



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
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# Introduction to MS WINDOWS XP



Mouse  
Desktop  
Windows  
Applications  
File handling



2009 Centre for Educational Technology, University of Cape Town

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## What is Windows XP?

Windows XP is a *computer operating system* and *graphical user interface* (GUI), which enables you to work with a wide variety of programs on your computer, often simultaneously. Windows XP is itself a special computer program that communicates your instructions to the actual computer hardware, and displays the results.

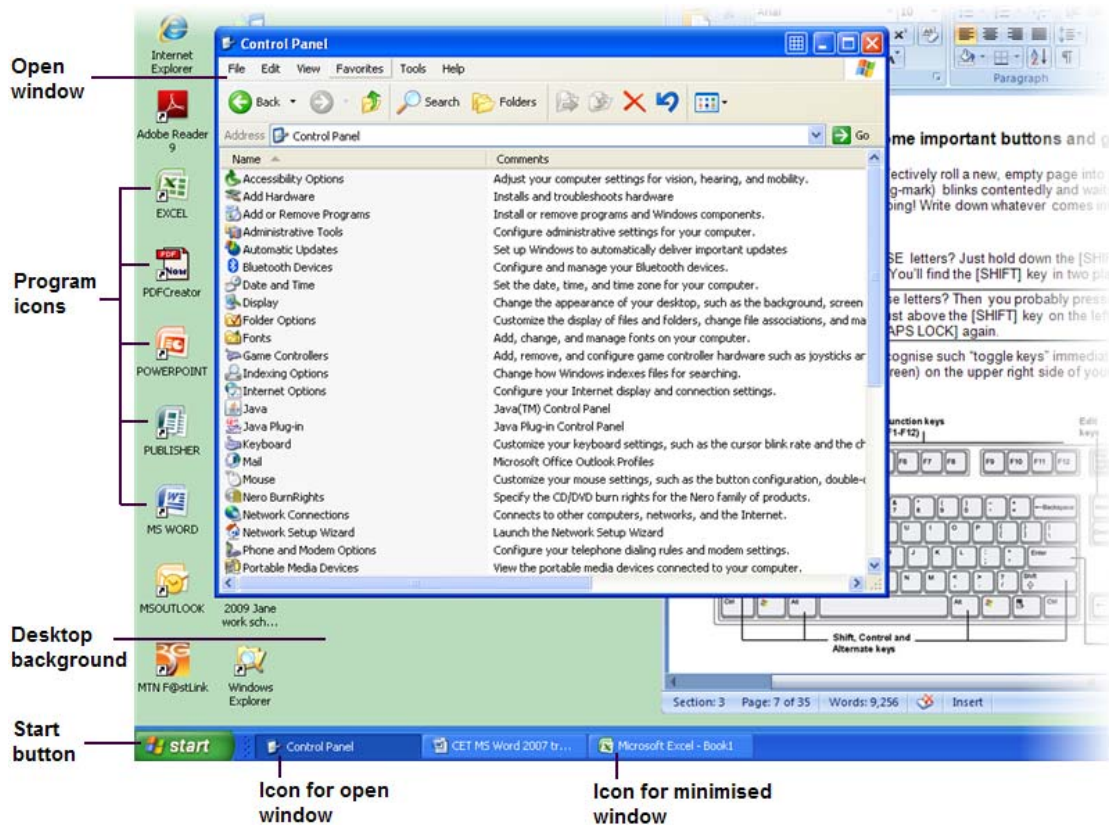
Some of the key features of Windows XP are:

### Windows within Windows

A *Window* refers to a rectangular area of the screen, within which you may view program folders and files, or display file contents such as documents, spreadsheets, and graphic images. A window can occupy part of the screen, can be maximised to fill the entire screen, or can be minimised so that it is no longer visible but remains active and is easily re-accessed.

### The Desktop

The *Desktop* gives you access to everything you need in Windows XP. It occupies the entire screen, and unlike a window, it can't be reduced in size. The desktop consists of a coloured or patterned *background*, containing small pictures called *Icons* that represent programs or data stores. Double-clicking on an icon opens the corresponding program or file inside a *window*.



The icons that are visible on your desktop depend on choices made at installation. In the UCT labs, you will usually see icons for

- **My Computer** (the gateway to your computer's drives, or data storage areas)
- **Recycle Bin** (a temporary "trashcan" that holds files you want to delete)

## The Taskbar

The *Taskbar* lies across the bottom edge of your screen. The *Start button* on the left provides access to all the programs, data files, and other features available on your computer. When you open a program or file, a corresponding rectangular icon will be displayed on your taskbar - even if the program has been minimised and is no longer visible on your screen. To access that program, you just need to click its icon on the taskbar!

