



Frequently asked Questions

This page provides answers to frequently asked questions about Microsoft Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005.

If you do not find an answer to your question in this FAQ, try the following resources:

- To learn more about Windows XP Media Center Edition, [download this PDF datasheet](#).
- For more detailed information about Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005, read about its [features](#).
- For expert advice, free downloads, and other useful information about Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005, check out the [Expert Zone](#).
- To submit a question or chat with other technical enthusiasts, visit [Windows XP Media Center newsgroups](#).

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General information

What is Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005?

Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005, available preinstalled on Media Center PCs, allows you to pause and rewind live TV or radio, digitally record an entire TV series or program category, watch DVDs and videos, organize and play your music collection, and showcase digital photos. Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 makes it easier to access digital entertainment wherever you are. Here are some of the top features:

- Multi-tuner support (record two shows at the same time and watch another previously recorded show)
- Support for digital and high-definition local TV
- Built-in CD and DVD burning
- Windows Movie Maker 2.1 with DVD burning
- Internet radio
- Enhanced setup wizard for easier installation

Is Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 available in any other languages?

Localized versions are now available for Australia, Austria, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

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Where can I purchase a Media Center PC with Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005?

You can purchase Media Center PCs from a variety of retailers or directly from the manufacturers. See the Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 [How to buy page for complete details](#).

Can I use the Media Center PC for my computing needs?

All Media Center PCs can run the same Microsoft programs as other Windows XP-based computers. You can use your Media Center PC to surf the Internet or to send and receive e-mail.

Can my local PC shop build a Media Center PC?

Starting this year, your local PC shop and other smaller manufacturers can offer Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 preinstalled on new PCs.

Installation

What equipment will I need to install Media Center?

- Media Center PC.
- Monitor or TV.
- Keyboard.
- Mouse.
- Remote control and remote control receiver.
- Internet connection.
- TV signal connection from an antenna, cable, or satellite.
- Cables to connect the various components. For a complete list, consult the documentation that came with your Media Center PC.

Note: DVD Burning, TV features and remote control support may vary by manufacturer and/or require additional purchases.

What are the basic steps for setting up Media Center?

1. Decide where the components go. The new experiences in Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 are designed around using the remote from the other side of the room; Media Center works well with the TV as the primary monitor.
2. Connect the peripherals. The simplest way to connect the peripherals is to set up a wireless network and add a wireless network card to your PC.
3. Hook up audio and video, and connect the devices. Media Center works with speakers from your PC, TV, or audio/video (A/V) system.
4. If you connect the PC to more than one display, configure the video card to show video on both screens at the same time.
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To display the same video on both your TV and your PC monitor:

- Click **Start**, and then click **Control Panel**.
- Click **Appearance and Themes**, and then click **Display**.
- On the **Settings** tab, click **Advanced**.
- On the **View** tab, click **Clone**.

I want to set up my Media Center in my family room. What should I use to make the job easier?

- USB extension cable for extending USB keyboard, mouse, and remote sensor
- SVG extension cable for connecting monitor and PC
- RG6 coaxial cable for connecting cable or satellite feed to PC
- Wireless keyboard and mouse, or keyboard and mouse extension cables
- Remote control and remote control receiver.
- Optical mouse (If you don't want to use a mouse pad)
- Composite video cable or SVGA cable for connecting PC to TV

For more information, review the information on [TV connection cables](#) and on [connecting your TV to your Media Center PC](#).

Do I need to purchase a TV tuner when I buy a Media Center PC?

Many Media Center PCs come equipped with a single TV tuner that captures your TV signal from a cable, satellite, or antenna source. Media Center PCs can also be equipped to handle multiple tuners. For example, if your Media Center PC comes with more than one TV tuner, you can record two shows while you watch a third recorded show.

If your Media Center PC is not equipped with a TV tuner, it is possible to [upgrade](#).

Will Windows XP Media Center PCs support surround sound and work with my existing A/V system?

Many Media Center PCs support multi-channel output for [speakers](#) and connected A/V devices (using digital interconnect outputs such as SPDIF or Toslink). Media Center PCs also deliver Dolby Digital, DTS, or PCM surround decoding.

What kind of displays can I connect to a Windows XP Media Center PC?

The Windows XP Media Center PC can connect to a variety of displays:

- Media Center PC and [desktop monitor](#). With computing and entertainment functionality in one place, this setup is ideal for locations where space is at a premium.
- Media Center PC, desktop monitor, and [TV](#). Use the desktop display for computing and the TV for entertainment.
- Media Center PC and high-resolution display. A high-resolution display, such as a plasma or projection TV, provides sufficient resolution for desktop tasks, like reading e-mail or surfing the Internet, and offers a home theater style experience for TV, home movies, and DVDs. When your Media Center PC is connected to a widescreen display, 16:9 support lets you toggle between normal, zoom, and stretch video modes.

