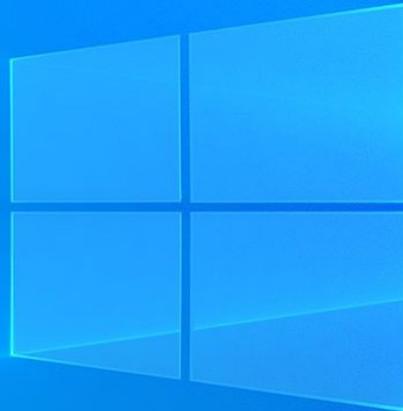


Basic Computing with Windows 10

by Dick Evans



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This White Paper is not meant to cover every topic known to man on computers. It just scratches the surface. There are many additional bits of information you already know or will pick up as you use your computer each day. This is meant to whet your appetite a little and get you started.

The following list shows the topics being covered. Click on any topic to jump right to that section of this white paper. When in the topic, click the red triangle to jump back to this list of topics.

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Basic Tricks Using Windows 10

No matter which update of Windows you are using, 1903, 1909, 2004, or 20H2, they all are very similar. The desktop is what you see when you startup Windows before you activate an app. You get to choose the image in the background, the size of the icons on the screen, and the size (resolution) of the overall screen. You also can change the timing for switching to a screensaver and whether or not to require a password to come out of the screensaver mode.

To modify the appearance of your desktop right-click on the desktop and choose Personalize. No real need to use a screensaver any more as the new LCD monitors do not have a "burn-in" issue like the old CRT's. However, it is nice to have the screen switch off after a while, and you can set the timing, and require a password to reenter. This stops someone else from poking around on your computer when you are not there. By the way, you can lock your screen when you are leaving by pressing Win+L. (The Win key is the picture of the flag and is usually located to the left or right of the spacebar. Sometimes it is in the upper right corner.

Some other Windows key shortcuts:

- Win opens the Start menu

- Win+E opens Windows Explorer

- Win+D clears the desktop

The bottom of the desktop in all versions has a taskbar with a start button on the left and the time/date on the right. Mouse over the time/date and you see the full date including the day of the week. Right-click the time and you can adjust for different time zones.

Note: If your taskbar is not on the bottom but on top or either side, you can grab a hold of it in a blank space and drag it to the bottom.

An alternate way to open the Start Menu is to press the Win key or Ctrl+Esc. When pressing multiple keys, hold down all but the last key, then tap the last key, then release the others. DO NOT try to press them all at the same time or the results might not be what you expected.

In between the Start button and the System Tray is where Windows displays the tasks you have launched like a browser, word processor, etc. All user initiated apps will appear on the taskbar. As you mouse over the taskbar items you might see a miniature window displayed showing what the current window looks like and if you click the task, that screen displays on the desktop. Alt+Tab will also allow you to scroll through the open apps.

When you open an app, a window will appear in one of two modes—full screen or smaller (referred to as the restore size). When in the restore size, the window may be resized by dragging the double arrow on any edge or corner to the size desired. To move a window it must be in Restore size; just drag the title bar. To switch between the two window sizes, double-click the title bar or click the restore or the full screen button in the upper right corner of the window. You can also drag the window to the top of the screen to make it full screen or drag it down when in full screen to make it the restore size. The Big X (X in the upper right of a window) will close the window and the app. Alt+F4 is the same as clicking the Big X.

My Computer Locked Up

It is just stuck and nothing I do does anything! This can be caused by a few things. Often it is just that the computer is waiting for a response from you. Be patient, you may have given it too many commands like you do when you press that elevator button multiple times.

Sometimes an open app needing your assistance will be blinking on the taskbar. What has happened is a dialog box has popped up but is under another window and you cannot see it. Click the blinking icon or press Win+M to minimize all open

windows. Dialog boxes cannot be minimized so they will be left on the screen for you to deal with. Answer the question and then click on the program you were working with on the taskbar to bring it back in view.

That did not work? It is time to look at the Task Manager. Press Shift+Ctrl+Esc or right-click on an open space on the taskbar and select Task Manager. If you see a large window with many tabs, then in the lower-left click Fewer details. In the smaller window, you can see what apps are open. Click on the one you would like to close, and then in the lower right of the window click End task. It might take a while to end it, so be patient.

That does not work? Although not the best thing to do, it is the only option left. Hold the power button down for as long as it takes to power off the computer. After waiting a minute, power it back up. Windows will start up (slowly) and correct any issues it may have found.

Which Browser Should I Use? [▲](#)

The big blue wave is the icon for Edge. It comes with Windows 10 and is popular for that main reason. The most popular browser is Google Chrome. Other popular browsers are FireFox, Brave, and Opera to name a few. However, some Microsoft sites may only work with Edge.

