

Tips and Tricks

I. 10 Speed Tweaks that can make a huge difference in Vista performance

1. Turn off Windows Search Indexing

Windows Vista search indexing is constantly reviewing files on your system to make their contents available for quick searching. This is handy, but can severely impact system performance.

To disable constant indexing:

- Click Start then Computer
- Right Click the C: Drive
- On General Tab, Uncheck Index this drive for faster searching
- On the subsequent dialog box, Select Include subfolders and files

2. Turn off Remote Differential Compression

Remote Differential Compression measures the changes in files over a network to transfer them with minimal bandwidth rather than transferring an entire file that has previously been moved. By constantly checking for file changes, this service can hinder system performance.

To disable this service:

- Open Control Panel
- Switch to Classic View
- Select Program Features
- Choose Turn Windows features on and off
- Scroll down and uncheck Remote Differential Compression

3. Turn off Automatic Windows Defender Operation

Windows Defender real-time protection against malware continues to run despite having Automatic operation disabled.

To disable this feature:

- Open Control Panel
- Select Windows Defender
- Choose Tools from the top menu
- Select Options
- Uncheck Auto Start at the bottom of the window

4. Turn off Automatic Disk Defragmentation

Windows Vista and its always-on defragment feature is not really that necessary and can cause system slow down. Just remember to run a defrag manually every week or so.

To disable this:

- Click Start then Computer
- Right Click the C: Drive
- Click on Properties
- Select the Tools Tab
- Click on Defragment Now
- Uncheck Run on a schedule

5. Add a 2GB or higher USB Flash drive to take advantage of Windows Ready Boost (Additional Memory Cache)

Ready Boost is Microsoft's name for using a USB thumb/flash drive to provide some quick access memory the operating system can use as extra RAM. The Ready Boost system can significantly improve system performance.

To set this up:

- Insert a USB Flash Drive
- Click Start then Computer
- Right Click the USB Drive in My Computer
- Select the Ready Boost Tab
- Choose Use this device
- Select as much space as you can free up for RAM usage vs. Storage

6. Turn off Windows Hibernation

Windows hibernation background services can use a large amount of system resources. If you do not use the Hibernate feature on a regular basis you may want to disable it to give Vista a performance boost.

To disable Hibernation:

- Select the Control Panel then Power Options
- Click Change Plan Settings
- Click on Change Advanced Power Settings
- Expand the Sleep selection
- Expand the Hibernate After selection
- Crank the selector down to zero
- Click Apply

7. Turn off System Restore

Analysis and restore point creation by Windows Vista can eat a fair amount of system resources. Disabling this service will obviously mean the system restore feature in Vista will not be available in the event of a system crash. Change this at your own risk.

To disable this service:

- Control Panel>System
- Click System Protection on the left panel
- Uncheck the main system drive
- Agree to the confirmation

8. Disable User Access Control (UAC)

This much-loathed new Vista feature attempts to protect your system from malware infection by making you manually confirm a whole host of everyday user operations. While it does not directly impact performance, it can be annoying and might be more hassle than good.

To disable User Access Control:

- Click Start then Control Panel
- Select User Accounts
- Select Turn User Account Control on or off
- Uncheck User Account Control Box
- Restart as recommended

9. Disable excess Windows Services that Auto-Launch at Startup

Just like Windows XP, Vista ships with all kinds of services enabled that load at startup and may never be used by most users.

To see what loads at start-up and disable the ones you likely would not be needing (they can always be started manually later):

- Click Start then Control Panel
- Select Administrative Tools
- Choose System Configuration
- Click the Services Tab
- You can safely deselect:
 - Offline Files (unless you are using Offline File Sync)
 - Tablet PC Input Service (unless you have a tablet PC)
 - Terminal Services
 - Windows Search (If you have already disabled indexing)
 - Fax (unless you are using a fax modem)

10. Disable Excess Windows Features

Windows ships with other features that are listed separately in the Vista operating system from the start-up services.

You can view and disable these features by:

- Clicking Start then Control Panel
- Select Program Features
- On the left panel, select Turn Windows Features on or off
- You can safely deselect:
 - Indexing Service
 - Remote Differential Compression
 - Tablet PC Optional Components
 - Windows DFS Replication Service
 - Windows Fax & Scan (unless you use a modem for faxing)
 - Windows Meeting Space (unless you use the Live Meeting Service)

II. How to Use the Windows Vista Tablet PC Input Panel

Introduction

Windows Vista offers enhanced Tablet PC support, including personalized handwriting recognition, pen flicks and an upgraded Tablet PC Input Panel (TIP). The new Vista TIP is more integrated into the system, does a better job of recognizing pen-based input and offers improved data entry capabilities.