What is a Media Center Extender?

Windows [Media Center Extender](#) devices are used to connect Media Center PCs with TVs and monitors in the home, extending Media Center experiences to any room in the house. You can also connect an Xbox 360 with Media Center Extender technology to your PC running Microsoft Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 through your wired or wireless home network, and access all of your TV, music, photos, movies, and Online Spotlight content through the Xbox 360

Can I connect a new PC running Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 to a work network or domain?

While you can access network resources on a work network or a domain, you cannot join a Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 PC to the domain. PCs running Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 are designed specifically for home use. Windows XP Professional features, specifically Domain Join and Cached Credentials (Credentials Manager for logons) are not included. As a result, you will be prompted for your logon user name and password to access network resources after you reboot or log back on to the PC. In addition, file shares or network resources that are set to require a domain-joined PC for access will not be available. Remote Desktop and Encrypting File System support are still included.

Playback

Can I use my computer and watch TV at the same time?

Yes. You can [watch TV while using your computer](#) at the same time.

What does the Media Center remote do?

From the comfort of your easy chair or across your living room, you can use the [remote](#) to browse Media Center, including the TV program guide listings, recorded TV, music, photos, and videos. You can also make your selections by artist, show or album title, or genre. When you're not using the remote, you can also access Media Center by using a mouse and keyboard.

What are the capabilities of the Media Center TV and Personal Video Recorder (PVR) features?

You can have Media Center record TV based on selections you make. You can select shows to record based on keywords, categories, actors, or directors.

What are the new TV features?

With multiple TV tuners, you can record up to the same number of shows as you have tuners, while watching a recorded TV show. It's your decision whether to record a single show or an entire series. Here are some more new features:

- Use Movie Finder to browse top-rated movies, new releases, and movies playing right now or showing in the next hour.
- Get rid of recording conflicts to ensure that Media Center records the shows that you want.
- Use the My TV page to display recent recordings and upcoming recordings.
- Press the MORE INFO button on your remote to record the show, launch Messenger, or get help.

For complete information, check out the Windows [Media Center features](#) page.

How do I find out what's on TV?

Using Media Center's Program Guide, you can view and scroll through a listing of current TV shows that is periodically

downloaded from your Microsoft TV listings service provider. The Guide displays channel and network information, along with the title and scheduled broadcast time of each show. When you select a show title, a short description of the show displays at the bottom of the screen.

Can I record multiple programs at once, or watch one show while recording another? Can I watch a recorded show while Media Center is recording another show?

Some Media Center PCs are equipped to handle multiple tuners. For example, if your Media Center PC comes with two TV tuners, you can record two shows while watching a third recorded show. Check with the manufacturer to find out how many TV tuners are included in your Media Center PC.

What happens if I try to record multiple shows at once and I don't have enough tuners to support it?

Media Center uses advanced conflict resolution features to help you prioritize recordings or find alternate airings of programs when preset recordings conflict. Here's how the system works.

A recording conflict notification appears:

- If you have one TV tuner enabled, and you schedule a recording for the same time as another recording.
- If you have more than one TV tuner enabled, and you schedule more recordings than you have tuners available at one time.

Follow the on-screen instructions to resolve the conflict when prompted. If you do not resolve the conflict, Media Center resolves the conflict automatically and selects a show to record. Sometimes Media Center can locate an alternate date and time for one of the shows and adjusts the recording schedule to record both shows.

Otherwise, Media Center selects which show to record based on the following criteria:

- A one-time recording (not part of a series)
- Series priority ranking (Series, Keyword, and Manual recordings can all be ranked in Series Priorities)
- The show that was scheduled first

If Media Center encounters a recording conflict between two episodes from different series recording requests, Media Center uses the Series Priorities list to decide which show to record. You can rank the series you most want recorded at the top of the Series Priorities list to help ensure that it is successfully recorded in the case of conflicts. When you schedule a new series, it is added to the bottom of the list and has the lowest priority.

Does Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 support HDTV? What do I need?

Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 is the first PC operating system to support playback, pause, and recording of free, over-the-air high-definition television (HDTV) right out of the box. Just connect the Media Center PC that has HDTV support to an antenna that can receive a high-definition TV signal, and get up to six times the image quality of standard TV. Media Center PCs with HDTV support are available through various manufacturers and retailers.

Can I receive HDTV over cable or satellite?

