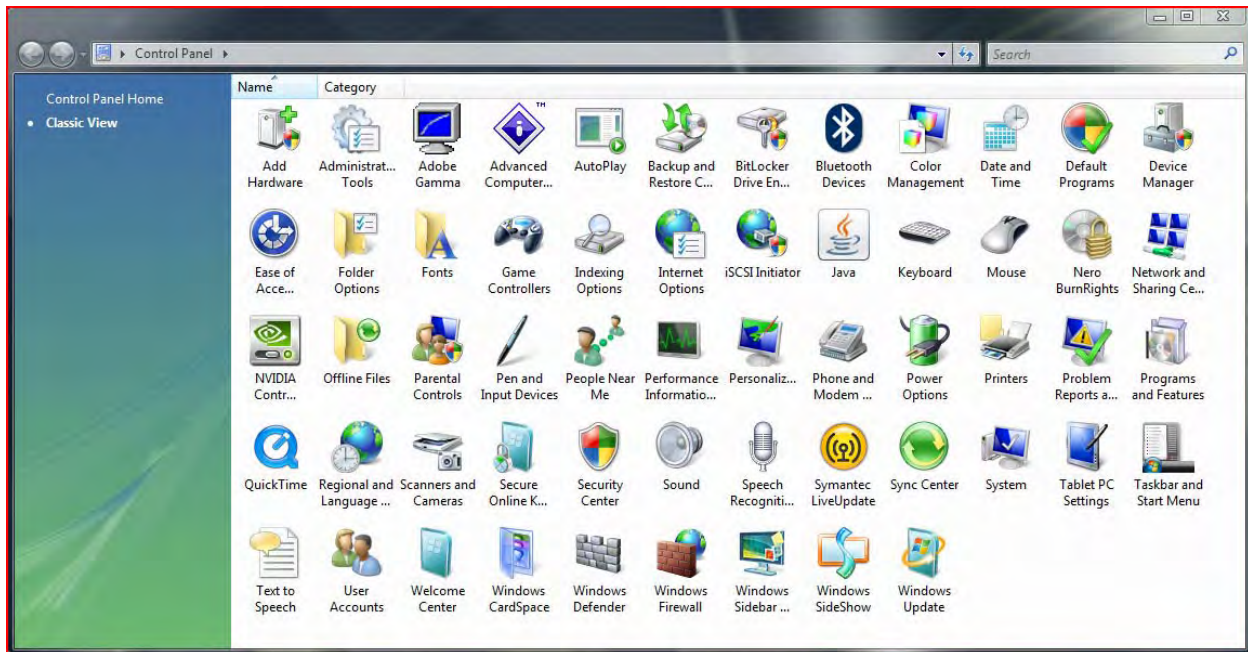
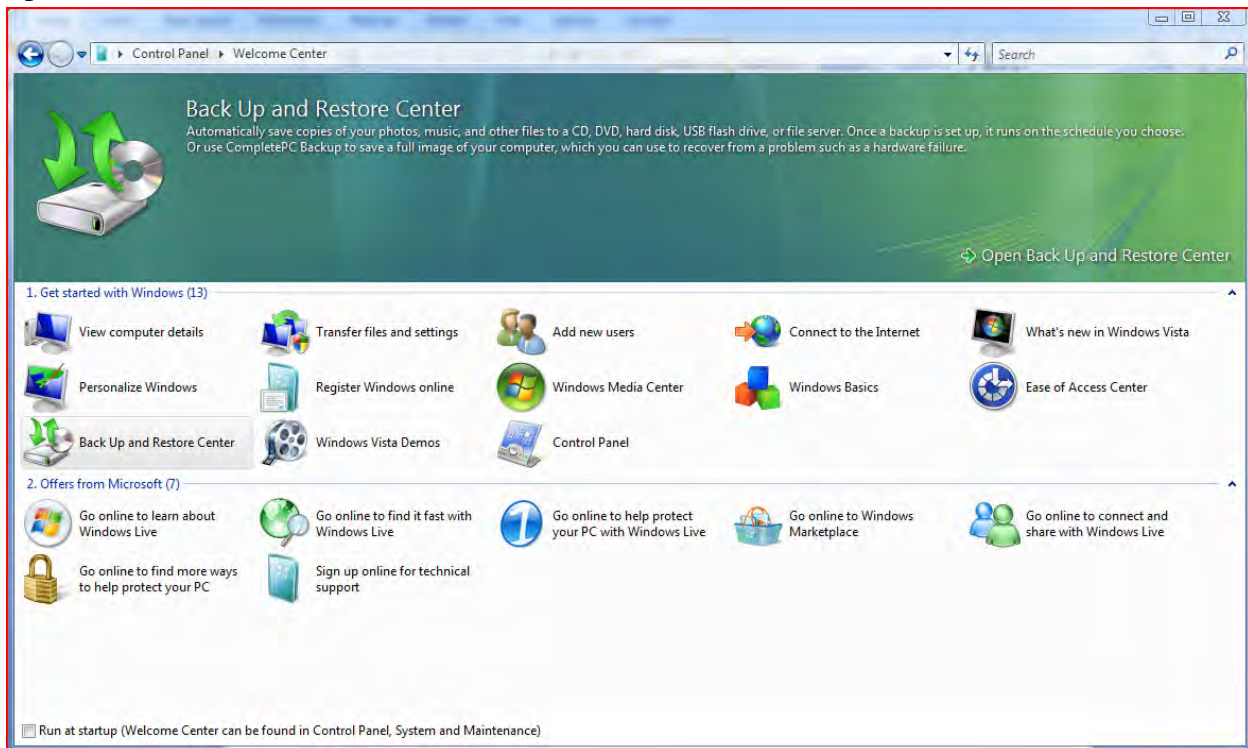


