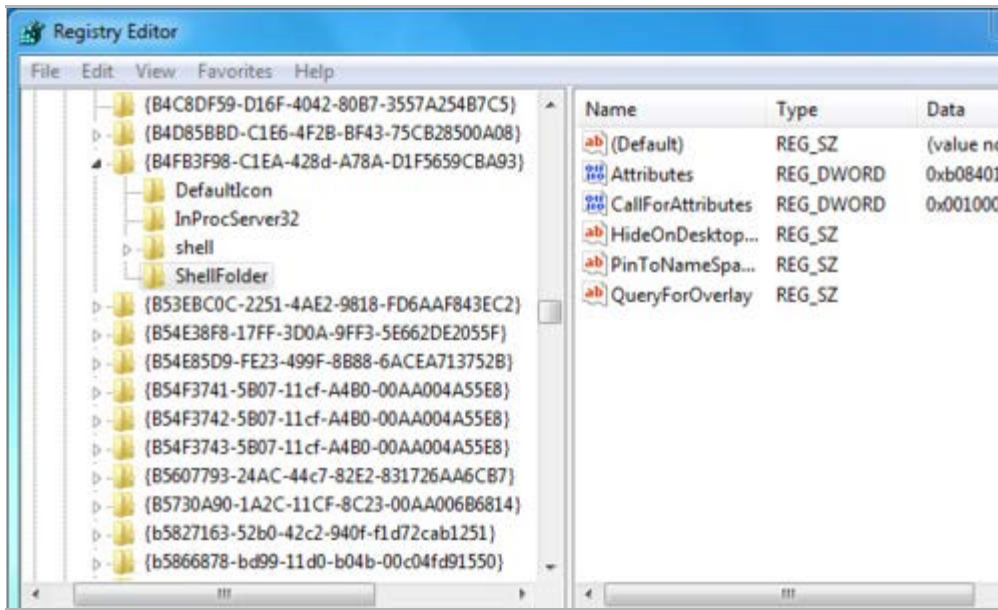


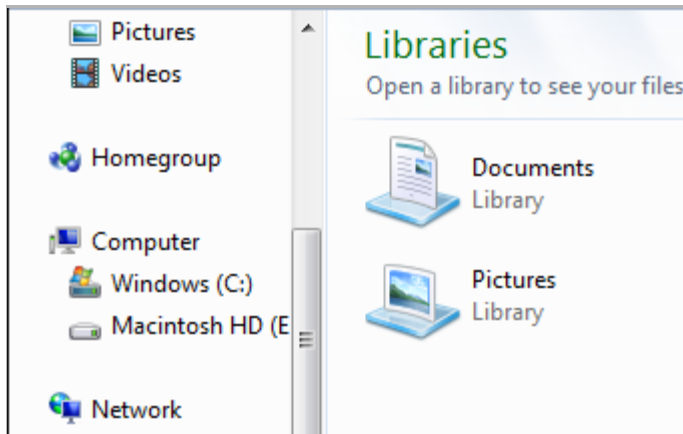
# Top 10 Registry Tweaks that Power Up Windows



The Windows registry is a mysterious place, but if you're comfortable editing it, you have the power to tweak nearly every Windows setting you can imagine. Here are 10 of our favorite registry tweaks that make life easier.

All of these hacks work in Windows 7, even if not labeled as such. Many may work in Vista or earlier versions of Windows, but varies, so be sure to read up more on the tweak before you go meddling in Vista's registry. And, of course, be sure to **make a backup of your registry** before you start hacking away.

## 10. Hide Pre-Populated Items in Windows Explorer's Sidebar



Windows Explorer is pretty easy to navigate, but that sidebar can easily get cluttered with features you don't use. For example, if you're the only computer on your network, you probably have no need for the Homegroup or Network trees. Each item in the Explorer sidebar has a registry key, and with just a few minor tweaks, you can have them hidden in no time.

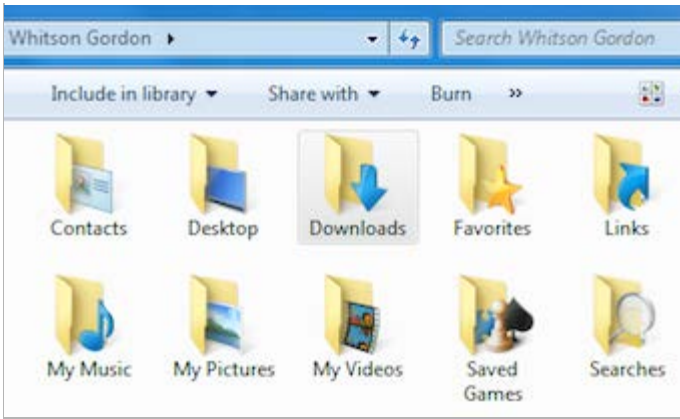
## 9. Disable Libraries in Windows 7



The new Libraries feature in Windows 7 is, in our opinion, one of its **best underhyped features**—but if you can't get over the annoyance of having multiple folders grouped together, you can get rid of them with a simple registry tweak. Note that, while you can hide them from the Explorer sidebar using #10, the feature itself is still around, and will likely pop up in other applications. So if you really don't like Libraries, **this tweak will get them out of your sight for good**.

