

# Houdini User's Guide





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# CHAPTER 1. INSTALLING HOUDINI

## INTRODUCTION

Identity theft cost Americans \$49.3 billion last year alone. Houdini is a quick and easy way to prevent identity theft, data loss, damage done by hackers, etc. Rather than simply lock your sensitive information or password protect it, Houdini makes it vanish altogether! A thief cannot steal what he or she does not know is there.

There has never been an easier way to keep private files REALLY private. Files stay hidden even if you turn on "View Hidden Files" in Windows Explorer. Your Recent Documents menu won't list your hidden files and Houdini runs completely in stealth mode, ensuring that other users on the same computer will not realize you are using Houdini to hide your valuable data. The best hackers in the industry are unable to tell you have anything hidden on your PC - even from the command prompt itself!

## INSTALLATION

Houdini installs in a few easy steps:

1. Download your licensed copy of Houdini and save to your desktop.
2. Locate and double-click the Houdini Windows Installer package (i.e. Houdini.msi)
3. Houdini will begin installing and you need only follow the directions on the screen.

**Note:** If you see a Windows warning during the installation process please disregard this warning and continue the installation process.

# CHAPTER 2. HIDING FOLDERS WITH HOUDINI

## GETTING STARTED

Houdini operates by hiding folders and directories that you choose. In order to use the program properly you must first create a list of folders you want to hide.

To add a folder to your list, click the "Add" button. Browse to the folder you want to hide and select it. Click "OK" to add that folder to your list.

Initially the folder will be listed as "Visible" in the right hand column. This means that the folder is able to be seen and accessed by anyone. In order to hide the folder, click the check box next to the folder and click the "Hide" button. Your folder is now hidden from view. No shortcuts that point to files in your hidden folder will work any more. If you turn on "View Hidden Folders" in Windows Explorer, the folder will still remain hidden. In fact, if you open Windows Explorer and view your folder while you're hiding it you will see it disappear entirely. To make hidden files visible again, check the box next to a hidden file and click the "Show" button. Your folder and all of the files in it will become visible again.

You can hide as many folders as you want, and hide or show multiple folders at a time: check the boxes next to any folders you want to show or hide, and then click the "Show" or "Hide" buttons. You can also use the "Select All" and "Deselect All" options in the "Action" menu. The action will be performed on all files added to Houdini .

The program will warn you if it sees that you are trying to hide a folder in the "Program Files" folder or "Windows" folder (not recommended, since it could cause problems with your operating system). The program will also not allow you to hide any folder that contains the program itself (otherwise, you would never be able to access it again). Houdini can be put into stealth mode and will not be seen by any users that do not know your password or hotkeys, so you do not need to hide Houdini itself.

Also, the program will not hide any folders that contain files you are currently working on. If you receive an error message when trying to hide a folder, be sure to close all applications that might be working on files in that folder.

To get the most out of Houdini, go to the options window and enable hotkeys and stealth mode. That will allow you to show and hide folders using only your keyboard. It's a quick and easy way to show your folders and hide them again with a few keystrokes.

## **MAIN WINDOW CONTROLS**

### **Folder List**

The folder list is where Houdini keeps track of all the folders you want to Hide/Show. To perform an action on a particular folder in your list, be sure to click the check box next to that folder first. The path to the folder is displayed in the "Folder" column. The status of the folder, hidden or visible, is displayed in the "Status" column. The folder list is automatically encrypted and saved whenever it is edited. The next time you open the program, the list will be exactly the same as it was when you closed the program.

### **Status Bar**

When you perform an action on your list of folders, such as showing or hiding them, the results will be displayed in the Status bar at the bottom of the window. Error messages will also be displayed there.

### **Add Button**

Adds folders to your list. Just browse to the folder you want, select it, and click "OK". You cannot add any folder that contains Houdini. You will be warned if you try to add a folder that resides in the Program Files or Windows directories.

### **Remove Button**

Removes any checked folders from your list. You can only remove folders whose status is "Visible".

### **Hide Button**

Hides any checked folders. They will disappear from your file system entirely. You will need to close any open files in the folder before hiding it.

### **Show Button**

Makes any checked folder visible.

### **Options Button**

Opens the Options window to configure password protection and hotkeys.

## USING THE MENUS

### File Menu

**Add Folder:** Adds a folder to your folder list

**Remove Selected Folders:** Removes any folder that is checked from your list

**Remove All Folders:** Removes all folders from your list

**Exit:** Exits Houdini

### Action Menu

**Show Selected Folders:** Shows any folder that is checked.

**Show All Folders:** Shows all folders, regardless of whether or not they are checked.

**Hide Selected Folders:** Hides any folder that is checked.

**Hide All Folders:** Hides all folders, regardless of whether or not they are checked.

**Select All:** Checks the check boxes next to all folders in your list.

**Deselect All:** Unchecks the check boxes next to all folders in your list.

**Options Menu:** Opens the window to display options for password protection and hotkeys.

**Help Menu:** Displays the Houdini help file.

**About Menu:** Displays your Houdini version number.

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR OPTIONS

### Automation Options

#### **Run at Windows startup**

When selected, the program will automatically run when you start your computer.

