

Intro to Computers *for Novices*

Desktop

The desktop is the main screen area that you see after you turn on your computer and log on.

Commonly found on the desktop are **icons** representing the Recycle Bin and any shortcuts to applications such as Microsoft Word or Excel.

(When you do things like use a program or open documents, the desktop itself often gets partially or completely hidden. But it's still there, underneath everything.)

Here's a typical ECC desktop:



Icons

Icons are small pictures that represent programs, folders, files, applications, or other items. Here are some common icons:



Double-clicking a desktop icon starts or opens the item it represents.

Icons (cont'd)

You can choose which icons appear on the desktop—you can add or remove an icon at any time—and you can also move icons by dragging them to a new place on the desktop.

Mouse Basics

Cursor

The mouse cursor is the on-screen representation of your mouse movements. Most often the cursor will appear as a white arrow, but it will change in appearance and functionality depending on what you position the cursor over.

 Your cursor in Word and other places where you use text	 Your cursor when what you're hovering over is a hyperlink	 Your cursor pretty much everywhere else	 Your cursor when your computer is thinking
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Quick Tip:

If your cursor ever looks like this  , it's because you've pressed down on the **scroll wheel** a bit too hard. (It's as if you 'clicked' with the scroll wheel, using it as a mouse button, rather than rolling it up and down.)

No worries! Just 'click' with the scroll wheel again, and your cursor should go back to normal.

(More about the scroll wheel in the next section.)

Right and Left Click

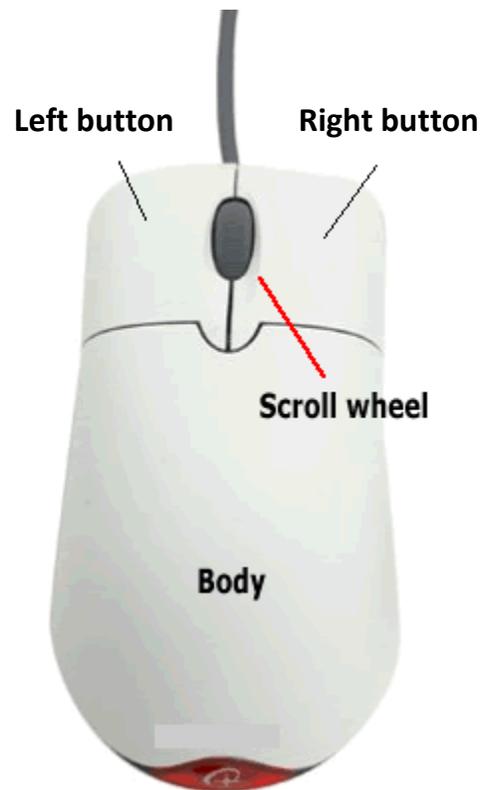
A mouse typically has two buttons: a **Left button** and a **Right button**.

The **Left** button is the one you will use most often. You use it to click and select items, position the cursor in a document, or drag items. It gets a lot of use. 😊

You click on the **Right** mouse button to bring up a menu of special tasks or options relating to where you just clicked. Clicking the secondary mouse button is called **right-clicking**.

(More Right–Left explanation below)

Most mice also include a **scroll wheel** between the buttons to help you scroll through documents and webpages. Use your index or middle finger to roll the wheel up or down. On some mice, the scroll wheel can act as a third button when pressed.



Sides of the Street



I like to think about the two mouse buttons and what they do as if they were businesses on different sides of the street.

The *Left side* has the businesses we go to all the time: the supermarket, the gas station, the bank, etc.

The *Right side* has the more specialized businesses we don't go to that often, but when we do need them it's good to know where they are: oil change, shoe repair, notary.

