

WindowBlinds™



WindowBlinds 6.0 is a utility for Microsoft Windows XP and Vista that enables users to change the look and feel of the Windows graphical user interface (GUI). By applying skins designed for WindowBlinds, the program can change title bars, borders, scrollbars, push buttons, and nearly every element of the Windows GUI. WindowBlinds has over 12 million downloads on CNET's Download.com and is, by far, the most popular desktop enhancement of all time.

This media guide will outline the primary features of WindowBlinds as well as outline what, specifically, is new in WindowBlinds 6.

How WindowBlinds Works

WindowBlinds works by extending the drawing routines of Microsoft Windows to support images, animations, and other elements that are provided by skins created by third-parties.

WindowBlinds Features

WindowBlinds has hundreds of features, Which can be broken up into the following categories:

- “Skinning” the Windows user interface for Windows XP and Vista.
- Changing the color of a given “skin” (visual style).
- Changing a skin for a particular application.
- Performance and usability options.
- Wallpaper changing, font control and more!



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A quick primer on skinning

The Windows user interface is made up of many different elements including title bars, buttons, scrollbars, and the Start bar. Over the years Microsoft has had three major new looks (with minor variations between them).

These looks are:

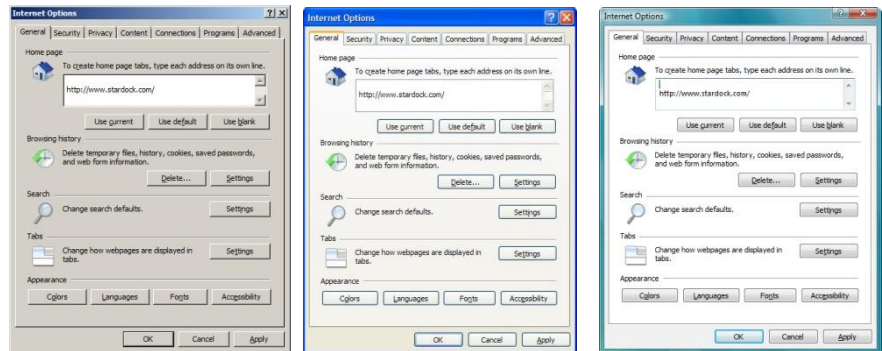


Figure 1: Windows Classic, Windows XP, Windows Aero (Vista)



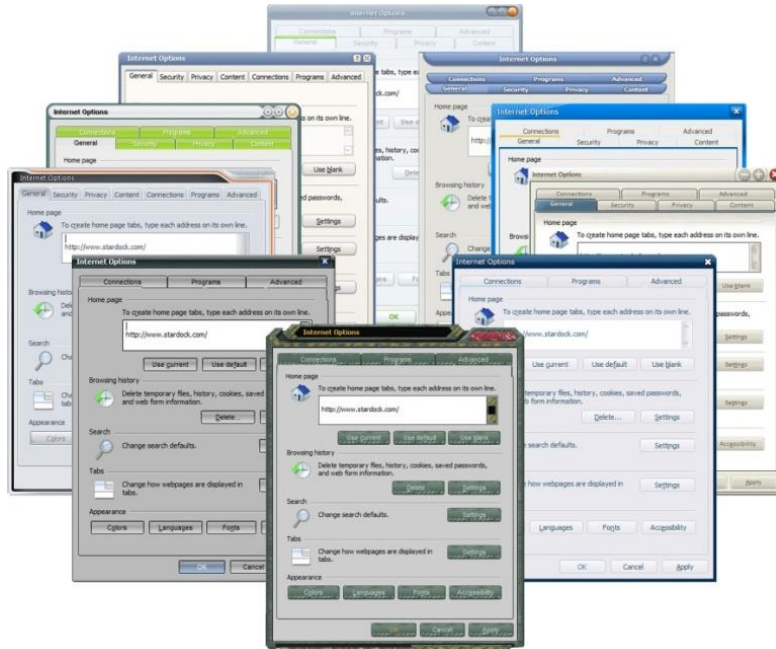
Did you know?