Windows Vista Tip and Tricks by Ron Mettler, May 10, 2008

The Welcome Center can be found selecting Start, Control Panel



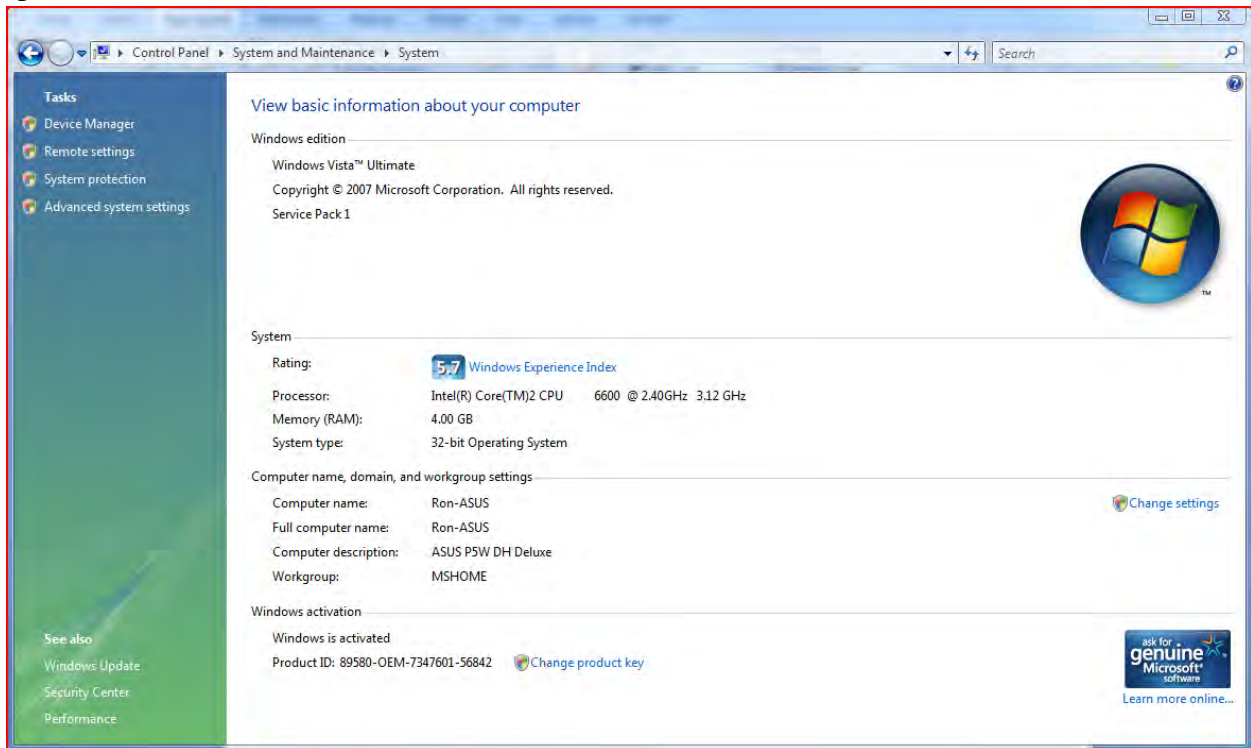
Open the Welcome Center and click on show all 13 items



