 and your computer can support virtualization, download Windows XP Mode and you'll be *almost* ready to go.

Windows XP Mode is a complete Virtual Hard Disk (VHD) with Windows XP SP3. Once you have it installed, you still need to set it up. This is indeed a separate implementation of a full OS. You need to go through the setup routine just as if it were installed on a standalone computer. The big difference is that once you're done, your machine will run both Windows XP and Windows 7.

Install and Set up Windows XP Mode

Follow these instructions to install Windows XP Mode on your Windows 7 machine:

1. Go to the Windows XP Mode download Web page. You'll see a qualification page.
2. Select the version of Windows 7 you have running on your computer. Be mindful of the 32-bit or the 64-bit selection. Select your preferred language in the second pull-down list.
3. Click the Windows XP Mode download button. This is a 500MB file, so it might take a few minutes or longer, depending on your Internet connection.
4. You'll get a security warning, such as: "Click Save to save the download for use on several similar Windows 7 desktops." You'll be prompted for a location to save the file. Click Run if this is the only desktop that will be running Windows XP Mode.
5. You might be asked for authorization again to start the installation of Windows XP Mode. Click Run to continue.
6. Windows XP Mode will start the install process. Click Next to continue.
7. Select the location for the install of Windows XP Mode files. You can either accept the default or click the Browse button to select another location. These files are fairly large, so if you have a larger hard drive with more space, or you just want to locate this in a different spot, you may want to select a different location other than the default. Click Next when you're ready to continue.
8. The files will begin to load. The progress line will cross a couple of times, so be patient.
9. Congratulations—you're now finished. Click Finish.
10. Next, you need to install Virtual PC on your Windows 7 desktop. Start by going back to the Virtual PC Web site in Step 1. Click the Windows Virtual PC button.
11. Again, you'll be asked if you want to Run or Save the download. If this is the only desktop you'll be loading Virtual PC on, select Run. If you have more than one desktop, select Save and pick a folder to store the file. This is only a 10MB file, so it won't take quite as long to download.
12. When the file is finished downloading, you'll be asked if it's OK to install the update. Click Yes to continue.
13. The License screen appears. Read the license by scrolling to the bottom or select the printable version and print it out. Click the I Accept button. If you don't want to accept the license, click the I Decline button. This will prevent you from installing the Windows Virtual PC software.
14. The installation will begin. You can track the progress by watching the progress bar.
15. Congratulations. You've successfully completed the install of Virtual PC. You'll now have to reboot your desktop. You

can click the Restart Now button to reboot the computer. You can click Cancel to reboot later.

Set up Windows XP Mode

We now have Windows XP Mode installed, but we still need to set it up. Remember this is a separate implementation of a full OS. The following steps will get you through it easily:

1. When your computer has restarted, click the Windows 7 Start button. Then select All Programs | Windows Virtual PC | Windows XP Mode to begin setup.
2. You'll be presented with a licensing screen. Read the licensing terms and click "I accept the license terms" when ready, then click Next.
3. Verify the installation folder and set up a password for the XPMUSER account. This is a required account that's automatically created. It's the default account used to run Windows XP Mode and any virtual applications installed in the virtual instance of Windows XP SP3. You would normally need to enter this password when starting the Windows XP Mode. If you don't want to enter the password each time you start Windows XP Mode, you can store the credentials by checking the "Remember credentials" checkbox.
4. Verify the installation folder listed at the top of the screen. It should be the same folder you selected when you installed Windows XP Mode in the previous section. If not, click the Browse button and find the installation files. Enter an appropriate password for your password rules. Reenter the password again. Click Next when you're ready to continue. Any authorized user accessing an application running in Windows XP Mode will use these credentials.
5. You need to set up Automatic Updates next. You can select an option to automatically download and apply the updates or to turn this service off. For this service to function properly, both the host Windows 7 computer and the Windows XP Mode virtual desktop must be able to connect to the Internet. It's recommended that you enable Automatic Updates. Click Next to continue.
6. Setup will now configure drive sharing. Drive sharing will allow files to be shared between both the Windows 7 OS and Windows XP Mode. Applications can seamlessly pass data between the two OSes with copy and paste. Then click Start Setup.
7. The setup process will start. This might take a few minutes, so be patient.
8. Once the installation is complete, you'll be automatically logged on to the new virtual machine (VM). The hardware will be identified as Windows XP Mode starts up.
9. Next, you'll need to apply any additional updates for Windows XP. You should see the Automatic Updates icon in the lower-right corner. Double-click this icon to start the update process.
10. You'll see the familiar Automatic Updates screen, with two update options:

    Express Install: This option will install all the recommended and critical updates.

    Custom Install: This option will list all the available updates and let you select the ones you want to install.

    Because this is a VM and you're only using it to run applications that won't run in Windows 7, the Express Install is the recommended choice. You're only interested in the recommended and critical patches in mostly all instances. If you require any additional updates for your specific application, then choosing the Custom Install will allow you to be selective. Click Install for either option to install the updates.

11. Congratulations: you've applied all the recommended updates. Click Close, and you're ready to use your Windows 7 VM to run Windows XP or Windows 7. The possibilities are virtually limitless.

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