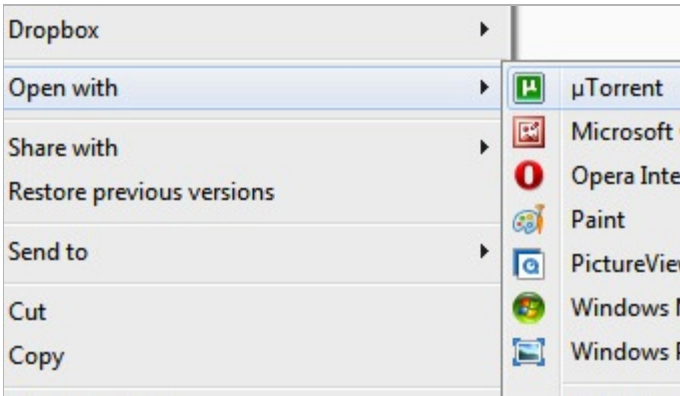
## 8. Change Your User Profile Location

Whether you've bought an SSD and need to move your home folder to another drive or you just don't like how long it takes to navigate to your documents, the registry has a few options for moving your user profile folder. It's not something you want to do if you've been using your computer for awhile (since many places will reference the profile's old location), and it isn't



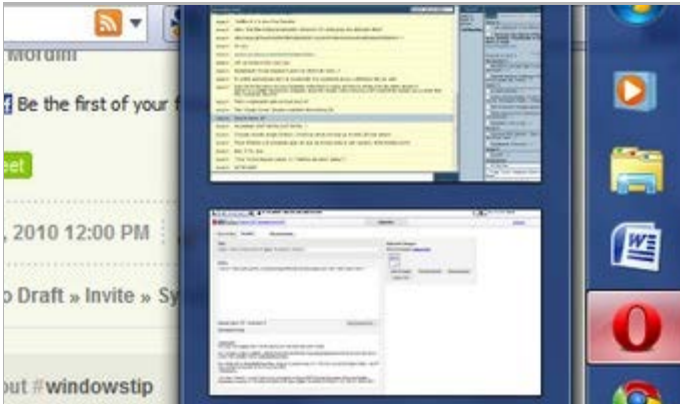
for the faint of heart—since it involves a good 21 steps—but in the end, it may very well make your life a lot easier.

## 7. Customize Windows Explorer's "Open With" Menu



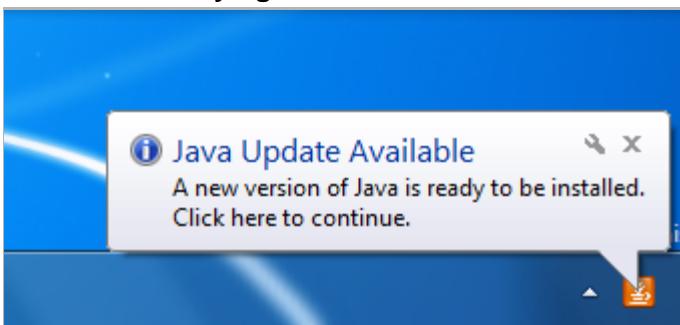
The context menu is great for performing tasks quickly, but as you install more programs, that "Open With" menu can get incredibly unruly. To get rid of those "Open With" entries that never seem to serve any use, you can [manually edit](#) which programs show up for which file extensions in the registry. It's a bit more time consuming than other registry tweaks, but it's far from difficult, and you're sure to be happy with the end result. If, on the other side of the coin, you want a program permanently docked in the "Open With" menu, you can [add it yourself through the registry](#) too.

## 6. Speed Up the Windows 7 Taskbar



The Taskbar is no doubt one of the best features in Windows 7, but it isn't without its tiny annoyances. The Taskbar popups (along with the associated Aero Peek functionality) require you to hover your mouse over the taskbar for a second before they appear—a delay that gets old quickly. If you'd like to speed up the thumbnail delay, all you need to do is [tweak a simple key in the registry](#). You can also [get rid of the Aero Peek delay](#), for super-fast window management. If the Taskbar thumbnails and Aero Peek aren't your style, you can use [this registry hack](#) to cycle through windows quickly with mouse clicks instead.

