



BootSkin Vista Guide

Version 1.02

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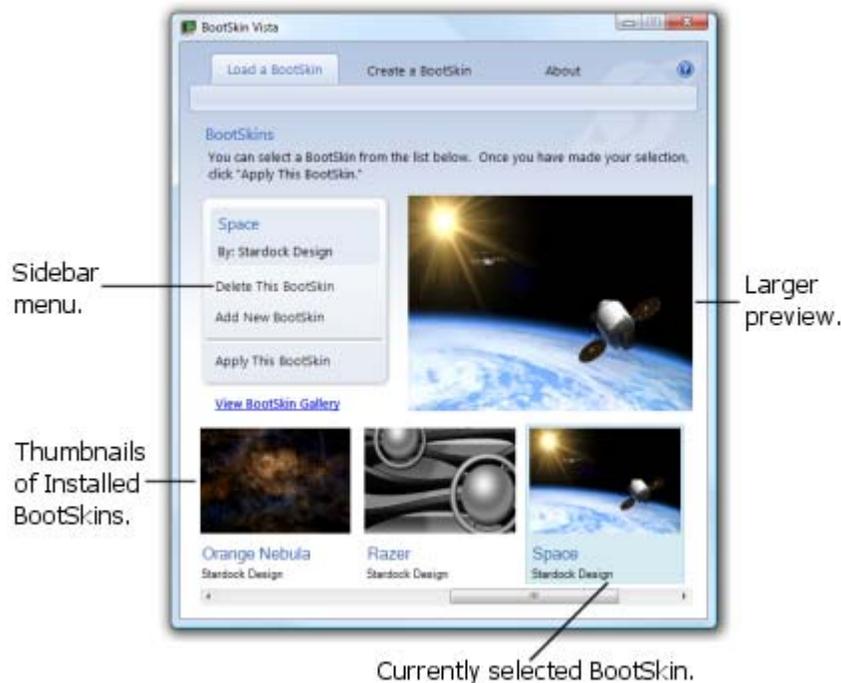
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1. Welcome to BootSkin Vista



BootSkin Vista allows you to change the boot screen seen when Windows Vista first starts to load. The Vista default screen is black with a green progress bar. You can change that to any of a hundred different images called BootSkins. BootSkin Vista includes several to start with, while WinCustomize.com offers hundreds more to download.

With a paid subscription to Stardock's Object Desktop or Object Desktop suites, you gain the added ability to create your own BootSkins from any image. The image only needs to be 10 MB or under, in PNG or JPG (or JPEG) format (for best quality) or GIF or BMP graphic formats. This opens a lot of possibilities to replace that drab loading screen with a picture of your family, that huge fish you really did catch, favorite pet, or any other image, including graphic art and more. With BootSkin Vista you can change the appearance of how Vista looks when starting up.

Features of BootSkin Vista (paid subscription)

A paid subscription to Object Desktop or Object Desktop Ultimate includes BootSkin Vista which adds the following feature:

- Allows you to create new BootSkins from image files (i.e. PNG, JPG/JPEG, GIF, BMP). Use the image for your computer, or upload it to WinCustomize to share & impress your friends.

Features of BootSkin Vista (free trial)

- Change the Windows Vista boot screen to any included BootSkin.
- Download & apply additional BootSkins from WinCustomize.com.
- View thumbnail images of multiple BootSkins from within BootSkin Vista.

System Requirements

- Windows Vista (32-bit or 64-bit).
- 10 MB free drive space.
- 256 MB RAM.
- [Impulse](#) must be installed in order to download and update software.

Upgrading from Previous Versions

Impulse will handle the upgrade from previous versions.

Updates

Check Impulse for updates to BootSkin Vista and other installed Stardock software. There is a button on the "About" tab you can click to have Impulse check for updates.



Additional BootSkins

Check [WinCustomize.com](http://www.wincustomize.com) (<http://www.wincustomize.com/skins.aspx?libid=76>) for hundreds of free BootSkins created by the skinning (graphics) community.