Over 3,000 different visual styles are available for free download on the website www.wincustomize.co

WindowBlinds extends this to support thousands of additional visual styles that also have a lot more visual features than Windows would by default.

WindowBlinds Visual Styles

WindowBlinds adds hundreds of additional visual drawing features to the Windows GUI that are taken advantage of by artists who make new skins (visual styles) that are applied by WindowBlinds. As a result, users can completely transform Windows in very fundamental ways.



What's new in WindowBlinds 6

WindowBlinds 6 is the most significant advancement to the program since its inception.

Its new features can be summarized as:

- Full support for Windows Vista skinning including the Sidebar, new Vista-specific controls, and full video acceleration.
- Blurred glass support for Windows XP users
- A new configuration program to make it much easier to configure the program
- The ability for users to modify the fonts and colors of skins within the configuration program and save their changes as sub-styles of the original skin.
- Support for fluid animation (30 frames per second) with no noticeable change in performance
- Users can control the transparency and blur levels in their skins
- Dozens of smaller new features requested by users.



Did you know?

On Windows Vista, many WindowBlinds skins can save enough power on a laptop to give the user 40 extra minutes

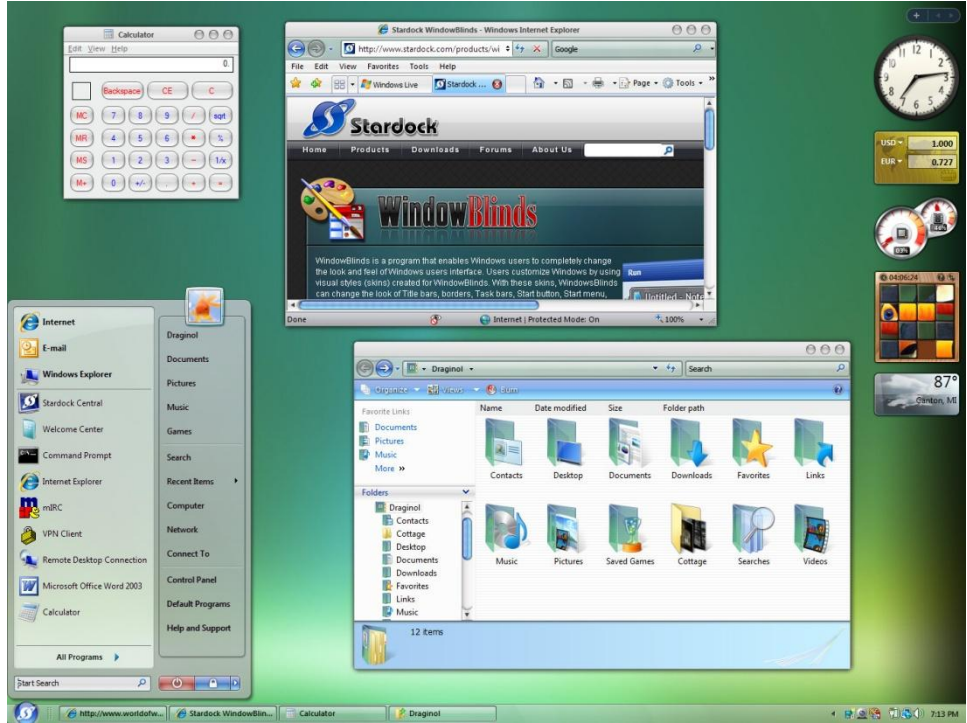


Figure 2: WindowBlinds 6 adds full customization support to Windows Vista and makes full use of the desktop hardware acceleration for maximum performance. Explorer backgrounds can be skinned, the Sidebar can be skinned, Internet Explorer 7 and other elements become skinnable, etc.