Instructions

Difficulty: Moderately Easy

Things You'll Need

- Windows Vista Home Premium, Business, Enterprise or Ultimate
- Tablet PC

Steps:

Step One

Login to Windows Vista.

Step Two

Open the TIP. In Vista, the TIP is docked on the left side of the screen by default. Start the TIP either by clicking on it with your mouse or pen or by clicking on the TIP icon on the taskbar, if enabled. To use the TIP, place your cursor in a data entry field in an application, such as a word processor, spreadsheet or Web browser. You can change the initial location of the TIP by dragging it to any spot on the left or right of the screen. Select "Tools," then "Options" to access other TIP configuration settings.

Step Three

Enter text. The TIP is divided into three sections, accessible by selecting the tabs simulating a Writing Pad, a slotted Character Pad and a Keyboard. Freeform writing is used on the Writing Pad, which shows the recognized text on the line directly below. Characters are entered on the Character Pad, which also shows the recognized text. The on-screen Keyboard simulates a standard QWERTY layout.

Step Four

Utilize shortcuts. To the right of each input method, a set of context-sensitive shortcuts are available. These shortcuts attempt to predict the most appropriate data for a given application. For example, the Web shortcuts appear when entering Internet addresses into a browser, providing buttons that automatically add relevant text, such as "http://," "www.," and ".com" before or after a handwritten URL. Other shortcuts include standard keyboard controls such as backspace, delete and space.

Step Five

Use gestures to delete handwriting or recognized text. A number of gestures are available for deleting recognized text and handwriting in the Writing and Character Pads. The standard method of drawing a Z-shaped gesture remains from the Windows XP TIP, and additional gestures include a strikethrough, vertical scratch-out in an M or W pattern, a circular scratch-out, and an angled scratch-out.

Step Six

Edit text. In addition to the gestures, the TIP includes a text correction area that provides for

editing individual words and letters. Select a misspelled or incorrectly recognized word in the recognition panel, which opens the correction area. Select the correct word, if available, from the list of recommended words or from the Dictionary icon. To correct a letter, hover over it with your pen, then either rewrite the letter or select from the alternatives available in the drop-down box. Use the "Delete Text" button to delete all of the text in the correction area. Click "OK" to return to the TIP when finished.

Step Seven

Send the text to the application. For the Writing and Character Pads, hit the "Insert" button to send your recognized text to the application. The Keyboard enters text directly into the application as the keyboard buttons are pressed with the pen.

Tips & Warnings

- If you have a compatible graphics tablet attached to your computer, you can now use that to enter handwritten information using the Vista TIP.

III. How to Repair a Tablet PC Input Device

Introduction

The beauty of a Tablet PC is that the input device, a digital pen, is more natural than using a keyboard. With the input device, you can point to files to open them, write notes on the desktop of your Tablet PC and even write text in your email or word processor. Occasionally, though, you may start to have problems with your input device and need to repair it.

Instructions

Difficulty: Moderately Challenging

Troubleshoot Problems With the Input Device of Your Tablet PC

Things You'll Need

- Tablet PC
- Operating system CD for your Tablet PC
- Spare pen for your Tablet PC

Steps

Step One

Try using the spare input device for your Tablet PC. Depending on the model of the Tablet PC that you own, you may be able to use your finger in place of the pen. If the new input device that you try to use with your Tablet PC has the same problems, there may be either a software or hardware problem with the Tablet PC, rather than a problem with the input device itself.

Step Two

Install the latest drivers. You can check for driver updates through "System Information" in your Control Panel. If there are no new drivers available, reinstall the current drivers to ensure that they are not the problem.

Step Three

Create a backup copy of the files that you need. If the input device and its drivers were not the problem, there may be a problem with the operating system on your Tablet PC or its hardware. The repair process could lead to a loss of data.

Step Four

Use System Restore to restore your computer to a point in time when the input device was working properly. You can select among any restore points that your Tablet PC created prior to the time when you first noticed problems with your Tablet PC.

Step Five

Reinstall the operating system if your problem persists after using System Restore. Performing a clean install of your operating system will erase the contents of your Tablet PC in their entirety. If your input device continues to malfunction after reinstalling the operating system, the problem is not related to the software.

