

Date: 6 August, 2009

Creating Dump Files on Microsoft Windows

Application

This Tech note describes the procedure to configure a PC controlling the Jands Vista application such that crash dump files may be collected and subsequently analysed in the event of a Vista crash. This procedure is for Microsoft Windows operating systems only.

This procedure only applies to Jands Vista updates from 1.13.5233 and later.

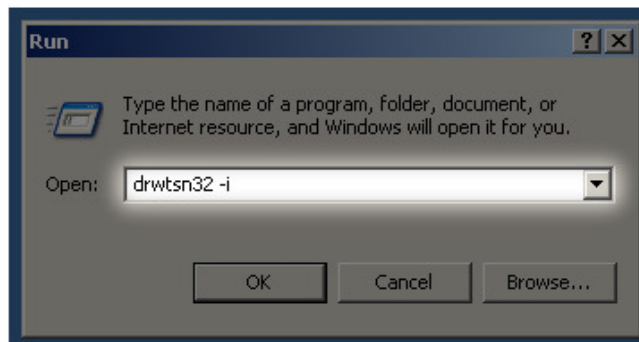
This procedure must be executed before any crash as files generated without this application cannot be retrieved or analysed.

Note: Not all crashes will generate a log file.

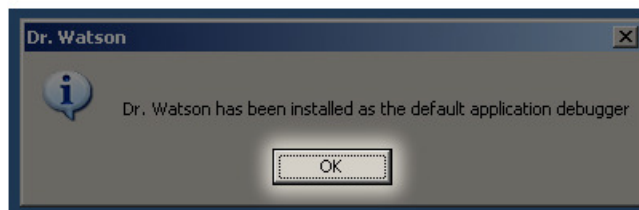
There are two different procedures – one for XP and another Microsoft Vista.

Windows XP Procedure

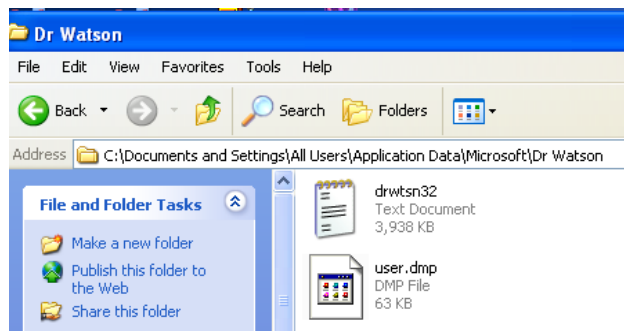
1. In the Start menu's Run box, enter the command "drwtsn32 -i".



2. A dialog box will appear informing you that Dr. Watson has been installed as the default debugger. Press OK.



Crash information will now be written into the file "C:\Documents and Settings\All Users\Application Data\Microsoft\Dr Watson\user.dmp".



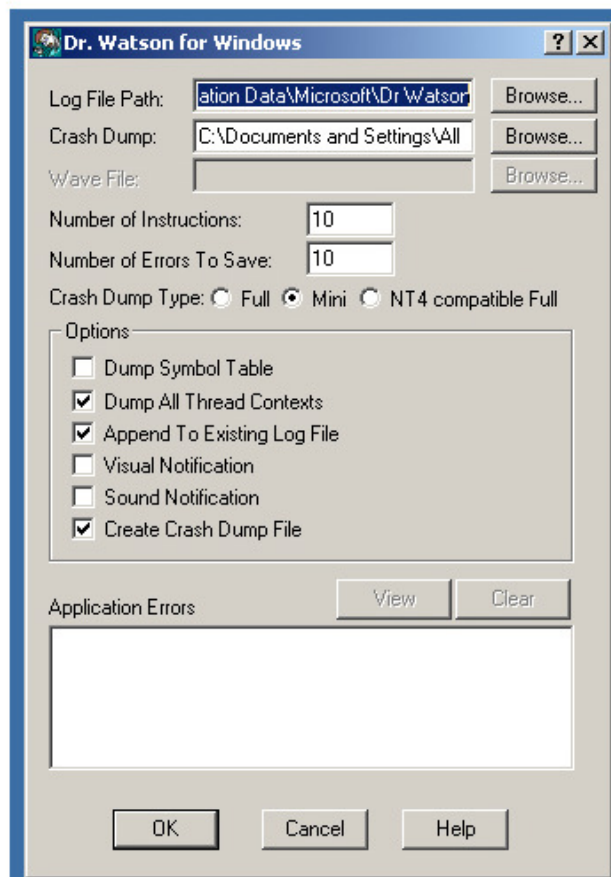
Should a Vista crash occur, navigate to the above directory and view the “user.dmp” file. Check the modification date to make sure that you are looking at the file that corresponds with when the crash occurred. Rename the "user.dmp" file to something a more descriptive eg Vista_1.13.522X_20090720_01.dmp", package it up with the show file and a description of what you were doing and email them to support@jandsvista.com.

Reconfiguring drwtsn32

Running drwtsn32 without any options or switches will bring up a window that allows various settings to be changed eg the location of the dump files can be made more easily accessible, or a visual alert letting you know a crash was logged.

If drwtsn32 is reconfigured, please ensure that the checkboxes and radio buttons remain set as per the image at right.

Additionally the number of crashes to save is limited to 10 by default. Once the limit has been reached, the system will no longer generate new log files. To ensure that data is collected users should periodically remove log file.



Windows Vista

Parts Required

- “ActivateCrashDumps.reg” file for Windows Vista users only. This can be downloaded from <http://www.jandsvista.com/ActivateCrashDumps.reg>.

Procedure

Windows Error Reporting (WER) has been integrated into the Microsoft Vista operating system. By default, Vista uploads the crash logs to Microsoft, but does not save a local copy. To save a local copy of the crash logs, the registry must be reconfigured by following these steps:

1. Download the file “ActivateCrashDumps.reg” file from the Jands Vista website <http://www.jandsvista.com/ActivateCrashDumps.reg> . Some browsers helpfully add a ".txt" to the filename (which may not be shown if Windows is hiding file file extensions - see below for details on changing this behavior). The file must have the file extension ".reg".
2. Save the file to the PC.
3. Using Windows Explorer, find the file and double-click on ActivateCrashdumps.reg to run it.
4. Respond affirmatively to any prompts.
5. Reboot the PC.

The next time any application crashes, the crash information will be written into a folder located inside "%LOCALAPPDATA%\local\Microsoft\Windows\WER\ReportQueue" (where %LOCALAPPDATA% is usually "c:\Users\user\AppData"). Check the modification date of the directory to make sure that the appropriate directory is being displayed.

Windows Vista hides many directories (and files) from the user by default. This can be changed in the Control Panel by selecting Folder Options -> View Tab -> Hidden Files and Folders -> Show Hidden Files).

Each crash will result in a new directory below "ReportQueue". Package up the entire directory naming each file something more descriptive eg "Vista_1.13.522X_20090720_01.dmp" along with the show file and a brief explanation of what was being done, and email them to support@jandsvista.com.

