

Microsoft Windows: The Basics

Part 3

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This is the third part of our three-part article on the Windows operating system. When you understand the basics of Windows, you can move around easily in most Windows-based programs and documents.

The Windows Desktop

The Windows operating system enables your computer to communicate and process information. It provides an interface between your programs and the computer's hardware by supplying an easy way to do all of the following:

- start programs using a graphical interface (see **Figure 1**)
- multitask (i.e., run more than one program at a time)
- switch between programs
- view more than one program or document at a time
- work with files and folders

- restart Windows or shut down the PC.
- Clicking the Start button displays the Start menu, which allows you to do the following:
 - access all programs installed on your PC
 - access the utilities in Control Panel for customizing your system
 - access Windows Help files

- search for files and folders available to you
- install and configure printers and fax machines.

Tip: Easy ways to open the Start menu are to press the Windows key on your keyboard or press Ctrl + Esc.

The Quick Launch toolbar is usually to the right of the Start button. It also allows easy access to commonly used

Figure 1. The Windows Desktop

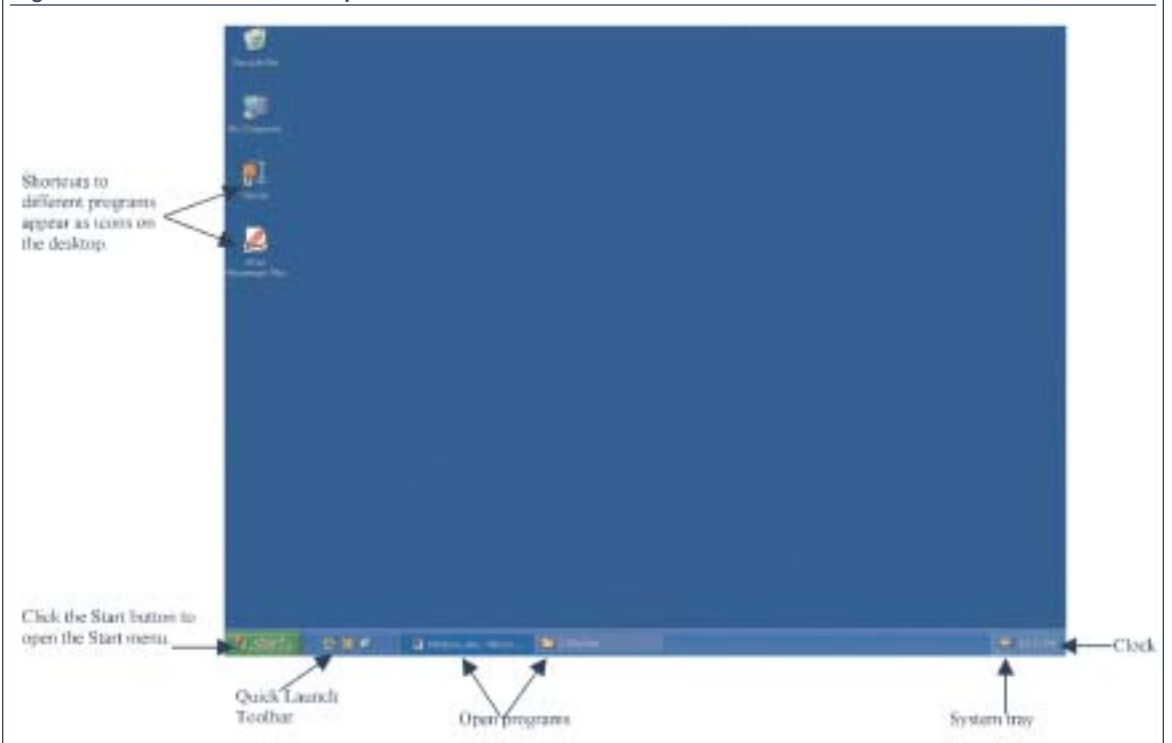


Figure 2. Create Shortcut Wizard

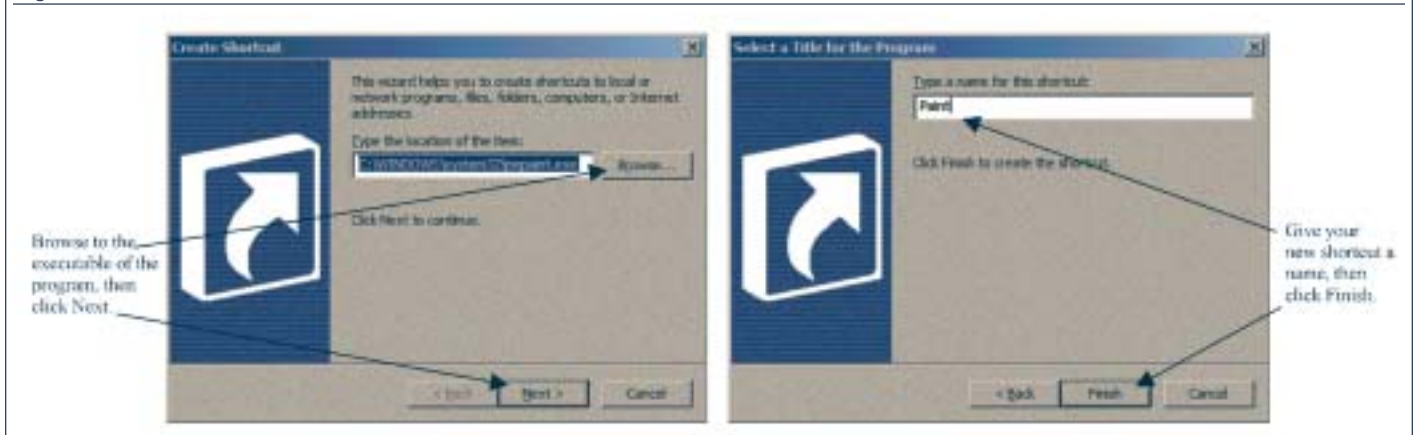


Figure 3. Command to Tile Two Windows

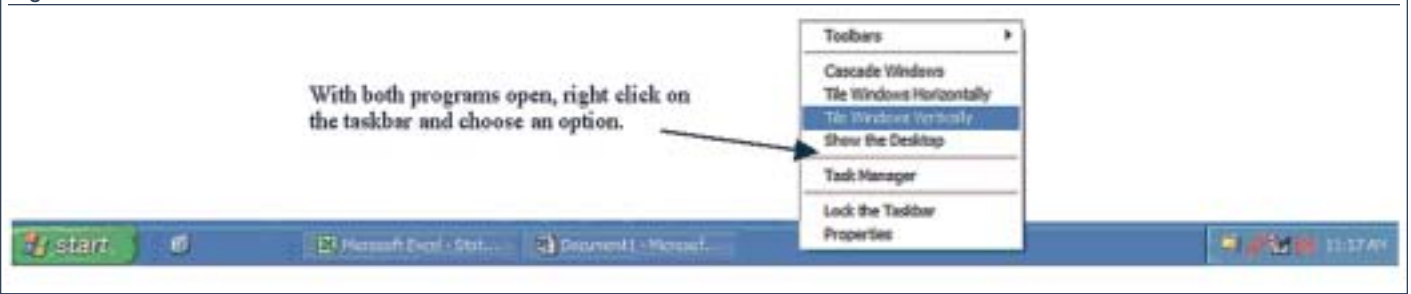
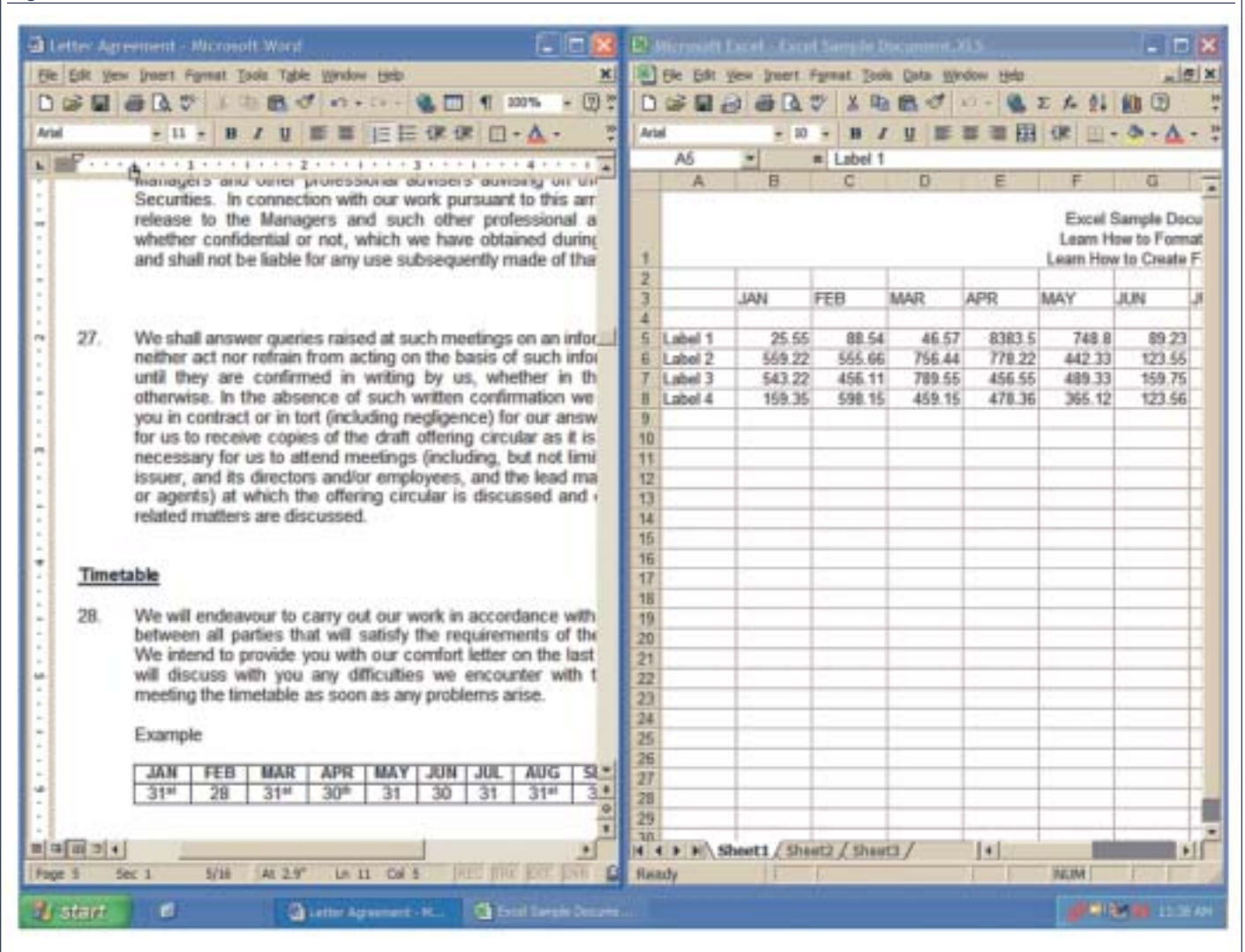


Figure 4. Two Tiled Windows



programs. To add a program to the Quick Launch toolbar, open the Quick Launch folder by right clicking an empty area of the Quick Launch toolbar and choosing Open Folder from the shortcut menu. From the File menu, choose New, and from the submenu, choose Shortcut. Follow the prompts of the Create Shortcut wizard (as shown in **Figure 2**). You can also

click and drag an icon from the desktop to the Quick Launch toolbar.

In newer versions of Windows, you may need to unlock the taskbar before you can add to the Quick Launch toolbar. To unlock the taskbar, right click on an empty area of the taskbar and clear the check next to Lock the Taskbar.

Tip. If the Quick Launch toolbar is

not displayed, right click an empty area on the taskbar, point to Toolbars, then click Quick Launch. In newer versions of Windows, you might need to unlock the taskbar before you see the Toolbars option.

The System tray is located in the Windows taskbar, usually at the bottom right corner next to the clock. It

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contains miniature icons for easy access to system functions such as antivirus settings, network settings, printer, modem, sound volume, battery status, and more. Double click or right click an icon to view and access the details and controls.

The taskbar is useful for seeing what programs are currently running on your computer, accessing any of the programs at any time, and managing the appearance of each program's window on your desktop. You can click any of the buttons on the taskbar to make that program the active window on your desktop. You can also right click any of the buttons to minimize, maximize, move, resize, or close that program's window.

Tip: An easy way to switch programs is to press and hold the Alt key, then press the tab key until you get to the desired program (Alt + Tab).

You can move the taskbar from a horizontal edge to a vertical edge or vice versa by clicking an empty part of the taskbar and holding down the left mouse button while dragging the taskbar to the edge of the screen you prefer. In newer versions of Windows, you might need to unlock the taskbar before you can move it.

To change the size of the taskbar, move the cursor over the edge of the taskbar until you see a double-headed arrow. Hold the left mouse button down and drag the edge until the taskbar is the size you want it to be, then release the mouse button.

To customize other features of the taskbar, right click on an empty part of the taskbar and, from the Shortcut menu, select Properties.