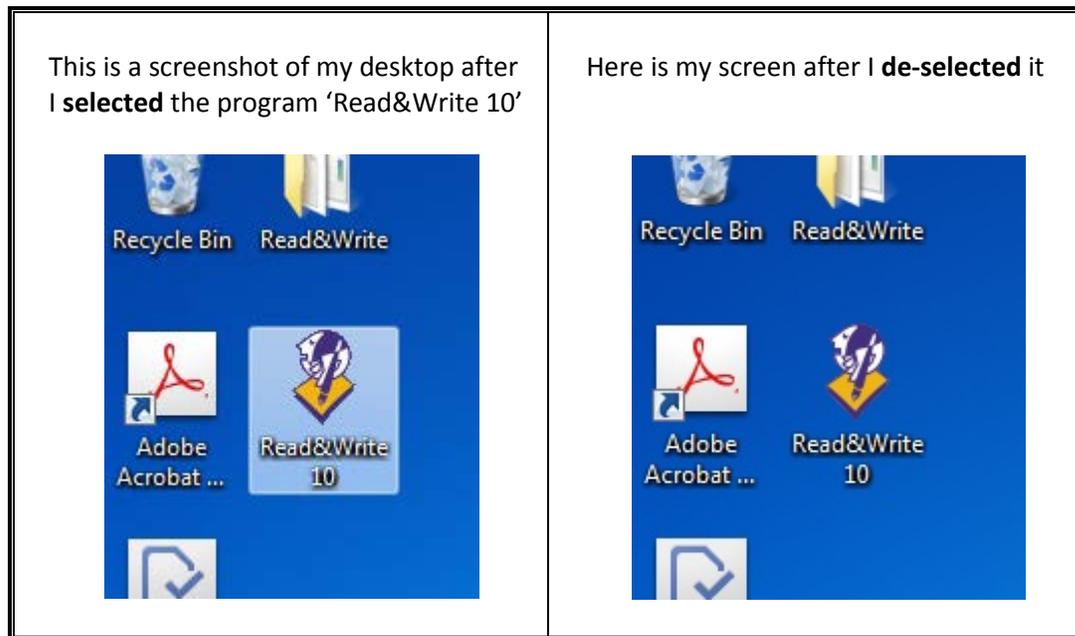
'What if I'm a lefty?'

If you use your left hand for the mouse, there's actually a setting on your computer to switch the jobs of the two mouse buttons.

Select / De-Select

Click on an icon or file to select it. If you want to 'unselect' or 'de-select' it (same thing 😊), click a blank area of the desktop or window.

You can tell if an object has been selected because it will be highlighted with a shaded box or rectangle. Here's an example:



Double-Click

To double-click an item, point to the item on the screen, and then click twice quickly. If the two clicks are spaced too far apart, they might be interpreted as two individual clicks rather than as one double-click.

Double-clicking is most often used to **OPEN** files or folders.

Drag Click (aka 'Click & Drag')

To drag click, **click once** on an object but **keep holding down** the left button. Now, with that left mouse button still being held down, move the mouse pointer to a new location and then **release** the button. The object you were dragging should move with you.

Drag Click (aka 'Click & Drag') cont'd

You can use this technique to move files and folders, arrange windows, select multiple items, and highlight text. We go over many of these topics in our Intro to Computer Basics class.



Quick Tip:

If you drag an object **on top of** something else, such as a folder, directory, or – oh, say – the Recycle Bin, your 'click & drag' turns into a 'drag & drop' (which we go over in Intro to Computer Basics.) This means you have in essence moved this object and **put it into that new spot**.

Dragging & dropping can be very handy, but only if that's what you intended to be doing – so be careful. 😊

Windows (the boxes/frames)

Whenever you open a program, file, or folder, it appears on your screen in a box or frame called a **window**.

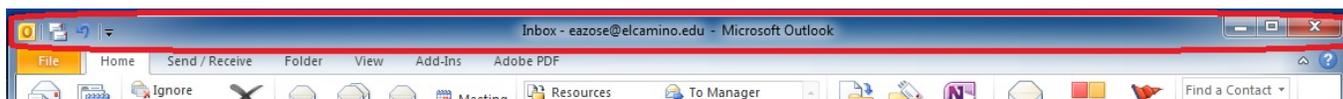
When you have several programs running at once, each one displaying in its own window. These windows can overlap one another. The window in front is known as the active window. Click any part of a window in the background to bring its contents to the front and make it the active window.

It's important to understand how to move your windows, change their size, or close them. But first, let's look at the different parts of a window.

Title Bar

The title bar is at the very top of a window. It displays the name of the document and/or program (or the folder name if you're working in a folder) and contains the Minimize, Maximize, and Close buttons (more on those buttons later.)

Here is my title bar in Outlook:





And here is my title bar in Microsoft Word. In many programs such as Word, Notepad, and PowerPoint, the title bar tells you the name of the document you're working on:



Moving a Window

To move a window, point to its title bar with the mouse pointer, then click and drag the window to the location you want.

Sometimes if you start dragging a window that's full-screen (i.e., if your Word document is taking up the whole computer screen, for example, and you try to move it), the window will shrink a bit smaller and will stay that new smaller size once you 'let go' of the mouse. (You can always resize it bigger, as we'll learn about below).

