

Windows Vista and Windows 7: Custom Static Tiles in the Mobility Center

This note describes how to generate your own homemade tiles to perform any command. These are static tiles, which only provide the functionality to perform two actions by pushing the button or the icon.

Be aware, that you have to edit the Windows registry and that this can potentially damage your Windows installation! So only perform the following steps, if you really know what you are doing!

Requirements

- Windows Vista or 7

How it works

The Windows Mobility Center contains system defined “Tiles” for the quick control of hard- and software, e.g. screen brightness, monitor connection. On a laptop the mobility center is opened by pressing windows-key+x.

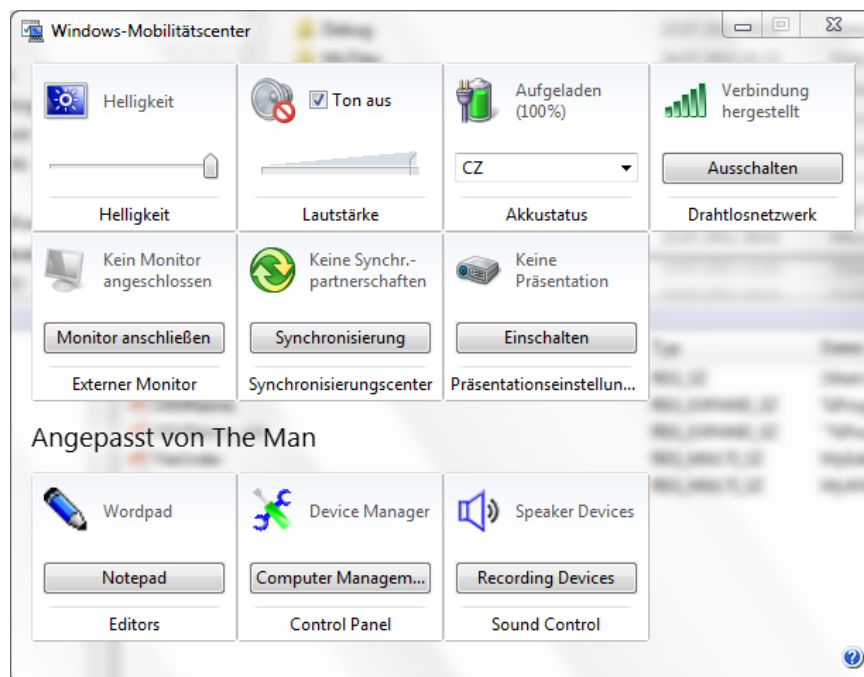


Figure 1: The Windows Mobility Center

The above screen shot shows the mobility center with the additional tiles (lower row with three tiles). The buttons and icons open editors, the control panels and sound controls. These are the tiles described in this note. The following description is based on the Microsoft document: *Windows Mobility Center – Extensibility Version 3.1 (2006)*.

In the following I assume, that a program with the required resources resides in %ProgramFiles%\MyTiles\.

Here the required steps:

1. Generate a DLL or EXE file (provided here *MyTiles.dll*) which contains the resources for
 - a. String to display as a header for the new tiles
 - b. Icons
 - c. Strings to be displayed on the tile
 - d. The ID of the above resources
2. Create a sub-key of type REG_EXPAND_SZ:
HKLM\Software\Microsoft\MobilePC\MobilityCenter\OEMName. The referenced string is displayed above the new tiles. Example: “%ProgramFiles%\MyTiles\MyTiles.dll”,100
 The OEMName key is mandatory!
3. Create a sub-key in the registry under the main key:
HKLM\Software\Microsoft\MobilePC\MobilityCenter\Tiles. Lets assume the name “MyEditors”
4. Add an entry in the list of tiles to be display in the sub-key (type REG_MULTI_SZ):
HKLM\Software\Microsoft\MobilePC\MobilityCenter\TileOrder. The name has to correspond to the key name used before (here MyEditors). By removing a tile name from the list, this tile will disappear from the Mobility Center.
5. The following sub-keys in “Tiles\MyEditors” are required (all of type REG_EXPAND_SZ):

Key Name	Description	Content
TileName	Resource file, resource ID	%ProgramFiles%\MyTiles\MyTiles.dll,1010
Icon	Resource file, resource ID	%ProgramFiles%\MyTiles\MyTiles.dll,101
IconAction	any command	"%ProgramFiles%\Windows NT\Accessories\wordpad.exe"
IconToolTip	Resource file, resource ID	%ProgramFiles%\MyTiles\MyTiles.dll,1012
StatusText	Resource file, resource ID	%ProgramFiles%\MyTiles\MyTiles.dll,1013
ButtonAction	any command	"%windir%\system32\notepad.exe"
ButtonLabel	Resource file, resource ID	%ProgramFiles%\MyTiles\MyTiles.dll,1011

The click on the button opens the Notepad and the icon the Wordpad.

6. The Tile will only appear on the Mobility Center Window, if all the above resources are actually found in the given dll or exe file!

To use the example, just unpack the zip file and use the enclosed dll and registry file.

