
Link: <http://bytes.com/topic/windows/insights/860758-windows-autorun-faqs-description>

Windows Autorun FAQs: Description

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NOTE- If you are unfamiliar with the concept of autoruns, then read "[Windows Autorun FAQs: Overview](#)".

Que-1: How can I safely remove or edit the autorun settings on my PC?

Ans: I recommend that you backup all of your important data before trying anything mentioned in this article. When a person is tweaking with autoruns, one has to rely on 'trial and error' methods and so there is always the possibility that something could go wrong. You may even end with crashed Windows OS installation, though it would be a rarest of rare case. And yes...Don't worry about problems that may arise due to this as there is enough information in this article to help you out. And even if you encounter a problem then you can certainly get help from the [Windows forum of bytes.com](#).

Que-2: Oh no....Why to play with autoruns when it may crash my system or cause data loss?

Ans: Hmm...There are pretty many matters under Windows OS which require the user to handle with autoruns. I would list two of them below:

1. A most frequently faced case where concept of autorun is widely used is of a system infected with virus. Although most users would leave the virus to be handled by their antivirus software, still there are many who would love to manually delete the virus and all the related malicious entries. And if you are one of them, then this FAQ is for you. Alternatively, if there is some virus which is still not removed by antivirus programs then you might consider removing it manually and in that case you may want to read this FAQs.

2. A slow Windows PC is another such situation where removing unused autostart programs will boost up system performance. It is a common folklore that Windows systems run slower than other systems (e.g. Linux, Unix). Although this is true to a great extent :) , still you can make your Windows box to run a lot better only if you remove unused autorun entries. In daily scenario, all Windows experts receive complaints from users that their Vista PC, in particular, is running really slow. And in most of cases, it is either a bulk of autoruns which slow down a system or the system has the configuration lower than that required by minimum system requirements to run that specific version of Windows Vista. As an example, I would like to tell you that a friend of mine had a XP system with pretty good configuration which had a boot time of more than 6 minutes. And after removing unused autoruns, the boot time came down to about 75 seconds. (after cleaning up unused programs and context menu entries, bad registry entries, defragmentation of the drive the boot time came down to 52 seconds which is a considered a pretty good boot time).

And so, there's a lot you gain by deleting unused autorun entries than just the safety of important data which you can always backup safely. And so, just backup all your important data and then proceed without any risk or fear. I would like to remind you that removable medias such as CDs, DVDs, Pen/Flash/USB drives are too cheap now a days.

Que-3: Ok...I have backed all my important data. Can you now list all the autostart locations?

Ans: For a comprehensive list of all autostart locations, visit "[Windows Autorun FAQs: List of autostart locations](#)".

Que-4: Do I need to remove autoruns from autostart locations manually? Or, Is there some tool/program available for such purpose?

Ans: The best way to prevent a program from running at startup, is to check the program's own options for a way to prevent this. Most good quality programs will provide an option for this.

If you are an average computer user, there are many programs around which will show a list of most of autostarting programs of your system and then you may choose to delete/add an autostart entry.

The best program which allow the user to see a list of autoruns on a PC and modify them is Sysinternals' (now acquired by Microsoft) Autoruns (note that this is the name of a program and not the terminology "autoruns" which is our present matter of discussion). And there's more....Sysinternals Autoruns program is a freeware. There are many other free (and non free) programs which deal with autoruns.

NOTE: If you are a Windows expert and comfortable with editing registry, then you can manually remove/add the autorun entry for a program using regedit.exe as most of autostart programs lay hiding somewhere in registry. If you cannot login to your XP installation you can try to edit the registry offline. For these purposes you can either use [Offline NT Registry Editor](#) or [BartPE CD](#). Be careful as some things may not be obvious. Try removing one thing at a time and then restarting the computer to see what happened. Changing more than one thing will make it difficult to detect the fault if problems occur. But I don't recommend this for everyone.

Que-5: Does Windows provides any program for autorun programs?

Ans: Yes, Windows does offer a program that will list programs that are automatically started from SOME of these locations. This program known as msconfig.exe, unfortunately, only lists programs from a limited amount of startup keys. To start msconfig.exe, click Start--->Run and type msconfig and press [Enter] or [Return] key. Go to the Startup tab, and uncheck the item there. I would like to mention again that this is not the best program for autorun programs.