On the other side of that spectrum, if you're moving around a window that's smaller than full-screen, if you tap that window up against the top of your screen, that window will expand and take up the whole screen. This can be startling at first if you didn't mean to make it go full-screen, but it can be a handy trick if you're moving around a bunch of windows and decide that you want that one to get a whole lot larger.

Resizing a Window

To resize a window (make it smaller or bigger), point to any of the window's borders or corners. When the mouse cursor changes to a two-headed arrow, click and drag the border or corner to shrink or enlarge the window.

Depending on which part of the window you've decided to resize from, your cursor might look like this:



Minimize / Maximize / Close Buttons

In the top-right corner of a window are the Minimize, Maximize/Restore Down, and Close buttons. These buttons hide the window, resize it extra large or smaller, and close the window, respectively.

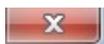


Let's look at each of these buttons:



The **Minimize** button *temporarily* removes the window from your desktop and stores it on the task bar at the bottom of your screen. The program disappears from the screen, but it's still running.

If you minimized a window and then want to work on it again, click on it down in the taskbar to open it up again.



The **Close** button closes the window you're working on. (*It may also close the entire program as well*, for certain programs such as Paint.)

Most of the time, though, if you *have multiple documents open in a program*, clicking the red X will close just that document. If you only have one document open, clicking the X will close the whole program, too.



When your window is only taking up part of your screen, that middle button looks like this. If you want that window to now take up the entire screen, click on this middle **Maximize** button to make it enlarge to fill up your whole screen.



If your window is using the whole screen, the middle button looks like this. If you want it to get a bit smaller (but not disappear all the way down to the task bar), click on this middle **Restore Down** button.

Scroll Bar

When a document, webpage, or picture exceeds the size of its window, a scroll bar appears to allow you to see the information that is currently out of view.



To operate a scroll bar:

- Click the Up or Down scroll arrows   to move the window's contents up or down in small steps. Hold down on the arrow to scroll continuously.
- Click an empty area of a scroll bar above or below the scroll box to scroll up or down one page.
- Drag click the scroll box up or down to scroll the window in that direction.

(If your mouse has a scroll wheel, you can use it to scroll up or down windows. To scroll down, roll the wheel backward; to scroll up, roll the wheel forward.)

Programs / Applications

Programs perform a specific task, such as word processing, accounting, or data management. (Microsoft Word is a word processing program.) Programs are also called applications.

Almost everything you do on your computer requires using a program. For example, if you want to draw a picture, you need to use a drawing or painting program. To write a letter, you use a word processing program. To explore the Internet, you use a program called a web browser. Thousands of programs are available for Windows.

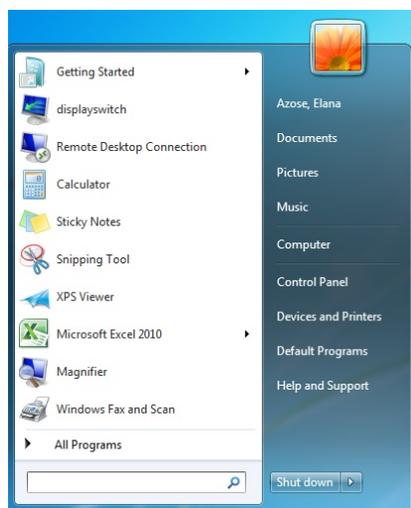
Start a Program

You can start a program by **double-clicking** its icon from the desktop. You can also double-click a file that uses that program. (For example, double-clicking a Microsoft Word document starts Microsoft Word, and then opens the file in the program.)



You can also start a program by clicking on it from the **Start Menu**. The Start Menu is the gateway to all of the programs on your computer. To open the Start Menu, click the Start button.

The left pane of the Start Menu contains shortcuts to programs, including your Internet browser, e-mail program, and recently-used programs, as well as a list of All Programs. To start a program, click it.



Here's a picture of my Start Menu. It might look a little different from yours, depending on what programs you've used recently.

Mine doesn't include shortcuts to Outlook or Internet Explorer, because I've pinned those icons to my Task Bar instead.

(We'll talk more about the Start Menu and the Task Bar in our Intro to Computer Basics class.)

