

Get the Most Entertainment from Windows Media Center

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What You'll Need

- Windows Media® Center—including on Windows Vista® Home Premium and Ultimate editions
- A television
- An analog or digital TV tuner
- A Windows Media Center Extender device.
- A computer running Windows Vista

Windows Guides is a library of easy-to-use guides that show you how to get more from your Windows experience. Share these guides with your friends and family.



Set up Windows Media Center

So much of our entertainment is digital these days—digital music, digital videos and photos, even digital TV, and there seems to be different programs for each one. But what if you could combine all of your digital media in one place? Even more, what if you could enjoy it from anywhere in your house, and on your own schedule? Well, now you can. Windows Media Center puts you at the controls of your entertainment world.

With Windows Media Center a whole spectrum of digital media is at your fingertips. Enjoy your full media library with the click of a button, connect to online media, watch and record live TV, or listen to music.

1. Press the green Start button on your Windows Media Center remote.
2. If you do not have a Windows Media Center remote, use your mouse to open Windows Media Center by clicking the Windows logo and selecting **Windows Media Center** from the programs list.
3. On the Welcome to Windows Media Center screen, click **Next**.
4. The following screen says you must complete two sections: 1) Required Setup and 2) Option Setup. Click **Next** again.
5. View the Privacy Statement, and then click **Next**.
6. Select **Yes** or **No** on the Help Improve Windows Media Center page, then click **Next**.

Set up Windows Media Center *(continued)*

7. On the **Get the Most from Windows Media Center** screen, select **Yes** to allow Windows Media Center to download album and DVD cover art, current TV guide listings, and other useful information from online media services.



Figure 1—Get the Most from Windows Media Center

That completes the setup. Click **Next** again, and continue with the Optional Setup if you'd like to do any of the following:

- Optimize how Windows Media Center looks on your display
- Set up your speakers
- Set up your Music, Pictures, and Videos Libraries

Click **Cancel** if you don't want to set these up. Otherwise click **Next**.

When you choose to proceed with the Optional Setup, the Windows Media Center wizard guides you through each part of the process with a series of easy-to-understand questions based on the type of display and sound system you are using.

Set up Windows Media Center *(continued)*

When you reach the **Set up your Music, Pictures, and Videos Libraries** section, you have the option to **Add folder to watch**. This allows Windows Media Center to access and track changes to a local or shared folder. It also allows you to view all of your digital media from within Windows Media Center.

1. Select **Add folder to watch** and then click **Next**.
2. Click to select one of the Add folders options.

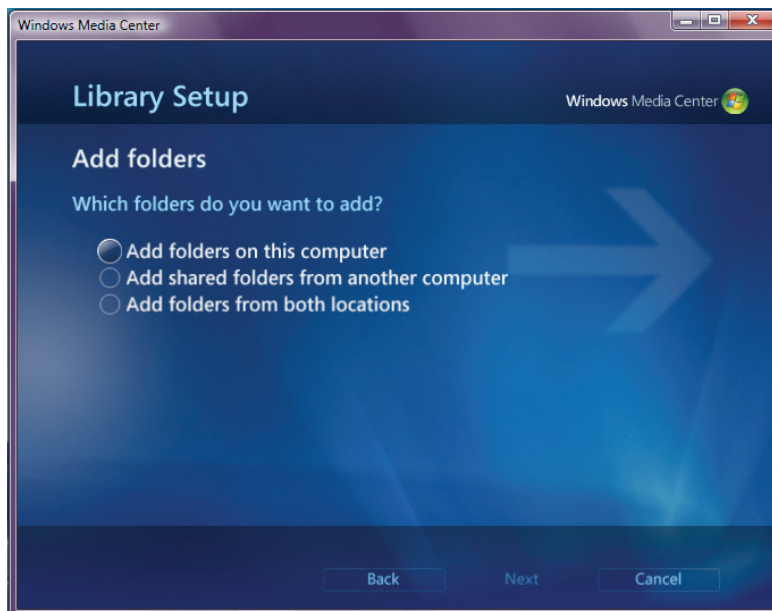


Figure 2—Add folder options

Set up Windows Media Center *(continued)*

3. Browse for the folder(s) containing media files.
4. Click to check the box next to any folder(s) you want to add.
5. Click **Next**.

Windows Media Center will search the folder(s) for digital music, photos, or videos. It will also save your folder selections for the next time you start the program.

6. When you've finished setting up Windows Media Center, select **I am finished** to open Windows Media Center and start exploring.



If you want an alternative to the transport controls on your PC, consider purchasing Windows Media Center remote.. To find this and other Vista certified accessories, go to <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/mediacenter/buy/default.mspx>

More Information

- Windows Media Center Overview: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/mediacenter/default.mspx>
- Windows Media Center—What Do I Need?: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/mediacenter/buy/requirements.mspx>
- Windows Media Center—How-to Videos: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/mediacenter/getstarted/videos.mspx>

Use Windows Media Center to Save, Organize, and View Entertainment, Photos, and Videos

You've put so much time and effort into building your digital media library, collecting music, videotaping special occasions, snapping tons of photos. Why not give it the platform it deserves? By adding your digital media folders to Windows Media Center, you do just that, and because all of your entertainment needs are in one place, you can sit back, relax and enjoy them.