Browser Basics [▲](#)

All browsers have an address bar, a search capability, tabs, and a status bar. They all allow for bookmarks aka favorites and keep a history of recently visited sites. You can set the home page to one or more sites so each time you open the browser those pages are located and opened. Typing the site name and pressing Ctrl+Enter adds the http, www, and .com to what you typed.

Right-click a link and select open in a new tab.

When viewing a web page, use Ctrl+Plus and Ctrl-Minus to make the words and images on a page larger or smaller. Ctrl+Zero to return to the default size.

Use the shift+click method to copy from the page. That is, select the first word to copy, scroll down the page without clicking, then hold down the shift key and left-click after the last word to be copied. This will select everything from the first word to the last. Then Ctrl+C or right-click on the selected area and choose Copy to place the selected area into the Windows Clipboard.

The biggest mistake most of us make is allowing additional toolbars to be added to our browser when installing programs and not unchecking the options to add them. They slow down your Internet access and take up valuable real estate. I see some browser windows where half the available space is used up with toolbars! Now you can hide all that junk by pressing F11 to just see is the actual page. Press F11 to bring them back.

Why Use a Free Email Like Yahoo or Gmail? [▲](#)

Everyone is given an email address from their internet provider. Like comcast.net. You do not have to use this email address. You are paying for internet access and can use any email service on the web. When you use your provider's email you generally use Outlook which comes with Windows 10 to retrieve your mail and to send emails. With an email account with Yahoo, Gmail, Hotmail, or even AOL or Juno, they maintain all your mail on their server. If you switch internet providers, you still have the same email address. Use a friend's computer or the local library and you have full access to all your mail.

Understanding Copy and Paste [▲](#)

First, let's define some key concepts:

Right-click means to point at something on the screen with the mouse pointer and then click the right button on the mouse. Click means to click the left button on

the mouse. Of course, this assumes you have not set up your mouse for left handed use, then the right becomes left, and visa-versa.

Drag means to point at something with the mouse pointer and then, while holding down the left button on the mouse, move the mouse. This is generally used to move what is being pointed to or to select what is dragged over.

Right-drag means to use the right button instead of the left.

Select means to drag across a series of words or objects on the screen. This action causes what is dragged over to change color indicating it has been selected.

Copy and Paste is such a simple but misunderstood concept. Your computer has a hidden from view area called the clipboard. To copy something, select it—words in a document, an image, the URL of a Web site, or even text on a Web page. Then right-click on the selected piece and select Copy. You can also use the keyboard command that has been around since the beginning; Ctrl+C. To use it, hold down the Ctrl key, tap C, and then release both keys. Do not attempt to press both keys at the same time.

What you had selected is now in the clipboard. You cannot see it, but just take it on faith. It is there and will stay there until you turn off your computer which clears memory.

Open the app you wish to copy the material to, like Word. Click to place the insertion point, aka cursor (that vertical line indicating where your next keystroke will appear) where you want the pasted material to be located, and then right-click and select Paste to paste the last item copied to the new location. You can also Ctrl+V to paste from the clipboard.

Windows 10 1909 and later keeps all the clipped items until you reboot or clear the clipboard. Win+V displays the items in the clipboard and you can select the one to be pasted.

This same method can be used to copy a file to another location on your computer. Although copying a file or folder does NOT place the item in the clipboard.

The Shift+Click Method [▲](#)

This method works whenever you want to select multiple items. It could be file names in a list of files, a series of sentences or paragraphs in a document or even a part of a Web page to use in a document.

Locate the first word in the section to be copied and mouse over it to select it. Without touching any button on the mouse, bring the pointer down to the end of the section to be copied.

Then hold down the shift key, point to the ending position, and then click the mouse and all between the first selected entry and the place you last clicked have been selected.

Now that you have selected all of it, you can right-click and select Copy or simply Ctrl+C to copy it to the clipboard for pasting in another application.

Copying from a Web Page [▲](#)

When copying from a Web page even the hidden coding is copied. You cannot see this information, but when you paste the selection into another app, like a Word Processor, the results are not just the text. Included are all the formatting, links, images, and often other things we may not understand.

To avoid this “mess”, I suggest pasting first into a pure text app like NOTEPAD. This app accepts only the raw text dropping any other coding and images. Then select all the new data. Another shortcut is Ctrl+A which selects all data in the

window having focus. Then right-click and copy to place that text data into the clipboard for pasting elsewhere.

Uploading Pictures to Email and Facebook [▲](#)

Uploading images is always a two-step process.

1. Browse to the location of the image
2. Upload the image

However, before uploading a picture you might want to resize the image to speed up the process.