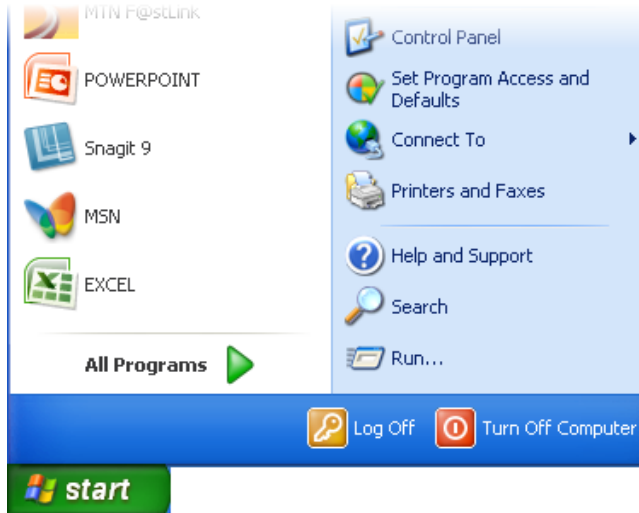


In this example, two windows are open; the Control Panel window (which is slightly darker in colour) is currently active.

## The Start menu

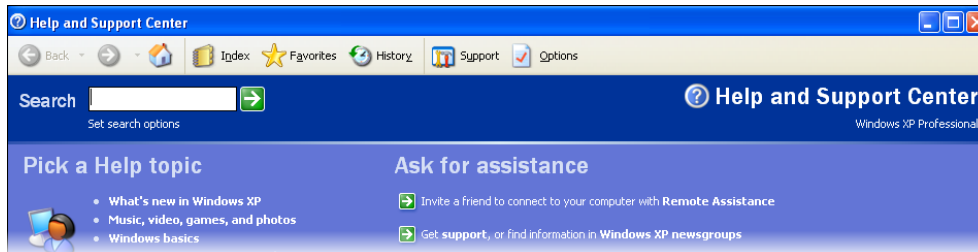
When you click on the Start button, a set of menu options is displayed. The contents will vary depending on your computer setup and most frequently accessed programs. If you click on the **All Programs** option, you'll see a list of all the programs installed on your computer – even those that don't have icons on the desktop.

Press the [ESC] (escape) key to close the menu.



## If you need help

One of the menu options displayed when you click the Start button, is labelled **Help and Support**. If you select this option, a Help window will open. To get help on a specific topic, type a word or phrase in the blank space at the top left of the window and then click the search arrow; alternatively, you can click to browse any of the Help topics listed in the window. Click the X in the top right corner to close the Help window.



## Using your mouse

The mouse is your most useful tool when working with Windows! It allows you to quickly select and run programs by simply clicking a button.

### It all clicks into place

You can use your mouse in a number of different ways in Windows:

1. **Pointing** Move your mouse so that the cursor points to an item on the screen.
2. **Clicking** Hold the mouse still, and click the left mouse button once. Clicking usually selects an object (highlighting it) or opens a menu or window.
3. **Double-clicking** Hold the mouse still and click the left mouse button twice in quick succession. Double-clicking is usually used to open a program or file, or to expand a folder so that you can see its contents.
4. **Right-clicking** Hold the mouse still, and click the right mouse button once. Right-clicking usually opens a context-sensitive menu that provides you with a set of relevant options.
5. **Dragging** Position your mouse on an object, hold down the left mouse button, and drag the object before releasing the button.

### Choosing or selecting?

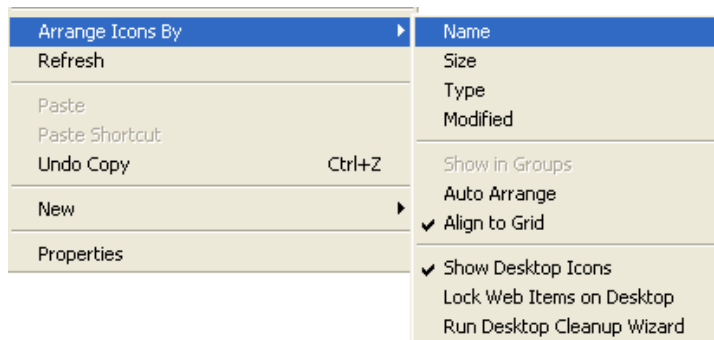
*Selecting* an item on your desktop means that you click on it once with the left mouse button, to highlight the object.

*Choosing* an item means that you double-click it with the left mouse button, so that it is not only selected but also opened. You can achieve the same result by selecting the item and then pressing [ENTER] on the keyboard.

### Practice exercise

With the Desktop visible:

1. Point to an item and click on it once. Notice how it becomes highlighted.
2. Drag one of your icons to a different point on the screen.
3. Point the mouse to a blank area of the desktop. Right-click to open a pop-up menu, and use your mouse to select the option for arranging icons by name.



4. Right-click on the My Computer icon to view its pop-up menu. Click an empty area on the screen or else press [ESC] on the keyboard to close the menu.
5. Double-click on the My Computer icon to open its window. Then click the X in the top right corner to close it again.

