

Introduction to Windows (98/NT/2000)

Overview

This course is designed to familiarize you with the Windows Operating System. It will give you an overview of the interface, file system and some features of Window.

The Mouse

There are 2 main devices used to input information into a Windows personal computer; the keyboard and the mouse. We will periodically mention some special keyboard commands, but will primarily concentrate on the mouse.

There are 4 different ways to use a standard 2 button mouse in Windows:

- (LEFT) CLICK: Point to an object on the screen and (quickly) click the left mouse button once. Clicking is used to select an object on screen (highlighting it) or to open a menu.
- DOUBLE-CLICK: Point to an object and click (the left mouse button) twice in quick succession. This is used to open (run or execute) a program, or to open a file or folder to see its contents.
- RIGHT-CLICK: Point to an object and click the right mouse button once. Right-clicking normally accesses “context-sensitive” menus; that is, menus that will give you information specific to the object which you right-clicked.
- CLICK AND DRAG: Position your cursor over an object, hold down the left mouse button and drag the object. This action is usually used to arrange icons or other objects on the screen.

NOTE: Your mouse can be customized so that its cursor moves at a speed that is comfortable for you, and so that it responds to your specified double-clicking speed. The buttons can also be switched by means of the Mouse control panel (for left-handed users). This will be covered in the *Control Panel* section.

Using the Mouse

Traditionally, Graphical User Interfaces such as Windows use the following mouse actions to differentiate between selecting and opening an icon.

- Single-click the icon to select it. The icon will become highlighted
- Double-click the icon to open it.

Pages on the World Wide Web usually only use single mouse clicks to open links.

Selecting Multiple Objects

If you need to select multiple objects simultaneously, the method used depends on whether the objects are contiguous or not. If the objects are contiguous (next to each other), click the first object, then, holding down the Shift key, click the last object. All objects between the first and the last are now selected for action.

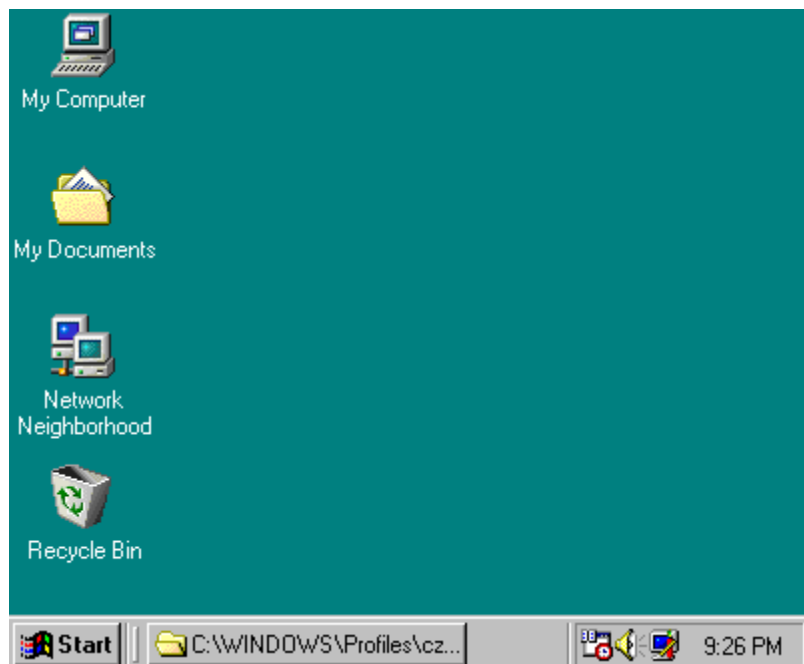
If the objects are not next to each other, hold the Control key and click each individual icon.

You can also use a selection box to select multiple items by clicking in front of (not on) the first icon and drawing a box around a group.

The Desktop

The Desktop is the main workspace for Windows. It appears as a colored background or picture (which is customizable), and contains Icons that open programs, files, or directories. The number of visible icons will depend somewhat upon your choices during installation, but will generally include *My Computer* (a “gateway” to your computer’s drives and files), *Network Neighborhood* (a “gateway” to resources available on your local area network), and a *Recycle Bin*, which temporarily stores items to be deleted.

You can click and drag icons to rearrange their appearance on the desktop – as long as the “auto-arrange” function is not active. To determine this, right-click on the open desktop, go to Arrange Icons, and see whether there is a check mark next to Auto Arrange. When auto-arrange is active, your icons will remain in even columns and rows.