Step Six

Contact the manufacturer of your Tablet PC to schedule service. If the problem with your Tablet PC is related to the hardware, you may not have the tools or knowledge needed to repair it. Trying to repair your Tablet PC yourself could also void your warranty.

IV. How to Calibrate the Pen on a Tablet PC

Introduction

One of the benefits of a Tablet PC is that you can enter commands and text using a pen, just as if you were writing on a notepad. There are a few additional steps that you must take, however, for the pen on your Tablet PC to work as accurately as possible. Just as you would calibrate the touch screen on a PDA, you need to calibrate the pen on a Tablet PC.

Instructions

Difficulty: Moderately Easy

Set Up the Digital Pen of Your Tablet PC

Things You'll Need

- Tablet PC

Steps

Step One

Turn on your Tablet PC. If you have a convertible Tablet PC, you will need to rotate the screen and fold it down over the keyboard so that you can use the pen more conveniently.

Step Two

Remove the pen from your Tablet PC. If you are using the digital pen that was included with your Tablet PC, you may need to press a button to eject the pen from your Tablet PC.

Step Three

Navigate to the "Tablet and Pen Settings" menu in the Control Panel. Tapping the pen on the screen of your Tablet PC provides the same action as left-clicking with a mouse.

Step Four

Indicate whether you are right-handed or left-handed. If you are left-handed, menus in programs that have been designed to accommodate left-handed use will appear to the right of your pen tip. For right-handed users, menus can be set to appear to the left of the pen tip.

Step Five

Tap on the "Calibrate" button and follow the on-screen instructions to set up your digital pen on your Tablet PC. In addition to calibrating the location of the pen, you will also be able to set the speed with which you double-tap on the screen.

Calibrate Your Tablet PC to Recognize Your Writing

Steps

Step One

Within the "Tablet" settings, select the "Handwriting" tab. There are two ways you can calibrate your Tablet PC to recognize your handwriting better: personalization or automatic learning.

Step Two

Enable the "Automatic Learning" option to collect data on your handwriting. Each time that you

correct the handwriting recognition software, it will adapt to improve its recognition of subsequent handwriting.

Step Three

Launch the "Handwriting Personalization" program. This will allow you to provide samples of each letter in your own handwriting, as well as train the PC to recognize your handwriting style.

V. How to Write in Word on a Tablet PC

Introduction

One of the key advantages of Tablet PCs is that you can enter text by literally writing it instead of typing it. You can, however, do more than simply jot down notes. You can also use the handwriting function to write text in programs such as Word, to write emails and to enter the addresses of websites.

Instructions

Difficulty: Easy

Configure the Input Panel on Your Tablet PC

Things You'll Need

- Tablet PC
- Microsoft Word installed on your Tablet PC

Steps

Step One

Click on the "Input Panel" icon on the taskbar. The Input Panel is the interface through which you can write text and enter it into programs on your Tablet PC. It allows you to enter text via a virtual keyboard, by writing one character at a time for increased accuracy or by writing entire words as you would while writing naturally.

Step Two

Select "Tools and Options" in the Input Panel. On the "General" tab, ensure that the option is checked that allows the Input Panel to be displayed in the text entry area when possible.

Step Three

This will minimize the amount of action that is needed to launch the Input Panel when you want to write text in Microsoft Word and other programs.

Enter Text in Microsoft Word on Your Tablet PC

Steps

Step One

Launch Microsoft Word on your Tablet PC. You can do this by using the pen from your Tablet PC to navigate to Microsoft Word from the "Start" menu or by clicking on the icon on your desktop or Quick Launch toolbar. This is assuming you're running a Windows operating system on your Tablet PC.

Step Two

Open a document in Word. If you want to edit an existing document, select it from the folder in which it is located. If you are starting a new document, you can open a blank Word document by selecting "New" from the menu.

Step Three

Bring the pen from your Tablet PC close to the screen where you want to start writing text. This will cause the "Input Panel" icon to be displayed, which you can use to write your text in Word.

Step Four

Click the icon to launch the Input Panel and start writing in Word. Additional lines will appear in the Input Panel as they become necessary to accommodate additional text.

Tips & Warnings

- Be sure that your Tablet PC has SP2 installed on it. In addition to providing security enhancements, SP2 improves the way you can access the Input Panel to write text on your Tablet PC.
- From the "Tools and Options" menu within the Input Panel, you can specify options including the location of buttons in the Input Panel, thickness of your writing and the amount of space between lines