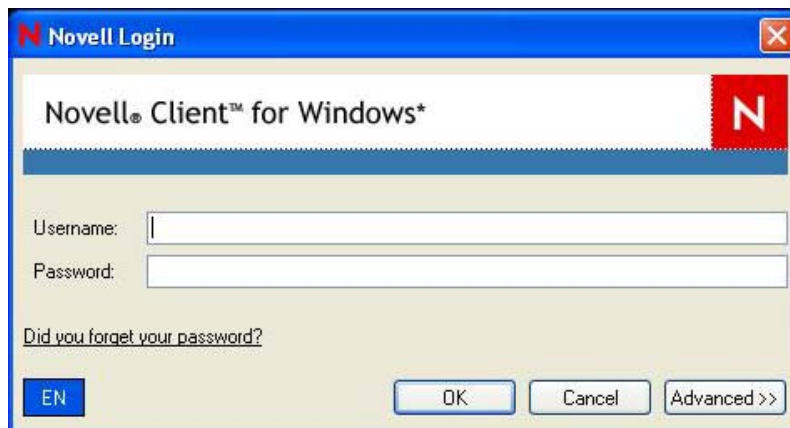
## Logging in and out

All the computers in the UCT labs are linked to a network. You must *log in* before you use a computer – this process identifies you as a legitimate user. After you've logged in, you'll be able to access your files even if you created them using a different computer.

### To log in

The login window should be visible on the screen. If the screensaver is currently active, then just move the mouse slightly to return the login window to view.

1. Type your *login name* (usually your student number) in the **Username** field of the dialog box.
2. Type your password on the **Password** field of the dialogue box.
3. Click on the **OK** button or else press [ENTER].

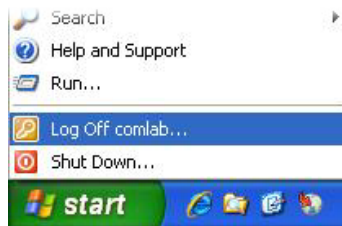


4. The Windows XP desktop will appear. In some labs you may then have to click another button to show that you accept the lab rules (such as no food or drink, and no cell phones).

### To log out

After you've finished working, you must *log out* so that the next user of that computer won't be able to access your personal files and email, or use your print credits.

1. Click on the **Start** button on the taskbar. You will see an option to **Log Off**, as well as an option to shut down (i.e. turn off) the computer.



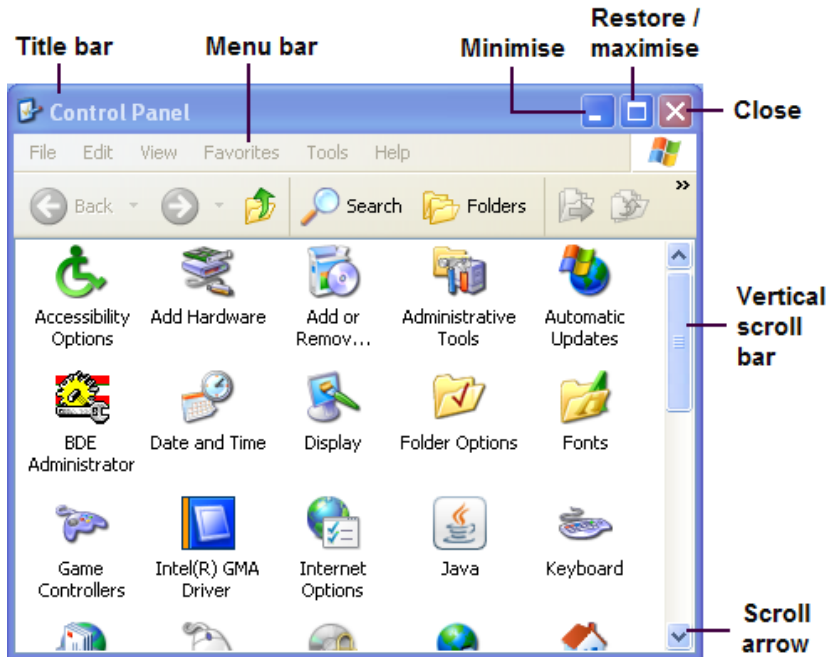
2. Click on the **Log Off** button. The system will ask you to confirm that you are logging off. The network login box will then appear for the next user to log in. (Note: Don't use the Shut Down option, or the next user will have to wait for the computer to start up again, which can take some time.)

### Practice exercise

1. Log in to the network using your own user name and password.
2. Log out correctly.
3. Now log in again – well done!

## Working with windows




Let's start by identifying the various components of a typical window, and how they are used.



