

THE WINDOWS VISTA SIDEBAR



In this lesson you'll learn how to access the Vista Sidebar and use it to add and configure gadgets.

One of Vista's goals is to put more information at your fingertips. Enter the Sidebar, a feature of built-in desk accessories, a concept first popularized by the Mac. It occupies the right or left end of your screen and serves up a clock, calendar, newsreader, weather gauge, and other useful items. You can add, remove, and reorganize these mini-applications or "gadgets" as you please to create exactly the Sidebar you want. Here's how.



The Windows Vista Sidebar, displayed on the right side of the desktop

First, decide if you want the Sidebar to be a permanent fixture on the desktop or something that stays hidden until you mouse over to the side of your screen. Right-click an unoccupied area of the Sidebar, choose Properties, and then check or uncheck "Sidebar is always on top of other windows." (This is also where you decide if the Sidebar should occupy the right or left side of the screen.)

Get more gadgets

To remove any of the existing gadgets from the Sidebar, mouse over it, then click the little close-application x in the corner. To change the settings for a gadget, click the little wrench instead. You can also drag and drop a gadget to a different location on the Sidebar, or drag it off the Sidebar altogether and position it somewhere else on your desktop.

To add gadgets to the Sidebar, click the plus sign at the top of it. You'll see a dozen or so choices; drag any of them to the Sidebar. However, there are hundreds more available online. Here's a partial list:

- Live Clock
- Amazon Search
- iTunes Songs
- Pong
- WeatherBug
- Hangman
- Video Player for YouTube
- Bible verse of the day
- Google Searcher
- HTML Sandbox

Click the "Get more gadgets online" link to see a complete list. There are literally hundreds of gadgets from categories including fun and games, search tools, security, and more. These aren't drag-and-drop additions, however; you'll have to download and install them first. Fortunately, most gadgets cost nothing.

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