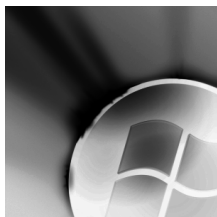


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## [Hack the Windows Vista Black Screen of Death - Images Tutorial](#)

*Reduced Functionality Mode is not actually that reduced...*

With Windows Vista, Microsoft shifted from the development path of Windows XP wide open to tampering with zero reaction, and has integrated an anti-piracy infrastructure into the platform. In direct correlation with the Windows Genuine Advantage and the Activation mechanisms, Windows Vista will be able to detect and blacklist non-genuine product keys, crack attempts, and identify the expiration of the initial 30-day grace period. The operating system will react to all by moving first into a non-genuine state and then into Reduced Functionality Mode.

The reduced Functionality Mode in Windows Vista is the now infamous Black Screen of Death. Just access the images at the bottom in order to make an idea of what the Black Screen of Death is. Essentially, in Reduced Functionality Mode, Windows Vista features no desktop, no Taskbar and no Start Menu. Additionally, the background wallpaper is changed to an immutable shade of black, just so you can understand the source of the Black Screen of Death reference. And on top of it all, the copy of the operating system is flagged as non-genuine, which is simply an euphemism for pirated.

Just to be on the safe side, I want to tell you that the Vista copy flagged as non-genuine featured in the screenshots is actually a genuine Microsoft release. Microsoft has made available as a free download Windows Vista Enterprise both as a standalone virtual hard disk image and bundled with Office 2007 Professional in a VHD designed to be integrated with Virtual PC 2007. Both free downloads come with an expiration period of 30 days, but the time should be more than sufficient to test drive the operating system.

Now, there have been reports of Microsoft threatening of the evolution of reduced Functionality Mode and its antipiracy efforts worldwide. The latest news comes from [Jakarta Post](#), and apparently Keith Beeman, Director of License Compliance at Microsoft was talking about the Reduced Functionality Mode in Windows Vista. Now the fact of the matter is that the so-called Black Screen of Death has been in Vista since the operating system debuted on the market back in November 2006 for businesses, and in January for the general consumers.

"We will apply the black screen mode within a few months. We will announce the date," Beeman apparently stated as quoted. As I have said, Reduced Functionality Mode has been around concomitantly with Windows Vista. Microsoft has recently denied having introduced any updates or upgrades to the antipiracy mechanism built into the operating system.

So, in Reduced Functionality Mode, Vista only displays a black background and allows users access to the Internet via the default browser to activate or re-activate the operating system, change or buy a product key. Still, hacking the big and scary Black Screen of Death in Vista is child's play.

In the browser address dialog box simply enter the drive letter for one of the volumes on your local hard drives. Most likely, this will be "C:". Vista will open Windows Explorer next. From here, you have full access to the hard drives and the data stored on them. But this is not enough, is it? Well, holding down the Shift key right click a drive or a folder or a file and

select open Command Prompt Here.

Once the "cmd" is run, simply type "explorer" and hit Enter. This command will launch Windows Explorer and will bring back the desktop, the wallpaper you had, the Taskbar and even the Start Menu, as you can see from the screenshots bellow. Now, Windows Vista will still be in a state of quasi-Reduced Functionality Mode, you'll just have a tad more access, and it will be easier to get around the operating system. You will quickly notice that some features, functions and default applications will still be off limits.

You can read about the Reduced Functionality Mode triggers in Vista [here](#), and also learn an alternative way to start Windows Explorer and also prolong the Initial Grace period of the operating system via the slmgr command [here](#). This will not work in Windows Vista Enterprise, only in Home Basic, Home Premium, Business and Ultimate, due to the different activation mechanisms. Go [here](#) to understand the advantages of running genuine Vista in comparison with pirated Vista. Also, did you know that you could force Windows Vista into [Reduced Functionality Mode](#)?