### Title bar

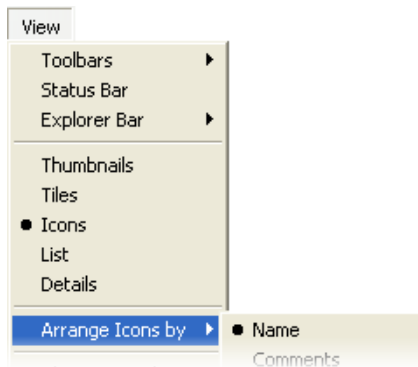
The top line of the window is called the *Title bar*, and displays the name of the corresponding program or folder. You can move an open window to a different part of the screen by dragging its title bar. If more than one window is open on the screen, then clicking on the title bar (or inside the window) will make a window *active* - which is indicated by a darkened title bar.

There are three control buttons at the right end of the title bar, which are activated by clicking on them:

- **Minimise** (on the left) keeps your program open, but reduces it to a rectangular icon on the taskbar. 
- **Restore / maximise** (in the middle) reduces the size of a full-screen window, or maximises a window that is not full-screen. 
- **Close** (on the right) closes the window or program. 

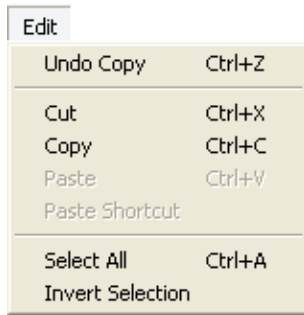
### Menu bar and viewing options

One row below the title bar is the *Menu bar*. If you click a word on the menu bar, a menu of additional choices appears. An arrow to the right of a menu option indicates that it has a submenu.





Some menu options can also be activated though a *keyboard shortcut*, such as [CTRL] + [C] for Copy. In this case the shortcut will be shown on the right of the menu option.



If you accidentally open a menu and wish to close it, simply click on the title bar; or on a blank space within the window; or press [ESC] on the keyboard.

### Navigating inside a window

If you can't see all the information contained in a window, then use the *Scrollbar* at the bottom or right edge to view more. You can "move" the contents displayed in the window using the arrows at each end of a scroll bar: for example, clicking on the bottom arrow on the vertical scroll bar will reveal what lies below the bottom border of the window. Alternatively, you can drag the *Scrollbox* within the scrollbar to see hidden areas of the window.

If a window is too big or too small for displaying the items it contains, then you can *resize* it. Hold your cursor over a border until it becomes a double arrow. Then drag the border to the size you want.

### Practice exercise

1. Open the **My Computer** window by double-clicking on its icon.
2. Move the **My Computer** window to a new position on the screen by dragging its title bar.
3. Click on the **View** menu to see the available options.
4. Change your View option to **Details**. Then change it back to **Icons**.
5. Practice maximising, restoring and closing your My Computer window.



## Starting and exiting applications

An *application* is a program that you use to do work with your computer – common examples are a spreadsheet, a word processor, or a database. There are two different ways that you can start up a Windows application:

### Using icons

If the application you want to use has an icon, either on the desktop or inside a window, then you just need to double-click the icon and the program will start. An example is the My Computer icon on your desktop, used for viewing the drives and folders on your computer.

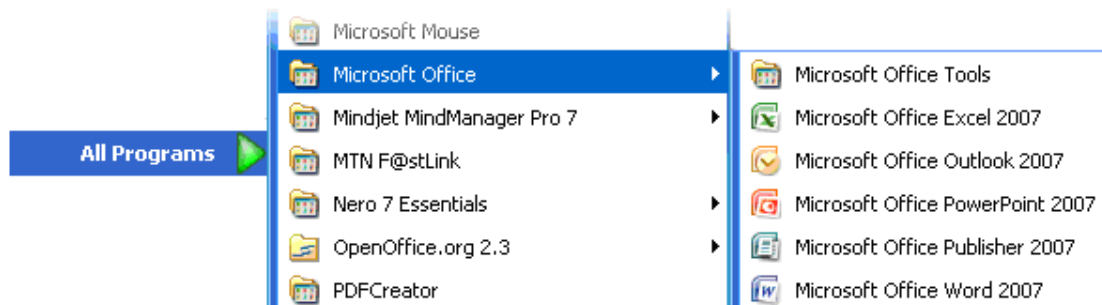
### Using the Programs menu

Most of the applications on your computer probably won't have desktop icons associated with them – the desktop would get too cluttered! So you need to be able to start applications using the Programs menu:

1. Click on the *Start* button
2. Point to the *All Programs* option on the Start menu. The Programs menu will appear.
3. Click the name of the application that you want to use, and the corresponding program will open in a new window.



Note that some applications (such as MS Office) consist of several related programs which may be grouped together in a submenu. If this is the case, then the application name on the Programs menu will be followed by an arrow. Move the mouse pointer over the arrow to see the submenu, then click on the required program.



### Practice exercise

1. Click on the **Start** button.
2. Select **All Programs**.
3. Navigate your way to the **Microsoft Word** program.
4. Open Microsoft Word.
5. Close Microsoft Word.

## Working with multiple windows

One of the most important features of Windows XP is its *multitasking* capability. This allows you to run more than one application at the same time. What's more, within one application you could have several files open, each in its own window. For example, you might have both MSWord and MS Excel open at the same time, and within MS Word you might be working on two different document files, each in its own window.

