

# Windows 7 Special Directories (Folders)

One of the first changes in Windows 7 (and Vista) that will be apparent to support staff used to Windows XP are the changes in the directory structure. Though some old directory names still appear, they are "junction points" (directory symbolic links), just pointers for Windows Explorer to the new directory. These junction points don't always work as expected (especially from the command line), so you should know the new locations.

Many of these locations are represented by Windows environment variables, which you can use from the command line as well as in Windows Explorer. (Wikipedia has a detailed explanation [here](#).) Where an environment variable exists, it appears in the table, but it may not work in older operating systems like Windows XP.



The directories listed here are for 32-bit Windows 7, Vista, and XP. 64-bit Windows 7 will introduce some complications.

Anywhere in the table below that you see a forward slash /, use a backslash \ instead. This Confluence system cannot render stylized backslashes correctly, so sometimes I have to use a forward slash.

Description	Windows XP Directory	Windows 7/Vista Directory	Environment Variable
Windows Directory	C:\Windows	C:\Windows	%SystemRoot%, also %windir% in batch files
System Directory	C:\Windows\System32	C:\Windows\System32	
Fonts	C:\Windows\Fonts	C:\Windows\Fonts	
Program Files	C:\Program Files	C:\Program Files <sup>2</sup>	%ProgramFiles%
Program Files Common	C:\Program Files\Common Files	C:\Program Files\Common Files <sup>2</sup>	%commonprogramfiles%
User Profile	C:\Documents and Settings/ <i>USERNAME</i>	C:\Users/ <i>USERNAME</i>	%UserProfile%
(My) Documents	%UserProfile%\My Documents	%UserProfile%\Documents	
(My) Pictures	%UserProfile%\My Documents\My Pictures	%UserProfile%\Pictures <sup>3</sup>	
Application Data	%UserProfile%\Application Data <sup>1</sup>	%UserProfile%\AppData\Roaming	%AppData%
Local AppData	%UserProfile%\Local Settings\Application Data	%UserProfile%\AppData\Local	%LocalAppData% Win7
Temp	%UserProfile%\Local Settings\Temp	%UserProfile%\AppData\Local\Temp	%TEMP%, %TMP%
Desktop	%UserProfile%\Desktop	%UserProfile%\Desktop	
Start Menu Programs	%UserProfile%\Start Menu\Programs	%UserProfile%\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs	
(IE) Favorites	%UserProfile%\Favorites	%UserProfile%\Favorites	
All Users Profile	C:\Documents and Settings\All Users	C:\Users\Public	%Public% on Win7, %AllUsersProfile% on XP
Common AppData	C:\Documents and Settings\All Users\Application Data	C:\ProgramData	%ProgramData% Win7, %AllUsersProfile% Win7
Common Start Menu Programs	C:\Documents and Settings\All Users\Start Menu\Programs <sup>4</sup>	C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs <sup>4</sup>	
Common Desktop	C:\Documents and Settings\All Users\Desktop	C:\Users\Public\Desktop	
Shared Documents	C:\Documents and Settings\All Users\Documents	C:\Users\Public\Documents	
Shared Pictures	C:\Documents and Settings\All Users\Documents\My Pictures	C:\Users\Public\Pictures <sup>3</sup>	
<b>Description</b>	<b>Windows XP Directory</b>	<b>Windows 7/Vista Directory</b>	<b>Environment Variable</b>

<sup>1</sup> Directory may be hidden, so it may not appear when you press {Tab} at a command line to complete the name

<sup>2</sup> On 64-bit Windows, the directory for 32-bit programs is C:\Program Files (x86), represented as %ProgramFiles(x86)%

<sup>3</sup> Note how this directory has been promoted, now parallel to Documents; it's the same for Music and Videos

<sup>4</sup> Note how these directories relate *differently*, at different levels, to their %AllUsersProfile% parents.

*Disclaimer: This information was correct as of when it was created based on Sande's best knowledge. If this page has been edited by anyone else, Sande is not responsible for the accuracy of the information.*