

# 8 Application Compatibility

Whenever you upgrade to a newer operating system, there is always a risk that your old software may not work correctly on the new operating system. Windows 7 is more of an incremental update to Windows Vista rather than offering a whole host of new features. Because of this, a lot of software that worked on Windows Vista will work on Windows 7 without any issues. Though software such as anti-virus software tends to be very operating system specific, so you may need to obtain a Windows 7 version of the software. This chapter looks at some of the options in Windows 7 that allow software to run that may not be fully compatible with Windows 7.

## Windows 7 Compatible Logo

When looking to buy software or hardware for Windows 7 have a look to see if it has a Compatible with Windows 7 logo, as shown below.



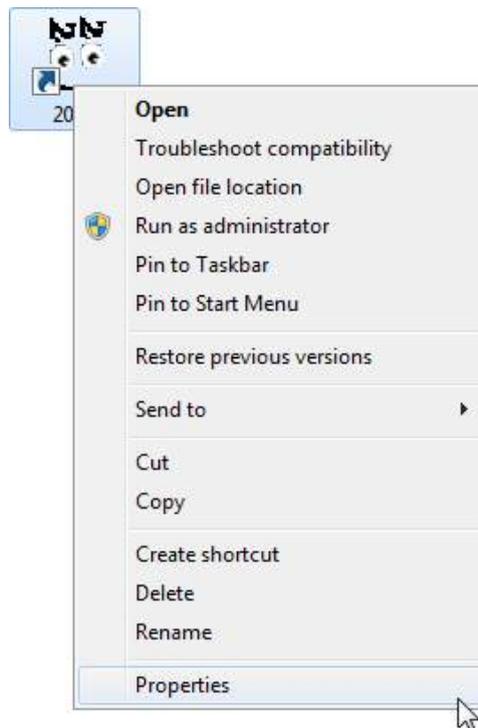
Having this logo means the software or hardware meets a number of criteria to ensure that it works with Windows 7. These include the following.

- Works with all editions of Windows 7, 32bit and 64bit.
- Installs seamlessly. No need to download additional software or make system changes.
- Uses device drivers that are digitally signed to ensure they have not been modified.
- Tested to ensure that it is robust. This does not guarantee it will not crash but it should be reliable.

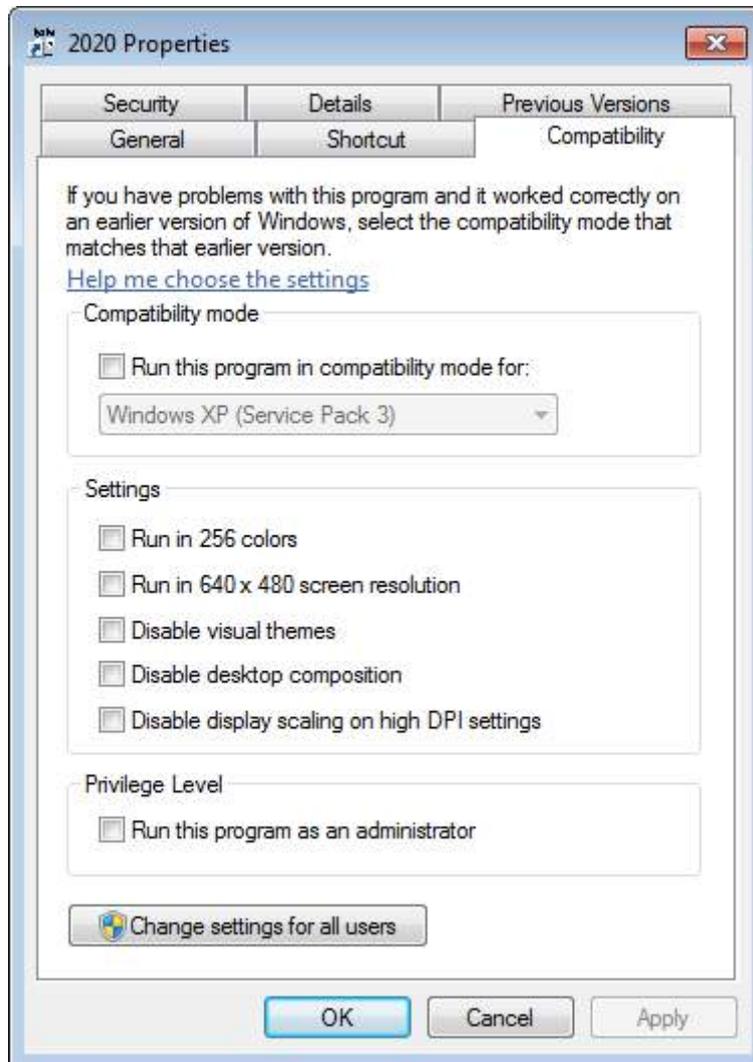
Not all software and hardware on the market will have this logo. This does not mean that it will not work with Windows 7; all this means is the manufacturer has not put their product through the Windows 7 Compatible program. When purchasing software, look to see if the product supports Windows 7. If the product has the Windows 7 compatible logo this is a bonus.