Location of BootSkins

BootSkins are stored (by default) on your computer with a ".bootskin" (without quotes) file extension in the folder:

Windows Vista: C:\Documents and Settings\Public\Documents\Stardock\BootSkin\Skins
or C:\Users\Public\Documents\Stardock\BootSkin\Skins

Support

Please contact Stardock Support at: www.stardock.com/support. On that web page you will find helpful FAQ's and other troubleshooting information. If you are unable to resolve your issue, please use the "eSupport System" to open a Support ticket. Please include as much information about your computer (i.e. version of Windows, type of computer, version of BootSkin Vista (on About tab), etc.). This information will allow support to diagnose your issue much quicker and allow for a faster response.

Resources

For additional information on BootSkin Vista (formerly called BootSkin Pro), please refer to this article on WinCustomize:

["BootSkin Pro - Changing and Using Vista BootSkins"](#) by Island Dog, (November 24, 2008).
http://islanddog.joeuser.com/article/331013/BootSkin_Pro_Changing_and_Using_Vista_BootSkins

WinCustomize.com is a great resource for not only getting a lot of great BootSkins, but also provides articles, forums, gallery, store and more. This is a great site run by the skinning community & Stardock to bring together the best in skinning (graphics) for Windows. The site is free to use, though you can subscribe to get additional perks and help support the operation of the site.

You can [upload a BootSkin file](#) you created to share on WinCustomize. This may include original material you actually created.

Direct link to [WinCustomize message Forums \(http://forums.wincustomize.com/\)](http://forums.wincustomize.com/).

Documentation

The version of this manual is 1.0 (3-19-09) and is based on BootSkin Vista (version 1.02). This manual was written and is maintained by Jim Kennedy (TheProf). Please email comments or corrections regarding this documentation to: documentation@stardock.com.

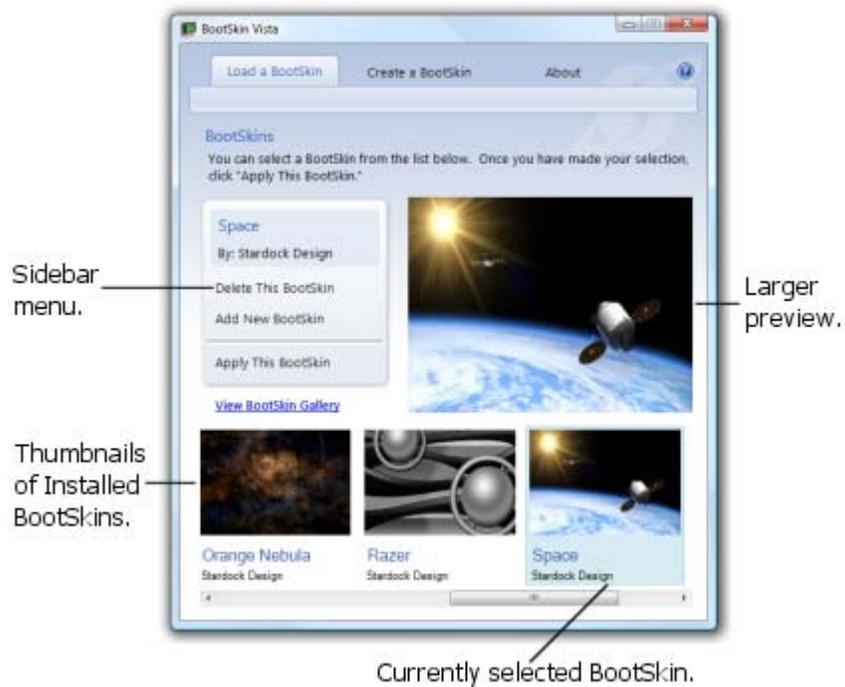
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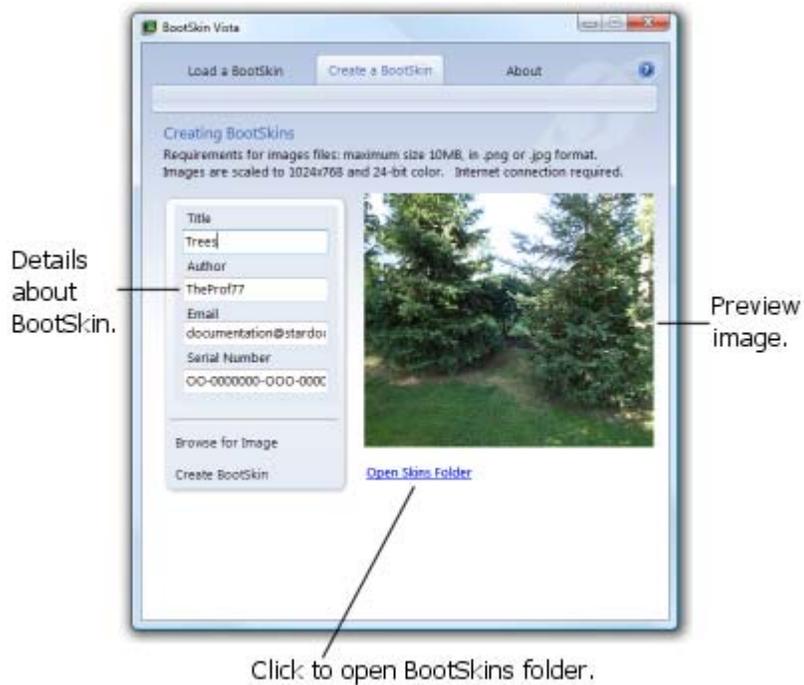
2. Introduction

