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SECURE YOUR PC PART 1 - USER ACCOUNTS

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USER ACCOUNTS

In this section different user account types are explained, what each account type is for and how to set them up.

If you don't want to read the next section, here's the short version:

> *Use a standard account pretty much all the time. Only use an administrator account when you have to. Which is rarely.*

WHAT IS A USER ACCOUNT?

Windows allows for the creation of accounts for multiple users on a single machine. Each user account can be configured and customized according to the needs and tastes of each individual user. Screen savers, internet favorites, desktop wallpapers, user-specific files are all stored separately for each account. This means each user can have a personalized version of Windows.

There are a few different types of user accounts but this guide will focus on standard accounts (aka limited accounts) and administrator accounts.

Good practice dictates that you should only use an administrator account when you want to make system-wide changes like installing new hardware or software, accessing files in secure locations (like the Windows and Program Files folders) making configuration changes to Automatic Updates or the Windows Firewall or creating new accounts. Think of this account like rock climbing without using any safety equipment. You could climb that vertical cliff face if you want, but one slip could mean disaster.

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Standard accounts should be used for day to day tasks like creating documents, surfing the internet, listening to music and so on. A standard account is still able to make changes to personal settings like display settings, screensavers, wallpaper, power management, accessibility options and use feature like Remote Desktop to connect to other computers.

The main benefit of using a standard account is that is can help protect your computer. It prevents users from making changes that can damage the computer like deleting programs or files that Windows needs to work properly.

So, without further ado, roll up your sleeves, put on some goggles and a lab coat, light your Bunsen burner and let's get started.
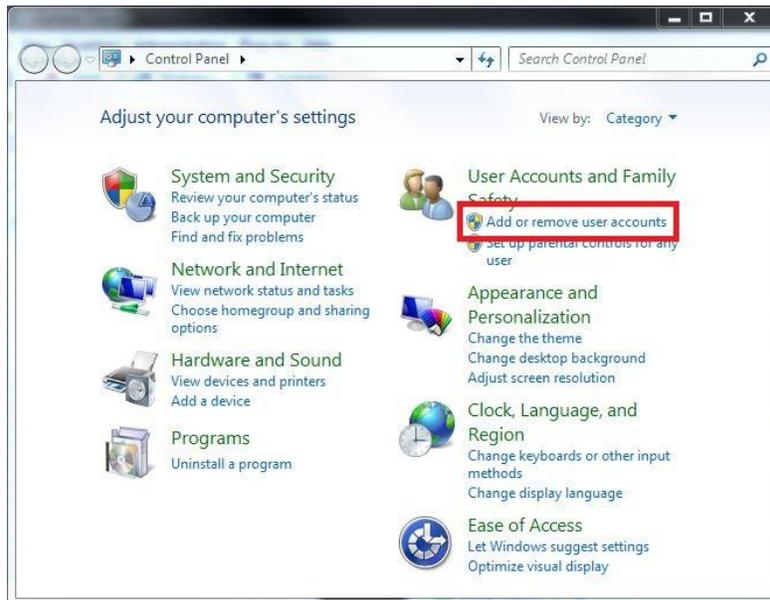
HOW TO SET UP AN ADMINISTRATOR ACCOUNT