If you did not add folders to your Windows Media Center libraries during setup, you can easily do it now.

1. Open Windows Media Center by clicking the Windows logo and selecting **Windows Media Center** from the programs list.
2. On your Windows Media Center start screen, use the up and down arrows to scroll to **Tasks**.
3. Use the left arrow to scroll to **Settings**.
4. Click to select **Settings**.
5. Click on **Library Setup**.
6. Select **Add folder to watch**, and then click **Next**.

Use Windows Media Center to Save, Organize, and View Entertainment, Photos, and Videos *(continued)*

7. Choose a folder location to browse (your computer, a shared computer, or both)
8. Browse for the folder(s) containing media files.



Figure 3—Selecting media folders in Library Setup

9. Click to check the box next to any folder(s) you want to add.
10. Click **Next**.
11. When the folders have been added, click **Finish** to return to the Settings menu.

Windows Media Center saves your folder selections for the next time you start the program. It will also update the contents of the corresponding picture, video, or music library automatically so they remain in sync.

Now that you've added your media folders to Windows Media Center, it's time to start enjoying them in new ways!



To remove a folder from Windows Media Center, follow these same steps, but select **Stop watching a folder** from the Library Setup options. Click to clear the checkbox next to any folder you want Windows Media Center to stop watching.

Use Windows Media Center to Save, Organize, and View Entertainment, Photos, and Videos *(continued)*

VIEW PICTURES AND HOME VIDEOS

Don't hide your digital photos and videos away to gather dust on your hard drive. Give them the spotlight they deserve by bringing them center stage with Windows Media Center.

1. Open Windows Media Center by clicking the Windows logo and selecting **Windows Media Center** from the programs list.
2. Scroll to **Pictures + Videos**, and then click **picture library**.

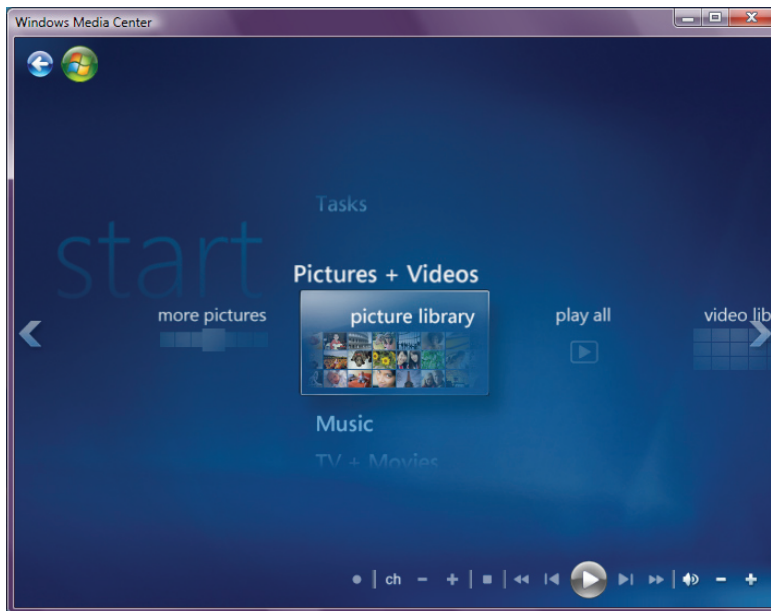


Figure 4—Pictures + Videos in Windows Media Center

3. Click on the picture folder you want to open.
4. To view a single picture, click on it. It will open in full screen mode, and you can use the transport controls to manually scroll through the other photos in the folder.
5. To view a slideshow of the photos, click **play slide show**.



Figure 5—Playback Controls in Windows Media Center

Use Windows Media Center to Save, Organize, and View Entertainment, Photos, and Videos *(continued)*

The navigation controls will disappear after a few moments. Move your mouse to any point on the screen for them to reappear.

6. Use the transport controls to skip, fast forward or pause the slideshow.
7. Click the arrow in the upper left corner of your screen to return to the previous page or menu.
8. Click the green Windows Media Center button to return to the main menu.



Figure 6—Back button and green Windows Media Center button



You can organize photos and video by folder, date taken, or by tag name. To organize by tags, click tags. Windows Media Center will immediately reorganize your files and folders based on the new criteria. Do the same to organize by date taken or by name.

Use Windows Media Center to Save, Organize, and View Entertainment, Photos, and Videos *(continued)*

To customize a slide show

You can specify which pictures are shown and in what order, the type of transition you want, the duration of the transitions, and other aspects of a slide show presentation.

1. On the start screen, scroll to **Tasks**, click **settings**, and then click **Pictures**. Customize your slide show by using the options on this screen.