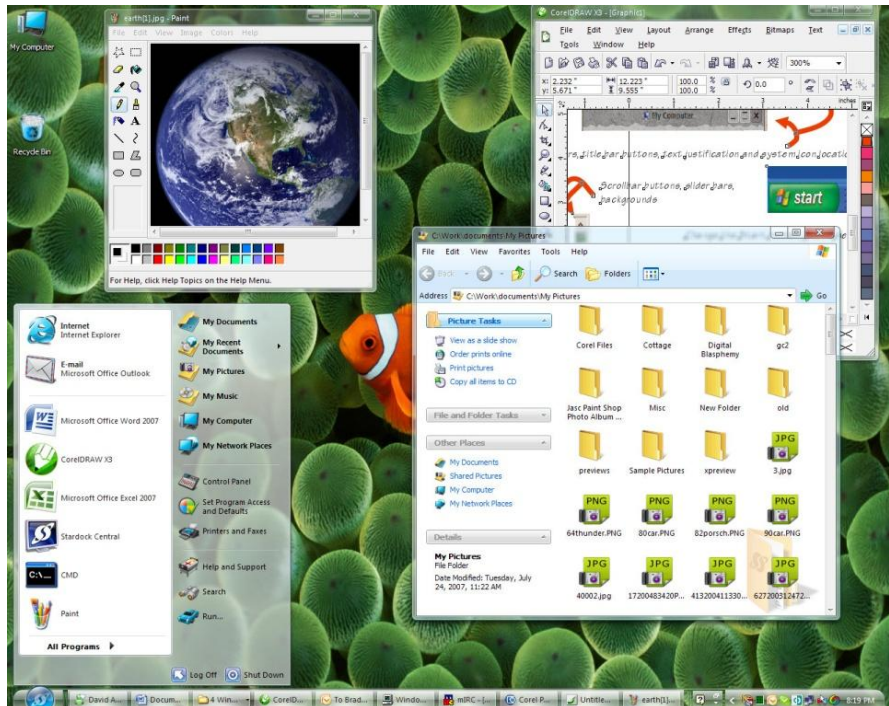


Figure 3: WindowBlinds 6 running on Windows XP. Blurred glass and other effects can make Windows XP look and feel revitalized.



Did you know?

WindowBlinds skins tend to result in less overall memory being used than if the user was running Windows XP or Windows Vista on their own. That's because



Figure 4: WindowBlinds 6 adds fluid animation support. The dragon on the start menu along with the fire is fully animated at over 30 frames per second without any noticeable performance change.

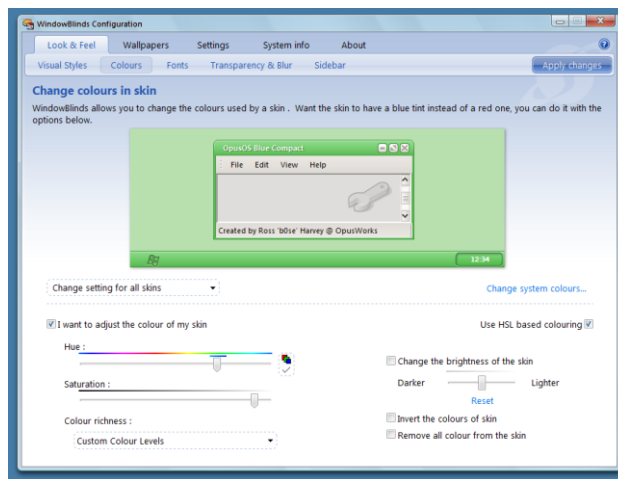


Figure 5: With WindowBlinds 6, users can customize the colors of individual visual styles and save them as sub-styles for later use.



Did you know?

The little color box button on the colorization screen allows users to pick a specific color to change rather than

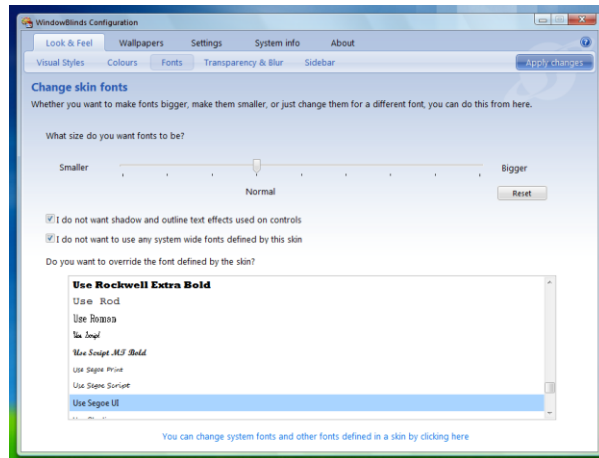


Figure 6: Users can now customize the fonts used in skins to their liking.