With BootSkin Vista you can change the first screen you see when Windows loads, called a "boot screen" (BootSkin). BootSkin Vista includes a number of free BootSkins to get you started, after that you can download hundreds more from WinCustomize.com which is a great place to get more skins, get involved with the skinning community, and more.



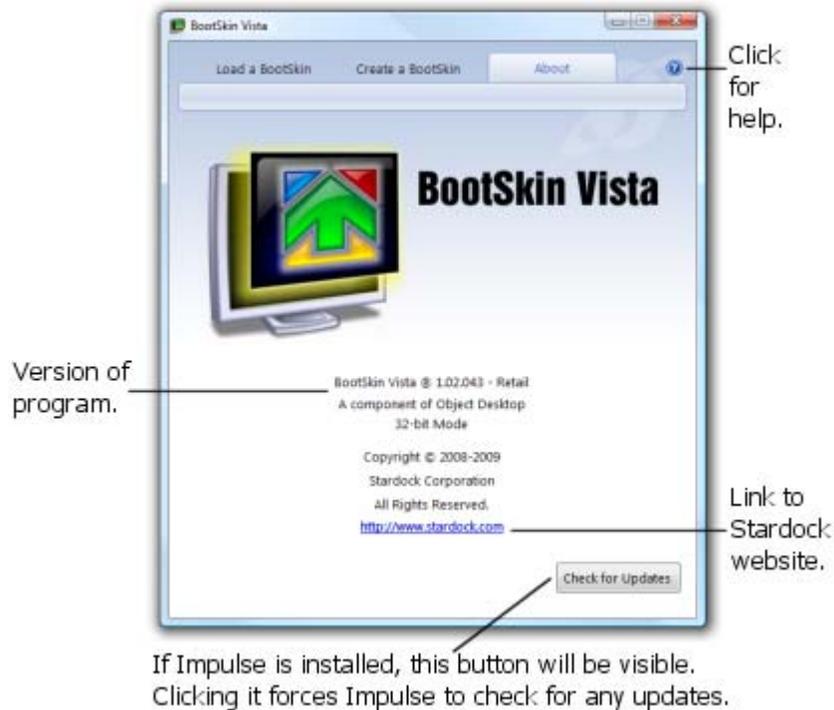
When BootSkin Vista starts the first tab you see is "Load a BootSkin" which allows you to browse the installed BootSkins, see a preview, apply it, add more BootSkins, delete ones you no longer want and "View BootSkin Gallery" on the WinCustomize web site.

Clicking on the "Create a BootSkin" tab gives you the ability to create your own BootSkin from a graphic image file. This could include a favorite photo of the family, your kids, pet, favorite boss (impress the boss on your work computer :-)) or other image. The sample BootSkins included with BootSkin Vista give you some idea of the kinds of images you could create, including original graphic art.



Note: You must have purchased BootSkin Vista either as a part of a subscription to [Object Desktop Network](#) (ODNT) or Object Desktop Ultimate. The free trial version does not allow you to create BootSkins. However, you can apply any of the hundreds of additional BootSkins available for download on [WinCustomize.com](#).