### Stealth Options

#### **Enter stealth mode when program starts**

When selected, the program will not become visible when Houdini is first started. You will need to use the CTRL + SHIFT + ALT + M hotkey (remember, the M stands for Maximize) to restore the program from stealth mode.

#### **Enter stealth mode when program minimizes**

When the program is minimized, instead of showing up on your taskbar it will disappear. You will need to use the CTRL + SHIFT + ALT + M hotkey (remember, the M stands for Maximize) to restore the program from stealth mode. Once in stealth mode Houdini itself will not be visible to any users.

### Password Options

#### **Enter password**

If you want enable a password, enter it here.

#### **Confirm password**

If you decided to enable a password, you must type the same password here or your password will not be accepted.

#### **Require password when program starts**

This will require a password when the program is started, but only when it is not started in stealth mode.

#### **Require password when using Hide All/Show All hotkeys**

This will require a password when you use the Hide All or Show All hotkeys. This is a good way to get a visual confirmation that your hotkeys are working properly.

#### **Require password when coming out of stealth mode**

This will require a hotkey when you use the CTRL + SHIFT + ALT + M hotkey (remember, the M stands for Maximize) to bring the program out of stealth mode.

## Hotkey Options

### **Enable Hide All Folders Hotkey**

If enabled, when you press CTRL + SHIFT + ALT + H (the H stands for Hide), the program will hide all the folders in your list. This hotkey will work whether or not the program is in stealth mode.

### **Enable Show All Folders Hotkey**

If enabled, when you press CTRL + SHIFT + ALT + S (the S stands for Show) the program will show all the folders in your list. This hotkey will work whether or not the program is in stealth mode.

## HOUDINI TIPS & TRICKS

If you want the program to run completely stealth, and control it using hotkeys do the following:

### **Create your list of folders to hide**

- Enable stealth mode when the program starts
- Enable stealth mode when the program is minimized
- Enable password protection when the program comes out of stealth mode
- Enable the Hide All/Show All hotkeys
- Enable password protection when using the Hide All/Show All hotkeys (optional, this will give you notification that your hotkeys are working properly, and help protect your hidden folders)

# CHAPTER 3. TROUBLESHOOTING HOUDINI

## COMMON PROBLEMS

### **What should I do if the program says that one of my folders is hidden or visible, but it's not?**

This can happen sometimes if Windows experiences an error while you attempt to Hide/Show a folder. Just right-click the entry that you are having trouble with and you will be given the option to toggle the status of that between Hidden and Visible.

Simply toggle the status and try to hide/show your folder again.

For example: you have a hidden folder that you attempt to make visible, and the program says it is "Visible" but it doesn't show up in Windows Explorer. Right-click the problem entry and select "Change to 'Hidden' status" (if an error occurred and this folder is not really visible).

The entry will be switched to "Hidden" status. Now, make sure the check mark next to your folder is checked and click the "Show" button. This time it should be made visible.

### **Houdini does not prompt for a password.**

After selecting to have Houdini require a password, it does not. This can happen from time to time.

There's a quick fix:

- If you are starting Houdini in stealth mode, you should instead check the option to require a password when coming out of stealth. Stealth overrides the initial password prompt.
- Make sure you are logged on to an account with access to modify the registry such as an Administrator level account.

### **I uninstalled the software before un hiding my files!**

To get your files back following these steps:

1. Open Windows Explorer
2. Go the folder that contained the hidden folder
3. In the address bar, add the folder name to the location
4. Then append "HIDDEN123456" to the end of the folder name like this:

Folder that contains the hidden folder  
c:\program files

Type the name of the hidden folder  
c:\program files\MyHiddenFolder

Append "HIDDEN123456" to the end of the folder name  
c:\program files\MyHiddenFolderHIDDEN123456

5. Now press enter.

That should bring up your files and you can move them to another folder. Please note that you must know the name of the folder you used Houdini to hide for you or this will not work.

**Houdini does not run at startup even though I selected that option.**

Try the following:

- Press Ctrl + Alt + Shift + M (all at the same time) to try to maximize Houdini. It may just be running in the background.
- Make sure you are logged on to an account with access to modify the registry.
- Make sure you are using the account you installed the software on.

## GETTING HELP

Oversight Technology offers many support options to licensed users.

**Support Center:** <http://www.oversightcorp.com/support/>



**FAQs:** The Houdini Frequently Asked Questions is kept updated and can answer most questions right away. Please visit the Houdini FAQs at <http://www.oversightcorp.com/support/faqs-houdini.php>



**User Guides:** Check to make sure you have the most recent version of this guide and download manuals for other Oversight Technology products.



**Help Desk:** Still need help? Open a ticket and a support representative will resolve your problem within 24 hours. Visit the help desk at <http://www.oversightcorp.com/helpdesk/>