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How to Create an Autoexec.Bat File

by Jeff Grundy



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Windows ME and earlier versions required MS-DOS to perform many background functions and operations. Many business applications developed for early versions of Windows were 16-bit programs that required certain parameters be set when the system booted to work properly. MS-DOS loaded startup parameters in the "Autoexec.bat" file that ran before Windows booted. However, modern versions of Windows no longer use MS-DOS or an Autoexec.bat file. Therefore, if you need to set up start-up parameters for an older application, you must create an Autoexec.bat file for the program manually.

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1. Click the Windows Start button, type "sysedit" (without quotes here and throughout) in the search box and press "Enter." The System Configuration Editor window appears on the screen with four templates for configuration files: System.ini, Win.ini, Config.sys and Autoexec.bat.

2. Click the "Autoexec.bat" header in the System Configuration Editor. Position the mouse inside the "Autoexec.bat" pane and enter commands to set variables needed for the older 16-bit application. For example, if your old 16-bit programs requires an Autoexec.bet entry that defines a path (or a full folder path name) for saving files or loading variables and also requires legacy SoundBlaster settings to produce sound in Windows, the Autoexec.bat file may require the following entries:

```
@ECHO OFF
PROMPT $P$G
PATH C:\NameOfProgramToRun
SET TEMP=C:\TEMP
SET BLASTER=A220 I7 D1 T2
```

Refer to the help documentation for your older program to determine what variable you must enter in the Autoexec.bat file.



3. Enter the executable file path needed to launch the application that requires the Autoexec.bat file. For instance, if the name of your application is "OlderBizApp," resides in the "C:\OldApp" folder and uses the "OldApp.exe" as the program executable file, you would enter: "C:\OldApp\OldApp.exe" on the last line of the "Autoexec.bat" file. Ensure that you change the "NameOfProgramToRun" variable in the sample Autoexec.bat file to the directory containing the executable file of the program you want to run -- "C:\OldApp" using the example provided herein.

4. Click "File" and then "Save" in the System Configuration Editor window. The utility saves the new Autoexec.bat file to the "C:\\" root folder automatically. Close the System Configuration Editor window.

5. Right-click the Windows desktop. Click "New" and then "Shortcut" on the pop-up menu. Click the "Browse" button in the Create Shortcut window. Double-click "Computer" and then click "Local Disk C:" on the drop-down list.

6. Scroll down to and highlight the "Autoexec.bat" file and then click "OK." Click "Next" in the Create Shortcut window.

7. Enter the name of the 16-bit application in the "Type a Name for This Shortcut" field and then click "Finish."

8. Right-click the new desktop shortcut for the older application and then click "Troubleshoot Compatibility." In the Program Compatibility window, click "Troubleshoot Program."

9. Enable the "This Program Worked in Earlier Versions of Windows but Won't Install or Run Now" option and then click "Next." Click "Windows 95" in the "Which Version of Windows Did This Program Work on Before?" window and then click "Next."

10. Click the "Start the Program" button to launch the older application in a new window. Exit the application after it loads and then click "Next" in the "Program Compatibility window. Click "Yes, Save These Settings for This Program." Wait for Windows to save the settings and close the Program Compatibility window.

11. Double-click the new shortcut on the desktop to launch the older application. Use the program as you normally would.

Warning

Windows 7 64-bit does not support 16-bit applications in any form. Therefore, the SYSEDIT utility is available only in 32-bit versions of the operating system. Because Windows 7 64-bit does not support 16-bit applications, there is no need for an Autoexec.bat file. If you use Windows 7 64-bit and have an older application you really want to use, you will need to install a virtual machine application such as VirtualBox. After you install the virtual machine, you can install a version of Windows that's compatible with 16-bit applications. Alternatively, you download and install Windows XP Mode with Virtual PC for Windows 7, which will enable you to run older 16-bit application on a virtual XP machine.