WINDOWS VISTA & WINDOWS 7

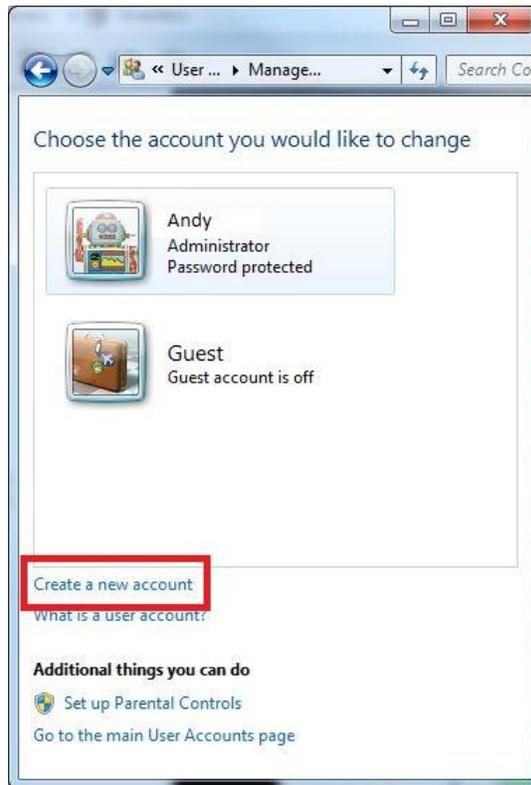Use this account for administrative tasks only!
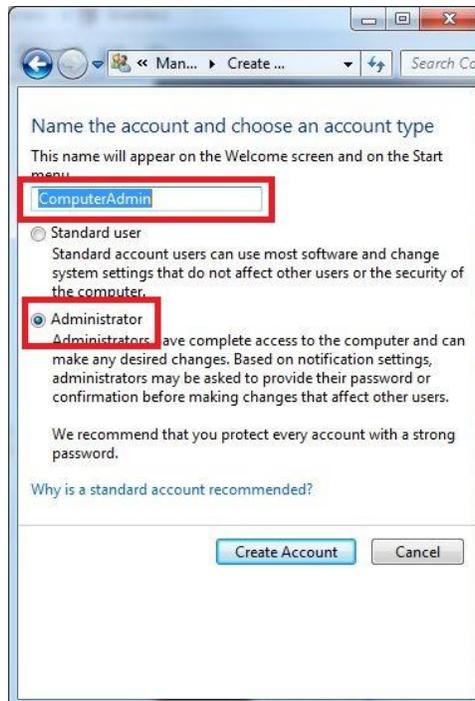
- Click **Start** -> **Control Panel**

- Click on **Add or remove user accounts**

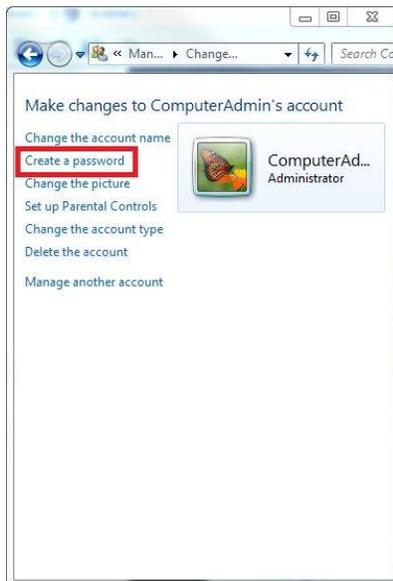- Click on **Create a new account**

- Name the account appropriately (note **Administrator** cannot be used to name the account since its already in use)
- Select **Administrator** as shown
- Click **Create Account**

- Now we need to set up a password for this account. Click on the new administrator account you created.

- Click on **Create a Password**

- Click on **How to create a strong password**
    - *Read the guide*
- Enter a password and confirm it in the box below
    - *Optional*
        - *Read **What is a password hint?***
        - *Enter a password hint*
- Click on **Create password**