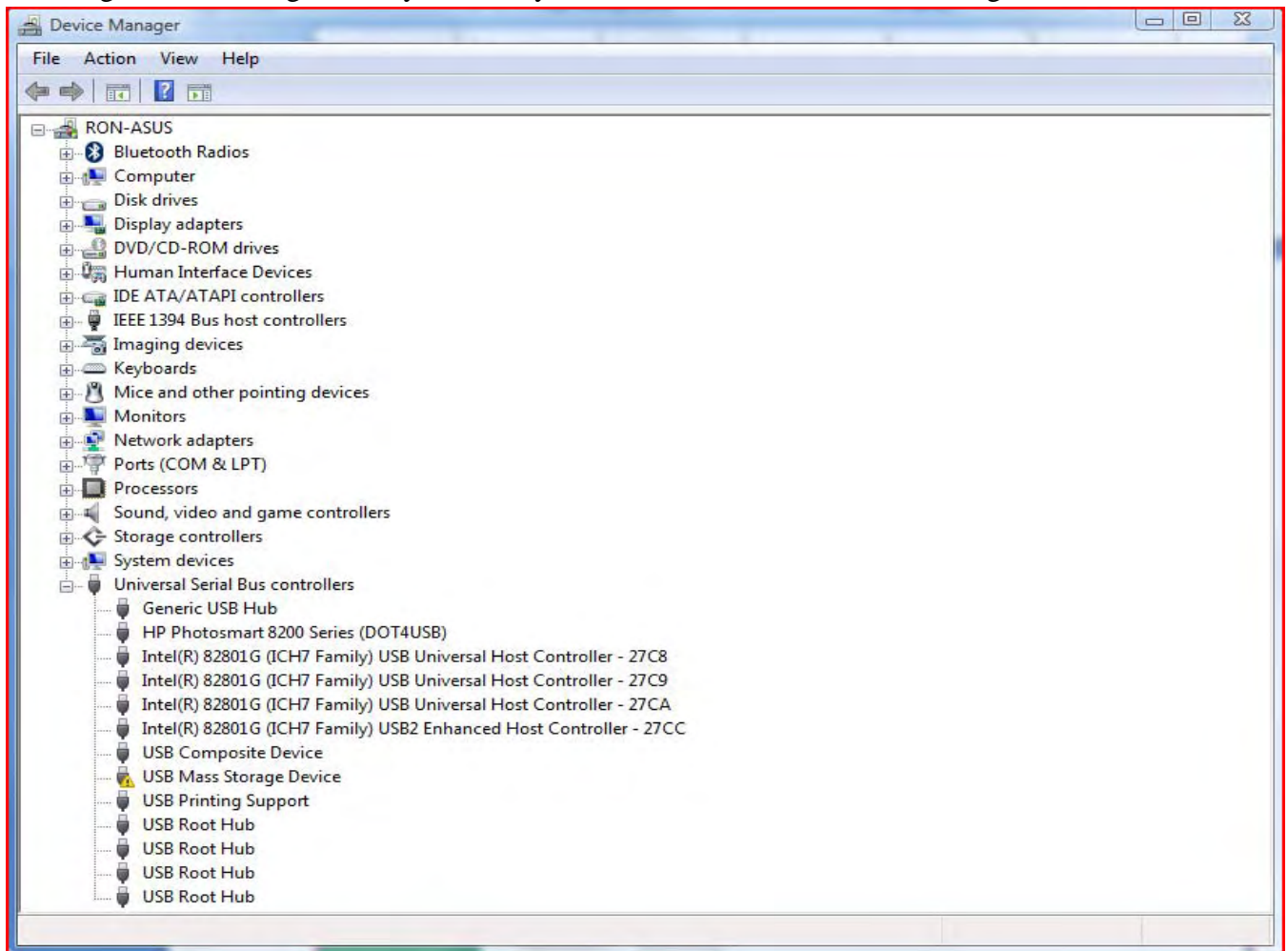
By default, Vista starts with the Welcome Center displayed. Uncheck Run at Startup to not have it display each time Vista is started.

