

[How to add a shortcut back into Windows Start menu](#)



*Stump the PC Club is a free tech-advice column written by members of the **North Orange County Computer Club**, which has been in existence since 1976. Visit the club's site at noccc.org. And don't forget to stop by the Gadgetress' home for the PC Club, at ocregister.com/link/pcclub, to find out how to ask a question and read past answers.*

QUESTION: Thank you for providing a forum for this question. My wife's PC is an older Dell Dimension 2350 running Windows XP Home Edition (Version 2002, Service Pack 2). This fine machine has somehow magically "lost" the Start -> Programs -> Games link. I placed shortcuts on her desktop for some of her favorite games, but she would very much like to have the entire link back in the familiar Start -> Programs -> Games location. Is there something I can do to recover this link (or recreate it)? - *Tony*

PC Club: Since the Start menu is one of the most frequently visited places by PC users, it can also be one of the most frequently jumbled up places. The Start menu is actually controlled by a folder located on the hard drive in several places because there is a folder named "Start Menu" for every user on a PC.

Let's assume that there are two users on a PC named Jim and Sue. The Start Menu for Sue is located at "C:\Documents and Settings\Sue" while Jim's is located at "C:\Documents and Settings\Jim." What's more, there is a Start Menu folder located at "C:\Documents and Settings\All Users." The theory behind this is as follows:

1. Each user, when they log on, has their own Start Menu items
2. Some Programs are available to all users and therefore, are located in the All Users folder.

When some programs are installed they ask if they should be available to all users or to just the user installing them. Other programs do not ask. They just make themselves available to the logged on user. If your PC has just one user, which is the norm, then you will have two Start Menu folders: one for yourself and one for All Users. It is under this All Users folder that the Games menu is located or at least should be.

The first thing to try is to sort the Start Menu alphabetically which makes it easier to locate entries. To do this click Start, All Programs and right-click any entry. Click “Sort by name” with your left mouse button. The next thing to try is to double-click the Recycle Bin. If it’s there, right-click it and select Restore. If neither of these simple solutions work, continue reading.

Now that we know where Windows stores the Games folder, we can try to search for it and relocate it to where it belongs. To locate it, click Start, Search. Select “All Files and Folders” and in the next screen that opens do the following:

1. In the “All or part of the file name:” box type Games
2. Leave “A word or phrase in the file:” blank
3. Click the “Look in” drop-down box and select the “C Drive” entry
4. Click “Search”

You should see an entry on the right named “Games” with its location showing. If it does not say “C:\Documents and Settings\All Users\Start Menu\Programs” it has been accidentally moved to an incorrect location. Write down the location on paper so you can close the Search window and manually relocate the Games folder to its rightful place. You can use the My Computer or Windows Explorer application to relocate the Games folder. Since you now know where it is, assuming it still exists on your PC, you can move it as follows:

1. Open Windows Explorer and navigate to where the Games folder presently resides
2. Right-click it and select Edit, Copy (we’ll leave a spare copy behind)
3. Navigate to where it should be and select Edit, Paste
4. Go to your Start menu and sort it as described above. You should now have your Games folder back where it belongs.



But ... what if you couldn't locate your Games folder by searching for it? You can recreate it as follows:

1. Create all of the shortcuts to your favorite games on the Desktop
2. Place them all into a folder named Games
3. Drag the folder using your **right** mouse button over the Start button until the Start menu opens
4. Next, drag it over the All Programs button until the menu opens
5. Drag the folder onto the menu and drop it anywhere. You will get a menu of choices. Select "Move here" with the left mouse button
6. You should now have a menu item labeled "Games"
7. Re-sort the Start menu to place Games in alphabetical order

- Ed Schwartz, NOCCC member. View his blog at www.edwardns.com/blog.