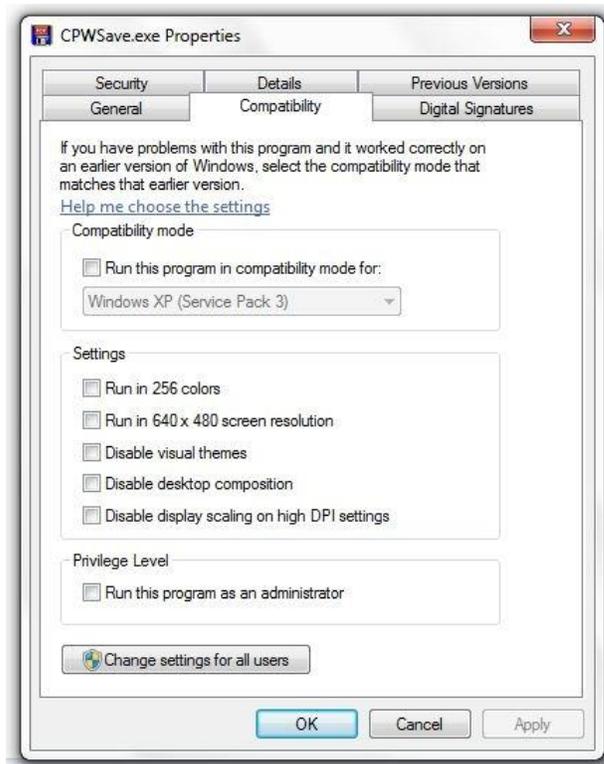


How to use Compatibility Mode in Windows 7

Windows 7 does a pretty good job of running programs designed for Windows XP or older operating systems, but you may run into situations where an old app will not function properly or just not run. There is a way to tweak the program's settings so that it functions correctly by doing the following:

1. Find the actual program executable (e.g., *program_name.exe*) you're trying to run. Usually located under the Program Files folder, but it can be anywhere on your hard disk.
2. Right-click on the file, then on Properties.
3. On the following screen click on the Compatibility tab.

Each program is different, so you will have to check Compatibility options one at a time and test until your old program runs properly. On some applications it will be sufficient to enable Compatibility Mode and select whatever OS it was designed for, say Windows 95. In other cases it will be necessary to change the settings to run in a 640 x 480 resolution, for example.



As an example, if you download and install the free RTS game Command and Conquer for Windows 95 you will need to enable Compatibility Mode for Windows 95 as well as check the Disable Visual Themes option before you play it.

Here's a rundown of the options you will see under Windows 7.

1. **Compatibility Mode.** Runs the program using settings from a previous version of Windows. You can choose from Windows 95 all the way up to Windows 7, including several versions of Windows Server.
2. **Run in 256 colors.** Uses a limited set of colors in the program. Some older programs are designed to use fewer colors.
3. **Run in 640 x480 screen resolution.** Runs the program in a smaller-sized window.
4. **Disable visual themes.** Disables themes on the program. Try this setting if you notice problems with the menus or buttons on the title bar of the program.
5. **Disable desktop composition.** Turns off transparency and other advanced display features. Choose this setting if window movement appears erratic or you notice other display problems.
6. **Disable display scaling on high DPI settings.** Turns off automatic resizing of programs if large-scale font size is in use. Try this setting if large-scale fonts are interfering with the appearance of the program.
7. **Privilege level.** Runs the program as an administrator. Some programs require administrator privileges to run properly. If you are not currently logged on as an administrator, this option is not available.
8. **Change settings for all users.** Let's you choose settings that will apply to all users on this computer.

Windows Compatibility works the same under Windows XP, with very minor differences. In future posts I will discuss OS emulators and other tools you can use when Compatibility Mode just doesn't cut it, or if you just want to test software in an environment completely independent from your main OS.