Windows 10 includes a Snipping Tool that lets you grab a piece of the screen and paste it into another app. It places the copy on the clipboard. It will be much smaller in size than the camera original, but as sharp as it was on your screen. Simply Win+Shift+S to open the tool. Then drag a box around the picture. When you release the mouse button the selected image is in the clipboard. Open your email app and paste the image.

Also useful is the website tinyurl.com. Use it to shorten an otherwise very long URL you want to send to someone else.

Why is my Computer Running Slow? [▲](#)

The speed is dependent on a number of factors. The first has to do with the OS and its updates. Each time MS sends you an update the amount of memory needed to run the OS is increased. So 2 GB of RAM may have been great when you got your computer, but now it needs 4 GB or more to do the tasks. The more RAM the better your computer will run. Use the Task Manager to see how much is used--right-click the taskbar and select task manager.

When your computer starts up it loads the OS and a number of processes and apps that load before you can get started. The longer the startup takes the more stuff is being started and the more RAM is being used. Often a number of these apps are not needed and were started because of some websites you clicked or some other app that was installed.

Some of these apps may be advertising apps (adware) or even malware of some type.

RAM contains the operating system, all those startup processes, and each application you have opened up. They may not show on the window because they are hidden behind your current screen, but they are on the taskbar ready to be switched to. If Windows cannot find enough RAM to hold everything that is running it uses a swap area on the hard disk to move bits of programs and data back and forth and this takes a lot of time. Hard disk access is MUCH slower than RAM access time even if you have an SSD instead of a mechanical hard drive. So if you are running slow, close down a few apps and see if it helps. By the way, having many tabs open on the browser is the same as having many apps open on the taskbar.

Run a cleaning program like “Wise Disk Cleaner” or “Wise Care 365” to keep your system clean of these issues. Either of these can be set to automatically run daily.

Glary Utilities is also a good tool to use as is CCleaner. Malwarebytes, and SuperAntiSpyware.

Another issue has to do with hard disk space. You should have no less than 10% free space on each Drive. Any less may cause your system to run slower.

Cleaning up the Hard Drive [▲](#)

There are a couple of apps in Windows you can use on a regular basis to clean up junk from the hard drive—disk cleanup and defrag. These have nothing to do with

malware or virus checking. They simply remove unneeded files from your hard drive and reorganize the drive so file access is quicker. Windows 10 does both of these processes automatically if they are turned on in Settings.

What are these junk files? Temporary files that were leftover from apps like browsing the Internet, installation files, deleted files from the recycle bin, etc.

What is fragmentation? Files are not always stored in contiguous areas of the hard disk. When you add something to a file, like when you change a document in Word, the additions go somewhere on the hard disk and are gathered together when you open the document. Defrag brings those pieces together.

It is also a good idea to allow Glary Utilities and have it check the disk occasionally to verify the hard disk.

Make sure you are getting the Microsoft updates for your computer—either automatically installed or downloaded awaiting your agreement to install.

Also, check what programs are starting when you start your computer. Often there are many that are not needed and slow down the startup process. Fewer icons on your desktop will also shorten startup times as well.

Using Security Software [▲](#)

There is no doubt that there are persons out there looking to attack your computer for no apparent reason except that they can. When you purchase a new computer it comes with a 30-90 day trial version of Norton or McAfee. They are excellent products, but they are also costly and can slow down your computer as they are running always in the background.

Microsoft has a free application called Windows Security that comes with Windows 10 and it will take care of checking for viruses and malware as you use your computer. It runs in the background and updates automatically. There is no

need to pay for Norton or McAfee that came with your new computer. I uninstall the one put on by the manufacturer and let Windows 10 take care of things.

Reading and Creating a PDF [▲](#)

A PDF reader does NOT come with Windows 10. However, The Edge browser will display a PDF as will Google Chrome. You can still download and install a free copy of Adobe Reader.

Why care about creating a PDF? Not everyone has the same word processing application as you. So when you send them your document, they cannot read it. Or you do not want them to take your document and make changes to it. PDFs are an easy and safe way to send documents to others.

Windows 10 comes with a PDF Printer. When you want to create a PDF instead of an actual printed document, open the print dialog box (print option in the app you are using) and select “Microsoft Print to PDF” as the printer.

Using the Cloud [▲](#)

First of all, the cloud refers to accessing apps through your Internet connection and not having them reside on your own computer. Second, it refers to storing your live data off of your own computer. In other words, all your programs like word processing and picture editing are accessed through your browser. No Internet connection? Then, there are no apps to run. Even if you have an app on your computer, with all your files in the cloud, you do not have the data on your computer unless you are using OneDrive from Microsoft that synchronizes the data in your OneDrive folder on your hard drive with your cloud OneDrive folder at Microsoft.

But with today's easy access to the Web either through a home connection or a WiFi connection at a local coffee shop or bookstore or even a hotspot connection

using your cell phone, this should not be a problem. And you can keep your data in both places, should you decide to play it safe.