Not at the current time. You can use standard connectors such as S-Video to connect your cable box or satellite receiver to your Media Center PC, and then watch and record high-definition TV programs. However, the HDTV programs will be in standard TV format. In order to watch and record a true HDTV signal using Media Center, you must have access to local channels broadcast over the air and receive these freely available signals with an HDTV antenna. For more information on HDTV antennas and over-the-air reception, please visit the [CEA Antennaweb.org](http://www.antennaweb.org) Web site.

What file format does Media Center record in?

Media Center uses a new file format called DVR-MS. DVR-MS creates an MPEG-2 file that includes metadata about

the recorded program to be stored.

How many hours of TV can I store on my Media Center PC?

Media Center offers four levels of **recording quality**—Fair, Good, Better, and Best. The quality level affects the amount of disk space needed: the higher the quality level, the larger the recorded TV file, and the more disk space needed.

The approximate amount of disk space that each recording level will consume is:

- Fair: 1 GB/hour
- Good: 2 GB/hour
- Better: 2.5 GB/hour
- Best: 3 GB/hour

What is content protection, and how does Media Center use it?

Content owners and/or broadcasters can set copy protection flags to indicate that a program is subject to content protection. When Media Center detects that this flag is set, it will protect the content by limiting the ability to copy and distribute the program.

Can I watch copy-protected recorded TV files on another PC?

Protected files can be watched only on the Media Center PC that originally recorded the content.

Can I watch unprotected recorded TV files on another PC?

Yes, as long as that PC can play DVR-MS files, either through Media Center or an updated Microsoft DirectShow player such as Microsoft Windows Media Player 10. Watch what you want when you want.

Can I play back copy-protected recorded TV files on the same Media Center PC by using Windows Media Player 10 or other applications that work with DirectShow?

Protected files can be watched only through Media Center on the Media Center PC that originally recorded the content.

Can I burn DVDs to watch using a dedicated DVD player?

Yes. Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 includes built-in support for burning video and data DVDs from photos, music, video, and TV content on a wide range of media types and formats. DVDs can be burned in one of the following formats:

- Data DVD: Designed for storing files on disc, such as creating a backup of music or photos.
- Video DVD: Designed for converting recorded TV or home movies into video for playback on most home DVD players.
- DVD slide show: Designed for creating a slide show with pictures and music for playback on consumer DVD players and computers equipped with DVD players.

In addition, you can continue to use your Media Center PC normally while you burn DVDs in the background.

How can I enjoy Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 content around the home or on portable devices?

Access your digital media anywhere in the home with Windows Media Center Extender devices, using your Media Center PC as your entertainment hub. Or go mobile with Portable Media Center running Windows Mobile software and enjoy high-quality digital video, recorded TV, movies, music, and photos—anywhere, anytime.

Do Media Center Extender devices support wireless home networks?

Media Center PCs and Media Center Extender devices can both be connected to wireless home networks, although certain configurations may not be supported. See the [Media Center Extender](#) page for additional information.

What are the capabilities of the My Music feature in Media Center?

Media Center allows you to save playlists, copy CDs to your hard drive, burn CDs, and specify the file format that best suits your needs. With your music collection in one place, you can use the remote to browse your music by album, artist, song, or genre.

What are the capabilities of the Media Center Radio features?

The Media Center Radio features let you tune in to FM broadcasts and control the way you listen. Just like with TV, if you're interrupted while listening, you can pause (up to 30 minutes), rewind, and skip ahead in radio broadcasts. Or, press the REPLAY button on your remote to skip back 7 seconds, so you can catch the title of a tune.

What are the capabilities of the My Pictures and My Videos features in Media Center?

With My Pictures you navigate thumbnail images or launch a slide show of your photos. My Videos gives you greater control when viewing home movies or videos.

What is Online Spotlight, and what are the experiences available within this feature?

Online Spotlight lets you connect to the latest news, movies, and other content by using your remote. You can rent and watch digital movies on demand, find and download new music, watch movie previews, play games, and more. (Additional fees may apply.)

What information is sent back to Microsoft about my viewing/listening habits? What information is shared with partners?

Microsoft is committed to protecting consumer privacy. Microsoft does not collect personal information about your use of Media Center features, such as your name, home address, phone number, e-mail address, credit card number, Social Security number, or driver's license number. Anonymous and aggregate usage information may be shared with partners. For more information on Media Center terms of use and the complete privacy statement, visit [the privacy section](#).

Are any extra fees required to activate Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005?

Some partners that can be found in Online Spotlight may charge for their services. Microsoft does not.



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