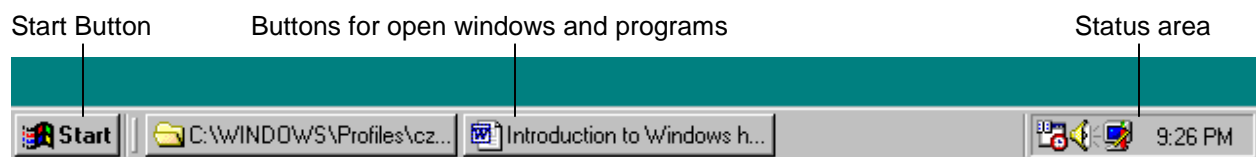


The easiest way of working with the Desktop is by using the Shortcut menu accessed by right-clicking. The shortcut menu has options to Arrange Icons (by name, type, size, or date) and to Line up Icons in orderly rows and columns. It also has options to create New Folders, and to paste icons that you may have copied elsewhere either as new files or as a shortcut to the existing file. The Shortcut menu also allows you to go immediately to the Display control panel by clicking on the Properties option at the bottom of the list.

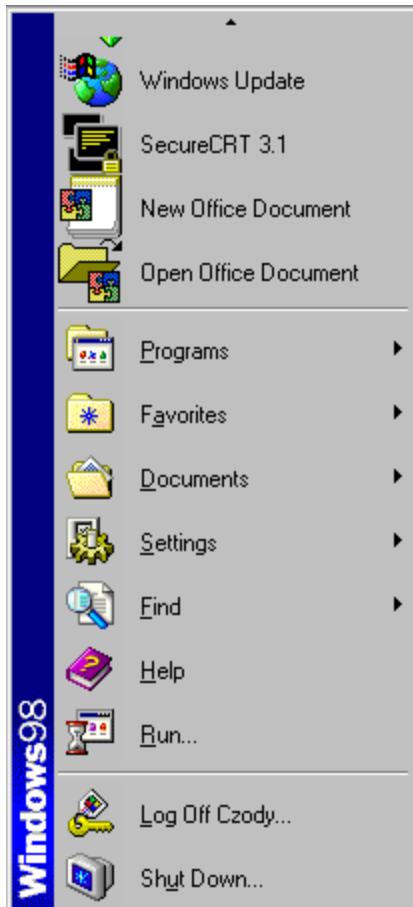
Along the bottom edge of the Desktop is the Task Bar. This contains useful information, such as the time (lower right corner), any programs that are currently running, and the Start Menu.

The Task Bar

The Task Bar forms the base of the Windows Desktop, and contains useful information about your computer. Usually along the bottom of the screen, the task bar is divided into three areas: the Start button with the pop-up Start menu at the left, buttons representing open windows and programs in the center, and the Status area showing items running in the background at the right. By clicking on any button in the center, you may switch between open windows and programs. You may also use the key sequence Alt-Tab to switch between open windows and programs as well.



The Start Menu



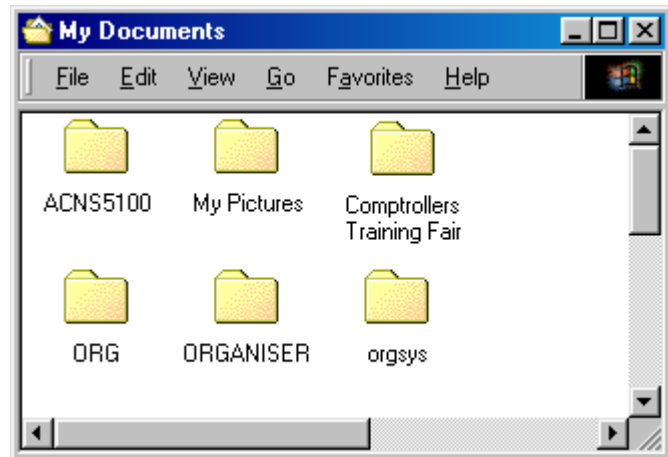
The Start Menu gives you access to Programs, your most recently used documents, Settings (including the Control Panel and Task Bar settings), Find, Help, and the Shut Down menu. By clicking on the Start Menu, these options become available.

To navigate through the Start Menu options, simply move your mouse over the desired menu item (no clicking necessary). The black triangles indicate that more options are available; just move your mouse over Programs, for instance, and you will see these options. Then follow the triangle to select the program you wish to open. This may bring about even more options.

From here, under the Programs submenu, you can open the Windows Explorer, which shows a hierarchical view of all the drives, folders, and programs found on your computer. It is important to become familiar with this file system. It may keep you from “misplacing” files or programs, and it can help you to keep your computer organized to run more efficiently.

Windows (open files and programs)

The top line of an open window is the Title Bar, which lists the name of the program or file. You can move a window around on the screen by dragging its title bar. If more than one program or file is open at once, you can make one window active by clicking on its title bar (or an empty gray space within the window); the title bars of inactive windows become gray.