View computer details – leads to a number of Vista options that are useful for troubleshooting and tweaking. In the below example, the System rating (overall performance) is 5.7 out of a possible 5.9,

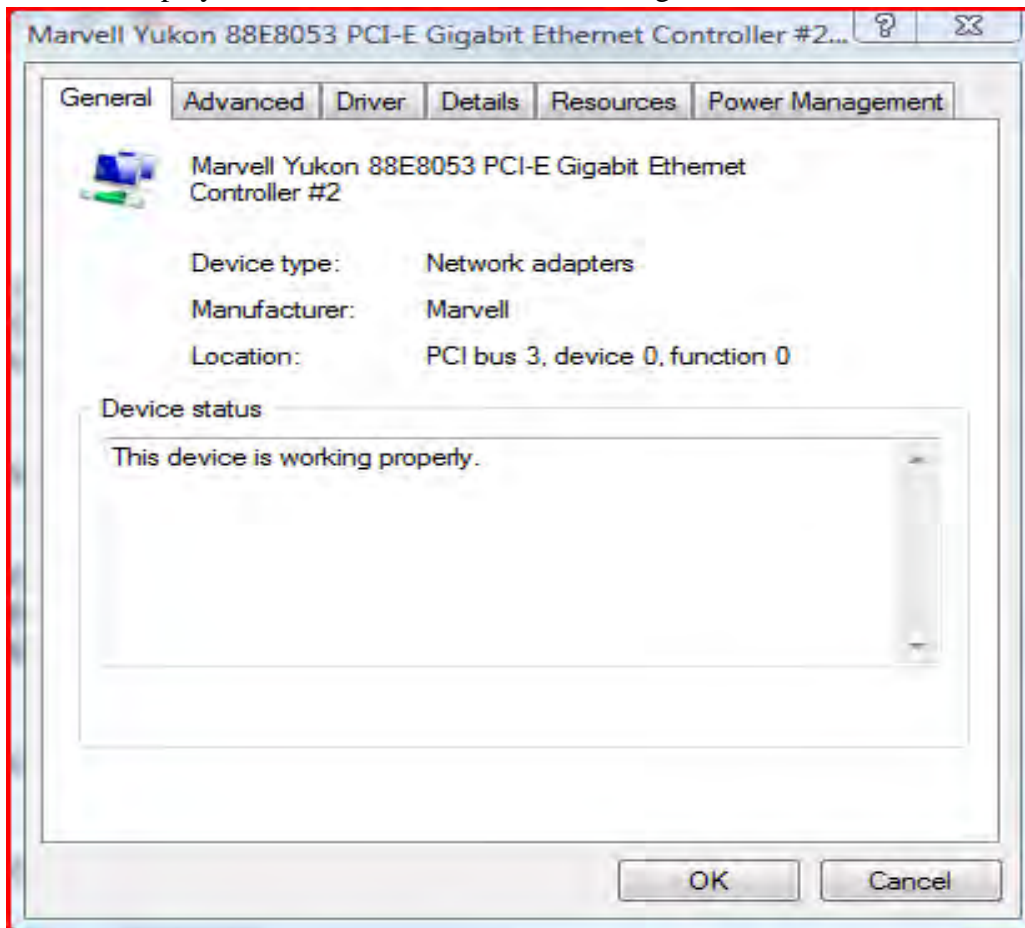
An Intel Core 2 CPU 6600 is installed with a rated speed of 2.4 GHz, actually operated at 3.12 GHz (BIOS over-clocked 130%). The Window also shows the network workgroup name and other useful information. Notice that an option for changing the product key is available. You can find your existing product key by selecting Change product key. Most if not all of the options in this Window can also be found in the Control Panel.



Selecting Device Manager takes you directly to a window similar to the following:

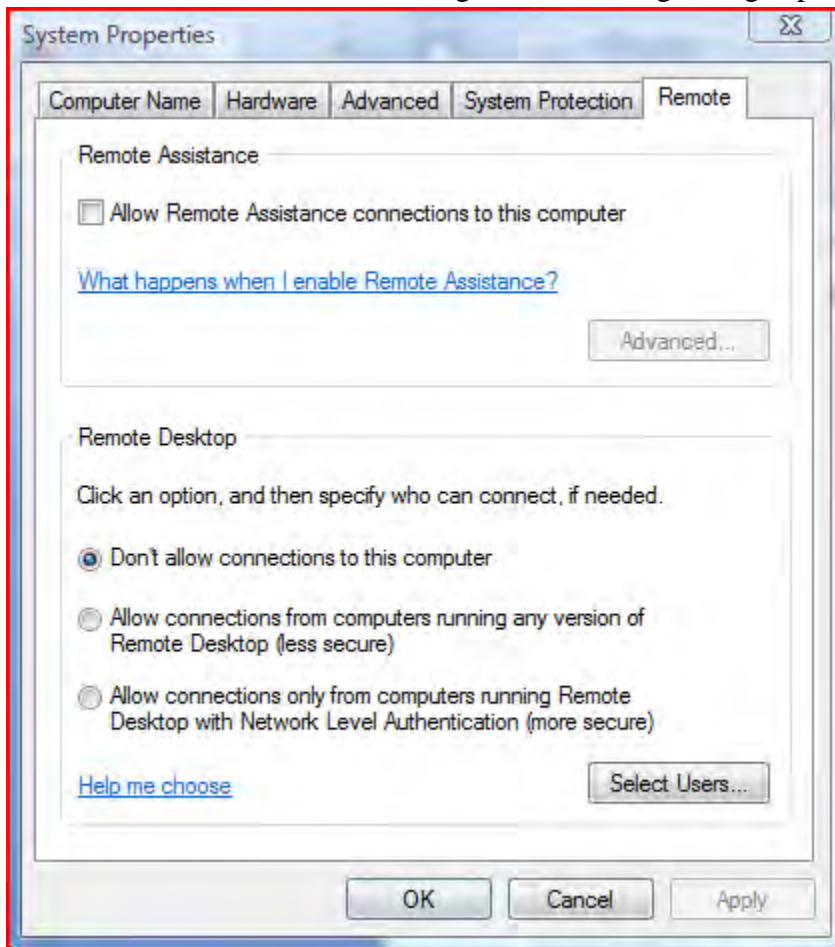


The above Window provides options for troubleshooting device problems. Expanding a device selection displays a window similar to the following:



Drivers can be updated, rolled back, and checked for date and supplier.

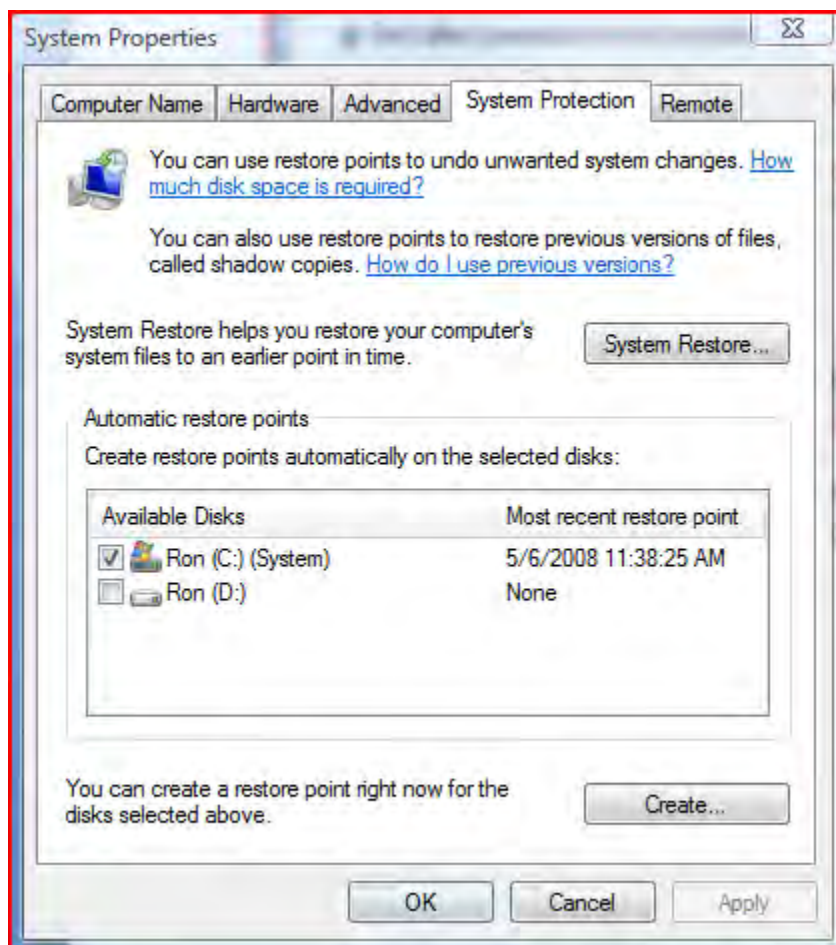
From the Welcome Center, selecting Remote settings brings up the following:



The above Window allows for configuring the settings required to permit remote connections like a remote troubleshooter might use to provide technical assistance.