- You can see now that the account now has a password.
- Click on **Manage another account** to return to the user accounts screen or close the window to finish.
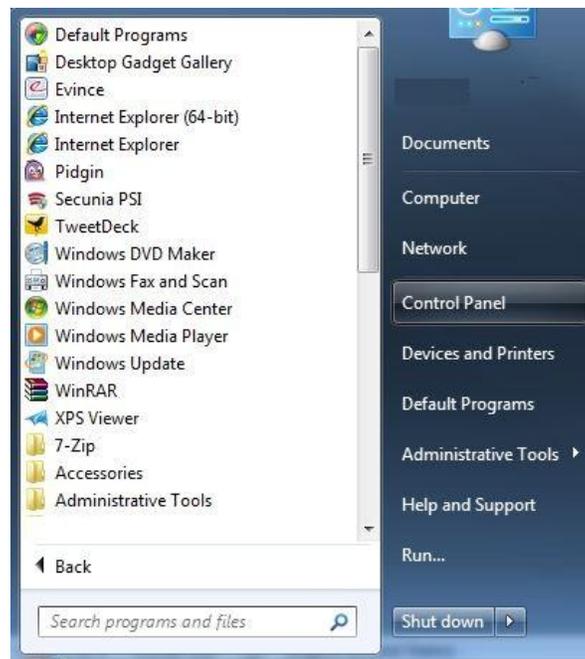
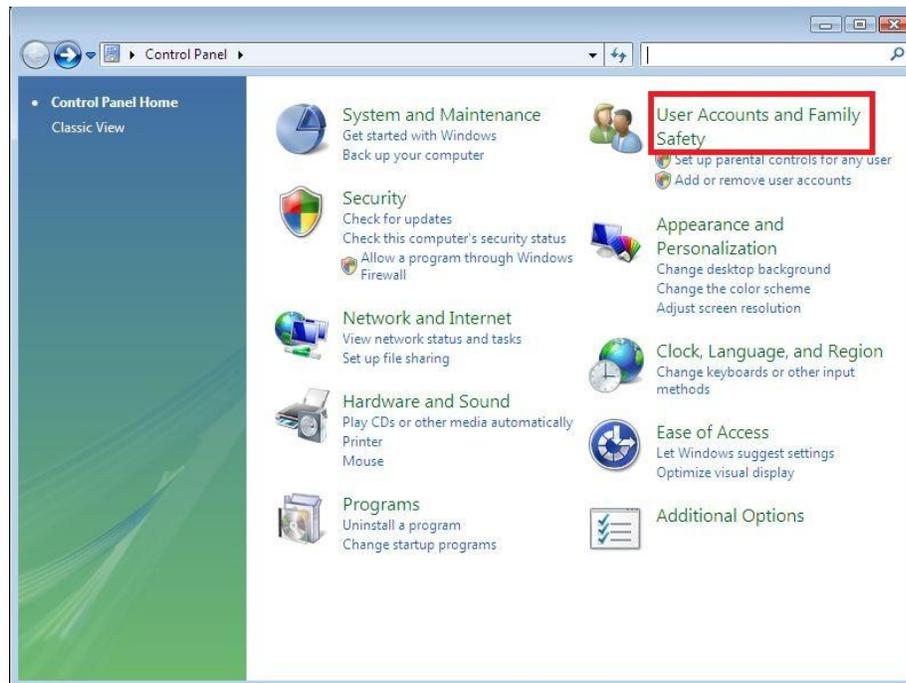## HOW TO CONVERT AN ADMINISTRATOR ACCOUNT TO A STANDARD ACCOUNT

WINDOWS VISTA & WINDOWS 7

If your main account has been set up as an administrative account, you should change it to a standard account. Here's how:

- Log in using the administrator account you created above
- Click **Start** -> **Control Panel**

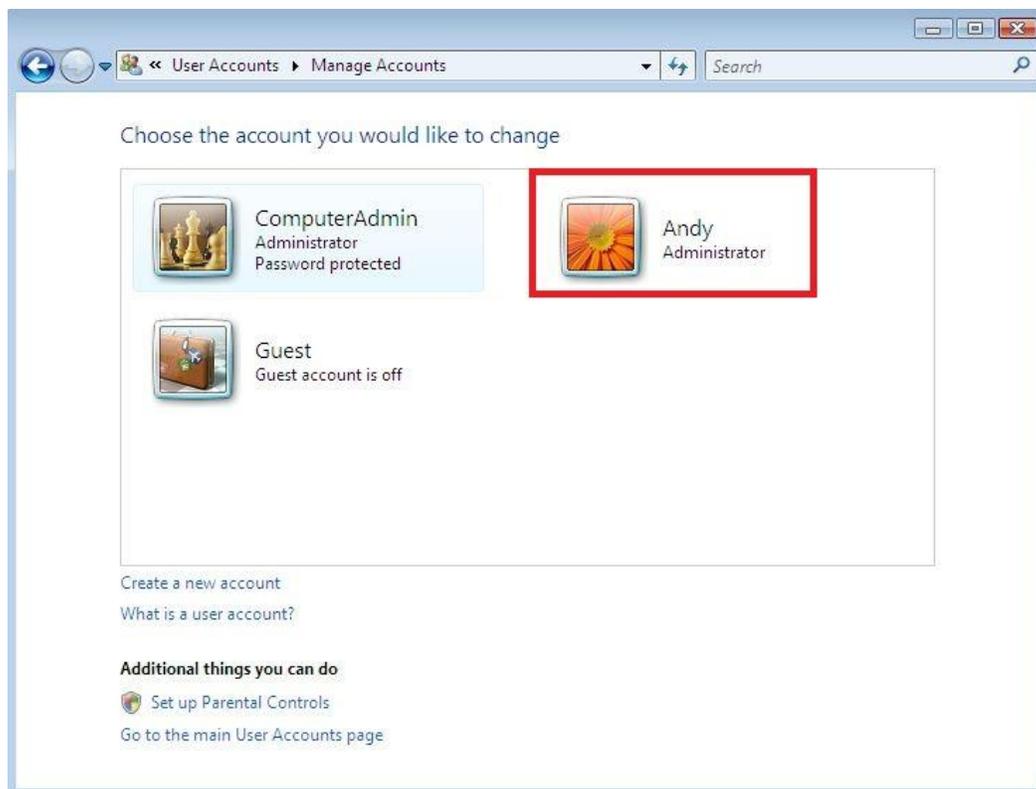- Click on User Accounts and Family Safety
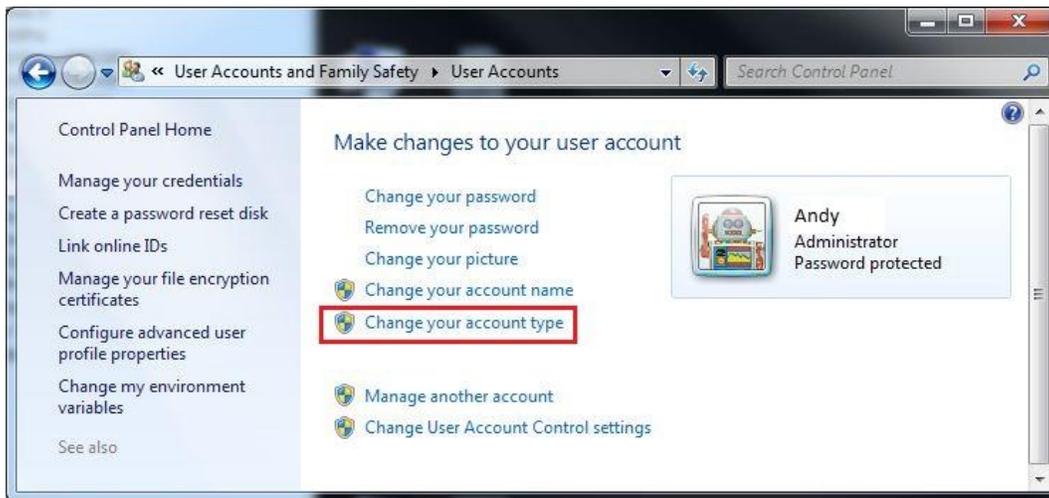

