

# Productivity Tips & Tricks for Windows

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## Copying & Pasting

If you use the same text for multiple purposes (for example, if you wrote a memo using Word, and now you want to e-mail part of it to someone), save time by copying and pasting the text between programs.

1. Go into the program window that contains the original text. Highlight the text you want to copy.
2. From the Edit menu, choose Copy, or press CTRL+ C.
3. Open or switch to the program window where you wish to reuse the text. Place the cursor where you want the text to appear.
4. From the Edit menu, choose Paste\*, or press CTRL+ V.

**\*Tip:** The copy & paste function usually brings the formatting along with the text you copy. However, there are times when you do not want the formatting, such as when pasting into an e-mail message. To paste just the text without the formatting, select Paste Special (instead of Paste) from the Edit menu. From there, you can usually choose “Unformatted text” or a similar option.

## Accessing Recently Used Documents

The Documents menu holds a list of the last 15 files you’ve worked on, and gives you 1-click access to them. Just go to Start ▶ Documents and choose the file you want. The necessary program will open automatically. In many programs, there is also a list of recently used files at the bottom of the File menu.

## Switching between programs (Multi-tasking)

In Windows, it’s easy to work with more than one program at a time, and to switch between programs. The taskbar (gray strip at the bottom of your screen) allows you to see all of the programs you currently have open, and you can switch between them simply by clicking on the taskbar icon for each one. You don’t have to close or minimize one in order to bring up another one. To switch between programs even more quickly, you can use the ALT+TAB keyboard shortcut (hold ALT & keep pressing TAB).

## Using right-click menus

Many people forget that you can right-click anywhere in almost any program to get a right-click menu with commonly used options. This may save you from needing to go up to the menus. Experiment by right-clicking in various places to see what menu options are available.

## Customizing the Start menu

To add something to your Start menu, drag the shortcut for the item onto the Start button and drop it there. The item will be added to the top of the menu, above the line.

To remove something from the Start menu, right-click on it and choose Delete.

## Automatically launch programs at startup

Did you know that you can have programs start automatically when your computer boots up?

1. Right-click on the Start button & choose Open.
2. Double-click on Programs.
3. Double-click on Startup.
4. Place a shortcut to the program you want to start automatically in this location. (See the **Desktop Shortcuts** section below.) Repeat for additional programs.
5. Close the window. The next time you restart your computer, the program will start automatically!

## Desktop shortcuts

To make it more convenient to access frequently used programs, files, or folders, you can create “shortcuts” for them and put them anywhere you like on your desktop. To create a shortcut:

1. For a shortcut to a program, locate the program on the Start – Programs menu and drag it with your right mouse button to the desktop. Choose **Create Shortcut Here**; if that option isn’t available, choose **Copy Here**.
2. For a shortcut to a file or folder, locate the file/folder through My Computer. Drag it with your right mouse button to the desktop and choose **Create Shortcut Here**.

To reposition a shortcut on your desktop, drag it with the left mouse button and drop it wherever you want it.

By default, shortcuts always start with “Shortcut to...”. To rename one, right-click on it and choose **Rename**.

To add a shortcut to the Quick Launch area on the taskbar, create the shortcut on the desktop first, then drag it to the Quick Launch area using the right mouse button. If you want to have it both on the desktop and in the quick launch, choose **Copy Here**; if you want to remove it from the desktop, choose **Move Here**.

*Hint:* The little arrow in the corner of an icon means that it’s a shortcut (as opposed to the original file).

## Keyboard Shortcuts

It takes a little time to remember keyboard shortcuts and get used to using them, but once you get used to them you’ll save a lot of time. (Why? Because you don’t have to keep taking your hand off the keyboard to grab the mouse.) Here are some of the most useful ones. These are common to almost all Windows programs.