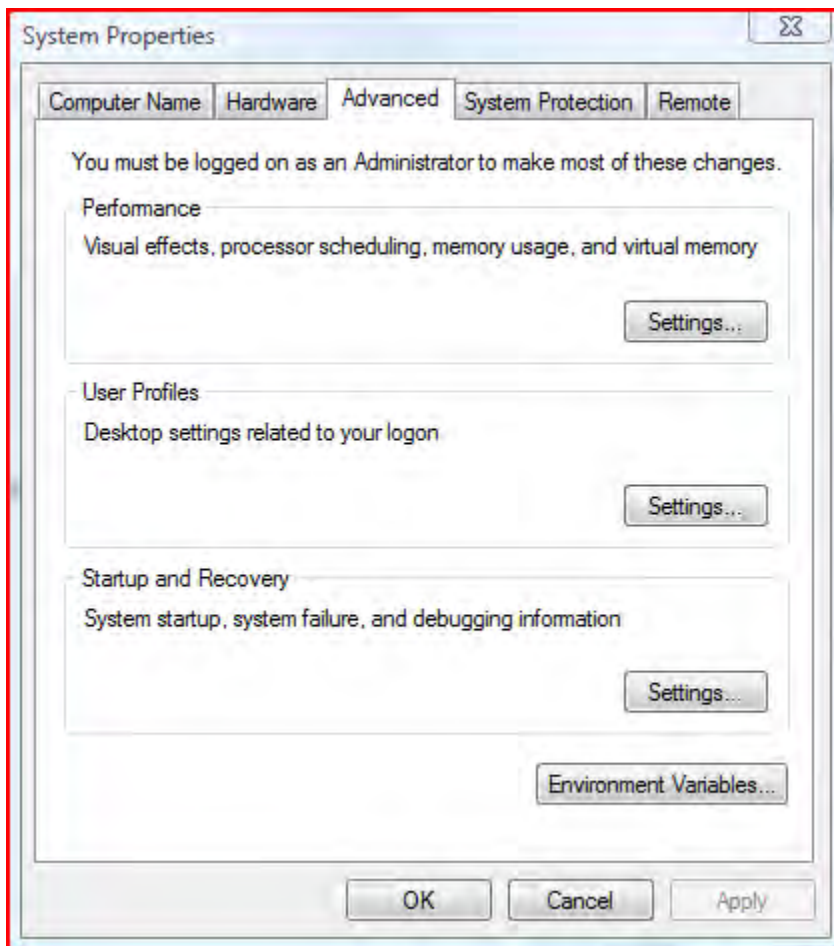
From the Welcome center, selecting System Protection takes you to a very useful window titled System Properties. The System Restore feature can be very useful for fixing problems that cannot be solved in other ways. If the “C” drive is selected for Automatic restore points, the system will automatically create restore points prior to system upgrades, software installs, and other key occasions.

This week, I was working with Virtual PC and also tweaking some settings. I found that my two DVD writers were no longer available and did not show up in Windows Explorer. I performed a system restore back to a few days ago prior to when I had upgraded a Norton backup program. The restore fixed the problem. The process took about 5 minutes.



Selecting the Computer Name tab puts you in a Window where the Workgroup name, computer name and computer description can be changed. Selecting the Hardware tab puts you in a Window that links to Device Manager and to a Windows Update Driver Settings Window. In the later Window, I have selected “Check for drivers automatically”. I believe this is the default setting.

