



Student Technology Services

Armstrong Atlantic State University

COMPUTER TIPS & TRICKS WORKSHOP

Learn how to become more proficient in using a personal computer.

- ✓ Components of a personal computer
- ✓ Hardware and software
- ✓ Drag and Drop
- ✓ Cut, Copy, and Paste
- ✓ Storage media
- ✓ Creating and organizing folders
- ✓ Keyboard shortcuts
- ✓ Searching for files and folders

Student Technology Services provides AASU students a wide range of technology resources, services, and information, so students are able to incorporate technology into their learning environment and course work.

Student Help Desk provides in-depth phone and email technical support and resources to students regarding WebCT, Microsoft Office programs, and student email.

Computing Labs are provided in MCC Annex and UH 112 for students to use to complete academic course work.

Orientations/Workshops are now offered regarding WebCT, computer and Internet basics, and Microsoft Office programs. Students are encouraged to visit www.sts.armstrong.edu to view an updated schedule of orientations and workshops.

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Computer Tips & Tricks

Basic Components

Every computer system has the following components:

- **Central Processing Unit (CPU):** The “brain” of the computer that performs the actual calculations.
- **Input Devices:** Devices that accept data from any external source, convert it to electrical signals, and communicate that data to the CPU. In other words, you use an input device to communicate to the computer which action you wish it to perform.
- **Memory:** Also known as *Random Access Memory* (RAM) temporarily stores any programs being executed by the computer, as well as the data on which these programs operate.
 - **Measurable units of memory include:**
 - *Byte:* equal to one character
 - *Kilobyte (KB):* respectively 1,000 bytes (1,024)
 - *Megabyte (MB):* respectively one million bytes (1,048,579)
- **Output Devices:** Devices that accept electrical signals from the CPU and convert them to appropriate forms of output such as an image, sound, or printout.¹ As opposed to input devices, output devices allow the computer to communicate with the user.
- **Storage:** Refers to various devices for saving data.

Hardware and Software

Hardware: Any component of a computer system you can physically touch.

Software: Any intangible programs or applications within the computer system.



Consider a book. The pages and ink are the hardware, while the words, sentences, paragraphs, and overall meaning are provided in the software. “A computer without software is like a book full of empty pages.”²

Table 1 Common Hardware Devices

Keyboard	This device allows the user to enter data and move around the screen using the arrow keys.
Monitor	This device refers to the display screen and the entire box that encloses it.
Mouse	This device allows the user to select data and move around the screen by clicking on the mouse buttons.
Printer	This device creates a hardcopy of the selected information.

¹ Grauer, Robert T. & Barber, Maryann. *Exploring Microsoft Windows 98 and Essential Computing Concepts*. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1998).

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Operating System (OS)

Windows is an operating system that is used to run software programs on a personal computer (PC). Programs cannot run without an operating system because that system links the various PC components to one another. Windows 2000 is the operating system utilized in the AASU Academic Computing Labs.

Table 2 Types of Operating Systems

Other versions of the Windows Operating System include:	Other Operating Systems include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows 95 • Windows 98 • Windows 2000 • Windows XP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DOS • UNIX • Mac OS

Windows Environment

The default Windows environment includes the following components; however, the computers in the Academic Computer Lab are configured to not show icons on the desktop. As a result, students must open the My Computer icon through Windows Explorer.

Table 3 Components of the Windows Environment

Desktop	This refers to the entire full-screen background. The virtual desktop was designed to mirror everything that might be found on a physical desktop, such as file folders (folders), tools (applications/programs), and papers (documents/files).
Icons	These are pictures associated with applications or files.
My Computer	This icon provides access to your hard drive, internal drives (such as floppy drive or zip drive), external drives, and network drives.
Start Button	The Start Button is located on the left end of the Taskbar and allows access to the programs on your computer as well as functions required for maintenance.
Taskbar	This is the thin, horizontal bar on the bottom of your screen that displays which programs are currently open or minimized.
Windows Explorer	This tool provides a snapshot of what's on your computer. From here you can view the My Computer Icon to discern what's on your hard drive, floppy disk, etc.