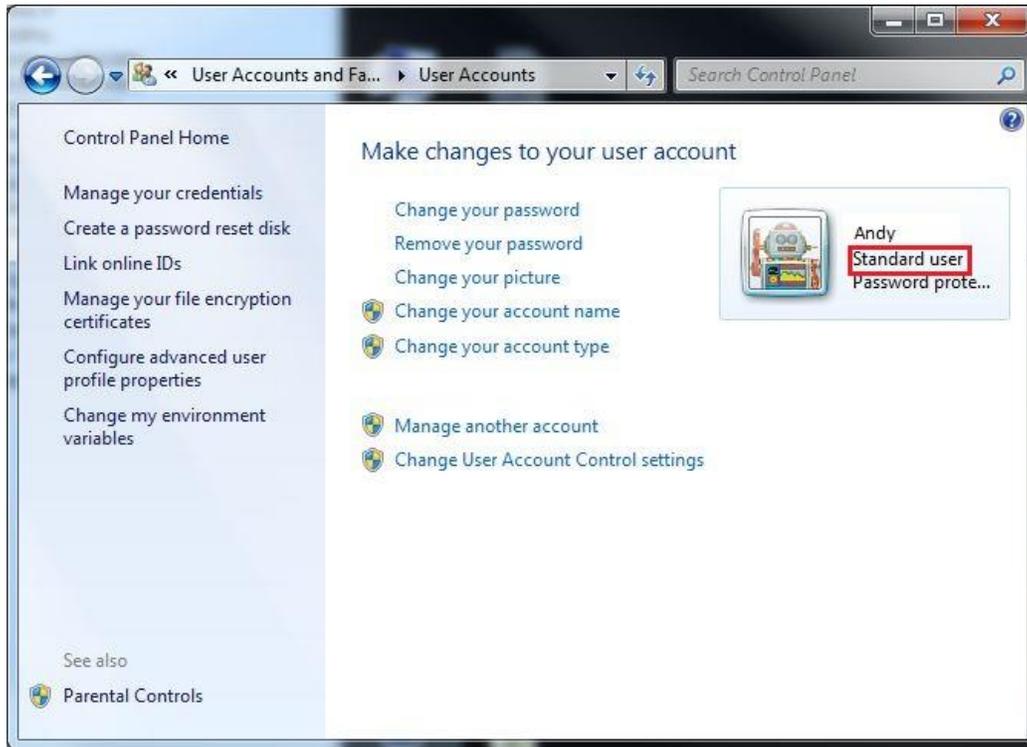- Click on **User accounts**

- Select **Manage Another Account**

- Click on the account you wish to change

- Select **Change your user account type**

- This account is now a standard user account. Done!
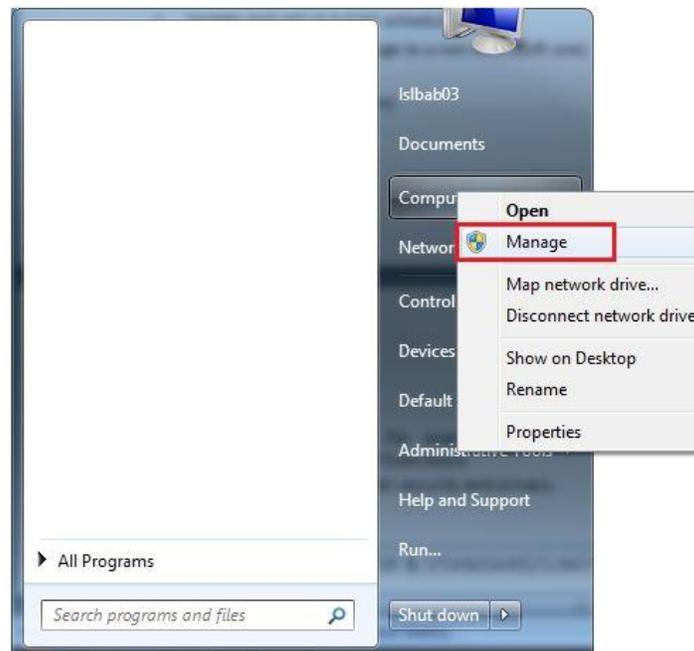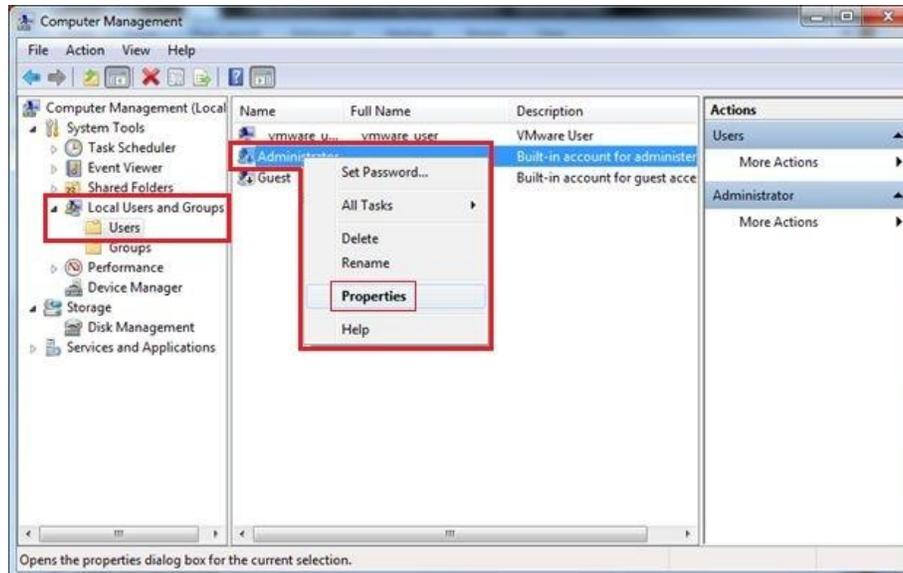
HOW TO SECURE THE BUILT IN ADMINISTRATOR ACCOUNT