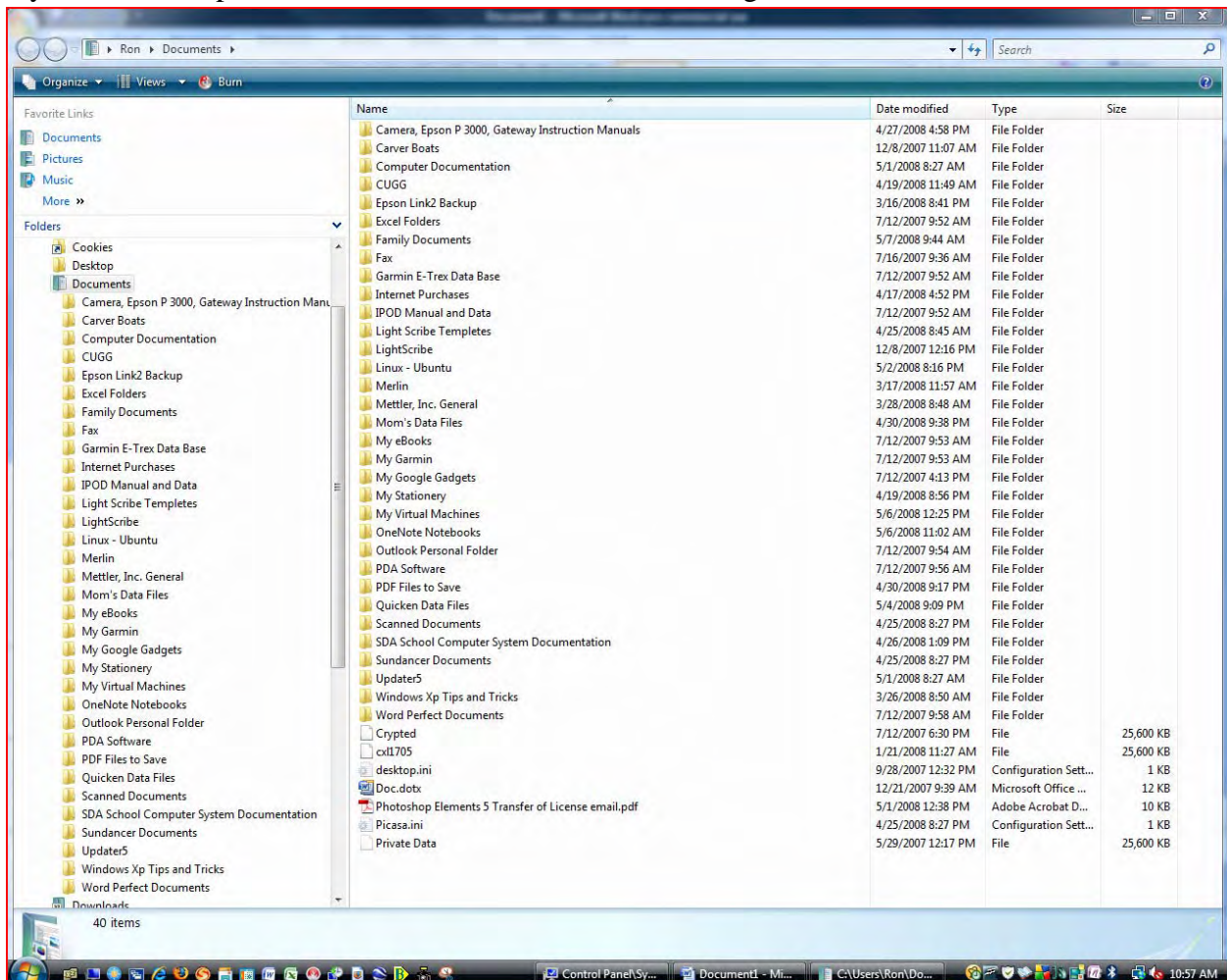
The Advanced system settings can be selected from the Welcome center or from the tab in the above System Properties Window. The following is the Window that appears from either source:



Most users should not change any of the settings available from the above Windows and the links. Of course, experimenting will most likely cause problems and require that you use the System Restore feature as explained above to restore your system.

Windows Explorer Tweaks

My Windows Explorer is tweaked to look like the following:



All of the folders under Documents and Downloads have the same type of layout. The columns list the file Name, Date modified, and the size. Holding the cursor over any folder name will show the date it was created and the size of the folder. To configure the columns in Windows explorer, right click on any cell heading in the row where Name is displayed. Then add or delete column headings as desired. The headings can then be selected and dragged left or right with the mouse to be in whatever order you so desire. To save the Window size and column settings go to Organize in the Icon bar at the top of Windows Explorer, then select Folder and Search Options, then the view tab, and then click on Apply to Folders. Then click on Organize again and Close. This will save the Window size.

In the Pictures Videos folders, you may wish to have column selections such as Name, Date Taken, Tags, Size, and Rating.

The Folder Options and View Tabs Windows look like the following:

