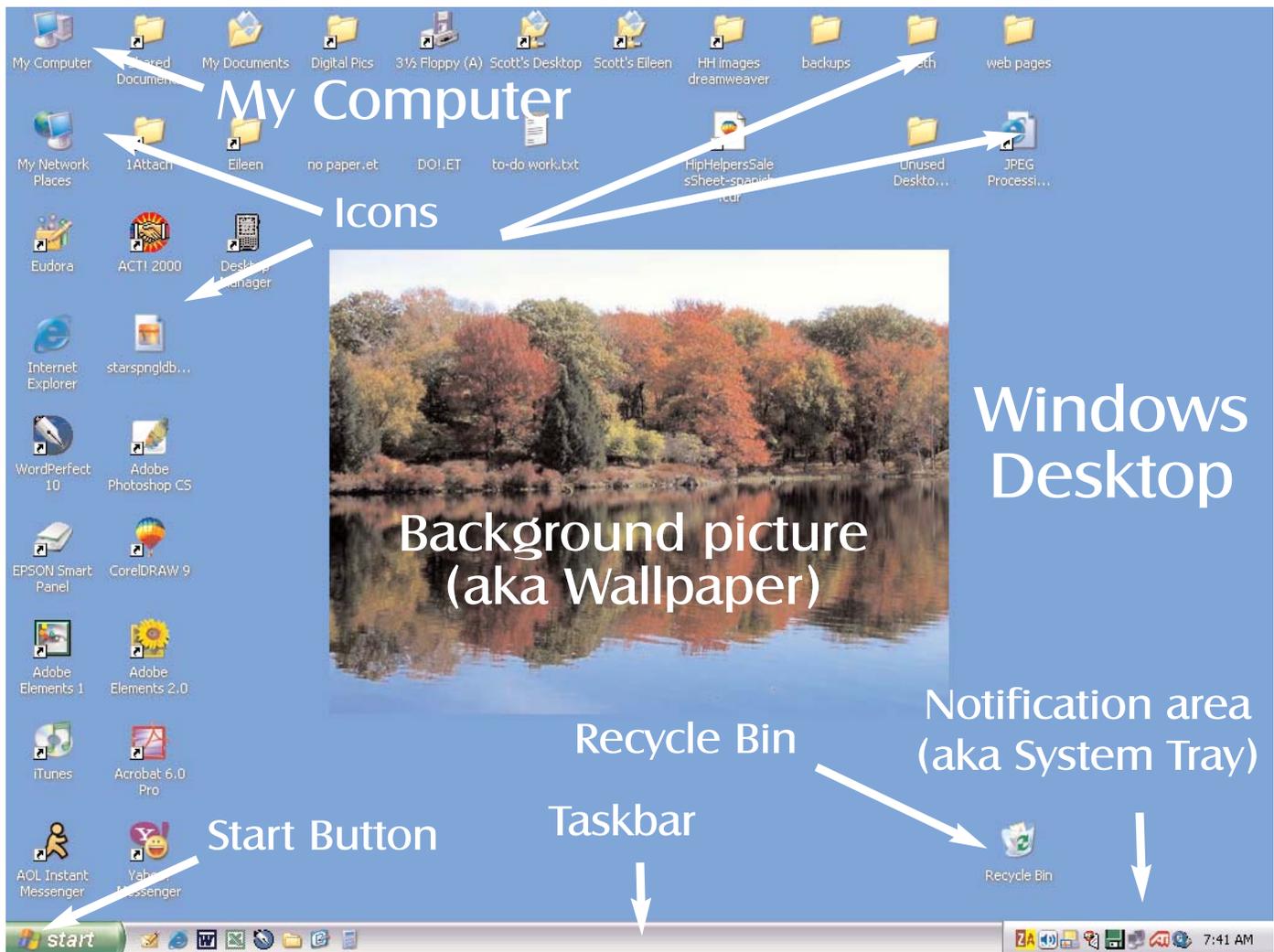


Windows Overview

Elements of the Desktop



Desktop

The **Desktop** is the the first thing you see after Windows starts up. It may be a solid color (**Desktop Color**) or a pattern, and may contain a picture (aka **Wallpaper**).

