

The Run Command

The Start menu doesn't ordinarily include the Run command. But power users and über-geeks may well want to put it back into the Start screen, following the instructions in Chapter 2.

Or don't bother. Whenever you want the Run command, you can just press **⊞+R**, or type *run* into the Search menu, or right-click the lower-left corner of the screen and choose Run from the secret Utilities menu.

The Run command gets you to a *command line*, as shown in Figure 1. A command line is a text-based method of performing a task. You type a command, click OK, and something happens as a result.

Note: The command line in the Run dialog box is primarily for *opening* things. Windows also comes with a program called Command Prompt that offers a far more complete environment—not just for opening things, but also for controlling and manipulating them. Power users can type long sequences of commands and symbols in Command Prompt.

If you're a PC veteran, your head probably teems with neat Run commands you've picked up over the years. If you're new to this idea, however, the following are a few of the useful and timesaving functions you can perform with the Run dialog box.

Open a Program

For example, you can use the Run command as a program launcher. Just type any program's *program filename* in the Open text box and then press Enter. For both

pros and novices, it's frequently faster to launch a program this way than to click the Start→All Apps menu with the mouse.

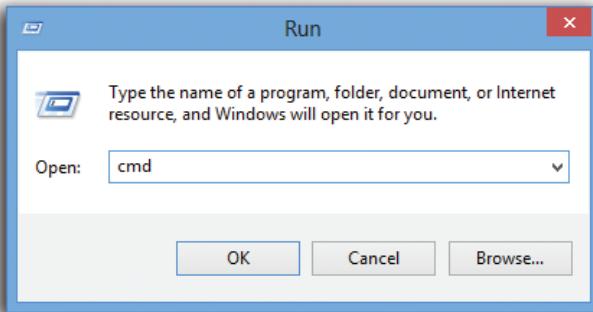
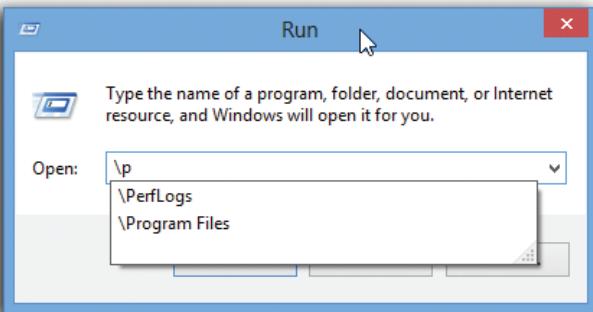


Figure 1:
Top: The last Run command you entered appears automatically in the Open text box. You can use the drop-down list to see a list of commands you've previously entered.

Bottom: The Run command knows the names of all your folders and also remembers the last few commands you typed here. As you go, you're shown the best match for the characters you're typing. When the name of the folder you're trying to open appears in the list, click it to prevent having to type the rest of the entry.



Unfortunately, the program filename isn't the same as its plain-English name; it's a cryptic, abbreviated version. For example, if you want to open Microsoft Word, you must type *winword*. That's the actual name of the Word program icon as it sits in your This PC→Local Disk (C:)->Program Files->Microsoft Office->Office folder. Here are some other common program filenames:

Program's real name

iexplore
explorer
write
msworks
msimn
wmplayer
control
regedit
cleanmgr
defrag
calc

Program's familiar name

Internet Explorer
File Explorer
WordPad
Microsoft Works
Mail
Windows Media Player
Classic Control Panel
Registry Editor
Disk Cleanup
Disk Defragmenter
Calculator

To discover the real filename of a certain program, open This PC→Local Disk (C:)→Program Files. Inspect the folders there; with the window in Details view, you'll be able to spot the icons whose type is "application."

Note: True, the search box at the Start screen offers another way to find and open any program without taking your hands off the keyboard. But the Run method is more precise and may require less effort because you're not typing the *entire* program name.

In fact, keyboard lovers, get this: You can perform this entire application-launching stunt without using the mouse at all. Just follow these steps in rapid succession:

1. Press +R.

That's the keyboard shortcut for the Run command, whose dialog box now opens.

2. Type the program file's name in the Open box.

If you've typed the name before, just type a couple of letters; Windows fills in the rest of the name automatically.

3. Press Enter.

Windows opens the requested program instantly. Keystrokes: 4; Mouse: 0.

Open Any Program or Document

Using the Run dialog box is handy for opening applications, because it requires so few keystrokes. But you can also use the Run dialog box to open *any* file on the computer.

The trick is to type in the entire *path* of the program or document you want. (See page <?>.) For example, to open the family budget spreadsheet that's in Harold's Documents folder, you might type `C:\Users\Harold\Documents\familybudget.xls`.

Of course, you probably wouldn't *actually* have to type all that, since the AutoComplete pop-up menu offers to complete each folder name as you start to type it.

Tip: Typing the path this way is also useful for opening applications that don't appear on the Start screen. (If a program doesn't appear there, you must type its entire *pathname*—or click Browse to hunt for its icon yourself.)

For example, some advanced Windows utilities (including the *Registry Editor*, an advanced diagnostic program) are accessible only through the command line. You also need to use the Run command to open some older command-line programs that don't come with a listing in the All Programs menu.

Open a Drive Window

When you click This PC at the desktop, you see that Windows assigns a letter to each disk drive attached to your machine. The hard drive is usually C:, the DVD drive

might be E:, and so on. (There hasn't been A: or B: drives since the demise of the floppy drives.)

By typing a drive letter followed by a colon (for example, C:) into the Run box and pressing Enter, you make a window pop open, showing what's on that drive.

Open a Folder Window

You can also use the Run dialog box to open the window for any folder on your machine. To do so, type a backslash followed by the name of a folder (Figure 6-35, bottom). You might type, for example, the first few letters of *\Program Files* to see your complete software collection.

Note: The Run command assumes you're opening a folder on drive C:. If you want to open a folder on a different drive, add the drive letter and a colon before the name of the folder (for example, *D:\data*).

If you're on a network, you can even open a folder that's sitting on another computer on the network. To do so, type *two* backslashes, the computer's name, and then the shared folder's name. For instance, to access a shared folder called Budgets on a computer named Admin, enter *\\admin\budgets*. (See Chapter 27 for more on sharing folders over the network.)

It might make you feel extra proficient to know that you've just used the *Universal Naming Convention*, or UNC, for the shared folder. The UNC is simply the two-backslash, computer name\folder name format (for example: *\\ComputerName\foldername*).

Tip: In any of these cases, if you don't remember the precise name of a file or folder you want to open in the Run dialog box, then click the Browse button to display the Browse dialog box, as shown in Figure 6-35, bottom.

Connect to a Web Page

You can jump directly to a specific Web page by typing its Web address (URL)—such as *http://www.bigcompany.com*—into the Run dialog box and then pressing Enter. You don't even have to open your Web browser first.

Once again, you may not have to type very much; the drop-down list in the Run dialog box lists every URL you've previously entered. Simply click one (or press the ↓ key to highlight the one you want, and then press Enter) to go to that site.