The Windows 7 Desktop Interface

Using the Windows Key

Windows Key:
Open/Close the Start Menu
Windows Key + PAUSE Key
Display the System Properties
Windows Key + D
Display the Desktop
Windows Key + M
Minimize all of the windows
Windows Key +SHIFT+M
Restore minimized windows
Windows Key + E
Open Computer
Windows Key + Tab Key
Cycle open programs with 3D Flip
Windows Key + L
Lock keyboard (or switch users)
Windows Key + L
Lock keyboard (or switch users)
Windows Key + Space
All Windows become transparent
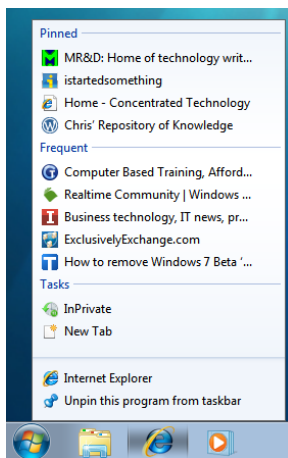**Windows Key + Arrows**
Up Arrow: Maximize a Window

Down Arrow: Minimize a Window

Right or Left Arrows: Pin Window to the right or left of the screen.

1. **The Start Orb**: This is a button in the lower right-hand side of your desktop that is the launching pad for accessing programs, files, Control Panel, accessing the Internet, E-mail and more. Some call it the Start button, pearl or jewel, but most prefer 'orb'.

2. **The Instant Search Box**: Instantly search for items like applications, documents and even emails. With 'as-you-type' searching, it will begin scanning all items from the moment you type in your first character.

3. **All Programs**: This is the location where all installed software programs are accessed. Click on All Programs to explore available applications on your computer. Click on any program shortcut on the menu to open the application.

4. **The Left Side Of The Start Menu**: By default, the 10 most recent programs will be displayed. To change the Taskbar and Start Menu Properties you right-click the Taskbar and choose Properties. Then you can select the Start Menu tab and choose Customize.

5. **The Right Side of the Start Menu**: This is where commonly accessed personal files such as Documents, Pictures and more are generally stored. Shortcuts to the Computer, Control Panel and Help and Support are located here as well.

6. **Shutdown Options**: Tell the computer to sleep, hibernate, shutdown, lock, log off, switch user or restart.

7. **Recycle Bin**: Used as a repository files you plan on deleting but they haven't been deleted just yet. This is a holding bin. You can right-click the bin and restore all items within. Typically though you will open the bin and locate specific files to restore.

8. **The Desktop**: Like a real desktop, this is where various objects such as files, folders and more can be placed for quick access.

9. **Gadgets:** Gadgets are mini applications you can pin to your desktop. They include different types of applications. The Media Center (shown above), clocks, calendars, photo slideshow applications, newsfeeds, stock information, calculators and much more.

10. **Windows Taskbar:** Usually located at the bottom of the Desktop, this area shows all open applications. In previous versions of Windows there was a Quick Launch toolbar. This is no longer needed as applications are now directly pinned to the taskbar.

11. **The Notification Area and Show Desktop Sliver:** There is a Notification Area to the right of the taskbar. Important details regarding software updates, messages and more are relayed here. To the far right is the 'Show Desktop' sliver. If you hover your mouse over this button sliver you will be able to take a peek at your desktop because it makes all the other windows transparent. However, if you want to go to your desktop you can select this button

Learn what you need...**When you need it.**

Taskbar Buttons and Jump Lists

Taskbar Buttons: Shortcut icons are visible on the taskbar for application shortcuts you pin (the defaults being IE 8, Explorer and Media Player 12). Open applications and windows have a visible border whereas shortcuts for favorite programs have no border unless opened. You can drag and drop buttons wherever you like (something you couldn't do prior to Windows 7 without a 3rd party solution).

Jump Lists: If you select a taskbar button and pull up with your cursor (or if you right-click a taskbar button) you will be shown a jump list. These show you common actions (for example, you can see above the jump list for IE 8 with a common task being 'New Tab'. You will also see, depending on the application, default lists of actions. Note: These lists will also appear in the Start Menu.