### Moving between applications

Each open window (even if it has been minimised) is represented by a rectangular icon on the taskbar at the bottom of your screen. The icon for the currently active window usually appears darker, and looks as if it has been "pressed in".



To switch between open applications, just click on the taskbar icon for the application that you want to switch to, and Windows will display its window on top of anything else that may be on your screen.

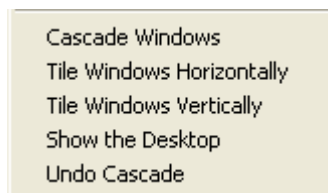
### Arranging windows

When you have multiple windows open, some of them may be hidden by others. Windows XP helps you to arrange them so that all your open windows are visible.

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Cascade           | Open windows lie on top of each other, with the title bar of each one visible. To access a window that is not at the top of the cascade, just click its title bar. |
| Tile horizontally | Windows are resized so that they fit one above the other on the screen.  |
| Tile vertically   | Windows are resized so that they fit side by side on the screen.   |



To change the way your windows are arranged, right-click on a blank area of the taskbar and choose the option that you want.



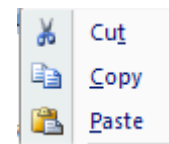
### Cutting and pasting between applications

Windows allows you to cut or copy material from one application and paste it into another. For example, you can copy text from a page displayed in your web browser, and paste it into a Word document. Similarly, you could copy an Excel chart into a report you are writing in Word.

You would do it like this:

1. Open the application window from which you want to copy material, and select the text or data to be copied.

2. Choose the **Copy** command from the toolbar, the menu bar, or a pop-up menu.
3. Open the application window into which you want to copy the selected text or data.
4. Position the cursor where the copy should be inserted.
5. Choose the **Paste** command from the toolbar, the menu bar, or a pop-up menu. (Some applications also have a **Paste Special** option which lets you specify in more detail how the material should be pasted.)



If the *Copy* and *Paste* commands aren't available on a menu or toolbar, then you can use the following keyboard shortcuts:

Copy : [CTRL] + [C]

Cut : [CTRL] + [X]

Paste : [CTRL] + [V]

### Practice exercise

1. Open both the Control Panel and My Computer.
2. Switch between the open windows.
3. Display them in vertically tiled view.
4. Close all the open windows.

## Using Windows Explorer

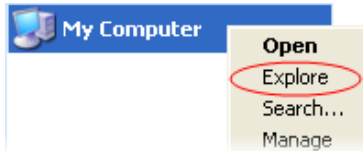
Windows Explorer is the file management tool that comes with Windows XP. It gives you the ability to rename, copy, move or delete the folders and files on your computer's drives.

Folders and files are displayed hierarchically within Windows Explorer. Folders can contain subfolders as well as files.

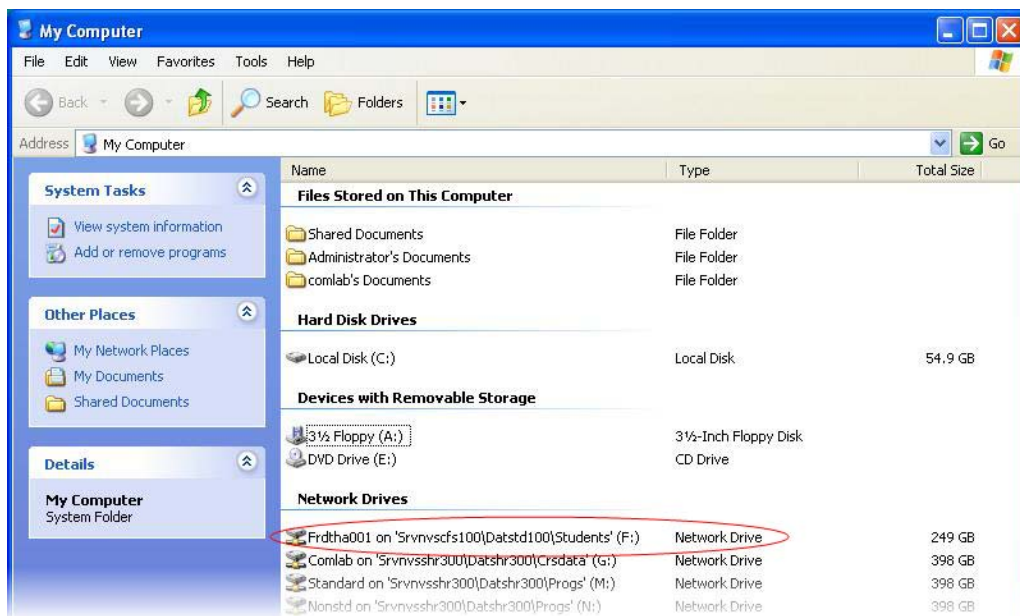
### Opening Windows Explorer

To start Windows Explorer, find the **My Computer** icon on your desktop or the Start menu.