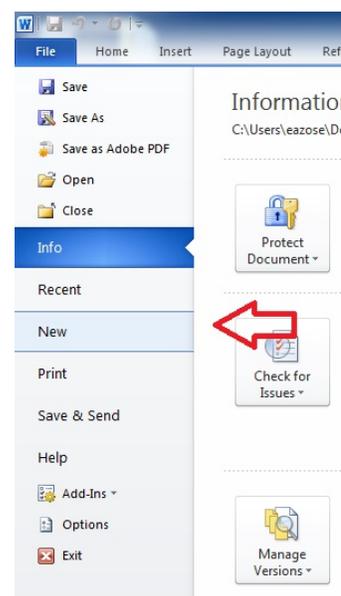
New

Some programs, including WordPad, NotePad, and Paint, open a blank, untitled document automatically when you start the program, so that you can start working right away. You'll see a large white area and a generic title like "Untitled" or "Document 1" in the program's title bar.

If your program doesn't open a new document automatically when it starts, you can do it yourself:

- Click the File menu in the program you are using, and then click **New**.

(If you can open more than one type of document in the program, you might also need to select the type you want from a list.)



Save

You can use this same menu to **Save** your document. Here's what it looks like in Word:

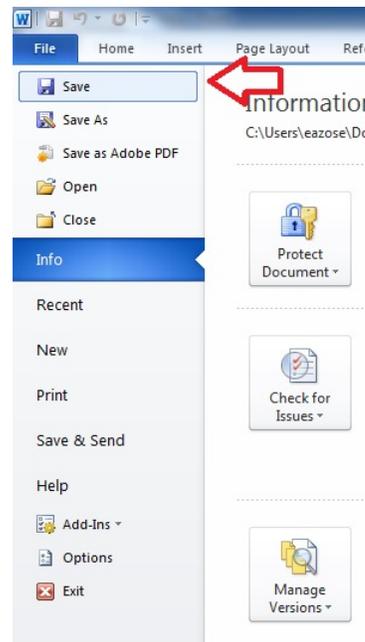
Saving a document allows you to name it and to store it permanently on your computer's hard disk. That way, the document is preserved even when your computer is turned off, and you can open it again later.

To save a document or file:

- Click the Save icon 

or

- On the File menu, click 'Save'. If this is the first time you are saving the file, you'll be asked to provide a name for it.



Even if you've saved a document once, you need to keep saving it as you work. To avoid losing work unexpectedly due to a power failure or other problem, **save your document often.



If you are working in a new file and this is the first time you're saving it, type a name for the file in the **File name box**, and then click Save.



Note that clicking Save will **overwrite** any previous saved versions of this same file. (Which is why it's a good idea to create different versions of the file with different names as you go along. See below.)

Save As

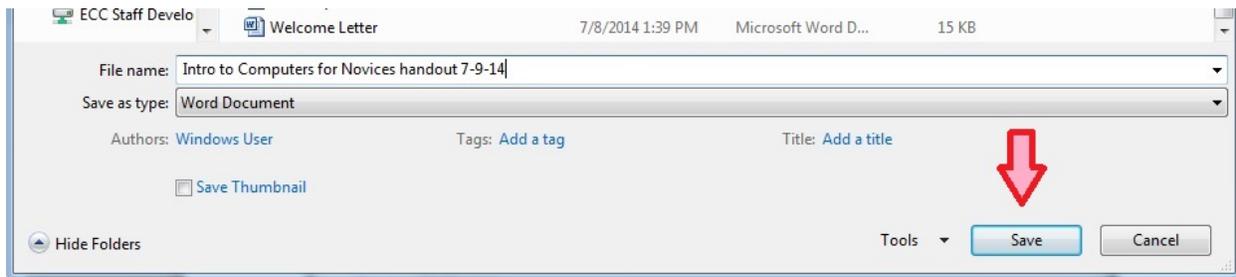
Save As is used when you want to save a file with a different name to create a backup copy of a file during the creation process. In that way, you can have different versions of the same document and can return to a previous stage.

I like to click 'Save As' and then rename my files with dates as I go along, such as "Windows 7 Handout 6-11-14" and "Windows 7 Handout 6-19-14." Then I know which one is the latest version.

Save As (cont'd)

Go to the File menu and select '**Save As.**' (It's just like going to the file menu and clicking Save, only you click on the choice below it.)

You can type a new name for your file, and then click the Save button.



Close

We saw before that clicking the red X in the corner  will close the document or program you're working on.

You can also close a program by going into the File menu like we did for New, Save, and Save As. Click '**Close**' to close the document or file you're working on, or click '**Exit**' to exit the whole program.

Help

Many programs have a Help button in the upper right-hand corner. Often it is represented by a question mark.  The Help button will usually take you to a searchable Help webpage.

You can type in **topics** (e.g., "make a table of contents") or even a **problem** you're encountering (e.g., "table of contents not updating.") 

