Title:
How Do I Compare Folders And Files On Different Machines That Should Have The
Same Contents?

Word Count:
516

Summary:
Imagine you are part of a team working on a project that has files all over the
place in folders stored on different machines, perhaps on the server and a few
of the clients. One member is writing up the technical manual, another team
member writes up the training guide, another pulls both of these text files down
because they are road testing the guides against the machine that is being
developed. In this article we are going to look at some options for you.

The big quest...

Keywords:
compare file,compare folder,document comparison,compare document

Article Body:
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place in folders stored on different machines, perhaps on the server and a few
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developed. In this article we are going to look at some options for you.

The big question is, how do you make sure that all of these files and the
project folder are always up to date and everyone is working on the same
material?

What about making sure that the project management is notified when someone
makes a change to source material and how do they know who's done it?

Keeping everyone working on the same material, and maintaining a log of changes
is essential and this all boils down to being able to compare folders and files
stored on different directories or machines and making sure they match or if
not, that the differences are highlighted.

Programmers have long used file compare software to track changes in software

code that is being produced and the majority of solutions available are strictly for use on comparing text files. If you have images in the file you will need something a little more sophisticated, but a brief look on the internet will throw up a large number of file compare utility programs for you to use.

ExamDiff is a freeware utility that can be downloaded and provides an easy to use GUI (Graphical User Interface) that will compare Windows files including Vista files. Completely free to download it will flag up alterations and file changes, allow you to edit the father or son copy of the file and provides a simple clear report on what is actually different down to an individual character or punctuation mark.

This is pretty typical of what you will find freely available, however as the use of applications that also include graphical images and other non-text data increase eg MS PowerPoint, Publisher and so on, then you will need to be prepared to part with some money to get a compare utility that will be able to detect changes in these files. Similarly, the ability to compare a directory tends to need a more sophisticated file compare program and the better ones tend to cost rather than being free.

A good example of a graphical and directory enabled file compare utility is Beyond Compare which will set you back $30 for the fully functional edition. Not only are you able to compare and sync files and folders in a Windows environment but you also can compare ftp sites to see what changes have been made to website coding and compare folders containing zip files without the need to unzip all the files before running the compare utility. Beyond Compare runs a 30 day free evaluation but this does not have all the features enabled that you will get in the paid edition.