

One PC, two operating systems? No problem

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*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: I just bought a new Gateway quad with 64-bit Windows Vista. I tried running a Biblical software package called Gramcord on it that works well on my XP. It says it is incompatible. I went out to Microsoft and tried downloading its virtual pc software, but that did not work.

I have heard I can have two operating systems on the same machine. How do I do that? Does this mean I could put up XP? Or is the problem the 64 bit? ~ Bill

PC CLUB: One of the reasons, Bill, that Vista sales have not met Microsoft's expectations is Vista's lack of backward compatibility with legacy software such as yours.

I recommend contacting the software manufacturer. If you visit its Web site at www.gramcord.org, it claims that Gramcord is now Vista compatible. This most likely applies to the latest version, which may be more current than the one you have. You can contact them by phone at 360-576-3000 or e-mail them at biblescholars@gramcord.org to get instructions on upgrading your software.

If you are at least able to install the software and it does not run under Vista, you can try one of these solutions:

1. You can try running the program in the "Compatibility" mode by following Microsoft's instructions at support.microsoft.com/kb/927386. See Method 2.
2. You can try to run the program in the "Administrator" mode. See Method 3 at the Web site referenced above.



Regarding [Microsoft's Virtual PC software](#), this is one way to run both Vista and XP on the same machine. In your case, Windows Vista would be the host operating system and Windows XP would be the guest. Since you did not state which version of Vista you have, it's difficult to say if it would work in your case. For the specifics of which Windows versions are supported, visit [Microsoft's Virtual PC 2007](#) page (try tinyurl.com/5pgq9q) and click the [System Requirements](#) link for details.

Installing the [Microsoft Virtual Machine](#) is not a trivial task but if you have confidence in your computer skills it can come in handy. It's typically used in the reverse situation of yours, however. Users with XP installed may want to try Vista without removing XP to see if their existing hardware and software is Vista compatible. The Virtual PC software will allow them to do this.

Another way to have Vista and XP coexist on your PC is to set up a dual-boot configuration. In order to do this you need to re-partition your hard drive so that it has at least two partitions. Or you could install a second hard drive. This is simpler if XP is installed first but it can be done with Vista already installed. One thing to keep in mind for this method is that you need to obtain all of the XP drivers for your hardware and you also need a Windows XP installation CD with a valid registration number or CD key. The drivers are often available at the manufacturer's Web site.

I would use the Virtual PC and Dual Boot solutions as a last resort. Should you want to review some material on installing a dual boot system, you can review the guide from APC Magazine ("[How to dual boot Vista and XP \(with Vista installed first\) — the step-by-step guide with screenshots](#)") or ProNetworks' guide ("[Install Windows XP in a Dual Boot with Pre-installed Windows](#).")

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