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## Path to current desktop backgrounds in Windows 10?

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54



23

There is another question on here that allows users to find the path to their current background image through a `cmd` command.

[How could I find out the path to the current desktop image?](#)

In Windows 10 this no longer works. It only returns the first image in the folder, it does not change with the

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returns the path(s) to the current image on the desktop background(s) that actually works in Windows 10 if one exists.

windows-10

edited Mar 20 '17 at 10:17



Community ♦

1

asked Sep 3 '15 at 4:17



cujo

325 1 3 12

## 5 Answers



84



A copy of the current wallpaper can be found by typing below path in Windows File Explorer address bar



+50

Path 1 -

%AppData%\Microsoft\Windows\Themes\CachedFiles

If you don't find a copy of your current desktop background image here, try below path instead

Path 2 -

%AppData%\Microsoft\Windows\Themes\TranscodedWallpaper

**Note:** The file

TranscodedWallpaper in Path 2 does not have a file extension. Use "Open With" or "How do you want to open this file?"

dialogue box and select any image viewer, such as, "Windows Photo Viewer", "Honeyview" or the "Photos" app.

### Note for Windows

**10:** The above locations have limitations. For example, if the wallpaper you're looking for is no longer visible in the 'Background' tab in the Settings app, you can't recover it. It will work for your last five wallpapers but nothing older.  
([Source](#))

Default Windows wallpapers can be found in

`%SystemRoot%\Web`

You will see 3 folders

- **"4K"** for 4K wallpapers,
- **"Screen"** for lock screen backgrounds, &
- **"Wallpapers"** for Default Windows wallpapers

Installed themes  
(Aero, etc):

`%SystemRoot%\Resources`

Per-user installed themes (including pre-installed from OEM):

`%LocalAppData%\Microsc`

If you are looking for the location of Lock Screen images - visit [this SuperUser question](#).

Personally, I use [John's Background Switcher](#) to manage my desktop backgrounds.

John's Background Switcher has an option to current/previous desktop backgrounds (ones set by the app). Right click on tray icon and select **View Current Picture** and the current desktop background opens in Windows Photo Viewer or your default image viewer). In Windows Photo Viewer, you can right click on the image & select **Open File Location** to view the original location of current desktop background in windows file explorer.

edited Apr 15 '18 at 17:12

answered Sep 24 '15 at 13:00



[xypha](#)

1,634 1 13 30

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The issue with the switcher is that i need a python script to be able to poll the path. The previous command worked beautifully in windows 7. Also

that new path  
doesn't even exist  
on my windows 10  
machine. – [cujo](#)  
Sep 24 '15 at 14:33

added a second  
path – [xypha](#) Sep  
24 '15 at 16:35

It's not what I hoped  
for since now I have  
to watch file  
properties for  
changes, but it does  
work. Thank you –  
[cujo](#) Sep 24 '15  
at 17:03

This method doesn't  
provide the location  
of the original  
photo, but rather  
the copy that  
Windows makes in  
preparation for  
display. –  
[Edward Brey](#) Oct  
26 '18 at 16:06

@Edward Brey -  
Use John's  
Background  
Switcher (or several  
other  
switchers/download  
ers) to switch  
wallpapers and to  
find original  
location. To the best  
of my knowledge,  
Windows 10 does  
not natively support  
it. Maybe raise it as  
a feature request in  
[Microsoft Feedback](#)  
– [xypha](#) Nov 2 '18  
at 10:41



5



I have Windows 10,  
version 1709. One of  
the other answers got  
me looking in the  
registry and I found  
exactly what I needed  
in clear text at

```
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Cont  
rol  
Panel\Desktop\WallPape  
r
```

No decoding needed.

answered Oct 11 '18 at 18:02



Jim

198 3 8

I use **Bing Desktop**  
to change  
wallpapers. I was  
able to find the path  
to those wallpaper  
images using this.  
Thanks! – [anacron](#)  
Nov 22 '18 at 6:59



3



Windows 8 and 10 still  
store the *original* path  
of the current  
background image -  
rather than the cached  
/ transcoded file as in  
xypha's answer:

```
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Cont
```

Microsoft doesn't want  
things to be easy  
though: this isn't plain  
text so you have to  
decode it from binary.

The Winhelponline  
website has compiled  
a couple of scripts  
(VBA and PowerShell)  
which can print the  
image name, and  
launch Explorer to  
point to the image file.