## Configure Program Compatibility Options

In some cases you may have old software that is not compatible with Windows 7. It is best to check with the manufacturer of the software to see if there is an update for that software for Windows 7. In some cases, the manufacturer may offer a free update to Windows 7. Other times these upgrades will cost money or the manufacturer has decided to discontinue the product and thus not provide any more support. If you install the software on Windows 7 and start experiencing problems, there are a number of compatibility options that can be configured that may allow this software to run even though it was not originally designed for Windows 7. To access the compatibility options, right click the application and select properties for the application as shown below.



There are a lot of compatibility settings that can be configured for the application as shown below. These options can do anything from making the application think it is running on a different operating system to change the way it is displayed. I will go through each of the options individually.



**Run this program in compatibility mode for:** This allows you to configure the operating system that the application will detect as running. Some setup programs will not run unless they detect a particular operating system. This setting also changes how certain functions in the operating system work to make them more compatible with previous operating systems. If you are receiving an error when running the application stating that it was not designed to run on this particular operating system, selecting this option may fool the application into thinking it is running on the operating system it was designed for.

**Run in 256 Colors:** This forces the application to run using only 256 colors. This may be required for very old DOS based applications.

**Run in 640×480 screen resolution:** This forces the application to run in 640×480 resolution. If the application is having display problems you may need to configure this. Generally only used for old DOS based software.

**Disable visual themes:** If the application title bars or Windows are not displaying correctly you may need to disable visual themes. This will disable the new themes options which may be causing the problem.

**Disable desktop composition:** This option disables the Aero looking glass desktop effects such as transparency and live previews. This may be required if the application is not displaying correctly. While an application with this setting enabled is running, Aero is disabled for all applications and will not be enabled again until that application is closed.

**Disable display scaling on high DPI settings:** If the font in the application is the wrong size, making text too large to fit in an icon for example – enabling this option will disable font scaling and should make the text in the application appear correctly.

**Run this program as an administrator:** This option will run the application with administrator's rights. Some old software, in particular software for Windows XP and earlier, may need access to parts of the operation system that a regular user does not have access to. This option will run the application as the administrator, giving them access to all areas of the operating system.

Please refer to the following free video for a demonstration of application compatibility options.

<http://itfreetraining.com/70-680/application-compatibility>

## XP Mode

If you are running Windows 7 Professional, Enterprise or Ultimate edition there is another option which may allow your old applications to run correctly using Windows 7. This is called XP Mode and is available for download from the following address.

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-AU/windows7/products/features/windows-xp-mode>

XP Mode works by running a virtual computer on the same computer that is running Windows 7. This virtual computer runs Windows XP with service pack 3. Since the virtual computer is considered to be a separate computer system it will use up RAM, CPU and hard disk space on the computer. XP Mode is difficult to configure and setup. Because of the extra configuration required and additional resources required, it should be considered as a last resort to getting your old applications to run. Since XP Mode uses a virtual PC the interface between the virtual machine and Windows 7 can be a little difficult to use. Please refer to the following free video from a demonstration of XP Mode

<http://itfreetraining.com/70-680/xp-mode>