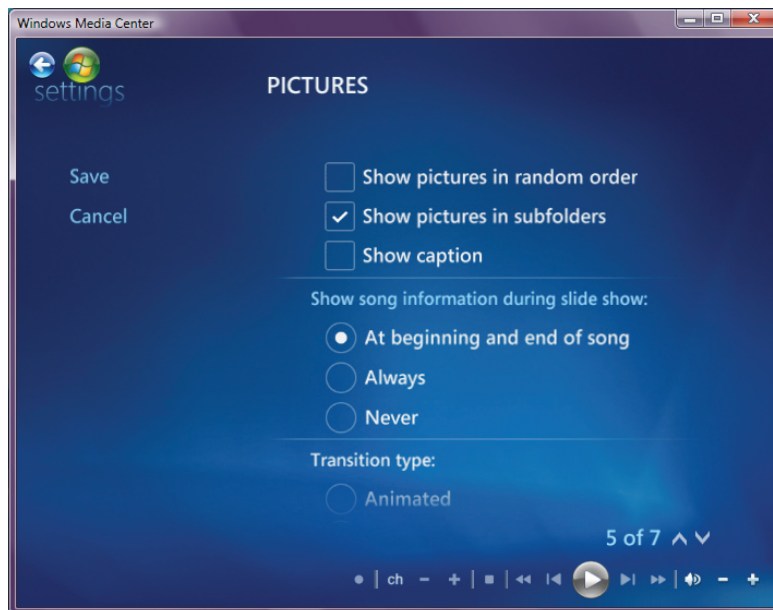


Figure 7—Customize picture slideshow options

2. Click **Save** to save the slide show settings.

Use Windows Media Center to Save, Organize, and View Entertainment, Photos, and Videos *(continued)*

To play home videos

1. Open Windows Media Center by clicking the Windows logo and selecting **Windows Media Center** from the programs list.
2. Scroll to **Pictures + Videos**, and then click **video library**.
3. Click on the video folder you want to open.



Figure 8—Video folders in the video library

4. Click on the video you want to watch. It will open in full screen mode, and you can use the transport controls to fast-forward, rewind or pause.
5. To return to the previous page or menu, click the arrow in the upper left corner of your screen.
6. Click the green **Windows Media Center** button to return to the main menu.



You can scroll left or right through your digital media collection by moving the mouse to the edge of the screen, or by using the left and right arrow buttons on your keyboard.

Use Windows Media Center to Save, Organize, and View Entertainment, Photos, and Videos *(continued)*

LISTEN TO MUSIC

Give your music library a worthy venue. Use Windows Media Center to play your favorite albums or playlists, add music to a queue, or even to a picture slideshow.

1. On the start screen, scroll to **Music**, and then click **music library**.
2. Browse by **album artists**, **albums**, **artists**, **genres**, **songs**, **playlists**, **composers**, or **years**.
3. You can also search **songs** by clicking songs, and then typing the first few letters of the song you're looking for.

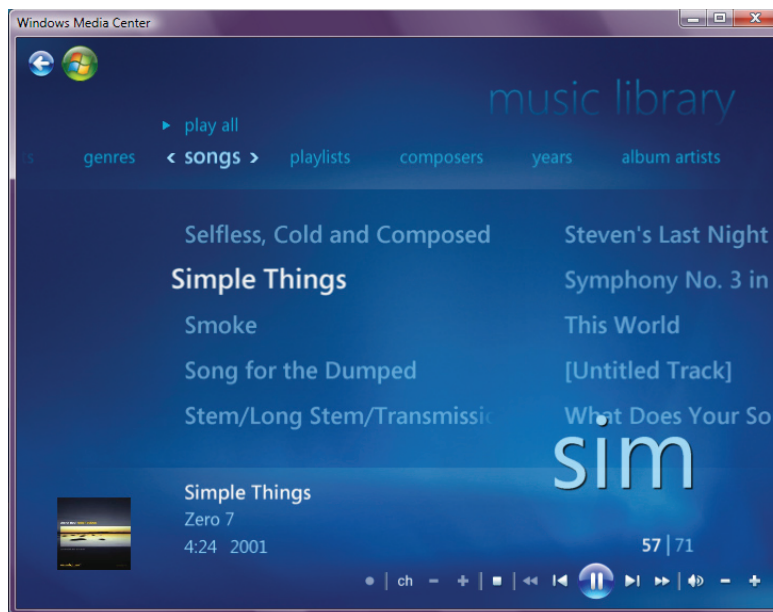


Figure 9—Search for songs in the Windows Media Center music library

Use Windows Media Center to Save, Organize, and View Entertainment, Photos, and Videos *(continued)*

