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## User Accounts

The available user names are created automatically during the installation of Windows XP but you can add or delete users at any time. Click the Start button, click Control Panel, switch to the Category view, and select User Accounts. Choose the desired task such as creating a new account or changing an existing account. You can also click the hyperlink to learn more about user accounts. Do not expect, however, to be able to modify user accounts in a school setting.

## Implement a Screen Saver

A screen saver is a delightful way to personalize your computer and a good way to practice with basic commands in Windows XP. This is typically not something you can do in a laboratory setting, but it is well worth doing on your own machine. Right click a blank area of the desktop, click the Properties command to open the Display Properties dialog box, then click the Screen Saver tab. Click the down arrow in the Screen Saver list box, choose the desired screen saver, then set the option to wait an appropriate amount of time before the screen saver appears. Click OK to accept the settings and close the dialog box.

## Designating the Devices on a System

The first (usually only) floppy drive is always designated as drive A. (A second floppy drive, if it were present, would be drive B.) The first hard (local) disk on a system is always drive C, whether or not there are one or two floppy drives. Additional local drives if any, such as a zip (removable storage) drive, a network drive, a CD and/or a DVD, are labeled from D on.

Minimizing Versus Closing an Application

Minimizing a folder or an application leaves the object open in memory and available at the click of the taskbar button. Closing it, however, removes the object from memory, which also causes it to disappear from the taskbar. The advantage of minimizing an application or folder is that you can return to it immediately with the click of the mouse. The disadvantage is that too many open applications will eventually degrade the performance of a system.

## Formatting a Floppy Disk

All disks have to be formatted before they can hold data. The formatting process divides a disk into concentric circles called tracks, and then further divides each track into sectors. You don’t have to worry about formatting a hard disk, as that is done at the factory prior to the machine being sold. You typically don’t even have to format a floppy disk, since most floppies today are already formatted when you buy them. Nevertheless it is very easy to format a floppy disk and it is a worthwhile exercise.

## The Favorites Button

Do you find yourself continually searching for the same information? If so, you can make life a little easier by adding the page to a list of favorite help topics. Start the Help and Support Center, use the Index button to display the desired information in the right pane, and then click the Add to Favorites button to add the topic to your list of favorites. You can return to the topic at any time by clicking the Favorites button at the top of the Help and Support window, then double clicking the bookmark to display the information.

## The Task Manager

The Start button is the normal way to exit Windows. Occasionally, however, an application may “hang”— in which case you want to close the problem application but continue with your session. Press Ctrl+Alt+Del to display the Windows Task Manager dialog box, then click the Applications tab. Select the problem application (it will most likely say “not responding), and click the End Task button. This capability is often disabled in a school setting.

## A New Internet Explorer

The installation of Windows XP automatically installs a new version of Internet Explorer. Pull down the Help menu and click the About Internet Explorer command to display the current release (version 6.0). Click OK to close the About Internet Explorer window. The Help About command works in all Windows applications.

**Remember the Location**

It’s easy to download a file from the Web. The only tricky part, if any, is remembering where you have saved the file. This exercise is written for a laboratory setting, and thus we specified drive A as the destination, so that you will have the file on a floppy disk at the end of the exercise. If you have your own computer, however, it’s faster to save the file to the desktop or in a temporary folder on drive C. Just remember where you save the file so that you can access it after it has been downloaded.

## Downloading a File

Software and other files are typically compressed (made smaller) to reduce the amount of storage space the files require on disk and/or the time it takes to download the files. In essence, you download a compressed file (which may contain multiple individual files), then you uncompress (expand) the file on your local drive in order to access the individual files. After the file has been expanded it is no longer needed and can be deleted.

## Sort by Name, Date, File Type, or Size

Files can be displayed in ascending or descending sequence by name, date modified, file type, or size, by clicking the appropriate column heading. Click Size, for example, to display files in the order of their size. Click the column heading a second time to reverse the sequence; that is, to switch from ascending to descending, and vice versa.

## The Document, Not the Application

Windows is document-oriented, which means that you are able to think in terms of the document rather than application that created it. You can still open a document in traditional fashion, by starting the application that created the document, then using the File Open command in that program to retrieve the document. It’s often easier, however, to open the document from within a folder by double clicking its icon. Windows will start the associated application and then open the document for you.

## The Plus and Minus Sign

Any drive, be it local or on the network, may be expanded or collapsed to display or hide its folders. A minus sign indicates that the drive has been expanded and that its folders are visible. A plus sign indicates the reverse; that is, the device is collapsed and its folders are not visible. Click either sign to toggle to the other. Clicking a plus sign, for example, expands the drive, then displays a minus sign next to the drive to indicate that the folders are visible. Clicking a minus sign has the reverse effect; i.e., it collapses the drive, hiding its folders.