Que-6: What is special about Sysinternals Autoruns program?

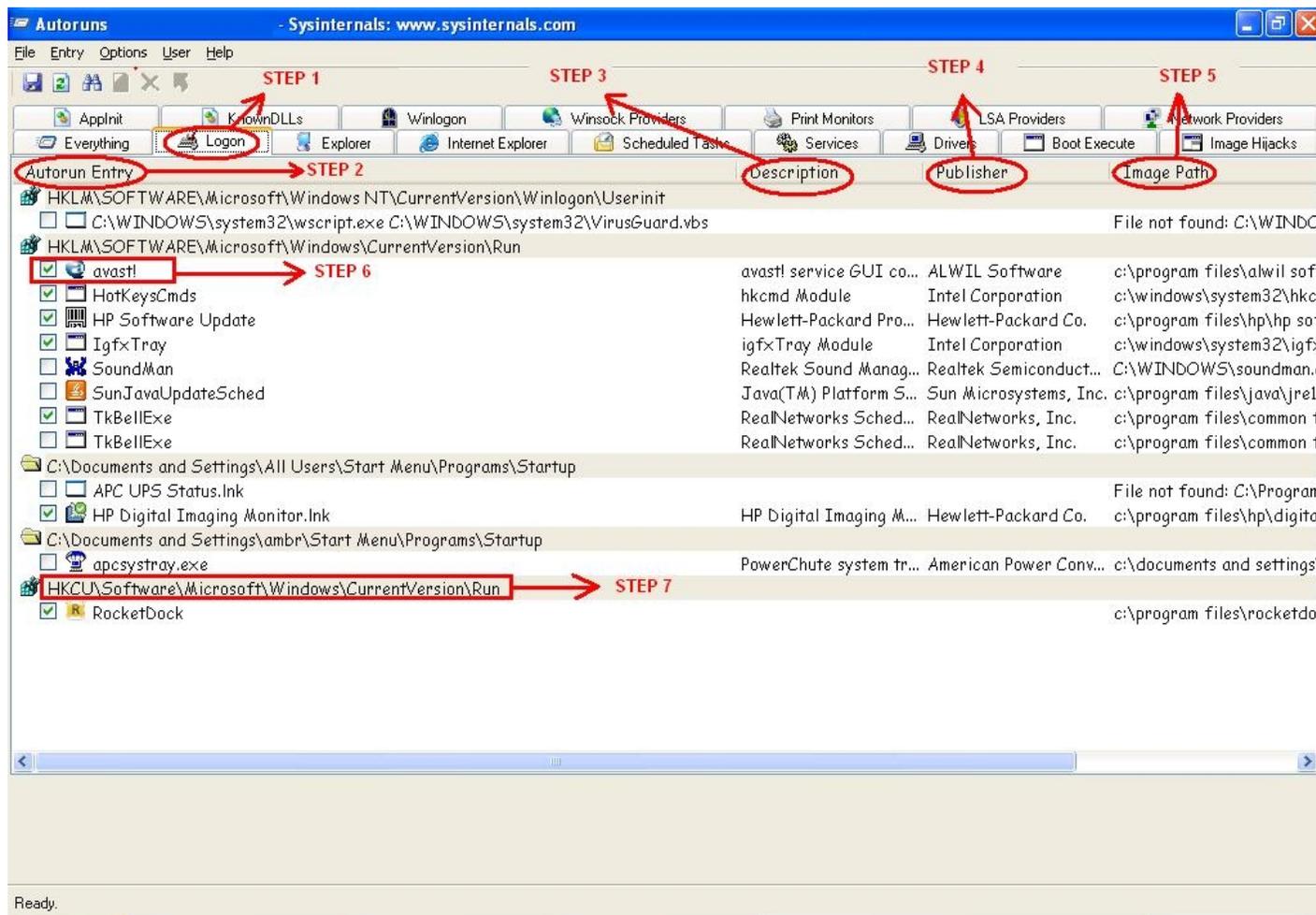
Ans: This utility, which has the most comprehensive knowledge of auto-starting

locations of any startup monitor, shows you what programs are configured to run during system boot up or login, and shows you the entries in the order Windows processes them.