4. When you find the album or song you want to play, click on it, and then choose from the options provided.

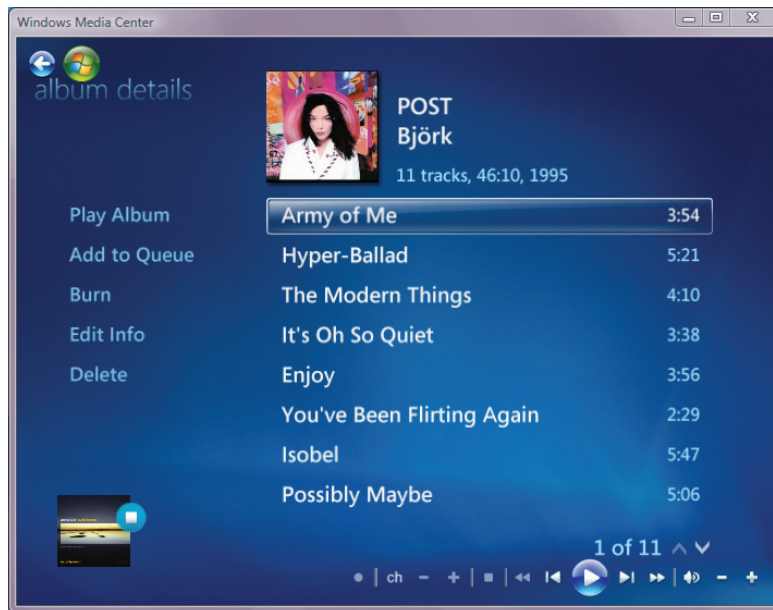


Figure 10—Album options in the music library

5. Choose **Play Album** or **Play Song** to start listening immediately or choose **Add to Queue** to add it to a temporary list of music you want to play.

Use Windows Media Center to Save, Organize, and View Entertainment, Photos, and Videos *(continued)*

To view and edit the queue

1. From your Windows Media Center start screen, click **Now Playing + Queue**, click **music**, and then click **View Queue**. The queue opens.
2. Click **Edit Queue**, and then do one of the following:
 - To move a song up or down in the list, click the up arrow or down arrow buttons.
 - To remove a song from the queue, click the **Delete** button (looks like an X).
3. Click **Done**.
4. To save your queue as a playlist, click **Save As Playlist**. Enter a name for the playlist and then click **Save**.



*Saving a queue as a playlist adds it to your permanent set of playlists, and can be accessed under **playlists** in your Windows Media Center music library or from Windows Media Player under Playlists.*

To play a slide show with music

1. From the Windows Media Center start screen, scroll to **Music**, and then click **music library**.
2. Click on the album(s) or playlist you want to listen to.
3. Click either a title or a name, and then click **Play Album** or **Play Song**. The music begins playing. If you select a playlist, you can just push **Play**.
4. Click **Play Slide Show**.

Use Windows Media Center to Save, Organize and View Entertainment, Photos, and Videos *(continued)*

PLAY CDS AND DVDS

Want to play the basics? Pop in CDs or DVDs and enjoy them in Windows Media Center as well.

To play a DVD

1. Open Windows Media Center by clicking the Windows logo and selecting **Windows Media Center** from the programs list.
2. Insert a DVD into the DVD drive on your computer.
3. If the main DVD title menu does not display automatically, scroll to **TV + Movies** on your Windows Media Center start screen, and then click **play dvd**.

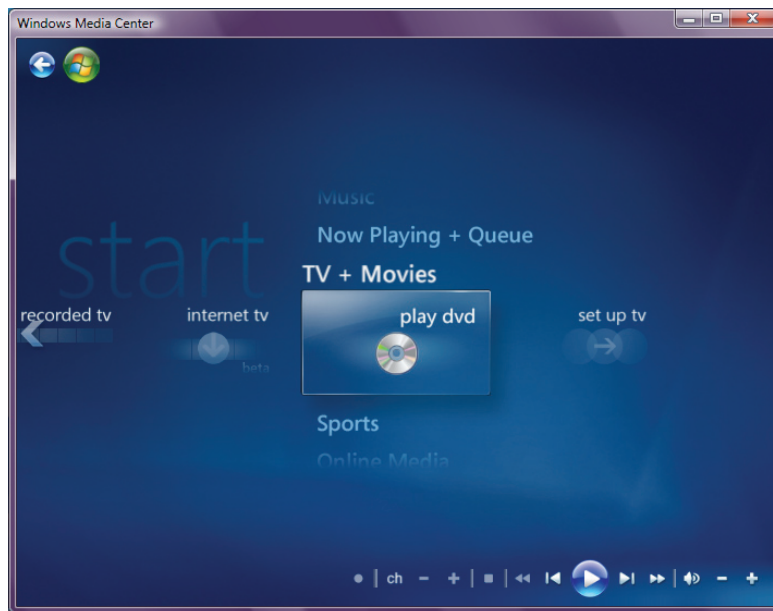


Figure 11—Play DVD option in Windows Media Center

4. Click the appropriate button on the DVD menu to play the DVD.

Your transport controls will disappear after a few moments.

5. To skip ahead, pause, skip back or stop the DVD, move your mouse to activate the transport controls. Once they reappear, use the buttons provided.

Use Windows Media Center to Save, Organize, and View Entertainment, Photos, and Videos *(continued)*

To play an audio CD

1. Open Windows Media Center by clicking the Windows logo and selecting **Windows Media Center** from the programs list.
2. Insert an audio CD into the CD-ROM drive on your computer.

The audio CD should begin to play. Your transport controls will disappear after a few moments.

3. To skip ahead, pause, skip back or stop the CD, move your mouse to activate the transport controls. Once they reappear, use the buttons provided.
4. To view the CD tracks, click **View Queue**.
5. To change the playback order of the CD, click **Shuffle**, click **Repeat**, or select both Shuffle and Repeat. When you shuffle and repeat playback, the audio tracks play in the same shuffled order again.