Right-click to display the pop-up menu, and choose **Explore**.



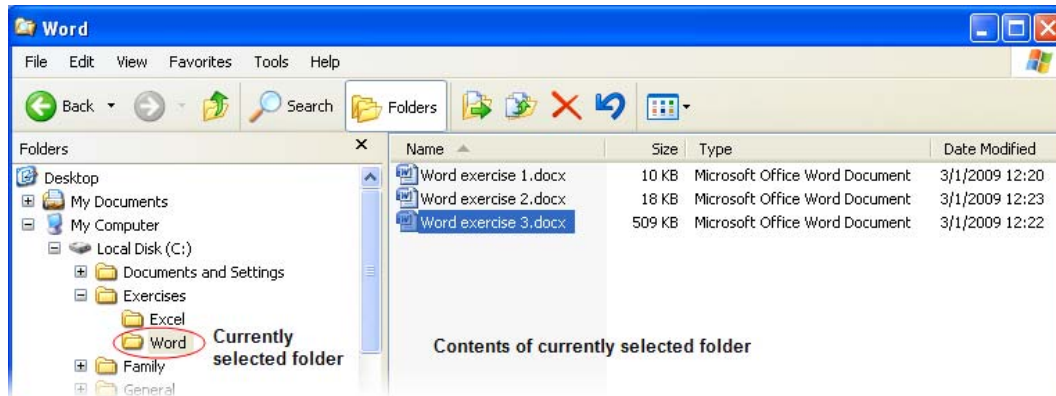
The window that opens will look similar to the example below. The title bar at the top of the window shows "My Computer". All the drives and other storage devices associated with this computer are shown on in the right hand pane.



Note that when you are working on the UCT network, you must NOT store your files on the C: drive. One of the network drives (usually the F: drive) will be identified by your student number, and has been allocated for your personal use. Because it is a network drive, it is accessible to you from any PC on the network.

To navigate through the directory structure and locate files that you want to open, copy, move or delete, you would do as follows:

1. Double-click on the required drive or removable device (floppy disk or flash drive) to display its contents.
2. Within the selected drive or device, double-click on any folder to view the subfolders and files that it contains.



The title bar at the top of the window will then display the name of the currently selected folder. On the left side of the window is a list of all the drives and folders on your computer.

- On the right side of the window is a list of all the folders and files located inside the drive or folder that is currently selected in the left pane.

In the left pane:

- A *plus sign* “+” next to a folder indicates that it contains subfolders that are not currently visible. Clicking on the plus sign (or double-clicking on the folder name) will reveal the subfolders.
- A *minus sign* “-“ next to a folder indicates that all its subfolders are currently visible. Click on the minus sign (or double-click on the folder name) to collapse the subfolders and hide them from view.
- Indentation levels in the left pane reflect the folder directory structure.

You can drag the vertical line between the left and right panes to make them wider or narrower.

If there are too many entries to be displayed in a pane, then you can use the vertical scroll bar to view the hidden entries.

### Selecting folders or files

In the left pane, click on a drive or folder that you want to select. Its contents will be displayed in the right pane. Similarly, you would click on a file in the right pane to select it.

To select a group of *adjacent* files or folders:

- Click on the first file (or folder) in the group that you want to select. It will become highlighted.
- Hold down the [SHIFT] key and click on the last file (or folder) in the group that you want to select. All the items between the first and the last file (or folder) selected will also be highlighted.
- Release the [SHIFT] key.

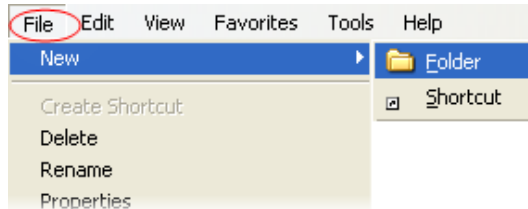
To select *separate* files and folders:

- Click on the first file (or folder) that you want to select. It will become highlighted.
- Hold down the [CTRL] key and click on each of the other files (or folders) that you want to select. All the items that have been selected will be highlighted.
- Release the [CTRL] key.

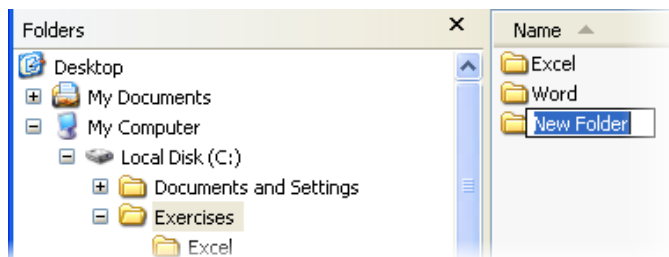
## Creating a new folder

To create a new folder in Windows Explorer:

1. In the left pane, highlight the folder within which you want to create a new folder. If you don't want the new folder to be a sub-folder of an existing folder, then select the *Drive* (such as F:) that the new folder should be in.
2. Select the **File** menu and hold the mouse pointer over the arrow on the right of the **New** command. Choose **Folder** from the sub-menu that appears. A highlighted folder icon called [New Folder] will appear at the bottom of the right pane.