To	Use
Close the active window	ALT+F4
Copy (the highlighted text/object)	CTRL+C
Copy whole screen to the clipboard as an image	PRINTSCREEN
Copy current window to the clipboard as an image	ALT+PRINTSCREEN
Cut (the highlighted text/object)	CTRL+X
Find files (in Windows)	WINDOWS+F
Find (text within a file)	CTRL+F
Maximize the active window	ALT+SPACE, X
Minimize all windows	WINDOWS+M
Minimize the active window	ALT+SPACE, N
Move the cursor one word to the left	CTRL+ LEFT ARROW (hold CTRL & keep pressing ARROW)
Move the cursor one word to the right	CTRL+ RIGHT ARROW (hold CTRL & keep pressing ARROW)
Move to the bottom of the page	CTRL+END
Move to the top of the page	CTRL+HOME
New	CTRL+N
Open	CTRL+O
Paste (the most recently cut or copied text/object)	CTRL+V
Print	CTRL+P
Restore the active window	ALT+SPACE, R
Save (the current file)	CTRL+S
Select all	CTRL+A
Switch between open programs	ALT+TAB (hold ALT & keep pressing TAB)
Open the Start menu	CTRL+ESC or WINDOWS KEY
Undo (the previous action)	CTRL+Z

# Working with Files

## Get organized!

Keeping your files organized is probably the one thing that will save you the most time every day. If you create and use a consistent organization system of files and folders, you'll reduce the time you spend looking for files.

- Keep all of your files in a central location/folder, using subfolders within it to organize them.
- Use a consistent file naming scheme and file structure to make it easier to find your files.
- When naming files, do **not** add your own file extensions (".xxx") - let the programs add them for you.

## Working with more than one file at a time

**CTRL+CLICK:** In order to manipulate more than one file at a time, hold down the CTRL key and click once on each file. Any action you take (cut, copy, move, or delete) will apply to **all** files which are selected (highlighted) at that time. Be careful not to left click, though, or you'll deselect all the files!

**SHIFT+CLICK:** In order to manipulate an entire list of files at the same time, click once on the first file in the list, then hold down the SHIFT key while clicking once on the last file in the list. All files in between the two will be selected. Any action you take (cut, copy, move, or delete) will apply to **all** files which are selected.

## Finding files

So maybe you're not as organized as you should be & you occasionally lose files. Here's how to find them:

1. Go to Start ▶ Search ▶ For Files or Folders. (Start ▶ Find ▶ Files or Folders in Windows 95/98/ME.)
2. Click on All files and folders.
3. Choose the drive & folder you want to look in under "Look in".
4. Type the file name in the "Named" box. If you don't know the file name, type some text that the file contains in the "Containing text" box. Try to make it unique text that won't be found in many files.
5. Click Search Options for more options such as Date and Type.
6. Click on the Search Now button (Find Now in Windows 95/98/ME).
7. Once the file is retrieved, just double-click the file name to open it.

# Protecting your Data

## Save Early, Save Often

When you start working on a file, don't wait until you've worked on it for a long time, or you've finished it, before saving it. You should always save after the first couple of minutes, or even as soon as you start the new file. Then, while you're working, save *all the time!* Get into the habit of saving every time you finish a sentence or paragraph, or pause for a thought, or when the phone rings, or if you get interrupted... you get the idea. That way if your program or computer crashes, you won't lose much work, & you won't waste time hunting for lost files or redoing your work.

**Hint:** To save quickly, just click on the disk icon in most programs, or press CTRL+S.

## Backing up your files

Back up your files regularly to avoid disaster. For all files not stored on the network, keep a second copy in a separate location, such as on your hard drive and on a removable disk (like a CD) or drive (like a USB flash drive or an external hard drive). *Never* rely on a floppy or Zip disk to store the *only* copy of a file – these types of disks are *very unreliable* and should be used only for back-ups and for transporting files. (If you have a floppy or Zip disk failure, contact the Help Desk before doing anything else.)

# Assistance and Questions

If you have any questions or need more information, please call the Help Desk at (920) 403-HELP (4357), contact us via e-mail at [helpdesk@snc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@snc.edu), or stop by the Help Desk in Cofrin 101. The Help Desk is for St. Norbert College students and employees only.