To Open My Computer in the Academic Computer Lab:

1. Click on **Start**.
2. Scroll up to **Programs**.
3. Select **Accessories**.
4. Click on **Windows Explorer**.
5. Click on the **My Computer** on the left side of the screen.

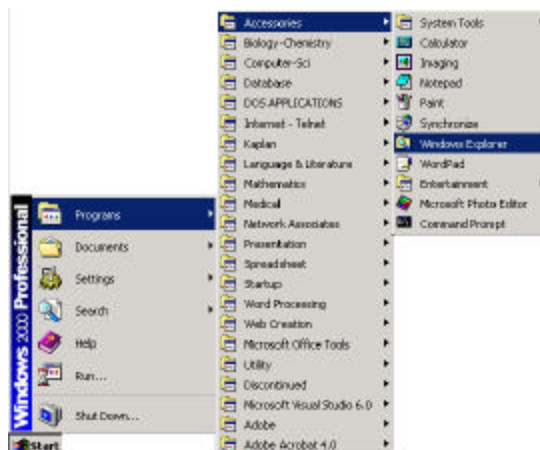


Figure 1 Opening Windows Explorer

Components of a Window

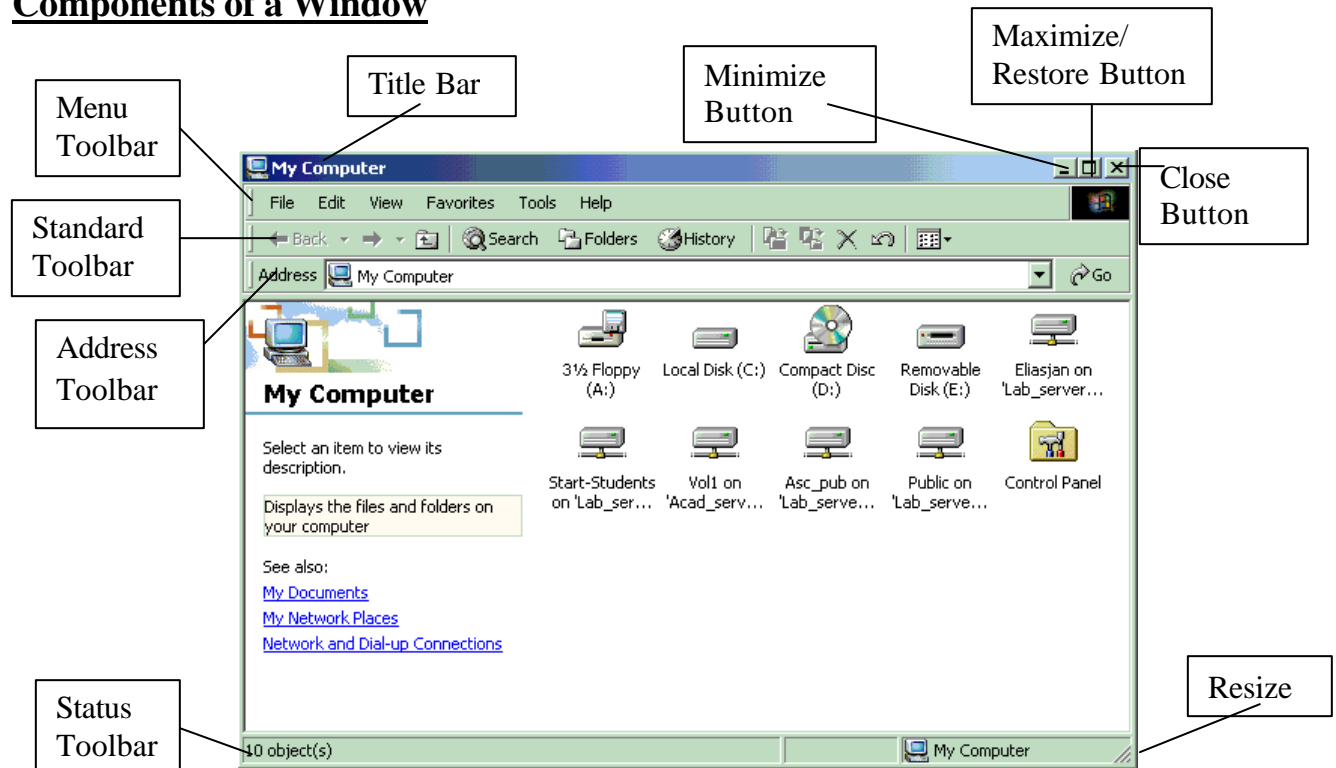


Figure 2 Components of a Window

Try to perform the following actions:

- Minimize the window
- Maximize the window
- Show the status bar
- Resize the window
- Move the window

Storage Media

Information on your computer can be saved using a variety of storage media. It is a good idea to save your information to at least two of the following storage media.

- The **hard drive** is an internal device where data can be stored within the computer. The computer recognizes the hard drive as the C: Drive. On campus, users do not have access to save to the hard drives; therefore, a Network drive has been created for students to save their documents. In general, the hard disk drive has the capacity to store several gigabytes of data.
- **Network drives** allow the user to access their information from any other computer also connected to that same network. In the Academic Computer Lab, the K: drive is designated as the Shared Drive that students are allowed to save to.

To save to the Shared (K:) Drive:

1. Open Microsoft Word from the Start Menu.
 2. Type your name.
 3. Click on the **File** menu.
 4. Select **Save As**.
 5. Locate the “**Save in:**” drop-down list.
 6. Select the **Shared on ‘Lab_server\users\Noc’(K:)**.
 7. Name the document your last name.
 8. Locate the folder named **Practice**, and double-click on it.
 9. Click the **Save** button.
- The **3 ½ Floppy Drive** (or A: Drive) allows users to save to magnetic 3 ½” Floppy Disks, which hold up to 1.44 MB of information. Floppy disks are convenient because they are small and portable. However, they may be easily damaged if they are not properly stored or if they are exposed to extreme temperatures. They tend to fail over time, so if you save files to them that you can’t bear to lose, be sure you also have a backup copy saved on another storage medium.