<http://www.winhelponline.com/blog/find-current-wallpaper-file-path-windows-10/>

answered May 1 '17 at 8:46



iain S

193 1 3

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- 1 This does not work with multiple displays. Unverified with a single display.  
– [cujo](#) May 2 '17 at 2:18
- 



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You don't explain exactly what you want to achieve so, I can give some tips here based on a guess: you want to change your wallpaper in certain conditions (for example one wallpaper every time you restart your computer) or to use a **custom** file as wallpaper.

In Windows 7 the wallpaper was usually found in

`%AppData%\Microsoft\Windows\Themes\TranscodedWallpaper .`

In Windows 10 you will find it in

`%AppData%\Microsoft\Windows\Themes\CachedFiles .`

You can also interrogate the registry at  
`HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Control Panel\Desktop\TranscodedImageCache` but note the warnings below about programs

that are NOT writing a file to disk!

If you want to build your own CMD script this might be unreliable IF you set the wallpaper not from Windows but from an external program. For example if I see a nice mage in my browser I set it as wallpaper directly from there. Same for IrfanView. I can easily name another 10 popular programs that could change the wallpaper to a custom path.

Note that some programs are changing the wallpaper without actually writing a file to disk. This can be done by hooking to the Microsoft Windows Desktop window and drawing directly on its canvas. This is how GIF/AVI animations are drawn on desktop.

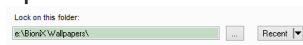
There is another issue if you build your own script: How to you handle images that don't have same aspect ratio as your desktop, or when desktop resolution changes?

**The solution** (if I guessed your problem correctly) would be to use a program like John's Background Switcher or [BioniX Desktop Background](#)



[Changer](#). The later is much more customizable and can be controlled via command line. It also has auto-detection to detect the best way to resize the image (fill/fit/tile). BioniX can also draw GIF without writing anything to disk (as explained above).

A even better way would be to use the "Lock on folder" option.



Set BioniX to change your wallpaper every 60 seconds (don't worry, you won't see a new wallpaper every 60 seconds since you will use only one file). Set BioniX to lock on any folder (let's say c:\Wallpapers). Inside that folder you put a single file called something like "My Wallpaper.jpg". BioniX will use that file as wallpaper every 60 seconds. Now, every time you want to change the wallpaper you replace the old "My Wallpaper.jpg" with your new file. BioniX will see the change you have done to the folder and apply the new file (within 60 seconds).

Let us know what you want to achieve with

your script to get a better solution.

edited Nov 29 '17 at 16:32

answered Nov 29 '17 at 10:18



Rigel

1,011 6 21 42

- 
- 1 The question states that I am looking for the path to the current file, not looking to actively set it. That is pretty clear in my opinion what I am trying to achieve. Your solution only talks about setting it programmatically not if it returns the path.  
– [cujo](#) Nov 29 '17 at 16:16

- 
- 1 @cujo - And my answer also tells you where to find the file - and gives you some warnings about your approach. – [Rigel](#) Nov 29 '17 at 16:25

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I'm referring to "the solution" as your answer does not focus primarily on what the question asked and more on dynamically programming the environment – [cujo](#) Nov 29 '17 at 16:27

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I read your answer, it adds no new information as to the location of the files that hasn't already been presented. And you talk about issues that do not matter. And the problems you present are outside the scope of the

question. A path is a path, the aspect ratio does not matter. – [cujo](#) Nov 29 '17 at 16:34

- 2 [@Empire](#) - The scope of this 2 year old question, with an accepted answer, seems clear to me. The question was, "I need a similar command that returns the path(s) to the current image on the desktop background(s) that actually works in Windows 10 if one exists." which the accepted answer provided ( i.e. %AppData%\Microsoft\Windows\Themes\CachedFiles ) – [Ramhound](#) Nov 29 '17 at 16:43



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To get the "Transcoded" PATH in cleartext, do this in PowerShell:

```
$TIC=(Get-ItemProperty Stop).TranscodedImageC[
[System.Text.Encoding]Z\\])+', '$2'
```

answered Dec 20 '18 at 16:16



[not2qubit](#)

857 11 23

**protected by**  
**Community ♦** Apr 13 '16 at 22:26

Thank you for your interest in this question. Because it has attracted low-quality or spam

answers that had to be removed, posting an answer now requires 10 [reputation](#) on this site (the [association bonus](#) does not count).

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