To play a data CD or DVD

1. Open Windows Media Center by clicking the Windows logo and selecting **Windows Media Center** from the programs list.
2. Insert the data CD or DVD into the CD or DVD drive.
3. Under **What do you want to do?** click **View videos**, **Play music**, or **View pictures**.


WATCH TV AND MOVIES

Now entertainment can move at your pace. Use Windows Media Center to watch, pause, and even rewind both live and recorded TV programs.

To watch live TV

1. Open Windows Media Center by clicking the Windows logo and selecting **Windows Media Center** from the programs list.
2. To begin watching live TV, do one of the following:
 - On the start screen, scroll to **TV + Movies**, and then click **live tv**.
 - On the start screen, scroll to **TV + Movies**, click **guide**, locate the TV show that you want to watch, and then click a show that is currently airing.

Use Windows Media Center to Save, Organize, and View Entertainment, Photos, and Videos *(continued)*

3. To display information about the TV program that you are currently watching, right-click the TV show, and then click **Program Info**. To return to the TV show click **Watch**.
4. To change the channel, move your mouse, and then click  to go up or down a channel.



Before you can watch TV with Windows Media Center, you need an analog or digital TV tuner. These are widely available, and you can find specific models that are compatible with Windows Vista by going to the Windows Vista Hardware Compatibility Center at <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/compatibility/>

To find and watch movies on TV

1. Open Windows Media Center by clicking the Windows logo and selecting **Windows Media Center** from the programs list.
2. Scroll to **TV + Movies**, and then click **movies guide**.

Browse movies by **on now**, **on next**, **genres**, or **top rated**.

3. Click a movie that is currently airing on TV.
4. Click **Watch**.
5. To display information about the movie that you are watching, right-click the movie while it is playing, and then click **Movie Details**. To return to the movie, click **Watch**.

To pause live TV or a movie

1. Move your mouse to activate the transport controls, and then click the **Pause** button.
2. To resume playing the TV show or movie, move the mouse, and then on the transport controls, click **Play**.



Figure 12—Playback controls

Use Windows Media Center to Save, Organize, and View Entertainment, Photos, and Videos *(continued)*

To stop playback of live TV or a movie

1. While you are watching live TV or a movie, move your mouse, and then click **Stop** in the transport controls
2. When you are ready, on the start screen, scroll to **TV + Movies**, and then click **live tv** to resume watching TV.

To adjust the volume when watching live TV or a movie

1. While you are watching live TV or a movie, move your mouse, and then click the **-** or **+** button to increase or decrease the volume.
2. Click the **Mute** button to turn muting on or off.



Windows Media Center is included on both the Windows Vista Ultimate and Home Premium editions. If you are using another edition of Vista or a different version of Windows, find out more about how to get Windows Media Center by going to <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/mediacenter/buy/default.aspx>

More Information

- Windows Help & How to—Get help for your TV tuner card: <http://windowshelp.microsoft.com/Windows/en-US/Help/d7ef383d-3342-4c8b-b1ce-5ca64891bc381033.mspix>
- Windows Help & How to—TV on your computer: Understanding TV signals and TV tuners: <http://windowshelp.microsoft.com/Windows/en-US/Help/aa79e7b4-e423-4459-ad22-1c240a8ffcd51033.mspix>
- Troubleshoot problems with DVDs and movies in Windows Media Center: <http://windowshelp.microsoft.com/Windows/en-US/Help/0d93980a-4c6a-4c97-8be7-90572cf0d79c1033.mspix>

Record TV in Windows Media Center

With Windows Media Center, you can watch TV on your schedule. Record live TV shows and movies directly onto your computer, schedule a recording in advance, or automatically record new episodes of your favorite TV series.

BROWSE RECORDED CONTENT IN WINDOWS MEDIA CENTER

With an optional Windows Media Center remote control, you can schedule recordings and play back your recorded content from across the room. If you do not have a Windows Media Center remote, you can use a mouse and keyboard to access the on-screen transport controls.