To save to a disk:

1. Insert the disk into the 3 ½ Floppy (A:) drive.
2. Open Microsoft Word.
3. Type a sentence that states your name and your major.
4. Click on the **File** menu.
5. Select **Save As**.
6. Name the document “About me”.
7. Select **3 ½ Floppy (A:)** from the “**Save in:**” drop-down list.
8. Click **Save**.



CHECK THIS! Take note of the **Save as type** box, because you can save your document in different formats. If you use Microsoft Works, Corel WordPerfect, or Lotus at home, you can use this **Save as type** box to select Microsoft Word or RTF (rich text format). You need to do this to open these programs on campus.



Figure 3 “Save as Type” Drop-down List

- A **Zip disk** is a type of disk storage developed by iOmega, which can only be read by a special drive called a Zip Drive. A Zip disk can hold nearly seventy times more information than a 3 ½ Floppy; the average Zip disk holds 100-250 MB of information. Yet, similar to the floppy disk, the zip disk is magnetic and is not the best option for long-term storage.
- The **Compact Disc** may be your best option for saving information long term. The average CD can hold up to 800MB of information and will only cost around \$1 per disc. However, you must be equipped with a CD Writer drive and corresponding software that would allow you to “burn” information from your computer’s hard drive onto a CD.

The Menu Toolbar

Drop-down (or pull-down) menus allow you to execute commands within an application. Simply click on the word on the Menu Toolbar to see which commands are available.

File Menu

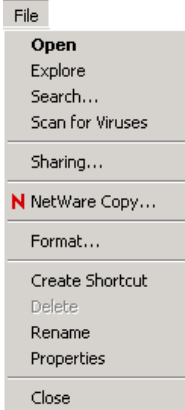


Figure 4 File Menu

The **File Menu** allows you to perform some of the most commonly used commands such as opening and closing files.

Edit Menu

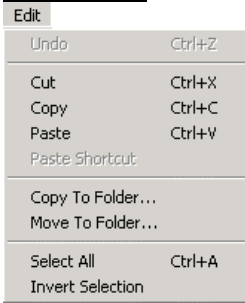


Figure 5 Edit Menu

The **Edit Menu** offers the user the option to Undo previous commands, as well as options to Cut, Copy, Paste, and Move. These techniques are addressed later in more depth.

View Menu

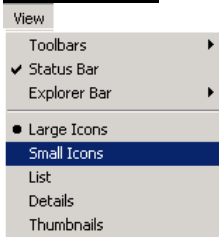


Figure 6 View Menu

To adjust the appearance of the icons within the window:

1. Click on **View**.
2. Select one of the following:
 - a. Large Icons.
 - b. Small Icons.
 - c. List.
 - d. Details.
 - e. Thumbnails.

* You can also access your Toolbars from the View Menu.

Creating and Organizing Folders

A common and helpful task in Windows is creating/organizing folders. You can do this on the desktop, within other folders, or on a disk. We will create a folder on a floppy disk.

To create a new folder:

1. **Right-click** the mouse in the empty space.
2. Select **New**.
3. Select **Folder** as shown in **Figure 7**.
4. Name the new folder.

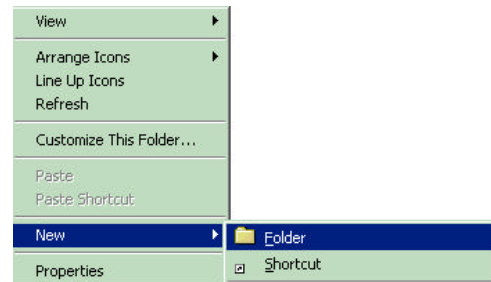


Figure 7 Creating a New Folder

Techniques to Know



- ✓ **Take a closer look!** Windows operating systems have devised techniques that allow the computer user to be more efficient. The following information summarizes the techniques that will save you time and trouble when using the computer.

Using the Mouse

The mouse serves as an input device allowing the user more time-efficient use of the computer. Below are the common actions that can be performed using the mouse.

- ✓ **Point:** Move the mouse pointer to an object.
- ✓ **Click:** Push the left mouse button one time.
- ✓ **Right-Click:** Push the right mouse button one time.
- ✓ **Double Click:** Push the left mouse button two times quickly

Right-Click Shortcuts

By right-clicking the mouse, you are offered a variety of shortcuts to commonly performed commands. After selecting an item, right-clicking on it will reveal other quick options you may have such as cut, copy, paste, delete, and rename.

To rename a file or folder:

1. **Right-click** on the item you want to rename.
2. Select **Rename** from the right-click shortcut menu.
3. Type a new name for your file or folder.

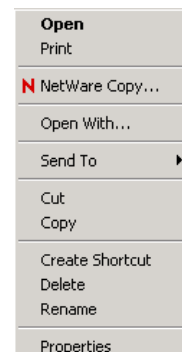


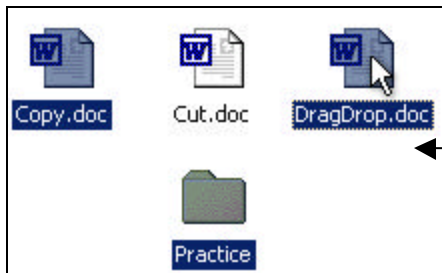
Figure 8 Right-Click Menu

Highlighting Techniques

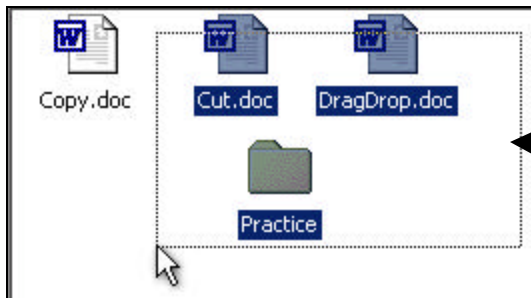
In order to perform any action to icons (files, shortcuts, folders, etc.), you must first select them by a method referred to as *highlighting*. Table 4 explores some quick methods of highlighting using a combination of keyboard and mouse shortcuts.

