

Running old DirectX games under DirectX 10

It's happened to everyone. One day you get the urge to dust off your library of old games and play the hits of yesteryear. There are quite a few ways to get old DOS games working under newer operating systems, but what do you do if your old classics are Windows games that won't run under DirectX 10?

Up through DirectX 9, Microsoft included legacy code to work with older drivers to ensure backwards compatibility. In DX10, that support has gone away, due to issues with the legacy code slowing down performance in newer games. This almost universally affects Windows Vista users, since DX10 is not officially available for XP. Early versions of Vista also came with DX9, and DX10 is backwards compatible with DX9c.

But even if you have a new computer or have upgraded, never fear. If you are running 32 bit Vista, the good news is that most games will work anyway. Even if they don't, there are ways to work around this issue and play your old favorites again.

The first step is to make sure that you are running the game in compatibility mode for the version of Windows it was released under. Right click on the icon, go to the compatibility tab, and check the box that says 'Run this program in compatibility mode for' and select the OS in the drop down.

If that doesn't fix the problem, check for a software solution. First surf to Microsoft's web page and download the optional components for DX10 such as D3DX9. Next look on the publisher's web to see if there are patches available for your games. Some developers have released patches resolving compatibility issues for their older games that are still popular.

If you can't find anything, then do a Google search for the specific title of the game you are having trouble running. If it's a game that was popular in its time, odds are that someone has run into the same issue, asked about it, and received an answer. Some games may simply require a change in the video or audio settings to work under DX10.

What if you are running 64 bit Vista, or you've tried everything? If you still cannot get the game running, you have the option of dual booting into another OS. Dual booting involves creating another partition on your hard drive and installing another version of Windows. Windows 98SE is the most stable operating system to run on newer hardware.

Even if you have the latest and greatest computer, following the above steps will have you reliving the gaming days of old.