1. Open Windows Media Center by clicking the Windows logo and selecting **Windows Media Center** from the programs list.

To record a live TV show or movie

1. On the start screen, scroll to **TV + Movies**, and then click **live tv**.

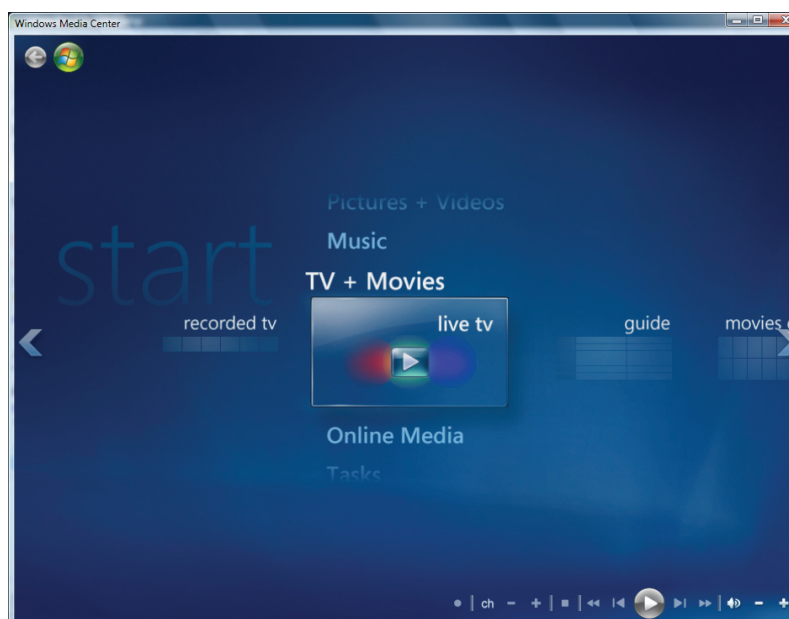


Figure 13—Watching or recording live TV in Windows Media Center

2. Click **Record** on the transport controls. If the transport controls are not visible, move your mouse to make them reappear.

Record TV in Windows Media Center *(continued)*

To schedule recordings in the Guide

1. On the start screen, scroll to **TV + Movies**, and then click **guide**.
2. Right-click the program that you want to record, and then click **Record** to schedule a recording of the program.

To schedule recordings using Search

You can search in Windows Media Center to find a TV show or movie that you want to record.

1. On the start screen, scroll to **TV + Movies**, and then click **search**.
2. Click the category you want to search by (such as Title), then follow the instructions to initiate a search.
3. On the search results screen, click the TV show or movie that you want to record. If a second screen appears with details of the program, click the name of specific TV episode or movie again.
4. Click **Record** to schedule a recording of the program.

Record TV in Windows Media Center *(continued)*

To set general recording options

You can change the default settings for your recordings, such as the quality at which a program will be recorded. These settings will not apply to recordings that you scheduled before adjusting the settings.

1. On the start screen, scroll to **Tasks**, and then click **settings**.
2. Click **TV**, click **Recorder**, and then click **Recording Defaults**.

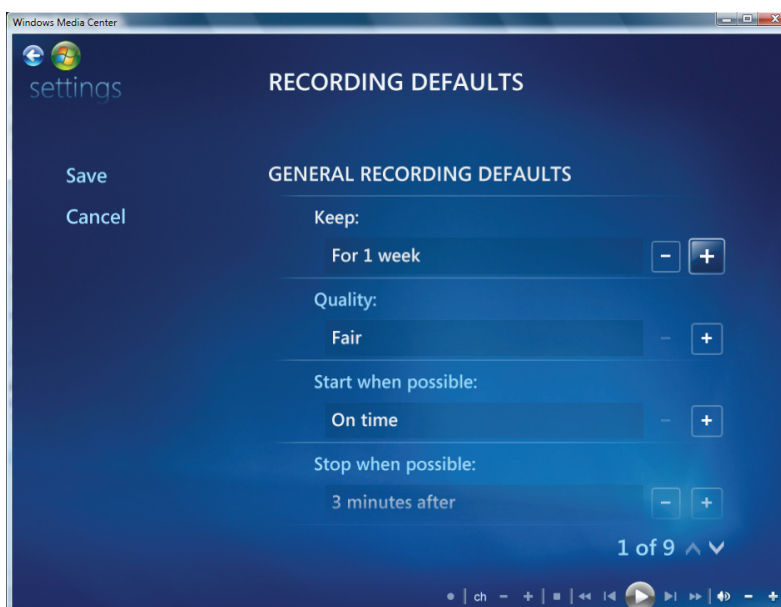


Figure 14—Setting TV recording default options

3. In **Keep**, click - or + to set parameters for automatically deleting recorded content.
4. In **Quality**, click - or + to select the quality at which the TV show will be recorded.
5. In **Start when possible**, specify the time to start recording. You can choose to start recording **On time** or up to four minutes before the scheduled start time of the show.
6. In **Stop when possible**, specify the time to stop recording. You can choose to stop recording **On time** or up to four minutes after the scheduled end time of the show.
7. In **Preferred Audio Language**, click **English** or **Any language**.
8. Click **Save**.



It is important to know that when you schedule Start and Stop times, if two recordings are scheduled back to back, but you have only one TV tuner device, a recording conflict may occur.

Record TV in Windows Media Center *(continued)*

To set recording options for a specific program

If you want to record a sports game that might go into overtime, you can override some select recording defaults.

1. On the start screen, scroll to **TV + Movies**, and then click **recorded tv**.
2. Click **view scheduled** for a list of your scheduled recordings.
3. Click the scheduled recording that you want to change, and then click **Record Settings**.
4. In **Stop**, specify the time to stop recording. Unlike the default settings, you can choose to stop recording up to three hours after the scheduled end time of a show.
5. In **Quality**, click - or + to select the quality at which the TV show will be recorded.

To record a TV series

1. On the start screen, scroll to **TV + Movies**, and then click **guide**.
2. Locate and right-click the TV series that you want to record, and then click **Record Series**.



You can also access the Record Series option by right-clicking search results in Windows Media Center, or by right-clicking a TV show that is currently airing.