Table 4 Highlighting Techniques

To select one icon	Click once on the icon.
To select items in a row or column	Click on the first item in the row or column and hold down the SHIFT key. Then click on the last item.
To select items randomly	Hold down the Ctrl key and click on the items you want to highlight.
To highlight items using the mouse	Hold down the left key of the mouse and drag a box over the items you want to highlight
To select all icons	Ctrl + A or go to the Edit menu and choose Select All.



Using Ctrl + Click to highlight randomly



Using the Mouse to highlight a box of items

Drag and Drop

Once a file or folder is selected, you can move it using a procedure called *drag and drop*. This technique allows you to virtually pick up the selected item, pull it to the desired location, and drop it in that place.

To drag and drop:

1. Click on the file or folder you wish to move without releasing the mouse button.
2. With the left mouse button held down, use the mouse to move the item where you wish.
3. Once the desired location becomes highlighted, let go of the button. This *drops* the item and permanently moves it from its previous location.

Cut, Copy, Paste

Another method of moving a selected item is to cut or copy it and then paste it in the desired location. The differences between the terms are outlined below. You can perform these actions either by using the Edit drop-down menu or by the right-click shortcut menu.

- Cut:** Permanently moves the item from its previous location.
- Copy:** Keeps a copy in the previous location while allowing the user to move an exact replica to a new location.
- Paste:** This is the act of putting a cut or copied item in a new location.

Keyboard Shortcuts

Knowing how to effectively use the keyboard will help you to become more efficient when using the computer. It is a good idea to become familiar with a few common keyboard commands since you have the option to use the keyboard in place of a mouse entirely. Table 5 highlights several common keyboard commands.

Table 5 Common Keyboard Shortcuts

Open a file	CTRL + O
Close a file	CTRL + W
Save As	F12
Save	CTRL + S or SHIFT + F12
Print	CTRL + P
Help	F1
Cut	CTRL + X
Copy	CTRL + C
Paste	CTRL + V

Caps Lock*: This button is located on the left side of the keyboard next to the letter “A” key. When activated, a green light will appear above the number keypad, and all characters typed will be in capital letters or in the shift function.

Number Lock*: This key is located on the number keypad on the right side of the keyboard. When Num Lock is activated a green light will appear above it, and the number keypad will work appropriately.

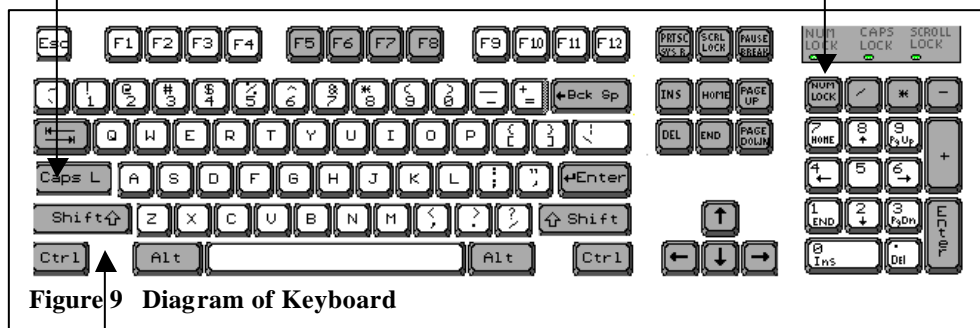



Figure 9 Diagram of Keyboard

Windows Key: The Windows key  will pull up the Start Menu from the desktop. Then you can use the arrow keys to make your selections from the Start Menu.

****Both the Number and Caps Lock keys are considered toggles because you push them once to turn them on and again to turn the function off.***



If you've ever had a computer program freeze up on you, here's a neat trick!

1. Simultaneously press **CTRL + ALT + DELETE** on the keyboard.
2. Arrow over and click on "Task List" in the Netware Security window.
3. After the Windows Task Manager opens, you can select the program that is not responding.
4. Select "End Task."