How to use the enclosed files

- Create a directory %ProgramFiles%\MyTiles
- Copy the enclosed *MyTiles.dll* to this directory
- Be brave and double click the *MyTiles.reg* in order to create the above entries in *HKLM\Software\Microsoft\MobilePC\MobilityCenter*
 - The registry file creates the entries for three tiles: MyEditors, MyControl, MySound
 - The OEMName is overwritten as well
- Enter the tile names (MyEditor, MyControl, MySound) you would like to see in the mobility center to *HKLM\Software\Microsoft\MobilePC\MobilityCenter\TileOrder*
 If the key does not exist yet, create it as REG_MULTI_SZ, or click on *TileOrder.reg*
- Use win+x to check the result

The created tiles allow to open standard Windows programs/panels: Notepad, Wordpad, Device Manager, Computer Manager, Sound recording and playback device control.

Customize the MyTiles DLL

To create your own tiles, you need the following:

- Icon with min. 32x32 pixel up to 256x256 pixel
- Program to modify and add strings and icons in MyTiles.dll (e.g. freeware ResEdit). The program IcoFx can be used to change and add icons as well

Afterwards you have to add an entry in *HKLM\Software\Microsoft\MobilePC\MobilityCenter\Tiles*. A template is provided with the file *template.reg*. This creates an entry called *MyOwnTile*, which can be adapted easily.

Enable Windows Mobility Center on Desktops

Create a new registry key in *HCU\Software\Microsoft\MobilePC\MobilityCenter* called *RunOnDesktop* (DWORD). Give this key a value of „1“.

Now the Mobility Center can be opened by typing *mbctr.exe* in a command window. You might want to add a shortcut for this. Check google how to do this! The program is located in the system32 folder of the windows installation (*c:\windows\system32\mbctr.exe*).

Remarks

All the above information and the enclosed MyTiles.dll and registry files are given to you without any warranty of correctness. Use and modify them at your own risk!

Enjoy!

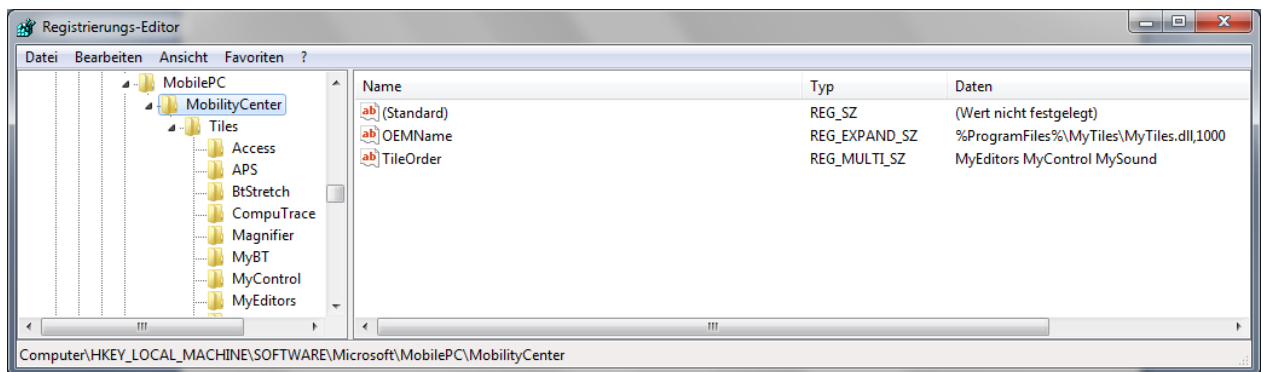


Figure 2: Registry entry *TileOrder* to enable tiles

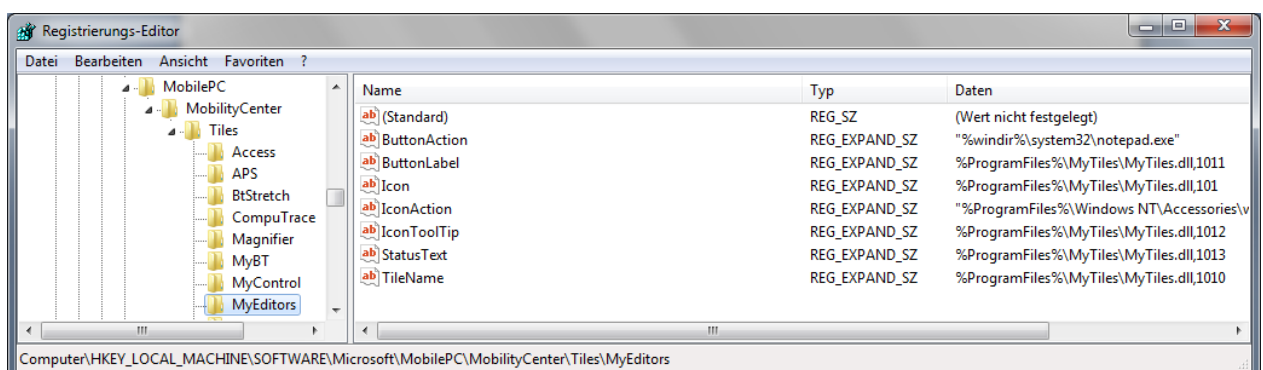


Figure 3: Content of tile *MyEditors* to open the Notepad or Wordpad