June 8, 2011
LEVEL: Intermediate

Windows 7 "Secret" Folders

This is a list of locations in the Windows 7 file structure (hard drive $C:\backslash$) where you can find and edit Windows setting and some program's features. Most can also be found in Windows Vista.

- **Office Custom Dictionary**

Location: `%USERPROFILE%`[1]`\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\UProof\`

Office Custom Dictionary is a file called **CUSTOM.DIC**. The file is a plain text file that can be opened and edited with Notepad.

- **Excel Add-Ins**

Location: `%USERPROFILE%`[1]`\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\AddIns\`

.XLA file is an Excel Add-In file that provides custom functions to Excel. If the .XLA file is saved in the correct location, it will be automatically recognized by all opened Excel files that can then use functions saved in the VBA module of the .XLA file.

Note: The .XLA Add-In must be enabled (activated) in Excel > Options > Add-In > click on the "Go" button, (Office 2010).

- **Themes**

Location: `%USERPROFILE%`[1]`\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Themes\`

Every downloaded theme (using the **"Get more themes online"** link in the *Control Panel > Personalization* application will have its own folder in the …`\Themes\` folder. For example, if you downloaded the "Lightning" theme from Microsoft's website, there will be folder called Lightning. If you want to remove the theme from "My Themes" section of the *Personalization* application, just delete the corresponding folder in …`\Themes\` folder.

Custom themes will have files with the same name as the name of the theme in the *Personalization* application and extension **.theme**. The file for the "Unsaved Theme" is called **Custom.theme**.

[FileName].theme is theme's configuration file and it should not be edited raw -- change desktop settings in the *Control Panel > Personalization*. However, there is one neat thing that you can do in the Themes folder. Pictures for a Desktop Background Slide Show are stored in the `DesktopBackground` sub-folder of the theme's folder (i.e. …`\Themes\Lightning\ DesktopBackground\`). Right-click on the picture file and you can rotate the image from the pop-up context menu ("Rotate Clockwise" or "Rotate Counterclockwise") – this can be very handy if your monitor is in the portrait orientation. You can also replace an image with your own and it will appear in the slide show rotation. Just make sure that you rename your image exactly with the name of the original that you are replacing.

(1) `%USERPROFILE% = C:\Users\[UserName]\`   ([UserName] is the name of windows login account.)

- **Gadgets**

Location 1: `%USERPROFILE%\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows Sidebar\Gadgets\`
Location 2: `C:\Program Files\Windows Sidebar\`

Gadgets downloaded and installed by user are stored in the location 1.
Second location holds Windows default gadgets (installed with Windows o/s) and some gadgets installed by programs (for example, WinZip will install its gadget into `C:\Program Files\Windows Sidebar\Shared Gadgets\` Folder.

Many gadgets developers don't design their gadgets so that they will automatically install into the **Gadgets Manager** (accessed by right-clicking on the **Desktop** and selecting "**Gadgets**" from the context pop-up menu.) Here is how to install a Gadget in a ZIP file that is not self-installing:

1. Download the ZIP file with the gadgets bits into the Download folder (btw, don't download executable files to Desktop – it's bad form).
2. Change the extension of the ZIP file (.zip) to .Gadget.   Example: **[GadgetName].Gadget**
   Note: You can also copy and paste the ZIP file and rename the copy, if you want to preserve the original file.
3. Double-click on the file to run it, (alternatively, right-click on the file and select "Open").
4. Click on the "Install" button in the pop-up dialog box – the gadget will be installed in Location 1.

If the ZIP file contains correct parts of the gadget, the gadget should now be available in the Gadgets Manager.

Note: The gadget bits (in the ZIP file) should usual be three folders ("css", "images" and "js"), a few image files (PNG or JPG) and web pages (XML, HTM or HTML).