It is valuable to know how to search and find files or folders on the computer. If you know the name or even part of the name of a file you are searching for, Find File can assist you in locating the file.

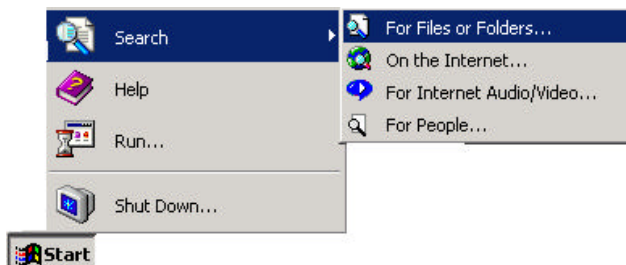


Figure 10 Finding a File or Folder

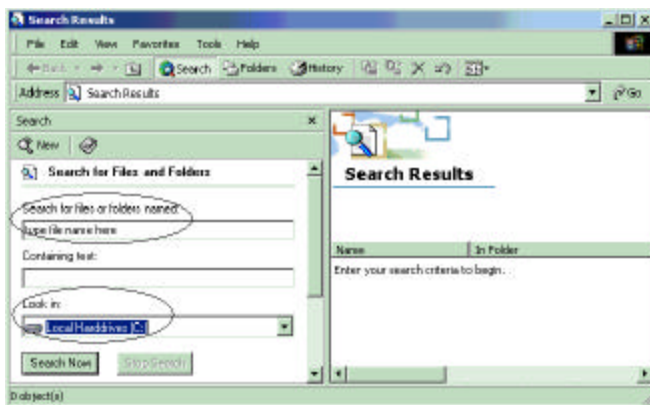


Figure 11 Using Search

To use Find File:

1. Click on the **Start** button.
2. Scroll up to **Search**.
3. Select **For Files or Folders**.
4. Type in the full or partial name of the file you are searching for as circled in **Figure 9**.
5. Select where to look for the file as circled in **Figure 10**.
6. Click **Search Now**.

NOTE: You can also limit your search by selecting "Type" or "Date" under Search Options.

Showing/Hiding File Extensions

File extensions indicate the file type. By default, the Windows operating system does not show file extensions. To show file extensions, do the following:

Windows 95 or 98

1. Open My Computer.
2. Go to the View menu and select Options.
3. Select the View tab.
4. Uncheck the box next to "Hide MS DOS file extensions for unknown file types."

Windows 2000 or XP

1. Open My Computer.
2. Go to the Tools menu and select Folder Options.
3. Select the View tab.
4. Uncheck the box next to “Hide file extensions for unknown file types.”

Common File Extensions

Filename extensions usually follow a period and indicate the type of information stored in the file.² The following table lists some of the most commonly recognized filename extensions.

Table 6 Common File Extensions

File Extension	What it Means	Program Needed to View File
.doc	Microsoft Word	Microsoft Word. Some versions of WordPerfect can read Word documents.
.rtf	Rich Text Format	Most word processors can open this file.
.txt	Text file	Any word processor can open this file.
.xls	Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet	Microsoft Excel
.ppt	Microsoft PowerPoint	Microsoft PowerPoint and some other presentation programs, such as StarOffice.
.pub	Microsoft Publisher	Microsoft Publisher
.wpd	Corel WordPerfect	Corel WordPerfect. Some versions of Word can read WordPerfect documents.
.wps	Microsoft Works	Microsoft Works
.mdb	Microsoft Access Database	Microsoft Access or any other program that can read Access databases.
.htm or .html	A web page	A web browser, such as Internet Explorer
.pdf	Adobe Acrobat file (Portable Document Format)	Adobe Acrobat Reader
.gif, .jpg, .png	Different graphics files	To edit the files, you'll need a graphics program. To view them, you can use your web browser.
.exe	Executable file	This is a program; double clicking the file will run the program. Be careful when opening an .exe file that you've received as an email attachment; it can be a virus.