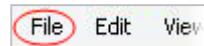
3. Type the name that you want to give the new folder, and press [ENTER]. Your new folder has been created!



## Saving a new file

Whenever you start a new task using an application such as Word or Excel, you'll need to save your work in a *file*. The process for saving a new file is basically the same for all Windows applications; the examples used here are based on Word.

1. At the top of the screen, click on the **File** menu, and then select the **Save As** option from the drop-down menu. (If your window shows a task bar with buttons, then you can click instead on the icon of a stiffy disk.)

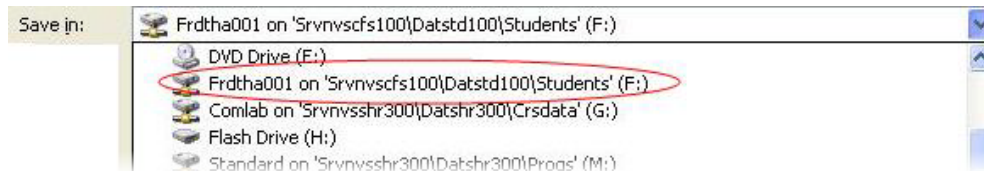


Note that in Office 2007, the File menu has been replaced by the Office Button.

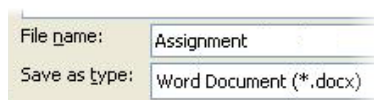


A dialogue box will open.

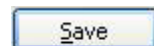
2. In the **Save In** field, use the drop-down arrow to select the drive and folder where you want your file to be stored.



3. In the **File Name** field, type the name that you want to give your new file.



4. Click the **Save** button. It's as easy as that!



### Renaming folders or files

1. Highlight the folder or file that you want to rename.
2. Select the **File** menu and choose the **Rename** command. Alternatively, you can right-click on the current file name to get a pop-up menu, and then select **Rename**.
3. The current folder or file name is highlighted. Type the new name and press [ENTER].

Be careful when renaming files that you keep the appropriate *file extension* (such as “.docx” for an MS Word 2007 file). If you change or delete a file extension then you may not be able to re-open the file. If your file extensions are not visible then Windows will automatically retain them for you.

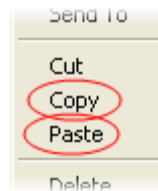
### Copying folders or files

Within Windows Explorer, there are lots of different options for copying folders and files! Commonly used methods for doing this are: right-clicking, using a toolbar icon, using a menu, using the keyboard, and dragging with the mouse.

Before you can copy, the file (or folder) that you want to copy must be selected. It's also a bit easier if your target folder is visible in the left pane. So I recommend that you first click on the folder containing the file to be copied, and ensure that the file you want is visible in the right pane. Then scroll through the folders in the left pane until the target folder is visible. Now you can see the file you want to copy on the right, and its target folder on the left.

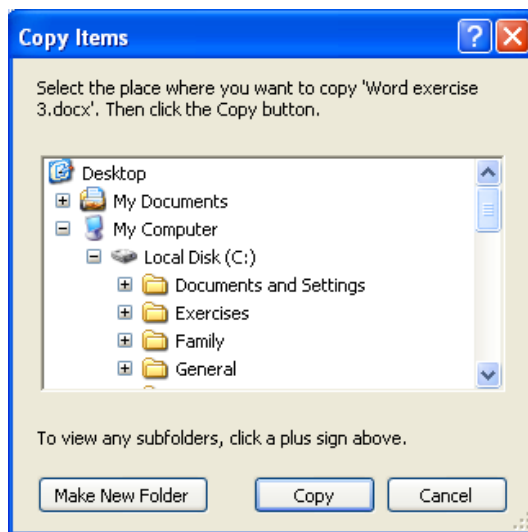
- **Right-clicking:**

1. In the *right* pane, select the folders or files you want to copy.
2. Right-click to display the pop-up menu, and select **Copy**.
3. Move the mouse pointer to the folder in the *left* pane that you want to copy to.
4. Right-click and select **Paste** from the pop-up menu.



- **Toolbar icon:**

1. In the *right* pane, select the folders or files you want to copy.
2. Click the **Copy To** icon on the toolbar.
3. The Copy Items dialogue box will open.

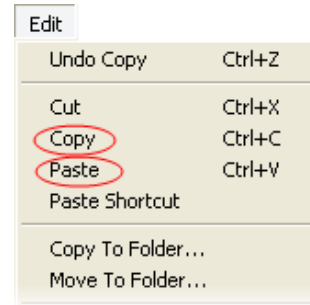




4. Select the destination folder and click the **Copy** button.

- **Menu bar:**

1. In the *right* pane, select the folders or files you want to copy.
2. Click **Edit** on the menu bar, and choose **Copy** from the list of options.
3. Select the destination folder. Click **Edit** on the menu bar and then **Paste**. (Alternatively, you can choose *Copy to Folder*, which opens the dialogue box shown under the preceding *Toolbar* option.)