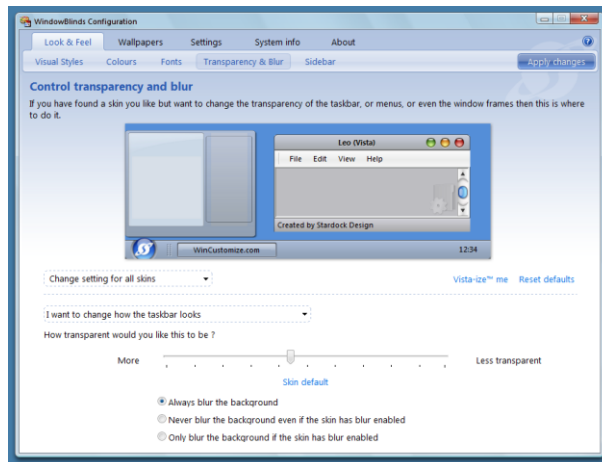


Figure 7: Users can control the level of blurring and transparency in their skins

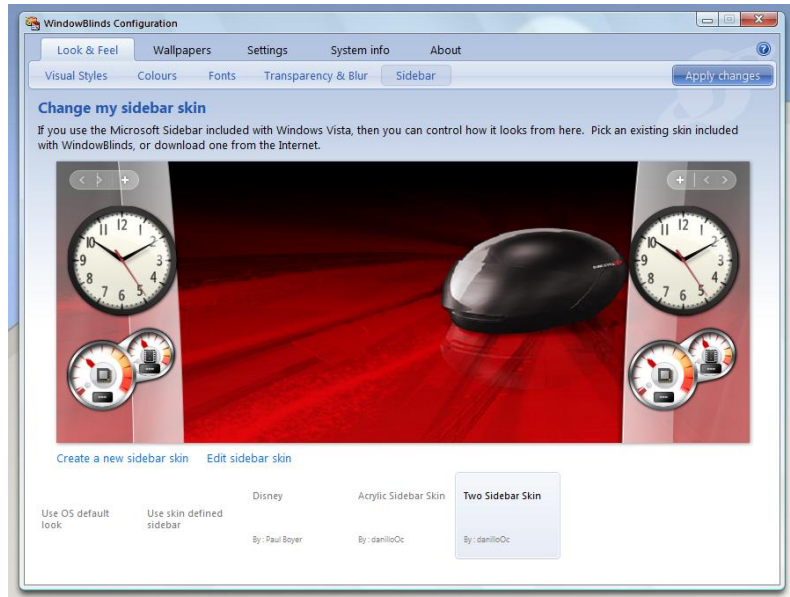


Figure 8: The new Windows Vista sidebar can now be skinned

WindowBlinds in action

WindowBlinds has so many features that it would be impossible to discuss them all without it becoming overwhelming. Below are the major features of WindowBlinds.

Look & Feel

Changing the visual style of Windows is simply a matter of opening the new configuration window and choosing the skin you want. A preview is displayed along with options to edit (with the free SkinStudio application) or apply the skin.



Did you know?