On the top right of every window there are three control buttons. The left button is the Minimize Button, which keeps your program or file open and active, but reduces it to a rectangular icon on the Task Bar. The middle button alternately Maximizes a window to full-screen or Restores a window to its original size. The right button Closes a window or shuts down an active program.

In an open window you will often see a variety of icons representing programs, files, or documents. Double-clicking these icons will open them (files or documents) or execute/run them (programs).

If all the contents of a window aren't visible, Scroll Bars will appear at the right and/or bottom edge of the open window. Click on the arrows at the top, bottom, left, or right of the scroll bars to scroll through the rest of the window. You can also drag the scroll bars with the mouse.

To change the size of the window, simply click and drag the resize corner of the window, the lower right corner. To move the window around on the desktop, "grab" the window by the Title Bar by clicking, and drag the window around the desktop to the desired location.

The row beneath the title bar is the Menu Bar. By clicking on the words in the menu bar, you reveal menus with additional choices or functions. Next to some of the menu commands are Keyboard Shortcuts (e.g., *control+F7*) – keystroke alternatives for accessing the same command or action that is on the menu bar. Next to some menu bar commands, a right arrow or triangle indicates more options.

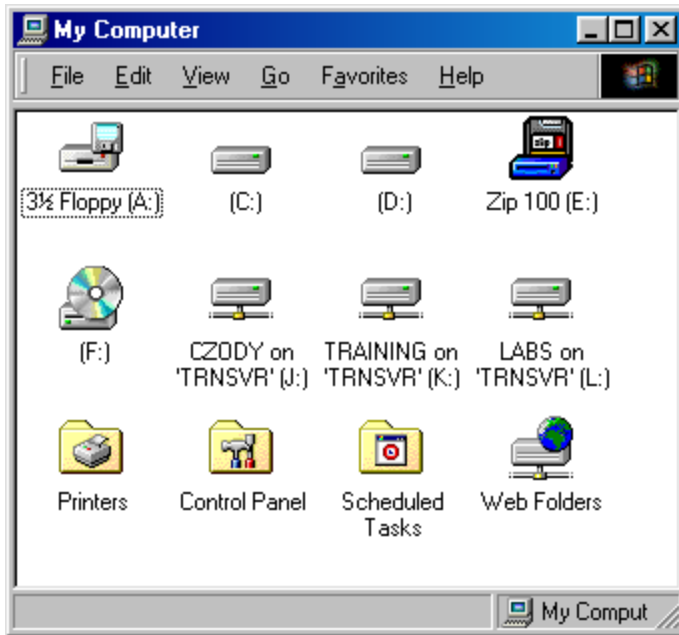
Most windows have a View menu with a variety of choices for viewing their contents – Small Icons, Large Icons, List, and Details.

- Small Icons – Displays the smaller version of the folder and file icons, with their names on the right side of the icons.
- Large Icons – Displays the larger version of the folder and file icons, with their names below the icons.

- List – Uses the same icons as the Small Icons option, except that the icons with their folders and filenames are arranged in a single column along the left side of the window.
- Details – Add columns of additional information (like a description, or the file type, file size, and so on) to the arrangement used when you select the List option.

Basic File Management

In order to more efficiently use your computer and its many programs and files, it is a good idea to know how your computer files information. The computer hard drive is organized by using folders and files, much like a large filing cabinet. Each drive (C, D) acts like a file drawer. Then within each drive, there are multiple folders. Each folder may contain more folders or files.