Record TV in Windows Media Center *(continued)*

To record only the new episodes of a TV series

1. On the start screen, scroll to **Tasks**, click **settings**, click **TV**, click **Recorder**, and then click **Recording Defaults**.
2. Click the **down arrow button** to scroll down
3. Under the **Series Only Recording Defaults** section, in **Show type**, do one of the following:
 - Click the **-** or **+** buttons to select **First run**. This will record the shows with an original air date that is less than a week old, or that are not marked as reruns.
 - Click **First run & rerun** to record all shows in a series, including reruns.
 - Click **Live** to record all shows in a series that are aired live.

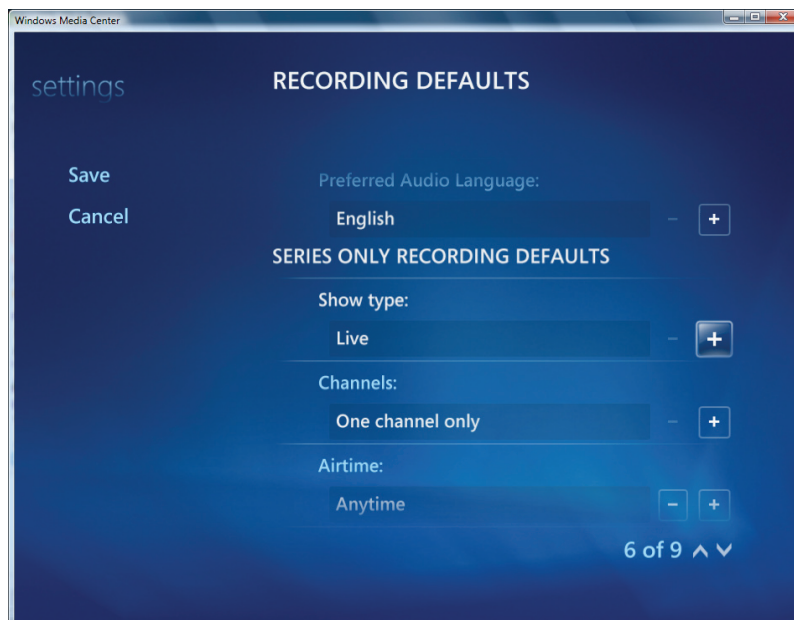


Figure 15—Setting TV recording options on a series basis

4. Click **Save**.

Record TV in Windows Media Center *(continued)*

To automatically delete recordings for a TV series

1. On the start screen, scroll to **Tasks**, click **settings**, click **TV**, click **Recorder**, and then click **Recording Defaults**.
2. Click the arrow button to go to the end of the screen.
3. Under the **Series Only Recording Defaults** section, click the - or + buttons to select a **Keep up to** option.
4. Select the number of shows in a series that are stored in Recorded TV at one time. You can choose to store from one to ten episodes or **As many as possible**. The recorder stores only up to the limit that you indicate.
5. Click **Save**.

To record based on channel and time

1. On the start screen, scroll to **TV + Movies**, and then click **recorded tv**.
2. Click **add recording**, and then click **Channel and Time**.

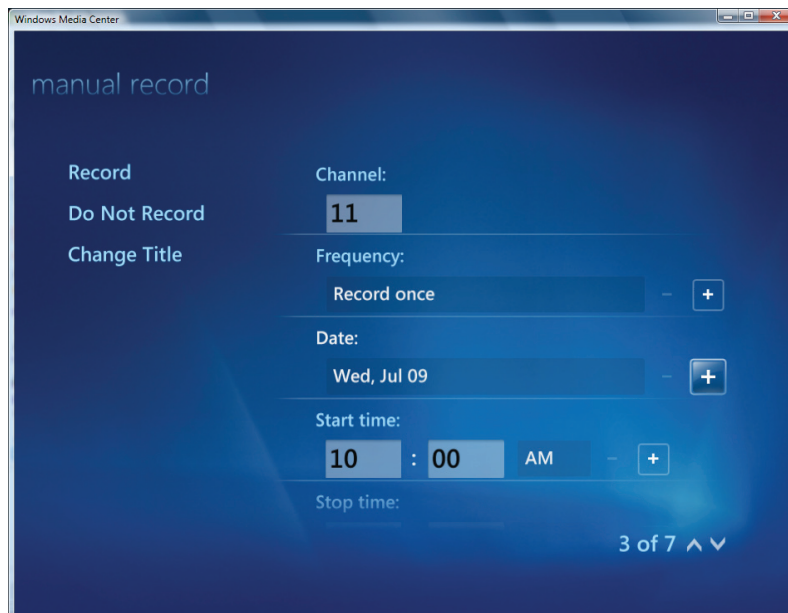


Figure 16—Manually recording TV based on channel and time

3. In **Channel**, enter the channel that you want to record.

Record TV in Windows Media Center *(continued)*

4. In **Frequency**, click the - or + button to specify how often you want to record the channel.
5. If you selected **Record Once** for **Frequency**, in **Date**, click - or + to specify the recording date.
6. In **Start time**, enter the time you want the recording to start.
7. In **Stop time**, enter the time you want the recording to stop.
8. Under **Keep**, click the - or + button to specify how long you want to keep the recorded show.
9. Click **Record**.