Taskbar

The **Taskbar** is located at the bottom of the screen, and contains the **Start** button (which contains shortcuts to get to your programs and controls) and the **Notification Area**, also known as the **System Tray** (which contains the clock, and icons which represent programs). When you use a software program, a button for that program is temporarily placed on the Taskbar. You can switch back and forth between open programs by clicking on their buttons on the Taskbar.

Start Button

The **Start Button**, when clicked, displays: shortcuts to your software (recently used programs and **All Programs**); access to the controls for your system (**Control Panel**), the **Help** section, the **Find** and **Run** commands, and the **Turn Off Computer** command. Additional items may appear in your Start menu: **My Documents**, **My Music**, **My Pictures**, **Printers and Faxes**, etc.

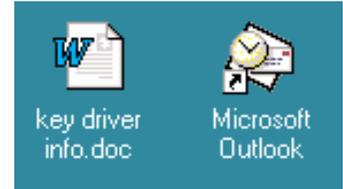
Icons

An **Icon** is simply a little picture that represents something: a program, a folder, a document, or any number of other things. **My Computer** is the icon by which you can see the contents of your computer, access a drive (like the floppy drive) and do many other things. The **Start menu** and **My Computer** both contain access to the **Control Panel** and **Printers**. The **Recycle Bin** is where most files go when you delete them; they gather there until you “empty the Recycle Bin,” deleting them for good. (You may also change your mind and restore the files from the Recycle Bin to their original locations.)

Windows will initially line up icons in columns, beginning with the top left corner and moving down and then right. You can move these around as you like. I like to keep my Recycle Bin in the lower right corner (which is where the Trash icon lives on the Macintosh desktop), away from the other icons.

Shortcut Icons

Some icons are representative of the thing itself (as in the Word document icon pictured here), and some are shortcuts (as in this MS Outlook icon). A shortcut icon bears a little curved arrow, and behaves like the thing itself (a document, a program file) but is not the thing itself. That is to say, a shortcut icon for a program will open the program just like the program icon would.



If you delete a shortcut icon, you only delete the shortcut -- not the file itself (in this case the Outlook program). If the icon for the Word document pictured here was deleted, that document itself would be deleted.

