

In Windows, there are several ways in which a program can be set to start automatically when the system is started. These include:

- An entry in the Startup folder
- An entry in the msconfig file
- An entry in the registry

Today, we are only interested in adding or removing items from the Startup folder. We are definitely not going to touch the registry. You should not touch the registry unless you have an idea of the risks involved. You could render your entire computer unusable if you get it wrong.

So, an example of what we are interested in here is that you may wish to open Microsoft Word and your email program automatically whenever you switch on your computer.

The way that we do this is to add shortcuts for each of those programs in the “Startup” folder. These shortcuts will then be executed when Windows opens in the same way as if they had been manually opened.

First we need to open the shortcuts folder:

- Click on the start button (bottom lefthand corner of screen)
- Click on the “All programs” option
- Look through the list for a yellow folder labelled “Startup”
- Right-click (that’s a right-click, not the normal left-click) on this folder name and then left-click on the “open” command. This will open a window showing all the items that are currently in the startup folder.

Now we need to add a shortcut in the opened folder that points to the program we want to load:

There are two different ways we can do this:

Via the Start Button

- Click on the Start button
- Click on “All Programs”
- Left-click on the program you wish to add to the startup folder and drag it to the opened “Startup” window. Dragging means using the mouse to move the cursor to the destination, while holding down the left mouse button.
- When your cursor is in the Startup folder, release the left button. There is now a shortcut in the Startup folder.
- Close the Startup folder in the usual way by clicking on the “X” in the top right-hand

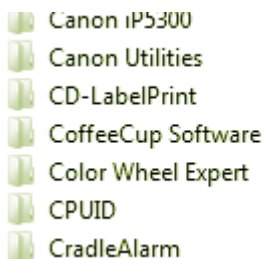
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Via the Desktop

- Right-click on the desktop item and then left-click on “create shortcut”. You will then see a second item on the desktop with the same icon as the first.
- Drag the new shortcut into the open Startup window.
- Close the Startup folder in the usual way by clicking on the “X” in the top right-hand corner.

There is also a third way of finding the program so that you can create a shortcut from it, and that is to open the “Program Files” folder and search from there. This is usually located in c:\program files (accessed from the “My Computer” or “Computer” icon).

One thing to be careful of is that you are looking for a *program icon* with the correct name and not a *folder* of the same name. For instance, you can see in this example that I have a folder called “CD-LabelPrint”:



If I create a shortcut of the folder and place it in Startup it means that the folder will open up automatically when I start the computer but the program will not launch. It is perfectly legitimate to automatically open a folder in this way but it is not what I wanted to do.

What I should have done is clicked on the folder called “CD-LabelPrint” and then created the shortcut from the program of the same name (as shown below).



We can extend this somewhat by adding that if you always want to open a specific document when you start your computer (for instance, a particular Excel worksheet or Word document), then you can create a shortcut to that document and place it in the Startup folder. When you start the computer, the program that normally opens that document will be launched and it will open the document whose shortcut is in the Startup folder.

Finally, you can remove items from the startup folder by just deleting them. This will not delete the programs, just the shortcut that you placed in the folder.

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