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HOW TO VERIFY BUILT IN ADMINISTRATOR ACCOUNT IS DISABLED
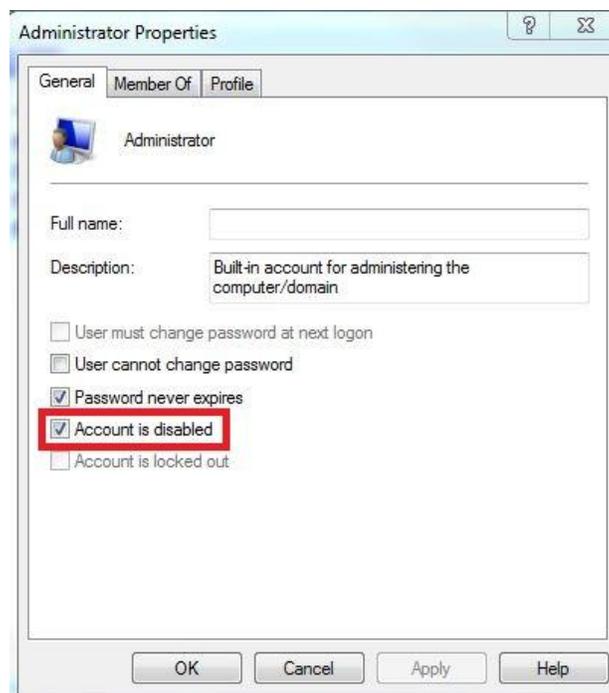
- Click **Start** –> Right click on **Computer** -> Click **Manage**

- Click on the triangle beside Local Users and Groups to expand
- Click on Users
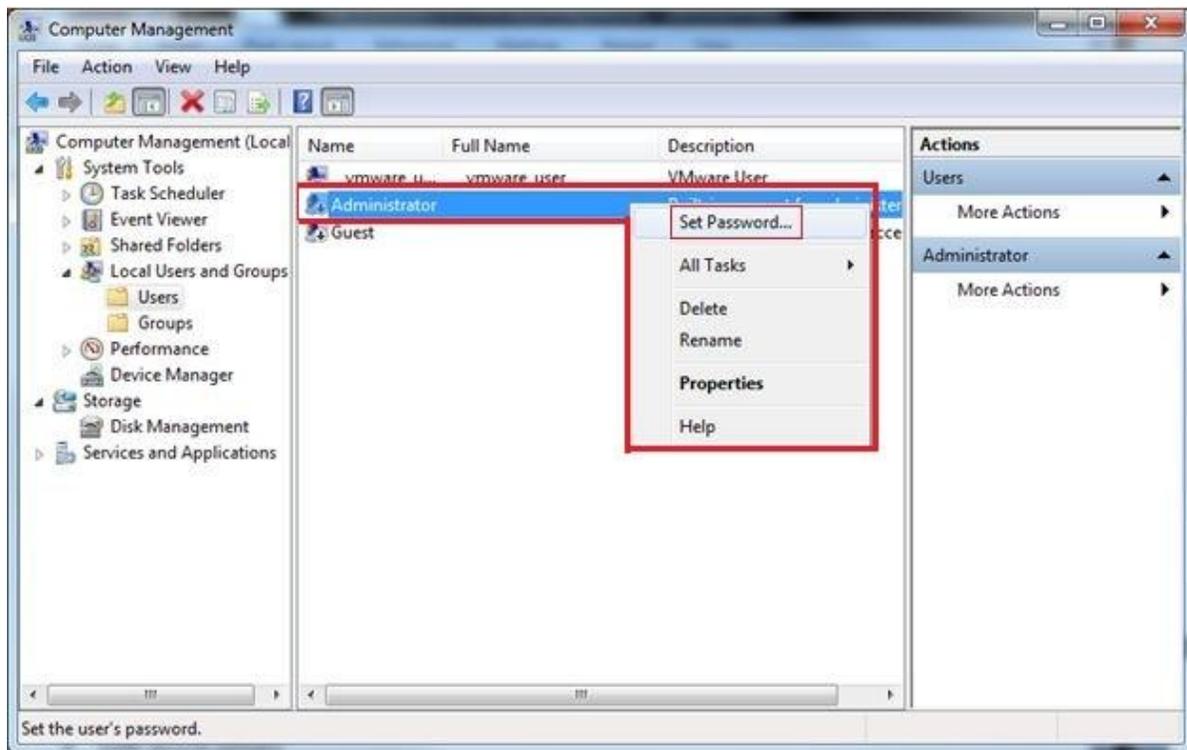- Right click on **Administrator**
- Click Properties

- Verify that the account is disabled by placing a checkbox as shown. Click ok when done.

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HOW TO SET A PASSWORD FOR THE BUILT-IN ADMINISTRATOR ACCOUNT

- Right click on **Administrator** and **Set Password**

- Read the text in the window.
- Click on **Proceed** when ready

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- Type in the new password and confirm it in the box below. Click OK when done

- Click **OK**. Done!

HOW TO SET UP A STANDARD ACCOUNT FOR ALL USERS

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- Log in using the administrator account you created.
- Follow the instructions for creating an administrator.
- When naming the account and choosing the account type, select **Standard** account.