

Where are my Contacts in Windows 7?

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Hi folks! PC Club is moving to Saturday publication with this post. Thanks for reading!

*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 notice that the Contacts folder in Windows 7 does not match the Contacts in Windows Live Mail, however, in Vista the Contacts folder does match the Contacts in Windows Mail. What happened?

PC CLUB: The Contacts feature built into Windows has changed with each new version of Windows including XP, Vista and now, Windows 7. This is related to how the built-in support for e-mail has changed. Windows XP uses the term Addresses and subsequent versions use the term Contacts but the terms are interchangeable. The implementation in each version is as follows:

Windows XP - in this version there is no Contacts folder per se but there is an Address Book. This address book is linked directly to Outlook Express and there is a separate address book for each user. If there are 3 users sharing a PC, there are 3 unique address books. It resides in the location below:

C:\Documents and Settings\user name\Application Data\Address Book

This is a hidden folder and you can follow the instructions on a Microsoft's web page "[Show Hidden Program or System Files](#)" (link: bit.ly/hiddenfolders) to enable viewing of hidden folders. The actual name of the address file is user.wab. If the user name is Mike, the file will be named Mike.wab.

There is also an application named wab.exe which resides in the following location:

C:Program FilesOutlook Express

When Outlook Express is launched and you click the Address button on the toolbar, the wab.exe program is launched and it opens the Address Book for the current user. You can also click Start, Run and enter WAB in upper or lower case and the address book will open.

When the address book is opened by either method, you can add, delete or edit any entry in the address book. You can also import to or export from the address book using a CSV (Comma Separated Value) format.

CSV files can be imported to and exported from virtually any email program including Windows Vista's Windows Mail, Windows Live Mail, Hotmail and Yahoo Mail to name a few. CSV files can also be opened with and edited by Microsoft Excel.

I strongly recommended that you export your Address Book to an external hard drive or flash drive to protect yourself against disaster.

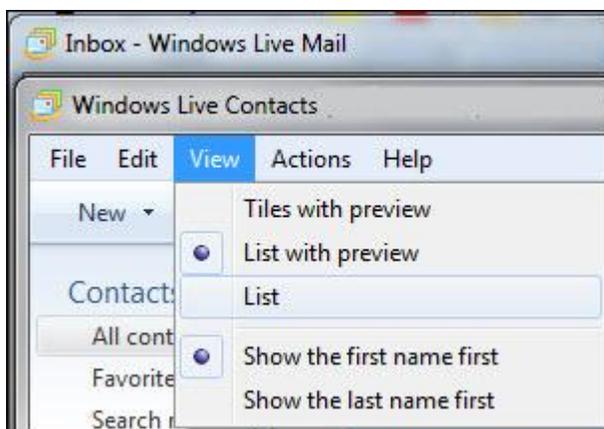
Windows Vista - In this version, Outlook Express was replaced by the built-in Windows Mail program. Vista has a Contacts folder located at the following location:

C:Usersuser nameContacts

As in XP, there is a Contacts folder unique to each user account. This folder is directly linked to Windows Mail and changes made to this folder, such as adding a new contact, can be made in the folder directly or in the Windows Mail application. When you open Windows Mail and click the Contacts button on the toolbar, you actually open the Contacts folder. You can also access the Contacts folder by clicking Start, All Programs, Windows Contacts.

Windows 7 - In this version, Microsoft did away with any built-in support for e-mail. There is a Contacts folder, however, located as follows:

C:Usersuser nameContacts



Again, there is a unique folder for each user.

This folder is linked to absolutely nothing. You can add contacts to it but there is no good way to utilize these contacts with an e-mail program. You can select a contact and click the E-mail button that shows up but I found this to be very unreliable. I recommend totally ignoring this folder. You can access this folder by clicking Start and entering "contacts" into the search box (without the quotes) and hitting the enter key.

If you download and install the free Windows Live Mail program from download.live.com/wlmail, you can then launch the program and click the Contacts link located on the lower left to open Contacts. From here you can add an individual contact or click File, Import or Export to work with CSV files. You can also import an Outlook Express Windows WAB file here as well.

Notes:

- If you have an existing Hotmail account (now called Windows Live Hotmail), when you install Windows Live Mail and add your Hotmail account, Windows Live Mail will automatically sync to your Hotmail and import all of your existing Hotmail contacts.
- If you are using Outlook 2003 or Outlook 2007 and have it installed when you install Windows Live Mail, a feature called Microsoft Office Outlook Connector will be installed. This will allow you to synchronize your online Hotmail contacts with Outlook. You can also download the Connector application at any time from Microsoft (link: bit.ly/outlookconnect). This feature works with XP, Vista and Windows 7 provided your Outlook is 2003 or later.
- See "Importing contacts from Windows Contacts Folder" at www.msoutlook.info/question/382 for more useful tips.

~Ed Schwartz, NOCCC member. View his Web site at www.edwardns.com.