You can configure WindowBlinds to minimize windows by right-clicking on the title bar. This popular feature can reduce

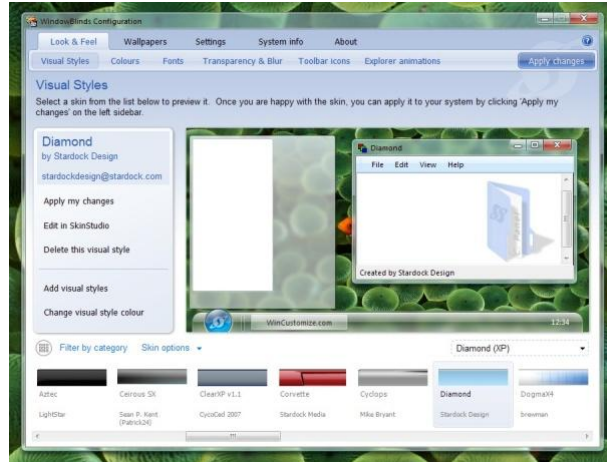


Figure 9: WindowBlinds 6 includes a new, easy to use configuration program.

Wallpapers

Many skin artists create wallpapers to go with their visual styles. WindowBlinds supports changing wallpapers, and you can choose to have it apply the provided wallpaper for you.

If no wallpaper is supplied you can choose from the wallpapers you have on your system, or mix and match different wallpapers with different visual styles to create your own look!

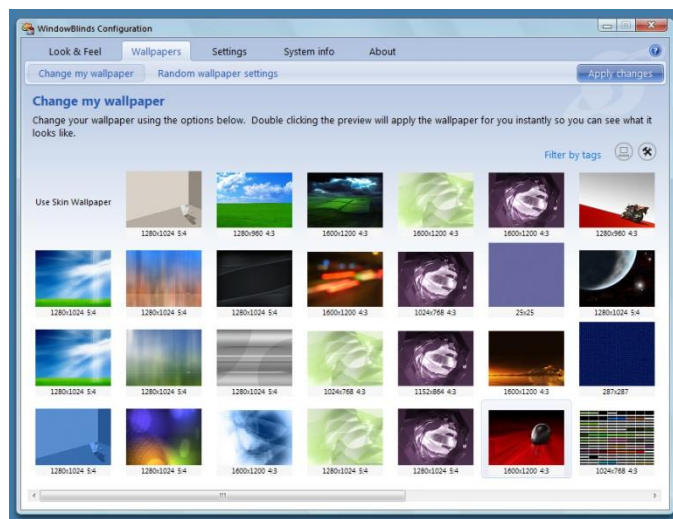


Figure 10: Manage the wallpapers on your computer easily, you can even have WindowBlinds randomly change your wallpapers throughout the day.

Per Application Skinning

Windows XP and Windows Vista only change controls (buttons, check boxes, etc.) on programs that are theme-aware, otherwise, the application has controls that look like Windows 95 (you may have noticed this before, this is why).

But WindowBlinds does not have this limitation. It can customize even non-theme aware controls. Ironically, the only way to make Windows XP or Windows Vista look consistently like Windows XP or Windows Vista is to use WindowBlinds.

WindowBlinds can exclude individual applications from being skinned as well as assign those applications to have a specific skin.

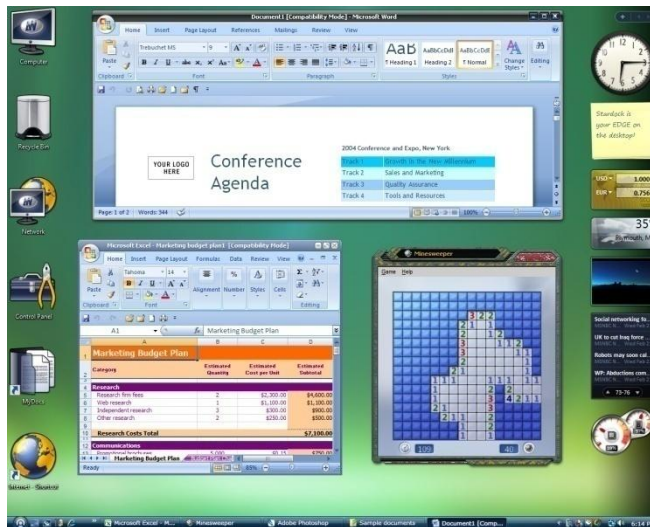


Figure 11: WindowBlinds users can assign different skins to different programs.

Performance & Usability

WindowBlinds isn't just eye candy. Users can use it to significantly improve the performance of Windows XP or Windows Vista over the OS by default.