The New Action Center and UAC Slider

Action Center: Introduced in Windows XP SP2 and improved in Vista (under the name Security Center) Windows 7 goes to the next level with the Action Center. In addition to security information, you can now access maintenance information and troubleshoot computer problems. Within the security portion you have similar options to what you have in Vista. These include: Windows Update, Windows Firewall, Windows Defender, User Account Control, Network and Internet security settings. Under the maintenance and troubleshooting side you can check for solutions to problem reports, perform backups or recovery and more. It's a one-stop-shop for you to take *Action*!
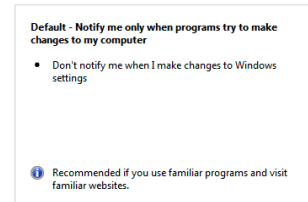
User Account Control: A security feature introduced in Windows Vista that is designed to help prevent malicious software or software you haven't explicitly approved as an Administrator, from running on your system. It works by requiring approval in presenting security dialog boxes in front of you so that you can (if logged in as an Administrator) simply continue, or (if logged in as a Standard User) either provide what's called 'over the shoulder credentials' or be stopped by the OS from performing the task. There are four settings you can configure with the slider:

- Never Notify
- Notify me only when programs try to make changes to my computer (do not dim my desktop)
- Default – Notify me only when programs try to make changes to my computer
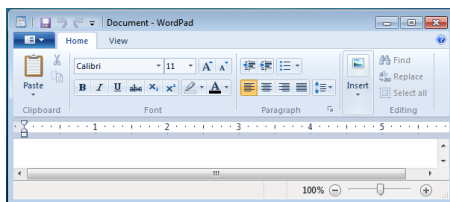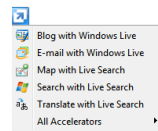- Always Notify

Application Enhancements

WordPad and Paint Get The New Ribbon: It has been years since these tools have received a substantial modification, but now they are sporting the same look as Office 2007 ribbon applications. (Notepad stays the same however.)

A New Calculator: With a new look and new functionality, the calculator has become an uber-calculator with unit conversion and date calculation tools, as well as templates to help you determine Gas Mileage, Lease Estimation and Mortgage Estimation (along with a host of other calculator types like Programmer, Statistics, and Scientific).

Internet Explorer 8.0: Some of the features in IE8 are carried over from 7.0 (like multiple tabs in a single browser window, Quick Tabs, RSS Feeds and so forth) there are some new enhancements that will hopefully improve your browsing experience:

Accelerators: Allows you to do tasks in fewer clicks by providing a simple link that will take selected text in the direction you need. You may need a word defined or translated, a location mapped, or more. Just select the text and look for the blue box to show Accelerator options.

Web Slices (a.k.a. automatic feed updates) will track specific feeds (for example a single item on eBay that you may be tracking). So if a site has slices you can subscribe to you will see a Green square (rather than an orange one) in your IE toolbar. Once you add the slice it will display in your Favorites Bar.

Media Player 12: There are two modes now. There is a separation between the library management side of the player (called Library view) and the 'what's currently playing' mode (called Now Playing view). There is also a streamlined interface and enhanced networking features to share media with others.
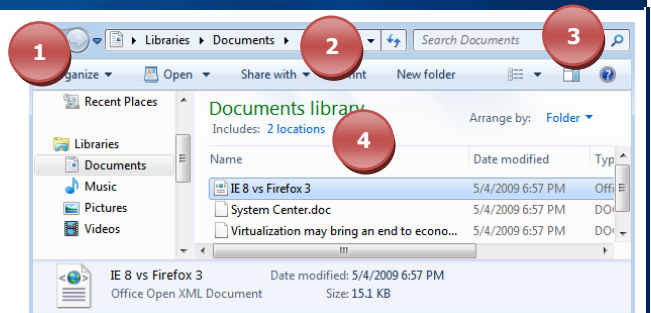
Windows Live Applications: While Internet Explorer and Media Player are still 'included' with Windows, some applications now require a download. You can download the following from the Windows Live download site: http://download.live.com

- Windows Live Call
- Windows Live Family Safety
- Windows Live Mail
- Windows Live Messenger
- Windows Live Movie Maker
- Windows Live Photo Gallery
- Windows Live Writer

Explorer and Libraries

Explorer is a file manager that helps you locate your data.

1. From the options bar in Explorer you can alter the way you Organize or Open your data. On the right hand side you have options to change the view and turn the 'Preview' pane on.

2. Address Bar (a.k.a. Breadcrumb Bar): Designed for easier navigation with ways to walk your way backward through the folder structure.

3. Search: In Windows 7 every shell has a Search bar at the top to facilitate location of data.

4. Libraries: One of the coolest new features in Windows 7, Libraries allow you to configure multiple locations the library can pull from. So, in the example here you see the Documents library has 2 locations. And that can be increased. You can alter the default libraries (Documents, Music, Pictures, Videos) or you can create your own.