To change the title of a Channel and Time setting

If you choose to record using the **Channel and Time** feature, the recordings will be given a title based on the first show in each recording, but you can also customize the title given to the recordings.

1. On the start screen, scroll to **TV + Movies**, and then click **recorded tv**.
2. Click **add recording**.
3. Click **Channel and Time**.
4. Click **Change Title**.
5. Enter the new title using the numeric keypad.
6. Click **Save**.
7. Select the channel and time you want to apply the new title to.

Record TV in Windows Media Center *(continued)*

To record based on keywords

Set up Windows Media Center to automatically record TV shows and movies based on keywords that are associated with a program, such as a director's name or a word in the title. Then, when a TV show or movie matching the keywords airs, the program will automatically record.

1. On the start screen, scroll to **TV + Movies**, and then click **recorded tv**.
2. Click **add recording**.
3. Click **Keyword**.

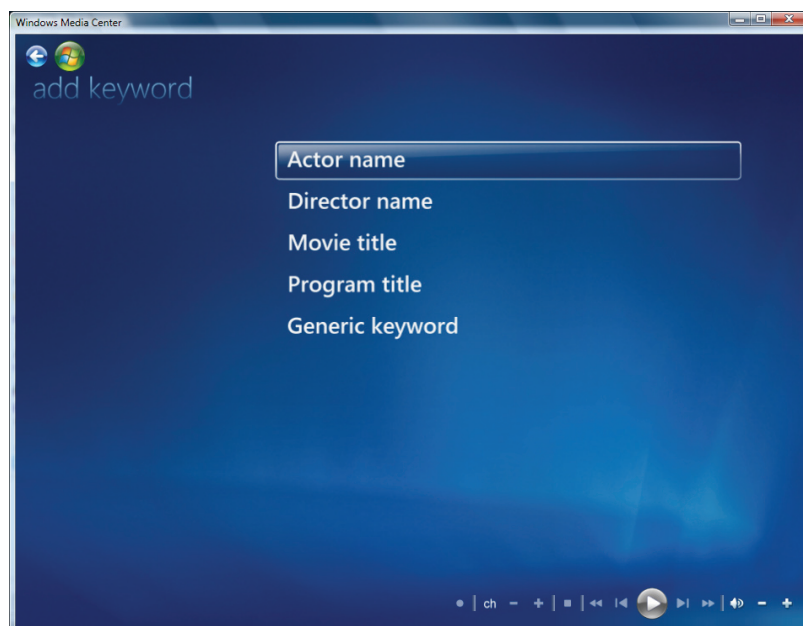


Figure 17—Selecting names or keywords to set TV recording options

4. Click **Actor name**, **Director name**, **Movie title**, **Program title**, or **Generic keyword**, depending on the keyword that you want to use for recording.
5. Type the keyword for your recording, and then click the matching keyword in the search results and click **Save**.
6. Click **-** or **+** in the different categories to modify the settings that will be used for your custom recording.
7. Click **Record**, and then click **OK**.

Record TV in Windows Media Center *(continued)*

To play back recorded TV

1. On the start screen, scroll to **TV + Movies**, and then click **recorded TV**.
2. Click **date recorded** or **title**, and then click the recorded TV show that you want to watch.
3. On the **program info** screen, click **Play** or **Resume**.

To play back a recorded movie

1. On the start screen, scroll to **TV + Movies**, and then click either **recorded TV** or, if you have a DVD changer connected to your computer, **dvd library**.
2. Click **date recorded** or **title**, and then click on the recorded movie that you want to watch.
3. On the movie **details screen**, click **Play** or **Resume**.

To add or remove folders that Windows Media Center searches when it looks for recorded TV

1. On the start screen, scroll to **Tasks**, click **settings**, click **TV**, click **Recorder**, and then click **More TV Locations**.
2. Follow the steps in **TV Discovery** to add or remove locations on your hard disk that Windows Media Center will search when it looks for recorded TV.



You can watch recorded TV files from multiple locations, but Windows Media Center will only record to the location specified in Recorder Storage.

More Information

- Windows Help & How to—Troubleshoot Problems with recording TV on your computer: <http://windowshelp.microsoft.com/Windows/en-US/Help/f0cc7aba-db5c-48fa-ba01-e00d74b5626e1033.mspix>
- Windows Help & How to—Managing recorded TV shows in Windows Media Center FAQ: <http://windowshelp.microsoft.com/Windows/en-US/Help/97f1b794-907e-4428-8ae5-69d20aa479c21033.mspix>
- Windows Help & How to—Setup Guide listings for use in Windows Media Center: <http://windowshelp.microsoft.com/Windows/en-US/Help/b438589e-d38f-4c82-a4f2-7b0b687ce83d1033.mspix>



SITES MENTIONED IN THIS GUIDE

Windows Media Center Remote: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/mediacenter/buy/default.aspx>

Windows Media Center Overview: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/mediacenter/default.aspx>

Windows Vista Hardware Compatibility Center: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/compatibility/>

Purchase Windows Media Center: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/mediacenter/buy/default.aspx>

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