Elements of a Window

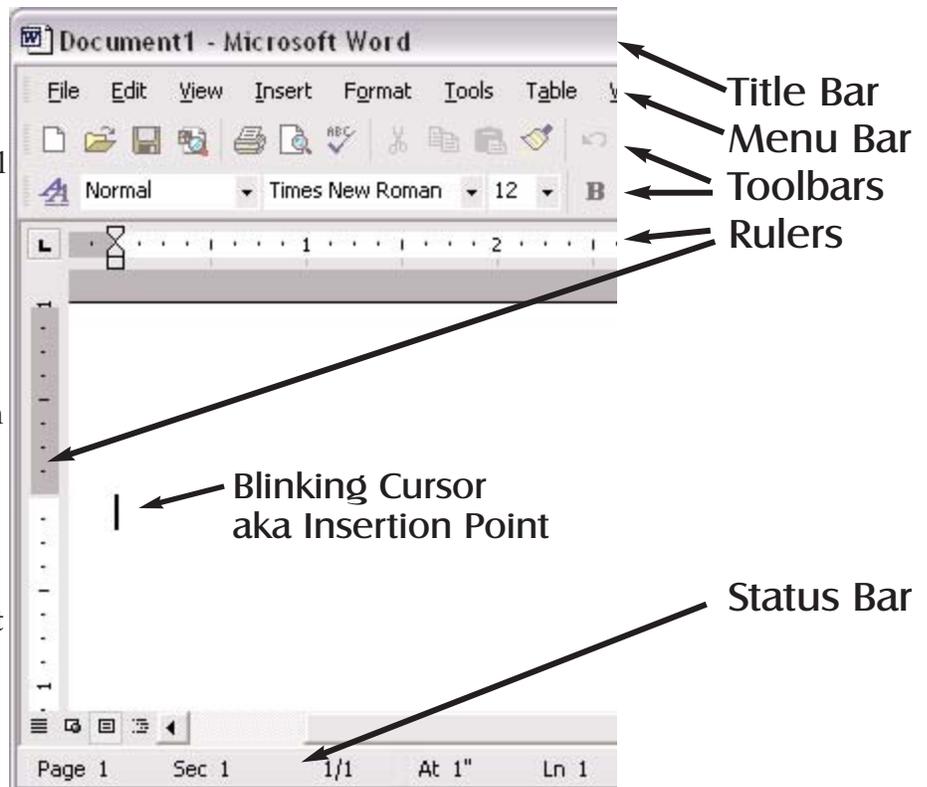
Title Bar

The title bar generally contains the icon for the program, name of the program, the name of the document, and the **Minimize/Maximize/Close** buttons.

Menu Bar

The menu bar contains the menu commands for a program. Some menu items are common to almost all programs (**File, Edit, Help**) and some are only seen in a particular program (e.g., a **Scan** menu in scanning software).

Many menu commands will be accessible via buttons and key commands. Where the command exists in a menu (e.g., **Print** in the **File** menu), it will often be accompanied by an icon of the corresponding button (an icon of a printer) and/or the corresponding key combination (**Ctrl-P**). After you've used the **Print** command in the **File** menu one time, you may remember that you can click a button or press **Ctrl-P** next time you want to print.



Some menu commands are toggles, and a checkmark indicates if a command is turned on or off (e.g., **View > Ruler**). So you click to turn it on, and click the same command to turn it off.

Some menu commands are followed by ellipsis points (. . .). When you select a menu command without ellipses, the command is executed immediately (as in **View > Ruler** above). When you select a menu command with ellipses, you'll get a dialog box before the command is executed. In the dialog box, you have a chance to change settings before executing the command, or to cancel out of it completely.

Some menu commands will be grayed-out, indicating they're unavailable at that moment. For example, you must have something in a document selected to use the program's **Copy** command. If nothing is selected, the **Copy** command (in the **Edit** menu) will be gray.

Toolbars

Toolbars contain **buttons** you click on to perform various tasks. Although the buttons execute commands which also exist in a program's menus, they offer one-click access to a command which involves at least two steps (sometimes more) by going through the menus. Most programs have at least one toolbar, although many programs have more than one (on the previous page, the **Standard** and **Formatting** toolbars appear in the image), and some have none -- they use only a menu bar. You can sometimes turn the toolbars on and off (i.e., display them or not), usually via a View menu command. Some programs (e.g., WordPerfect) will let you customize the toolbars, adding buttons not displayed by default, and deleting ones you never use.

Toolbars can often be moved out of the usual space at the top of a window, repositioned elsewhere on the screen. They may then appear as more of a palette, and might be referred to as such. If you accidentally drag a toolbar out of position, you can click-and-drag it back into position.

If a window only has a menu bar showing, look in the View menu (or a similar menu) to see if one is available—it might just using your computer a little easier.

Rulers

Programs like Word and WordPerfect will offer you rulers, which you can use to see precisely where you are on a page, or see tab and margins settings, add tab stops, and more. The trade-off with rulers is that you'll have less space in the window for displaying your document, and someone with a small monitor may not want to sacrifice that document space. Just know that you can turn it on and off as you desire. The ruler is often considered one of the toolbars, so look for a View menu command for either Rulers, or Toolbars, within which Ruler will be an option.

Status Bar

The Status Bar will display various information, depending on what program you're in, and where you are in that program. That information may include: (1) in word processor and similar programs, current page number in a document, location on the page, Caps Lock status, Number Lock status, Insert/Typeover status, document name and the names of documents open in the background; (2) in an Explore or Open window, the number of objects in a selected folder, the number/size of selected items, an explanation of menu commands over which you move your mouse; (3) in an Internet browser, the status of images being loaded on a web page or the URL of a hyperlink.