## Navigating the Hierarchy

~~Click the Up button on the Standard Buttons toolbar to move up one level in the hierarchy in the left pane and display the associated contents in the right pane. Click the Up button when you are viewing the New Car folder, for example, and you are returned to drive A. Click the Up button a second time and you will see the contents of My Computer. Note, too, how the contents of the Address bar changes each time you view a different folder in the right pane.~~

## Keyboard Shortcuts

Most people begin with the mouse, but add keyboard shortcuts as they become more proficient. Ctrl+B, Ctrl+I, and Ctrl+U are shortcuts to boldface, italicize and underline respectively. Ctrl+X (the X is supposed to remind you of a pair of scissors), Ctrl+C, and Ctrl+V correspond to Cut, Copy, and Paste, respectively. Ctrl+Home and Ctrl+End move to the beginning or end of a document. These shortcuts are not unique to Microsoft Word, but are recognized in virtually every Windows application.

## The My Documents Folder

The My Documents folder is created by default with the installation of Windows XP. There is no requirement that you store your documents in this folder, but it is convenient, especially for beginners who may lack the confidence to create their own folders. The My Documents folder is also helpful in a laboratory environment where the network administrator may prevent you from modifying the desktop and/or from creating your own folders on drive C, in which case you will have to use the My Documents folder.

## Two Ways to Recover a File

The Undo command is present in Windows Explorer as well as application programs such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Thus, you do not need to resort to the Recycle Bin (which is described in step 7) to recover a deleted file provided you execute the Undo command immediately (within a few commands) after the Delete command was issued. Some operations cannot be undone (in which case the Undo command will be dimmed), but ***Undo is always worth a try.***

## Customize Windows Explorer

Increase or decrease the size of the left pane within Windows Explorer by dragging the vertical line separating the left and right panes in the appropriate direction. You can also drag the right border of the various column headings (Name, Size, Type, and Modified) in the right pane to increase or decrease the width of the column and see more or less information in that column. And best of all, you can click any column heading to display the contents of the selected folder in sequence by that column. Click the heading a second time and the sequence changes from ascending to descending and vice versa.

**Keep the View**

Once you set the desired view in a folder, and determine how to group its objects, you may want to display every other folder according to those parameters. Pull down the Tools menu, click the Folder Options command, and click the View tab. Click the button to Apply to All folders, then click Yes when prompted to confirm. Click OK to close the Folder Options dialog box. The next time you open another folder it will appear in the same view as the current folder.

## Switching Users versus Logging Off

Windows XP gives you the choice of switching users or logging off. Switching users leaves all of your applications open, but it relinquishes control of the computer to another user. This lets you subsequently log back on (after the new user logs off) and take up exactly where you were. This is potentially dangerous because anyone can get into your open applications if you do not require a password when you log on. Logging off, on the other hand, closes all of your applications and ends the session, but it leaves the computer running at full power and available for some one else to log on. This is the typical option you would select in a laboratory setting at school.

## The Quick Launch Toolbar

The Quick Launch toolbar is a customizable toolbar that executes a program or display the desktop with a single click. Right click a blank area of the taskbar, point to (or click) the Toolbars command, then check the Quick Launch toolbar to toggle its display on off. You can add additional icons to the Quick Launch toolbar by locating the associated program in Windows explorer and dragging its icon to the toolbar.

## Working with Shortcuts

You can work with a shortcut icon just as you can with any other icon. To move a shortcut, drag its icon to a different location on the desktop. To rename a shortcut, right click its icon, click the Rename command, type the new name, then press the enter key. To delete a shortcut, right click its icon, click the Delete command, and click Yes in response to the confirming prompt. Deleting a shortcut deletes just the shortcut and not the object to which the shortcut refers. Be sure, however, that the icon contains the jump arrow. Deleting an icon without the jump arrow deletes the object which is not what you intend to do.

## The Arrange Icons Command

The most basic way to arrange the icons on your desktop is to click and drag an icon from one place to another. It may be convenient, however, to have Windows arrange the icons for you. Right click a blank area of the desktop, click (or point to) the Arrange Icons By command, then click Auto Arrange. All existing shortcuts, as well as any new shortcuts will be automatically aligned along the left edge of the desktop. Execute the Auto Arrange command a second time to cancel the command, and enable yourself to manually arrange the icons.

You Don’t Need the Complete Filename

You can enter only a portion of the filename and the Search Companion will still find the file(s). If, for example, you’re searching for the file “Marketing Homework”, you can enter the first several letters such as “Marketing” and Windows will return all files whose name begins with the letters you’ve entered; e.g., “Marketing Homework” and “Marketing Term Paper”.

## Shortcut Wizard

Shortcuts can be created in many ways including the use of a wizard. Right click a blank area of the desktop, click (or point) to the New command, then choose Shortcut to start the wizard. Enter the Web address in the indicated text box (or click the Browse button to locate a local file). Click Next, then enter the name for the shortcut as it is to appear on the desktop. Click the Finish button to exit the Wizard. The new shortcut should appear on the desktop.