Clicking on the "About" tab displays important information about BootSkin Vista, including the version number (i.e. 1.02.043) and which OS (Operating System) you are using (i.e. 32 or 64 bit) which can help Support in case you have trouble with the program.

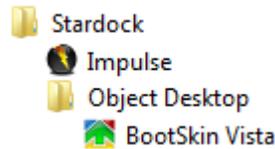


If Impulse is also installed, a button will be visible which allows you to check for any new updates for BootSkin Vista or other installed software via Impulse. Clicking the  icon in the upper, right corner of any tab while connected to the internet, will display this documentation ([BootSkin Vista Guide](#)) in your web browser.

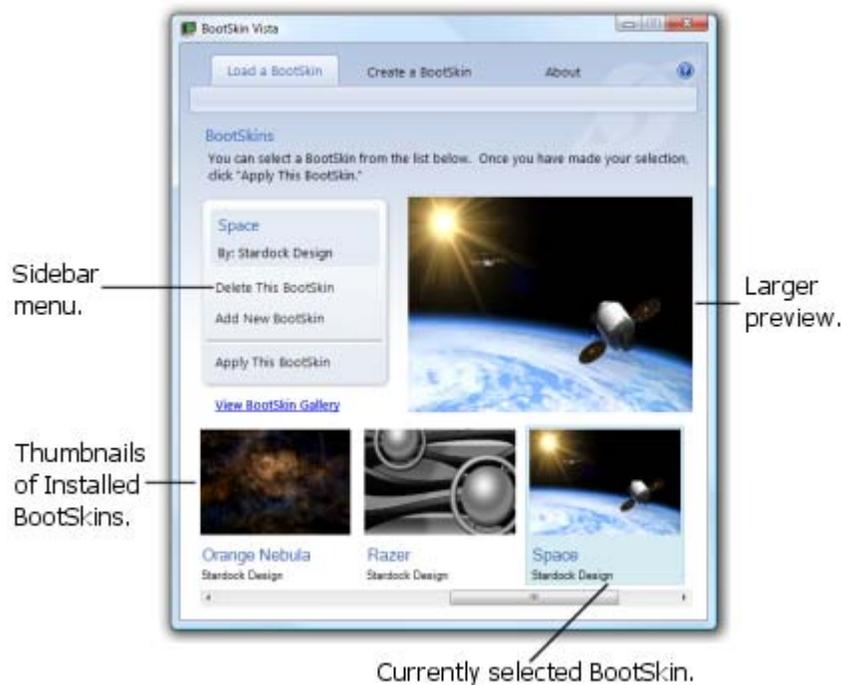
3. Load a BootSkin

After installing BootSkin Vista, locate the icon on the Start Menu. Click on Start, then All Programs, Stardock folder, click on the Object Desktop folder to open it, and click on the "BootSkin Vista" icon to run it.

Note: The free trial version of BootSkin Vista includes an extra shortcut icon under the Stardock folder called "Get Updates (Impulse)" to check for new updates.



The first screen you will see is the "Load a BootSkin" tab which allows you to change the default "Windows Default" (status bar) to any installed BootSkin. BootSkin Vista includes a number of BootSkins to choose from. The initial screen is organized into three main areas: a sidebar menu on the left, preview area on the right and a thumbnail (small image) representing each installed BootSkin available to be applied to your computer.

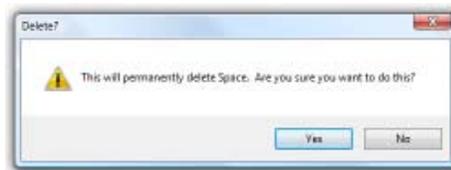


Sidebar Menu

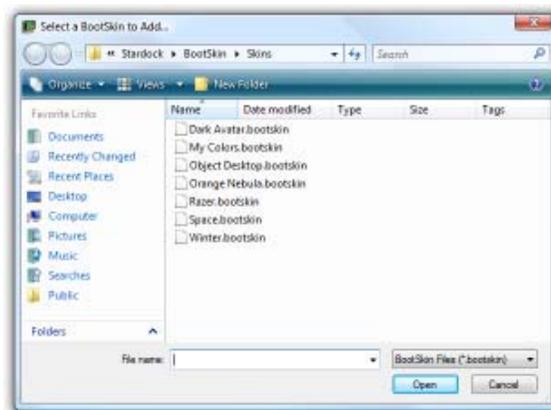
The sidebar menu on the left gives you a number of options for managing the BootSkins, including:



- Title & Author of the BootSkin - seen in the example above as "Space" "By Stardock Design".
- Delete This BootSkin - after selecting a thumbnail of a BootSkin, click this option. A dialog box will ask you to confirm the decision to delete it. Click to delete it. (Click or to abort.)



- Add New BootSkin - opens a Windows Explorer type window allowing you to locate any files ending in ".bootskin" (without the quotes) & add the new BootSkin you may have downloaded, etc.. After locating the file, click on it, then click . (Click or to abort.)



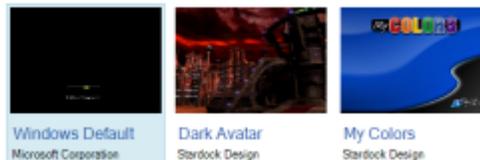
- Apply This BootSkin - select a BootSkin by clicking on a thumbnail, and then click this option from the Windows Default (or a previous BootSkin) to this BootSkin. After a BootSkin has been applied, you will see the following message box confirming the change. Click  or  to close the box.



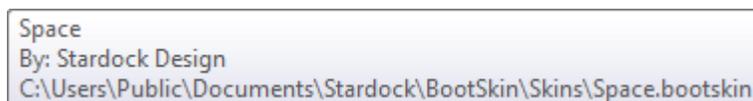
- Tip: Double-clicking on a thumbnail will automatically apply the selected BootSkin.
- "[Visit BootSkin Gallery](#)" - located below the sidebar menu is a link to the WinCustomize.com web site for hundreds of free BootSkins. Clicking this link while connected to the internet will open your default web browser and display the WinCustomize Gallery for BootSkins. WinCustomize is a free site and a great place to get a lot of free BootSkins, join in forums, view other galleries, read articles and get help.

Installed BootSkins

When you start BootSkin Vista for the first time, "Windows Default" is selected. Simply click on a different BootSkin to see a larger image in the preview area. Use the horizontal scroll bar near the bottom of the BootSkin Vista window to view additional installed BootSkins. When you click on a BootSkin thumbnail, it will be highlighted in a light blue color (i.e. Windows Default is selected in the image below).



Each thumbnail displays a small screenshot image of what the BootSkin image will look like, the preview area shows a larger version of it. Under each thumbnail is the Title of the BootSkin (i.e. Dark Avatar, My Colors, Space) and the Author or creator (i.e. Stardock Design). BootSkins downloaded from WinCustomize may have been created by someone not using their real name, instead using an alias or handle (i.e. HG_Eliminator, ZubaZ, TheProf77). Stopping the cursor over a given thumbnail (except Windows Default) will display a pop-up box with the title, author and file path to where the actual BootSkin is located on your hard-drive.



After applying a BootSkin, save any data & close all applications. Then restart your computer to see the BootSkin when Windows loads.

Help

To view this manual on the Stardock web site, locate the  icon in the upper, right-hand corner of any tab in BootSkin Vista. Clicking it while connected to the internet will open your web browser and display this BootSkin Vista Guide on the product page.

4. Create a BootSkin

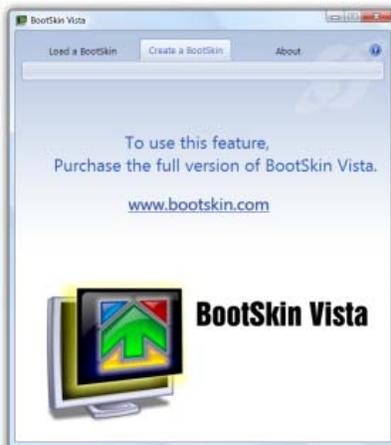
To create your own BootSkin, click on the "Create a BootSkin" tab. You will need to be connected to the internet as BootSkin Vista has to transfer your image to the Stardock server to be converted into the BootSkin Vista (.bootskin) file type format.