Adding a Shortcut to the Desktop

You may want to place a shortcut on your desktop for the most commonly used programs. There are several ways to do that. If you are running Windows 98 or above, from the Start menu, choose Programs, then right click on the program for which you would like a desktop shortcut. From the shortcut menu, choose Send

Table 1. Keyboard Techniques

To extend a selection	Press
One character to the right	Shift + Right arrow
One character to the left	Shift + Left arrow
To the end of a word	Ctrl + Shift + Right arrow
To the beginning of a word	Ctrl + Shift + Left arrow
To the end of a line	Shift + End
To the beginning of a line	Shift + Home
One line down	Shift + Down arrow
One line up	Shift + Up arrow
To the end of a paragraph	Ctrl + Shift + Down arrow
To the beginning of a paragraph	Ctrl + Shift + Up arrow
One screen down	Shift + Page Down
One screen up	Shift + Page Up
To the end of a window	Ctrl + Alt + Page Down
To the beginning of a document	Ctrl + Shift + Home
To select the entire document	Ctrl + A

Table 2. How to Select Using the Mouse

To select	Do this
Any amount of text	Hold the left mouse button while dragging over the text.
A word	Double click the word.
A line	Click once in the left margin area (when you see the right-pointing arrow).
Multiple lines	Click to the left of a line with a right-pointing pointer and drag up or down.
A sentence	Hold down CTRL, and then click anywhere in the sentence.
A paragraph	Triple click in the paragraph. Or move the pointer to the left of the paragraph until it changes to a right-pointing arrow, then double click.
Multiple paragraphs	Move the pointer to the left of the paragraph until it changes to a right-pointing arrow, then double click and drag up or down.
A large block of text	Click at the start of the selection, scroll to the end of the selection, then hold down SHIFT and click.
An entire document	Move the pointer to the left of any document text until it changes to a right-pointing arrow, then triple click.
A graphic	Click on the graphic.
To deselect	Single click anywhere on the selection or press one of the arrow keys on the keyboard.

To, Desktop. If the program is not on the Start menu, right click on an empty area of the desktop. From the Short-cut menu, choose New, and from the submenu, choose Shortcut. Follow the prompts of the Create Shortcut wizard shown in Figure 2.

Once you have finished, the shortcut will appear on the desktop.

Tiling Two Windows

Have you ever wanted to display two programs side by side on the desktop so you could copy and paste between them? To do this, simply open both programs, then right click on the taskbar and choose Tile Windows Vertically.

Figure 3 shows the result. With both programs visible, it is easier to

copy and paste between them. To determine the active window, look for the darker Title bar. In Figure 4, Word is the active Window.

To tile multiple documents from the same program, look in the program's Window menu for an Arrange or Tile command.

Tip: To bring a tiled program or document to full screen, click the Maximize button.

Selecting Text or Objects in Windows

Before performing an operation on an object, the user must select it (usually by clicking), to distinguish it from other objects. Selecting the object to be operated on is a fundamental

characteristic of the Windows interface. For example, before you can copy an object or text to the clipboard, it must be selected.

To select consecutive objects in a list

- click on the first object and hold down the Shift key while you click on the last object; or
- click on the first object, hold down the Shift key, and press the down arrow until all objects are selected.

To select nonconsecutive objects in a list, click on the first object and hold

down the Ctrl key while you click on additional objects.

The keyboard techniques shown in **Table 1** can be used in many text-based programs such as Word, WordPad, Notepad, WordPerfect, and e-mail. To select text using the mouse, use the techniques listed in **Table 2**.

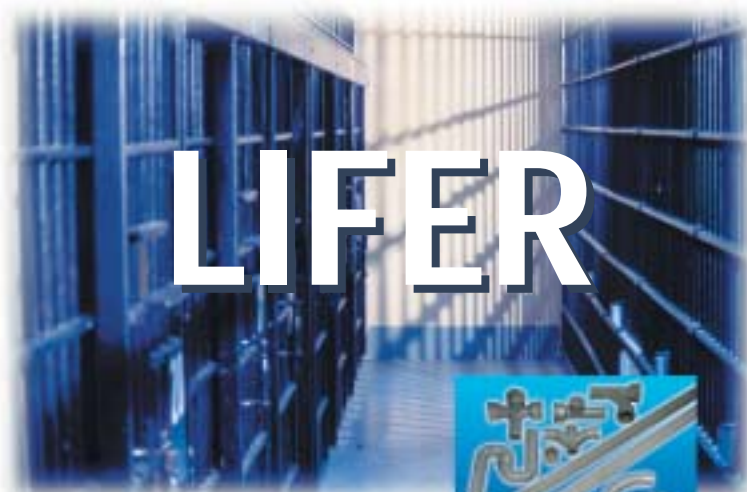
Be careful: if you type while your text is selected, the selection will be replaced with whatever was typed. To get the original text back, click Undo (usually on the Edit menu).

As you use the programs on your

PC, be observant and don't be afraid to experiment. That is how you can learn! ■



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