

# Preparing Your System

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## Overview

How to prepare your system and configure Windows so MediaPortal interfaces with your TV much like a commercial Set Top Box without annoying pop-ups, requests for passwords when you boot up, etc.

## Introduction

Preparing your system as outlined in this guide will optimize Windows for using MediaPortal on your HTPC . This will give you the best user experience when you are viewing your media and will make your HTPC behave like a Set Top Box rather than a computer connected to your TV.

Once you have completed preparing your system, you will be ready to move onto the next step: [Installing MediaPortal](#)

## System Requirements

Like any software, MediaPortal has minimal system requirements in order to work. These system requirements can be found on our website under [Products > MediaPortal > Requirements](#).

## Best Practices

Before you start installing MP, there are a number of things you need to do to your basic Windows installation to get it ready. These are not all essential, but are recommended to get the best results:

## Windows Installation

On the TV Server or Single-Seat Installation, it is recommended to install Windows on a small partition, around 60-70 GB should be plenty depending on the number of extensions you install. You can also use this drive for your TV time-shifting files (the temporary video files that MediaPortal will generate when any of your clients are watching TV). A larger separate drive or partition is highly recommended to record your TV programs especially if you record a lot especially in HD format.

**Note:** MediaPortal skins, and many images are stored in the \ProgramData folder. Some images like fanart, can be quite large, or you may have many images if you have a lot of media files. Thus you may require a larger partition for Windows if you choose to install many skins, extensions, a lot of fanart, or have large media libraries.

## Windows Updates

Once you have installed Windows, make sure that you download and install all available updates from Windows Update. You may wish to use the [Update Control](#) Extension to perform future Windows Updates within MediaPortal

## Notifications (Pop-ups)

Make sure that any system notifications e.g Windows Update, update software, virus scanner notifications are disabled or set to "gaming mode". This will prevent the annoying update reminders popping up while you are watching your favorite movie!

## Drivers

Ensure all your system drivers are up to date - see [Driver Downloads](#) for sources.

## Inserted Media (Autoplay)

Ensure your Windows auto-play is set to do NOTHING when any media is inserted. This will stop you getting annoying behavior when you insert a CD/DVD /Blu-ray into your machine. To do this enter **control /name Microsoft.AutoPlay** into the Windows run utility (**Win+R**) and press enter. In the AutoPlay control panel **untick** *Use AutoPlay for all media and devices* then click **Save**.

You can setup MediaPortal to display [autoplay](#) options when you insert an optical disc if you wish.

## Windows Login

Setup your system to auto-logon when Windows starts.

If you plan to use Task Scheduler to wake your PC and run some scheduled programs (e.g. to download EPG data from the internet, or defrag your system over-night), then Windows will require you set a password. and prompt you for a password every time it boots-up.

To configure your system to log on automatically,

1. Type **netplwiz** into the Windows run utility (**Win+R**)
2. Press enter. In the User Accounts window
3. **Untick** *'Users must enter a username and password to use this computer'*
4. Click **Apply** - you will then be prompted for the credentials of the user Windows will use to auto logon.

## Computer BIOS Settings

Set your HTPC BIOS up so that the computer turns on automatically after the loss of power. This will mean that if you have a power cut while you are on holiday, the system will power up, then go back to standby/hibernate and be ready for your next scheduled recording.

If you are running a Client/Server setup, you will also need to make sure that your server BIOS permits Wake-On-Lan.

## Media Storage

Make sure your media is stored in sensible locations. MP can catalog your media from many different locations, but it is best if you can group your media types together on the hard drive(s) before you start as it will make life much easier for you. If you need to arrange your music and associated CD art, then a separate tool is available to help: [MPTagThat](#).

## Home Network

Live TV in MediaPortal is designed to work in a Client/Server mode. This means that it must have a valid network connection for it to work properly. Ideally this connection should be a wired network so it is available as soon as the HTPC wakes up. If you don't have a wired home network or you are installing MP on a PC connected wirelessly, then this guide will help you: [MSLoopBack Device for SingleSeat Users](#)

## Power Saving

Make sure your system power-saving options are configured correctly. This is particularly important for your TV Server. You may wish to configure it so that the display turns off after 3 minutes at idle and the hard drives power down after 5 minutes at idle. You could also then set the system to go into standby after 5 minutes if required.

For the TV Client or Single-seat installations you will probably want to disable most power-saving options so the system is always ready. To configure Windows power-saving options go to Control Panel > Power Options.

You may also use the [Power Scheduler](#) plugin provided with MediaPortal to schedule power saving modes for both the TV-Server or Client. The [PowerScheduler++](#) extension offers even more features.

## Installing Codecs

In order for MP to play your files in all the different formats on your hard drive and removable media, it needs access to audio and video decoders.

As of v 1.3.0 or later, MediaPortal includes [LAV Filters]<https://www.team-mediaportal.com/extensions/video-audio/lav-filters?lang=en> which will play most if not all media formats For information on how to configure the LAV filters see: [LAV Configuration](#).

## Windows XP

**Warning** : As of v 1.5.0 MediaPortal no longer officially supports Windows XP. You can still install MediaPortal 1.5.0 on Windows XP but you will get a warning during installation that it is not supported anymore.

For previous versions, MediaPortal is only supported on Windows XP 32-bit Edition with at least service pack 3.

Specific updates are required for XP as outlined on the Required Updates tab of MediaPortal > [Requirements](#).

In particular, you will need to install some additional software and patches before installing MP.

- [BDA/DVB hotfix](#) - This hotfix is essential for viewing digital TV broadcasts using either analog or digital TV cards. It is already included in roll up 2 of Windows MCE 2005, but for Windows XP you have to install it manually. [Updated psisdecd.dll]  
For further details on the above patch see: the forum thread: [\[Patch\] Tuner Issue and channel-scan crash - Windows XP](#)

## Further Info

This tutorial provides a basic overview of the most important points to consider when setting up Windows 7 as a base OS for MP. Detailed explanations of how to install and configure Windows 7 are available from a number of sources. Some examples are listed below.

- [Clean Install Windows 7 - Windows 7 Forums](#)
- [TweakHound - Installing Windows 7](#)

## What's Next

Once you have prepared your system, you are ready to proceed to [Installing MediaPortal](#)

## Related

### Tutorials

- [Windows 8](#) (Beginner)
- [Codecs](#) (Intermediate)
- [Anti-Virus Settings](#) (Intermediate)
- [Firewall Settings](#) (Intermediate)
- [Windows XP](#) (Intermediate)
- [References](#)
- [Driver Downloads](#)
- [Other](#)
- [Windows 7](#)
- [Java for Bluray BD-J support](#)