WindowBlinds skins can even add additional buttons such as roll-up

buttons, buttons that link to a website, even media player controls right to the title bar or border of a window!

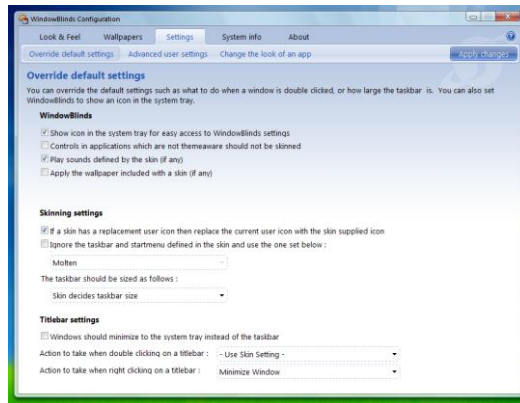


Figure 12: WindowBlinds includes a large number of usability options to extend what Windows users. can normally configure

WindowBlinds in daily use

WindowBlinds has grown in popularity over the years with users. With millions of users worldwide, it is the single most popular desktop enhancement utility of all time.

In addition, its robust engine has been licensed by countless companies in some form or other. Odds are, your PC right now has WindowBlinds installed in one form or other (if your'e running a program that is "skinned" it might be using a special licensed version of WindowBlinds).



Did you know?

You can double click on a skin or a wallpaper to apply just that part of the skin rather than having to apply the

Companies that have licensed WindowBlinds for use include ATI, Microsoft, Nintendo, Blizzard, nVidia, Alienware, Dell, and countless others.



Figure 13: The World of Warcraft skin available at WorldOfWarcraft.com uses WindowBlinds

Pricing & Availability

WindowBlinds is a free download. It costs \$19.95 to register the program. Users can also get WindowBlinds as part of Stardock's suite of popular desktop enhancements called Object Desktop which adds programs that customize icons, animated wallpaper, widgets and gadgets, window effects, and much more.

Version History

Version 1 of WindowBlinds was released in 1999 and since then it has grown and matured. Version 2.0 in 2000 added the ability to "skin" more controls, in 2001 version 3.0 offered support for Windows XP, including the Start bar, and in April of 2003 version 4.0 added skinning for non-theme aware programs, command prompt skinning and a new skinning format. Stardock is the world leader in Windows customization software, and strives to remain on the cutting edge of the technology they pioneered.

V5.0: November 29, 2005. Added support for per pixel-alpha blending (glass effects to title bar), toolbar icon changing, and progress bar animation changing. It is roughly 3.5 times faster than previous versions due to hardware acceleration, and has a reduced memory foot-print thanks to eliminating the need for a dedicated process.

V6.0: October 02, 2007. Adds a multitude of new features some of which include; blurring, sidebar skinning and start menu animation.

Specifications

Product Name:

WindowBlinds 6.0 (www.windowblinds.net)

Developer:

Stardock Corporation (www.stardock.com)

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Plymouth, MI, 48170

Phn: 734-927-0677

Fax: 734-927-0678

Pricing:

\$19.95 for [stand-alone version](#) or **\$49.95**

when purchased as part of the [Object Desktop](#) suite of Windows enhancement utilities.

Requirements:

- 32-bit or 64-bit Windows Vista.
- 32-bit Windows XP
- 1GHz Processor
- 100MB Free drive space
- 512MB RAM
- 128MB Video card with a WDDM driver



Did you know?

WindowBlinds has been featured in several movies to give computers a “futuristic” looking interface.

About Stardock

Stardock is the world's leading developer of Windows enhancement utilities. Its software is used by over 10 million people worldwide and has been licensed by trendsetting companies like NVIDIA, ATI, Alienware and Microsoft, plus in movies and on TV. Stardock operates WinCustomize.com, the premier portal for Windows enhancements, drawing more than 3 million unique visitors each month. Stardock is a Microsoft Certified Gold Partner. The company's website is located at

www.stardock.com.