- **Keyboard:**

1. In the *right* pane, select the folders or files you want to copy. Press [CTRL] + [C] on your keyboard.
2. Select the destination folder. Press [CTRL] + [V] on your keyboard.

- **Dragging:**

1. In the *right* pane, select the folders or files you want to copy. Click and hold down the left mouse button.
2. If you are copying them to another location on a *different* drive, then drag them to the destination folder and release the mouse button.
3. If you are copying them to another location on the *same* drive, then hold down the letter [C] on the keyboard while you drag them to the destination folder. You can then release the letter [C] and the mouse button.

Ensure that you drop the copied files exactly on the destination folder – this will be highlighted as you drag over it. If you “lose” your files, it’s a good idea to check in the folders above and below the destination folder, to see if the copied files landed there.



Remember that you can use the **Undo** function to undo a command you have just executed, including copying files.

### Moving folders or files

Using Windows Explorer, you can move folders and files using similar methods to those shown above for copying:

- Right-click, and select **Cut** (instead of *Copy*) followed by **Paste**.
- Use the **Cut** and **Paste** icons on the toolbar.
- Use the **Cut** and **Paste** options on the **Edit** menu.
- Use [CTRL]+[X] followed by [CTRL]+[V] on your keyboard
- Drag your files to the new location. If the new location is on a different drive then hold down the [SHIFT] key while dragging, otherwise Windows will make a *copy*, and you will still need to delete the original file.

Again, your task will be easier if you first make the destination folder visible in the left pane before you select the files that you want to move from the right pane.

So what is the difference between copying and moving a file? When you *copy* a file, the original file remains in the source folder, so you end up with two copies of the file, one in the source folder and another in the destination folder. When you *move* a file, the original

disappears from the source folder, and you are left with only one copy of the file, in the destination folder.

### Deleting folders or files

Deleting files and folders is dangerously easy! Here again, you have several options:

- Select the file or folder, and click the **Delete** icon on your toolbar.
- Select the file or folder, and click the [DEL] key on your keyboard.
- Click **File** on the menu bar and select **Delete**.
- Right-click the file or folder and select **Delete** from the pop-up menu.
- Select the file or folder and drag it to the **Recycle bin** on your desktop.



When you delete a file or folder, Windows will ask you to confirm the deletion. Make sure that you have the right file before clicking **Yes**.



**Warning:** It's not always possible to recover files that you have deleted, especially if they were deleted from a network drive. Be very careful not to delete files that you may need again in the future! Remember that when you delete a folder, you also delete any files in that folder.

### Practice exercise

1. Open Windows Explorer and identify your F: drive.
2. Create the folder F:\Test
3. Create the sub-folder F:\Test\Sub
4. Delete the folder and the sub-folder that you have just created.

## MS Windows Task Sheet 1

### Introduction to PCs

Answer the questions below, making your explanations as clear as possible.

1. What is the difference between *Hardware* and *Software*?

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2. Name two *input* devices and two *output* devices.

Input:

Output:

3. Why do you need to *log in* to the computers in the UCT labs?

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4. Your computer has a *C: drive* and an *F: drive*. Which of these should you use to save your files, and why?

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5. What is a computer *virus*, and what precautions can you take to avoid infecting your computer?

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6. When would you *log off* from a computer, and when would you use *shut down*?

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## MS Windows Task Sheet 2

### File management

Log in to a PC in the lab, and complete the following exercises.

Step	Instruction	Notes
1.	Start <i>Windows Explorer</i> .	See page 12
2.	Open your F: drive.	
3.	Create a new folder on your F: drive, called <b><i>File Management</i></b> .	See page 14
4.	Create a second new folder on your F: drive called <b><i>Exercise</i></b> .	
5.	Now create a subfolder within the File Management folder, called <b><i>Task Sheet</i></b> .	
6.	Minimise the <i>Windows Explorer</i> window.	See page 7
7.	Use Start – All Programs – Accessories to open the <i>Notepad</i> program.	See page 9
8.	Type your name inside the Notepad window.	
9.	Save the Notepad file in the Task Sheet subfolder on your F: drive, with the name <b><i>Identity</i></b> .	See page 14
10.	Close the <i>Notepad</i> window.	See page 7
11.	Restore the <i>Windows Explorer</i> window.	
12.	Copy the Identity file from the Task Sheet subfolder to the Exercise folder.	See page 15
13.	Rename the Identity file in the Exercise folder, to call it <b><i>Identity Copy</i></b> .	
14.	Delete the original Identity file in the Task Sheet subfolder.	See page 17
15.	Delete both the Task Sheet subfolder and the File Management folder.	
16.	Close <i>Windows Explorer</i> .	
17.	Log out from your PC. Well done!	