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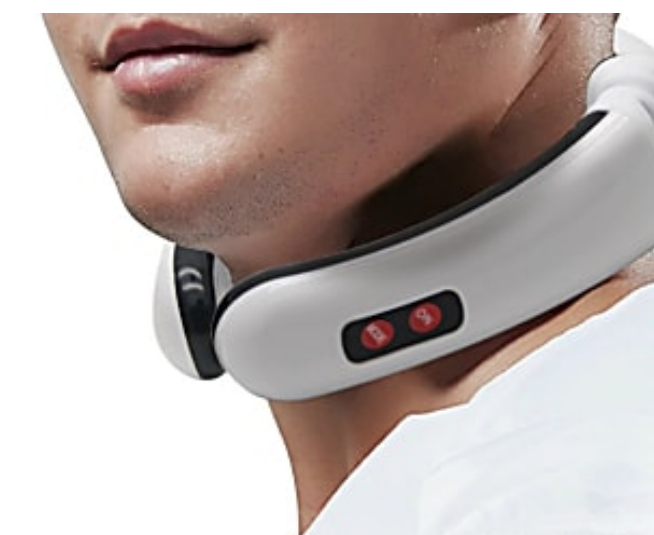
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About the Author

Jeff Grundy has been writing computer-related articles and tutorials since 1995. Since that time, Grundy has written many guides to using various applications that are published on numerous how-to and tutorial sites. Born and raised in South Georgia, Grundy holds a Master of Science degree in mathematics from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

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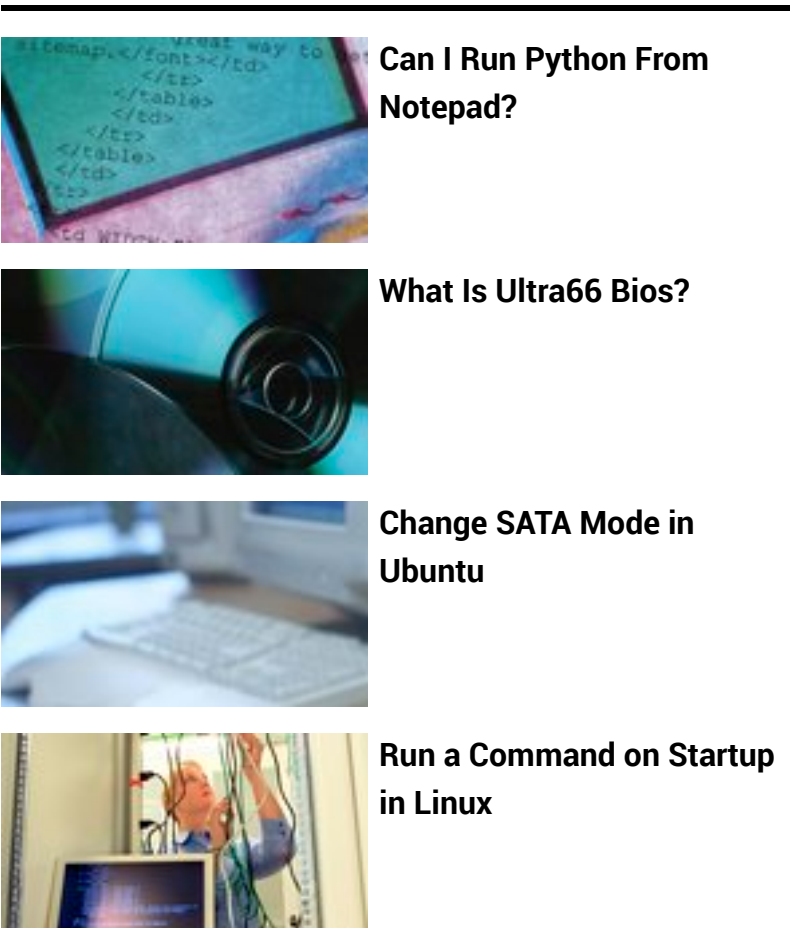
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