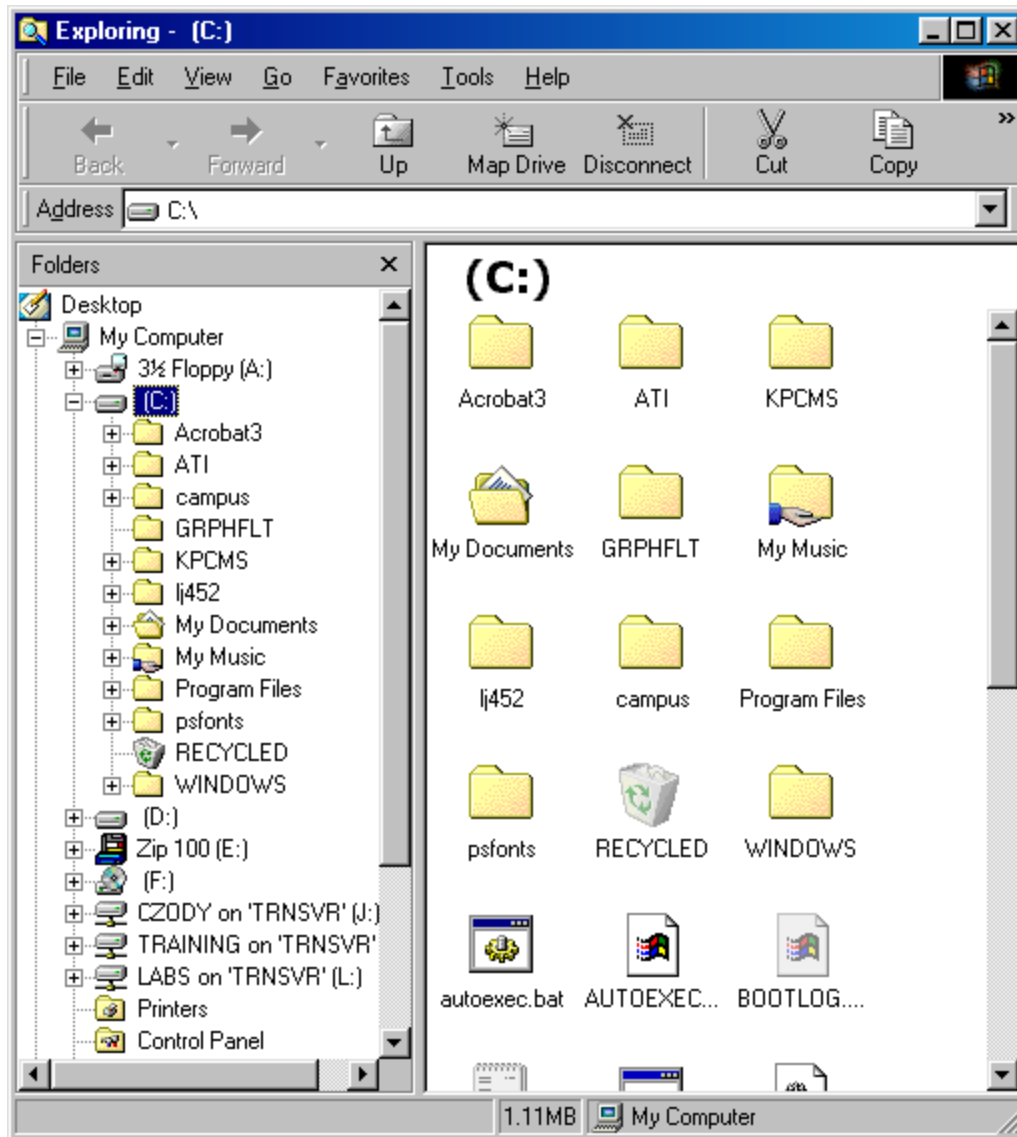


There are two main ways for you to view your computer's files and structure. They are by windows, beginning with My Computer, and by Windows Explorer.

By double-clicking on My Computer, you will see what resources are currently available on your computer (such as Floppy drives, Hard drives, CD-ROM drives, and Network drives) and your Control Panel folder and your Printers folder. Such information will vary from machine to machine depending on what hardware is installed in the computer, and whether it is connected to a Local Area Network.

By double-clicking on any icon, you are "opening a drawer" to see what is stored on that drive, or in that folder. You may continue opening folders until you find the file you are seeking.

The other alternative is by launching the Windows Explorer utility. This is located under the Programs submenu of the Start Menu. The Windows Explorer gives you a more in-depth view of the file structure on your computer.



This window shows you a hierarchical view of your files and programs on the left, and the contents of the current folder on the right.

To look further into the file structure, you may double-click any icon on the right side of the window. This will change the current folder to the one you double-clicked, and display the contents on the right.

You may also look further into the file structure by clicking on the plus symbol to the left of the folder. This will expand the folder and display a list of folders within. Also, the plus symbol changes to a minus symbol, indicating that all contents are displayed. All folders and files of the folder will be displayed in the right side of the window. To collapse the contents display on the right, click the minus symbol to the left of the folder icon.

Naming files and folders

Each filename in Windows consists of two parts: a main filename and a file extension. The file extension, which identifies the type of file and the program used to create it, is at most three characters. The program usually assigns these characters automatically when the file is saved. The main filename, however, may be up to 255 characters long. When you first save a file, the program will ask you for a filename; this will help you identify the file when you are looking for it at a later time. The filename may consist of upper and lower case letters, numbers, and spaces, although Windows is not case sensitive.

Folder names contain only a description, since they are only a placeholder for other files and folders. These names may also contain upper and lower case letters, numbers, and spaces.

When naming files and folders, keep in mind that although you have up to 255 characters, the shorter and simpler the name is, the better. It is easier to view a list of files whose names are relatively short rather than a list of files whose names could be a small paragraph.