

Shared Computer Toolkit for Windows XP Product Overview

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Microsoft created the Shared Computer Toolkit to help make shared computers more reliable and less time-consuming to maintain. Unlike personal computers, shared computers are:

- Used by many different people who generally don't know or trust each other
- Used in public places where personal privacy and security are big concerns
- Subjected to greater wear and tear due to their frequent use and public availability

The Shared Computer Toolkit is ideal for computers in schools, public libraries, community technology centers, and Internet cafés. It allows those who manage shared computers in these environments to easily:

- [Defend](#) shared computers from unauthorized changes to their hard disks.
- [Restrict](#) users from accessing system settings and data.
- [Enhance](#) the user experience on shared computers.

Defend shared computers from unauthorized changes to the hard disk

Unauthorized changes to a hard disk can make shared computers less reliable. Windows Disk Protection helps to prevent users, viruses, spyware, or other programs from making permanent changes to the hard disk by clearing changes each time the computer restarts.

Because certain changes, such as critical updates and antivirus signatures, need to be permanently saved, Windows Disk Protection allows you to schedule such changes to occur automatically at whatever time you choose.

The Windows Disk Protection tool:

- Helps protect operating system files
- Clears changes when the computer restarts
- Automates critical and antivirus updates
- Lets you choose to save changes to disk

Restrict untrusted users from system settings

Shared computer users can't always be trusted—they are often anonymous, and sometimes mischievous. The User Restrictions tool makes it easy to create restricted local user profiles so users have limited access to Windows system utilities, files, and data. You can prevent user access to Control Panel, the command prompt, any drive on the computer, the Registry Editor, and many other system utilities. You can also prevent users from running unauthorized software on a shared computer.

The User Restrictions tool is best suited for workgroup environments in which users share accounts and passwords, and where Active Directory is not present.

The User Restrictions tool lets you:

- Restrict access to Windows system utilities
- Prohibit access to important data
- Prevent users from running unauthorized software
- Simplify the Start menu

Enhance the user experience

Users generally prefer a consistent, familiar, and private shared computer experience. The toolkit helps shared computer operators create an interface that will not confuse or distract users with unnecessary programs or options.

The toolkit also helps to protect user privacy by refreshing the desktop, user settings, and user data each time a new user logs on. Plus, it consolidates several accessibility features into one user interface, so users can more easily access the features they regularly use. For users who are new to computers, the toolkit also provides a variety of suitable online learning resources.

The Windows Accessibility tool lets users:

- View and control all accessibility features from one place
- Easily enable or disable wanted accessibility features

This document is an excerpt from <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/sharedaccess/>