## The Rename Command

Every file or folder is assigned a name at the time it is created, but you may want to change that name at some point in the future. Right click the file or a folder whose name you want to change to display a context-sensitive menu, and then click the Rename command. The name of the folder will be highlighted with the insertion point at the end of the name. Enter (or edit) the new (existing) name and press enter.

**Select Multiple Files**

Selecting (clicking) one file automatically deselects the previously selected file. You can, however, select multiple files by clicking the first file, then pressing and holding the Ctrl key as you click each additional file. Use the Shift key to select multiple files that are adjacent to one another by clicking the icon of the first file, then pressing and holding the Shift key as you click the icon of the last file.

## Right Click and Drag

The result of dragging a file with the left mouse button depends on whether the source and destination folders are on the same or different drives. Dragging a file to a folder on a different drive copies the file, whereas dragging the file to a folder on the same drive moves the file. If you find this hard to remember, and most people do, click and drag with the right mouse button to display a context-sensitive menu asking whether you want to copy or move the file. This simple tip can save you from making a careless (and potentially serious) error. Use it!

## Modify the Start Menu

***Click and drag a shortcut icon to the Start button to place the*** shortcut on the Start menu. It does not appear that anything has happened, but the shortcut will appear at the top of the Start menu. Click the Start button to display the Start menu then press the Esc key to exit the menu without executing a command. You can delete any item from the menu by right clicking the item and clicking the Unpin from the Start menu command.

## Updating your Passport

You can modify the information in your passport profile at any time. Open the Control Panel, click User Accounts, select your account, then click the command to Change Your .NET passport. You can change your password, change the question that will remind you about your password should you forget it, and/or change the information that you authorize the passport service to share with others.

## The Show Desktop Button

The Show Desktop button or command minimizes every open window and returns you immediately to the desktop. You can get to this command in different ways, most easily, by clicking the Show Desktop icon on the Quick Launch toolbar. The button functions as a toggle switch. Click it once and all windows are minimized. Click it a second time and the open windows are restored to their position on the desktop. If you do not see the Show Desktop button, right click a blank area of the taskbar to display a context-sensitive menu and click the Show the Desktop command.

## Shared Folders versus Personal Folders

Windows XP automatically creates a unique My Documents folder for every user, which in turn contains a unique My Pictures folder and My Music folders within the My Documents folder. These folders are private and cannot be accessed by other users. Windows also provides a shared documents folder that is accessible to every user on a system. You can protect your files by storing them in you’re my Documents folder. Conversely, you can share your files with others by storing them in a shared folder.

**Other Media Players**

If you double click a music (MP3) file and a program other than Windows Media starts to play it is because your system has another media player as its default program. You can still use the Windows Media Player, but you will have to start the program explicitly from the Start menu. Once the Media Player is open, pull down the File menu and click the Open command, then select the music file you want to play.

## The Media Guide

Click the Media Guide button at the left of the Media Player to connect to the Internet and display the home page of the Windows Media Site. You can also get there by starting Internet Explorer and entering windowsmedia.com in the address bar. Either way, you will be connected to the Internet and can search the Web for media files and/or play clips from your favorite movie.

## Change the View

***Click the down arrow next to the Views button on the Standard toolbar*** to change the way files are displayed within a folder. The Details view provides the most information and includes the filename, file type, file size, and the date that the file was created or last modified. (Additional attributes are also possible.) Other views are more visual. The Thumbnails view displays a miniature image of the file and is best used with clip art, photographs, or PowerPoint presentations. The Filmstrip view is used with photographs only.

Change the Resolution

The resolution of a monitor refers to the number of pixels (picture elements or dots) that are displayed at one time. The higher the resolution, the more pixels are displayed, and hence you see more of a document on the screen at one time. You can change the resolution at any time. Right click the desktop, click the Properties command to show the Display Properties dialog box, then click the Settings tab. Drag the slider bar to the new resolution, then click OK.

**Change Your Status in Windows Messenger**

Any one on your contact list knows immediately when you log on; thus, the larger your contact list, the more likely you are to be engaged in idle chit chat when you have real work to do. You can avoid unwanted conversations without being rude by changing your status. Click the down arrow next to your name in the Messenger window and choose a different icon. You can appear offline or simply indicate that you are busy. Either way you will be able to get your work done.

E-mail versus Instant Messaging

E-mail and instant messaging are both Internet communication services, but there are significant differences. E-mail does not require both participants to be online at the same time. E-mail messages are also permanent and do not disappear when you exit your e-mail program. Instant messaging, however, requires both participants to be online. Its conversations are not permanent and disappear when you end the session.

## Support Online

Microsoft provides extensive online support in a variety of formats. Start at the Windows XP home page ([www.microsoft.com/windowsxp](http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp)) then click the Support button to see what is available. You will be able to search the Microsoft Knowledge Base for detailed information on virtually any subject. You can also post questions and participate in threaded discussions in various newsgroups. Support is available for every Microsoft product.