Like the various Toolbars, the Status bar can be turned on and off, so if you don't see one at the bottom of a window, look for a View menu command for Status Bar, or Toolbars, within which Status Bar will be an option (in WordPerfect it's called the Application Bar; it may bear a similar name in some other programs).

Minimize/Maximize/Close

In the upper right corner of most windows, at the right edge of the **Title Bar**, are **Minimize/Maximize/Close** buttons.



The left-most button is the **minimize** button. Click this to hide the window. A program window will become visible as a button on the Taskbar. Click that button on the Taskbar to **restore** the window to the size it was before you minimized it. (A document window will generally become a button in the lower left of the program window. Again, click that button to restore the window.)

The center button is the **maximize** button, which acts as a toggle. If a window does not fill the entire screen, the icon looks like one big window; click to maximize the window, or make it fill the entire screen. The icon then looks like two smaller windows; click it to **restore** the window to its previous size.

The right button is the **Close** button. Click this to close a window. In the window shown on the previous page, clicking the upper close button will close (exit) the program. This is the same as **File > Exit**. (Click the lower close button to close the document, but leave the program open.)

The window shown on the next page is a word processor window, and there is a document window within the program window. The top set of buttons controls the **program window**, and the lower set controls the **document window** (sometimes the program window has only a single Close button).

There's usually an icon in the upper left corner of a window. When you click the it, you get a pop-up menu of the Minimize/Maximize/Close commands for the program window; you can click one of those options, or click outside of the menu to close it. Double clicking this icon closes the window/program.

Tip: Double-click the Title bar of a window to Maximize the window. Double-click it again to restore it.

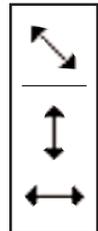
Moving a Window

To move a window, click the Title Bar of the window. Hold down the mouse button while you drag the window to move it, releasing the mouse button when the window is where you want it.

Resizing a Window

To resize a window, position your mouse cursor at the lower right corner of the window. The mouse cursor will change, and display as a diagonal arrow. Hold down the mouse button while you drag the corner to resize the window, releasing the mouse button when the window looks the way you want it.

You can also resize a window by clicking on any side of the window (top, bottom, left, right) but you'll only be able to move that one side. Position your mouse cursor at the edge of the window, where it displays as a vertical or horizontal arrow. Click-and-drag to move that edge of the window.



You'll get a similar arrow mouse cursor (with a line across it) when you mouse passes over other repositionable portions of a window. For example, in an Explore window there's a long, thin divider between the folder tree pane on the left, and the pane containing a selected folder's contents on the right. When you see that arrow cursor, you can reposition that divider, to make room for more of one pane or another.

Some windows may not resize the way you desire, and some are not resizable at all.

Scrolling

Scroll bars appear in windows (and portions of window) when there is more visible information in the window than can be displayed. If you don't see a scroll bar, that means everything that's on the page is visible in the screen; there's nothing above or below (or on either side) that's out of view.

The scroll arrows work sort of like the arrow keys on the keyboard, click them to move the contents of a window up or down a line or so at a time.

Click in the gray area of the scroll bar to move the contents of a window up or down a visible pane at a time, similar to the Page Up/Page Down keys.

If the contents of the window are somewhat vast (e.g., a 10-page word processor document or web page), use the scroll box to avoid having to click the scroll bar again and again and again to move through the document. At the beginning of a document, the box is at the top of the scroll bar. Click-and-drag the scroll box to the bottom of the scroll bar and then release it, and you'll be at the end of the document. Drag it to the middle of the scroll bar and you'll be at the middle of the document. In many cases you'll get a live scroll, which means that the contents of the window will move as you move the box, so you can see exactly where you'll be in the document when you release the scroll box.