The "Title", "Author" and preview area will be blank when creating a BootSkin for the first time. Your "Email" should have been filled in from Impulse, along with your "Serial Number".



Free Trial Version

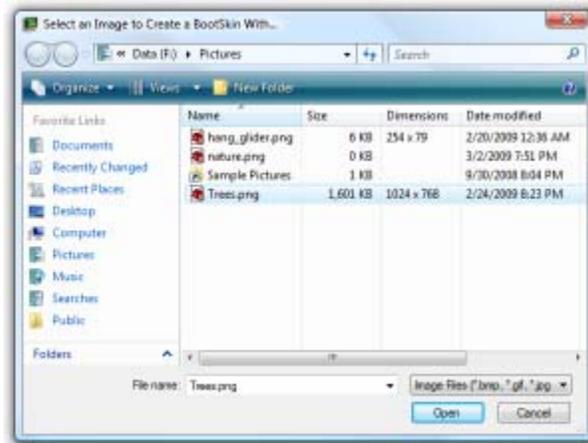
Note: If you are using the free trial version of BootSkin Vista, you will see the following screen. This gives you a link (www.bootskin.com) to click to view the product page in your web browser where you can get more information & purchase the full version of BootSkin Vista (a part of Object Desktop) which allows you to create your own BootSkins.



Creating a BootSkin

To create your own BootSkin, type in a "Title", and "Author" which can be your real name or an alias (i.e. Sly Fox). Usually people who share skins on WinCustomize.com use their alias from that site as the "Author". This way, as you create more skins for BootSkin Vista and/or other programs, you build a reputation of the quality of your work. WinCustomize recognizes skinner (people who create skins) by granting different [levels of access](http://www.wincustomize.com/about.aspx) (<http://www.wincustomize.com/about.aspx>) based on your work and community involvement. WinCustomize is not the only skinning site on the internet, but is a great place to start. It gives you a lot of free skins to download, the ability to create your own & share with the community, talk with the community in forums, read tutorials, view links to other skinning sites and more.

The "Email" address associated with the "Serial Number" must match your Stardock.net account (i.e. Impulse, WinCustomize.com, GalCiv2.com) used with Impulse or Object Desktop if you are a subscriber. Then click "Browse for Image" to locate the desired image file. The image must be in one of the following file type formats: PNG, JPG/JPEG, BMP or GIF. PNG & JPG/JPEG give the best quality. Maximum file size is 10 MB (10,000 KB) and images are scaled (resized) to 1024x768 pixels and 24-bit color. After selecting the desired image file, click . (Click  or  to abort.)



The image will then appear in the preview area. Then click "Create BootSkin" and you will see a status bar appear near the bottom of the BootSkin Vista window. Status messages will be displayed under the bar telling you what it is doing, such as: Uploading image, Upload complete! Downloading BootSkin, and Download Complete.



If the "Email" address and/or "Serial Number" do not match your Stardock.net account or there was a typo in either, you will receive the following status message:



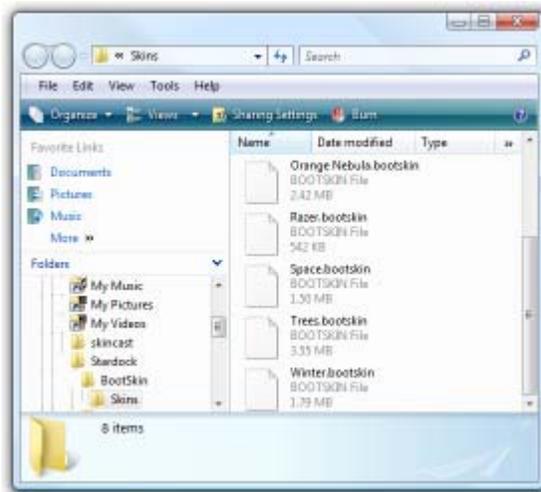
If you get that message, verify that your Email address is correct, as you may have accidentally clicked into that field and erased or changed a character(s). If your email address has changed, you must

change it through Impulse, not here. To verify your serial number, run Impulse and click the Help  icon to get a list of your serial number(s). After correcting the problem, click "Create BootSkin" again. If you continue to have problems, go to the Stardock Support web site at: <http://www.stardock.com/support/> for help in resolving this issue.