## 5. Disable Annoying Notification Balloons



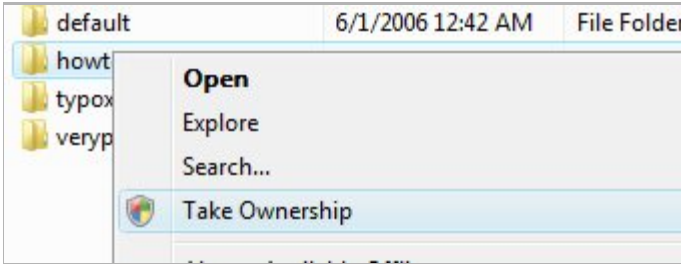
The notification balloons in Windows' lower right-hand corner can be helpful, but if you have a number of things going on at once, they can get pretty annoying. It's an extreme measure, but if you'd like to turn them off altogether, all it takes is a [very simple registry tweak](#). Of course, if you find that disabling them completely is too extreme, you can always turn them back on.

## 4. Change Your PC's Registered Owner



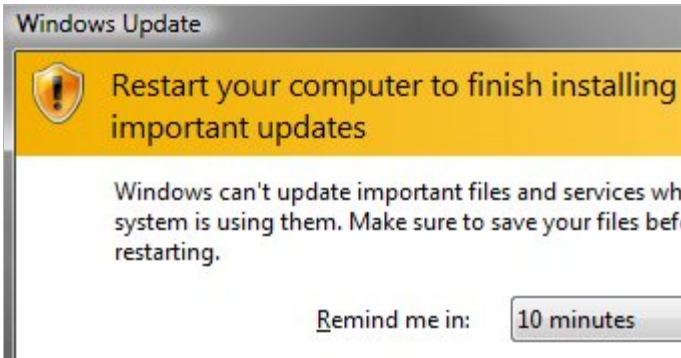
Whether you've acquired a used PC from someone else, or you just don't like the name you registered anymore, you can **change the registered owner and registered organization of your PC** with a quick registry tweak. It may seem useless to some, but when you inherit an office computer or end up changing where you work, it's a pain when your computer automatically adds incorrect information to everything.

### 3. Take Ownership of Any File From the Context Menu



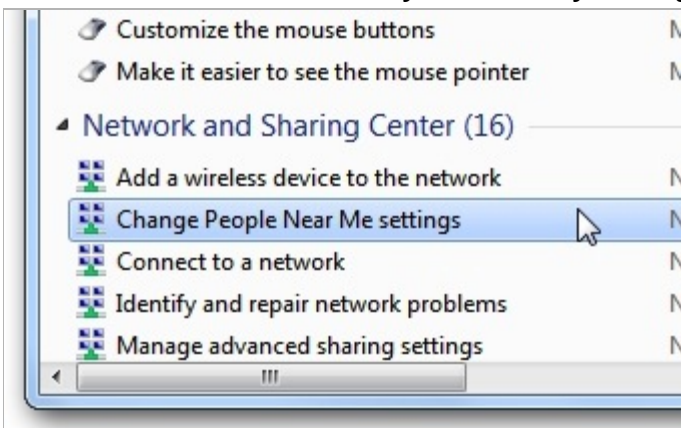
If you don't have ownership permissions of a file or folder in Windows, it can be difficult to work with it—and taking ownership of a file is no easy task. Thankfully, with a small registry hack, you can add a "Take Ownership" option to the Windows Explorer context menu, making you the owner of the file in just two clicks. We **briefly mentioned this tip before**, but you can find the full hack over at our friend [The How-To Geek](#).

### 2. Stop Windows Update from Hijacking Your PC



Windows' automatic update system is convenient for those of us that would rather not deal with manual updates day in and day out, but when it forces you to reboot your computer (or forces you to install updates when you put your computer to sleep), it can make you want to pull your hair out. Thanks to the registry, however, there are a few different registry tweaks that will keep Windows Update from getting up in your business: **one to keep it from forcibly rebooting your computer**, and **one to keep it away from your shut down and sleep buttons**.

### 1. Enable God Mode to Quickly Access Any Setting You Want



If there's one thing that bugs me about Windows 7, it's that the new Control Panel takes forever to navigate, with seemingly infinite levels of buttons and links to click through just to activate one setting. The Windows 7 "God Mode" hack (which is one of our **five favorite Windows 7 tweakers**) puts every setting in the Control Panel at your fingertips through a magical folder in Windows Explorer. You don't actually need to enter the Registry Editor to create this beast, but it certainly qualifies as a registry hack, as you're essentially using the registry's Globally Unique Identifiers to create a desktop shortcut to all those settings. While the **God Mode folder** is the most popular use for this method, it's also worth noting that you can **use it to create (or re-create) other system places** like the Recycle Bin, My Computer, Libraries, and others.

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