Que-7: Well, as you had said previously, that Sysinternals Autoruns is the best program for autoruns. Can you please tell me where to download and how to use Autoruns utility?

Ans: The original web page for Autoruns utility is [here](#) and you can download Autoruns utility directly from [here](#).

The second link is a compressed zip file which has both a command line and a graphical version of Autoruns utility. Unzip the downloaded file and look in the compressed folder for a binary executable with the name autoruns.exe. Simply double click it to start the program. You will be prompted to accept a license agreement. If you agree to the terms, click 'agree'. Now you will see a window like this:



NOTE: Except [Logon] tab in the program, all other tabs lists the autorun files most of which are important for stability of a clean Windows system, although there may be some malicious/unwanted entries too. And so, unless you are a

windows expert and you know what you are doing, don't mess up with autorun files of any other tab except [Logon] tab [i.e. the tab mentioned in STEP 1].

STEP 1: Click on [Logon] tab. The autorun programs listed under this tab are executed once the user logs in.

STEP 2: This column labeled [Autorun Entry] lists the program and the autostart locations for that program.

STEP 3: This column labeled [Description] provides a description of the corresponding autorun entry (if any). This description may provide some information about the use or purpose of the program; although this is not to be relied upon.

STEP 4: This column labeled [Publisher] lists the name of the company/author for the program. In cases dealing with malicious files (e.g. viruses) this description may provide some help but I repeat that this information is not to be relied upon.

STEP 5: This column [Image Path] lists the actual location of the autoruns on a PC.

STEP 6: This area lists the actual autorun program that is intended to be executed when system boots. If the check box next to it is checked then the autorun is executed on system startup and if it is unchecked then it is not executed/run when system starts. And so, if you don't want a program to act as autorun then simply uncheck the entry next to it's name.

STEP 7: This is actual location (i.e. folder/registry) where a given set of autoruns is located. In Sysinternals Autorun program these entries are highlighted with a different color.

NOTE: Please note that under [Logon] tab, don't remove the check mark next to following entries otherwise you may be in trouble with your Windows installation:

1. Location: HKLM\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\Winlogon\Userinit
File: userinit

2. Location: HKLM\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\Winlogon\Shell
File: explorer.exe

3. Location: HKLM\System\CurrentControlSet\Control\Terminal Server\Wds\rdpwd\StartupPrograms
File: rdpclip

[Let me make it clear that rdpclip.exe is the executable that provides function for Terminal Services server that allows you to copy and paste between server and client. RDPCLIP is not loaded on the client side, i.e. not on the machine using Remote Desktop to connect to a remote machine instead it is loaded on the machine allowing other machines to connect via Remote Desktop. And so if you don't know what this all means then you should better not uncheck it. And if it is unchecked and you want it to autorun then simply check it again]

NOTE: For more help, you can refer to a file named autoruns.chm, i.e. the Help file for Autoruns utility, in the folder you had previously decompressed. You can alternatively post your queries to either [Windows forum of bytes.com](http://www.windowsforumofbytes.com) or [Sysinternals Autoruns Forum](http://www.sysinternals.com/forums/autoruns).

Que-8: OK, so that was enough about autoruns.....Now what about other programs for the same purpose?

Ans: Other than Sysinternals Autoruns, there are only a few programs which are good enough to be used when dealing with autoruns. For a list of some programs that deal with autoruns, visit "[Windows Autorun FAQs: Programs dealing with autoruns](#)".

Que-9: But what if I really want to a program to act as an autorun program?

Ans: If you want to autorun a program on windows startup, then simply add it's location to one of autostart locations. This can be done either manually or using many third party freeware application. Some of them are listed above. Two of most commonly used autostart location are:

1. C:\Documents and Settings\All Users\Start Menu\Programs\Startup
2. C:\Documents and Settings\<USER_NAME>\Start Menu\Programs\Startup

Que-10: Is there anything else that you would like me to know?

Ans: Yeah...There are two things that I want to tell you:

1. Best of luck
2. Good bye :)

Other links:

1. [Windows Autorun FAQs: Overview](#)
2. [Windows Autorun FAQs: List of autostart locations](#)
3. [Windows Autorun FAQs: Programs dealing with autoruns](#)