After the upload is complete and it processes your image, it will download the new .bootskin file and keep you updated on the progress:



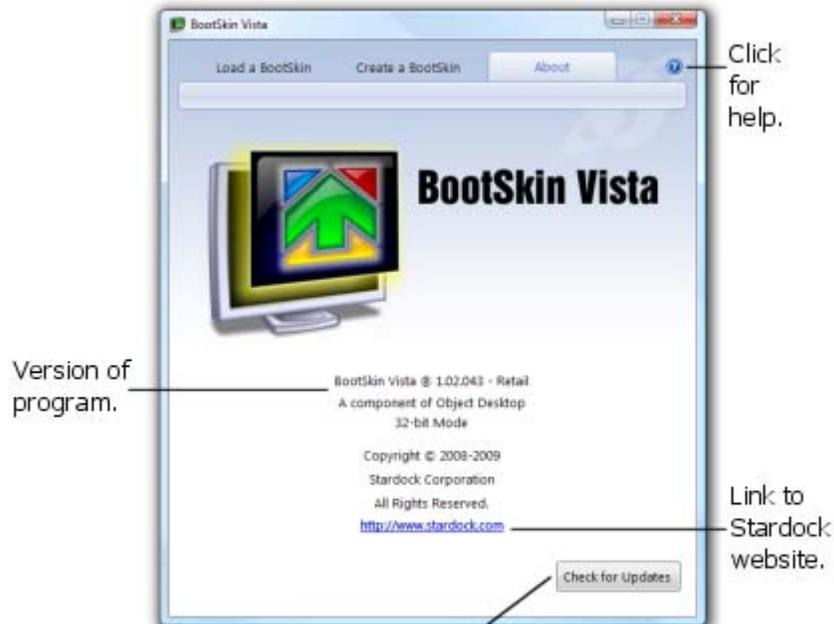
After it says "Download complete!" you can click "Open Skins Folder" to view the BootSkin it stored on your computer. When done, click  to close the window.



To apply your new BootSkin, click on the "Load a BootSkin" tab, locate the BootSkin thumbnail, click on it, and then click "Apply This BootSkin". Then close BootSkin Vista by clicking , and save any data in open applications. Close all applications, and restart Windows to view the new BootSkin on startup.

5. About

Clicking on the "About" tab displays the: program logo, title of program (i.e. BootSkin Vista), version of program (i.e. 1.02.043 - Retail), the operating system it is for (i.e. 32-bit Mode, 64-bit Mode), copyright information, a link to the Stardock home page (www.stardock.com) and if Impulse is installed, a button to check to see if there are any updates for BootSkin Vista or other Stardock programs you have installed. Clicking the Help  icon in the upper, right-hand corner opens your web browser and displays this documentation (BootSkin Vista Guide). You must be connected to the internet to view the Stardock home page, or this guide.



If Impulse is installed, this button will be visible.
Clicking it forces Impulse to check for any updates.

Appendix A: Installation of Free Version

These instructions pertain to installing the free trial version of BootSkin Vista.

From the Stardock [BootSkin Vista product page](http://www.stardock.com/products/bootskin/downloads.asp), click on the "Download" page (<http://www.stardock.com/products/bootskin/downloads.asp>), then click on the "Download" link for "BootSkin Vista Download" and you will see the following dialog box:



- If you select , it will download the file to a temporary location on your computer, then it will start the installation. (After the install is completed, it will delete the file it downloaded.)
- If you select , it will ask you for a location on your hard-drive to store it. Locate the desired folder and click (or to abort). Then after the download completes, it will ask if you want to , or . Select to install the application.



The first screen you will see after the install starts is the "Welcome to the Impulse Installation Wizard". Impulse is required to install BootSkin Vista, as this allows you to get updates and other information about products Stardock sells, including the full version of BootSkin Vista (part of the Object Desktop suite). Click the **Next >** button to start the install. (Click **Cancel** or **X** to abort.)



The next screen you will see is the License Agreement (also known as the End User License Agreement (EULA)) which you must agree to install this software. Use the vertical scroll bar to view the entire license agreement. Check the box next to "I accept the terms of the license agreement", then click **Next >**. (Click **< Back** to view the previous screen. Click **Cancel** or **X** to abort the install.)



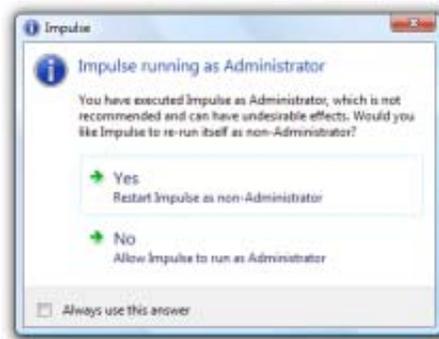
The next screen in the install wizard is for the Target Folder (or path) where Impulse will install files to for both Impulse & BootSkin Vista. (You may change the default folder to something else by clicking the **Change...** button and locating the desired folder.) On the Target Folder screen, click **Next >** to continue. (Click **< Back** to view the previous screen. Click **Cancel** or **X** to abort the install.)



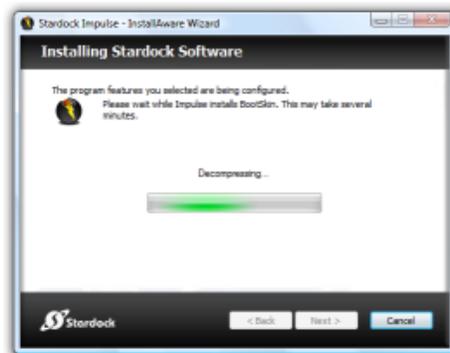
You will then see a progress bar displaying the status of the installation of the files to your computer. (Click  or  to abort the install.)



If you receive the following prompt asking "Impulse running as Administrator" with a "Yes" or "No" answer. It is strongly recommended that you click "Yes" (run as non-Administrator).



The install will then continue with the progress bar:



When the install is complete, you will see the following screen:



By default, the box is checked next to "Run BootSkin now", uncheck it if you do not want to run it at this time. Otherwise, click and BootSkin Vista will run. At this point, you can refer to the directions earlier in this manual on how to use BootSkin Vista.

Note: The free trial version allows you to apply BootSkins, however you cannot create your own. You must purchase Object Desktop or Object Desktop Ultimate which includes the full version of BootSkin Vista to create your own BootSkins from graphic image files.

Appendix B: FAQ

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

What is a BootSkin (boot screen) & where do I see it when Windows starts?

By default, when you turn on your computer (or restart it) and Windows Vista starts to load, the first thing you see is the boot screen which is a black screen with a progress bar. This is what BootSkin Vista can change to a BootSkin (boot screen) of your choice.

How large are BootSkins?

The image used to create a BootSkin (.bootskin) cannot exceed 10 MB (10,000 KB) in size. The file type can be PNG, JPG/JPEG, GIF or BMP. The best quality is PNG or JPG/JPEG. If you are creating your own BootSkin from an image file that exceeds 10 MB, if it is in the JPG/JPEG file type, you can use a graphic program to compress the image down to a smaller size. The smaller the image file, the faster Windows loads it.

How is BootSkin Vista different from other programs?

Unlike other programs that can change the Windows boot screens, BootSkin Vista does so in a safe manner. It does not patch the Windows kernel. Nor does it require you to download replacement Windows kernels to do so.

Boot screens that use BootSkin Vista are typically under 20 KB compared to other boot screen programs whose files are over 2 MB (20,000 KB).

How can BootSkin Vista be used?

BootSkin Vista is free for non-commercial use.

What are the differences between BootSkin Vista (Free) & BootSkin Vista (Purchased)?

BootSkin Vista (Purchased version) does everything BootSkin Vista (Free version) does, except it also allows you to create your own BootSkins from image files.

Where can I get more BootSkins?

You can download hundreds of free BootSkins from WinCustomize at: <http://www.wincustomize.com/Skins.aspx?LibID=76>. These BootSkins were created by the skinning community to share with others.

How can I create a BootSkin?

To create a BootSkin you must have purchased Object Desktop which includes BootSkin Vista, then refer to the section in this guide: [4. Create a BootSkin](#).