There are a number of free office suites available in the cloud. The one I use is Google Docs and it can be accessed at docs.com. Another is Libre Office. They are free and compatible with Microsoft apps. Microsoft has its own on at Office.com which uses your OneDrive storage in the cloud.

The cloud is a great place to store pictures. They are backed up in the cloud while you can still have a copy on your home computer. While in the cloud you can send links to others to view them. Want a nice print of one of your pictures or maybe a calendar with your pictures included or even a book to give as a present with pictures relevant to the person getting the present? The cloud-based service can print and mail them for you. I use Google Photos to store all my pictures. This is a free service and there is no limit to the number of images you can upload. An app on my phone automatically uploads every picture I take to my Google Photos cloud.

So all we need is a computer with an Internet connection to access the Web. With nothing else on our computer, we can access the cloud to run applications, save our pictures and documents, and even watch movies and television shows.

Finding Lost Files

You created it a few weeks ago, but do not remember where you saved it or what you called it? No problem, Windows can find that file for you using its robust search capability. From the start menu, Win+S to open the search box and type what you remember of the file name. Or Win+E to open File Explorer and type your search in the Search quick access box.

The first place to look is in your Recent Files. If you have not worked on too many things, it might be right there.

The second is in the app you were using. If it was a Word document, open Word, then look in the Recent list. This will contain a lot more documents than the Recent Items list on the Start menu.

Type in what you think the file name is and it will look for it. Not sure? Enter the type of file like .doc and enter a time frame. It will show you all the files of that type you worked on in that time period. Do not know the name, but you do know something that is in the body of the document? Enter it and have Search look inside the documents for you.

Moving and Copying Files ▲

Although we talked about using Copy and Paste with files, there is a better way. Open two windows on the desktop. Simply right-click on the taskbar and choose “Show windows side by side”. One with the folder showing the file(s) to be copied or moved and the other the destination folder. Select the files or folders to be copied/moved. Click to select one file, Ctrl+Click to select additional files, drag a box around the files to be selected, or use the Shift+Click method to select a contiguous range of files/folders.

Holding the right mouse button down, drag the selected batch of files/folders to the destination folders. A menu will display giving you the option of copying or moving. Copying makes an exact copy of the original so you have both the original and the copy. Moving makes an exact copy but removes the original when the operation is finished.

If you simply hold down the left mouse button and drag, the files will be moved if both source and destination folders are on the same disk. If not you will see a plus sign as you drag and the files will be copied. Shift and left mouse dragging will do the opposite.

Using a Flash Drive ▲

Years ago the only way to move data between computers was a floppy diskette. It stored 1.44 MB of data. Today a digital image made with your camera is often larger than 1.44 MB and would never fit. USB flash drives, like diskettes, require no energy to keep data stored. Their capacity ranges up to 2 TB, but the typical and affordable sizes are between 16 GB and 32 GB.

A flash drive is an external storage device. It is a disk drive that can store anything you can store on your computer's internal hard drive provided the flash drive is large enough. They come in many names and forms—thumb drives, USB flash drives, SD cards, memory cards, and are used even inside your cell phone, tablet, and camera. Using Copy and Paste you can move data to and from computers—referred to as a "sneaker network"!

In Windows 10 a flash drive can also be used to increase the available RAM on your computer. This is called ReadyBoost. It is slower than internal RAM but much faster than letting the system use your hard disk drive as “pretend RAM” memory when it runs out of available RAM.

Backing up Data to a CD, Flash Drive, or in the Cloud [▲](#)

There is a difference between backing up, imaging, and cloning. All three are making copies of information on your hard drive to another device.

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Backing Up | Making a copy of certain files to another device
This is usually done for the safekeeping of important files
It is also how you would take all your data from an old computer to a new one |
| Imaging | Making an image of everything on the hard drive
Allows for the restoration of the entire drive after some type of malicious attack or to a new hard drive if the old drive is no longer useable |
| Cloning | Making a duplicate of the hard drive. This copies the entire drive to another drive of the same size. If your old drive crashes you |

simply replace it with the clone.

Every once in a while create a fresh copy of your files just in case your computer crashes because of a hard disk error or more likely a virus. All you will lose is the data that was created since the last data backup.

If you are using Google Photos and/or OneDrive, those files are already backed up. Just copy the other folders and files needed to ensure you have a copy off the computer just in case.

A USB flash drive is fine for some of your data but you should really create a backup of the entire hard disk drive. For this, I suggest using an image backup app called EaseUS Todo Backup. It is free and will easily take a “picture” of your entire drive and create its image on an external hard drive.

If your computer should crash, all you need is a new hard drive and your image backup to bring everything including all the programs and operating system very quickly.

A 2 TB external drive can be purchased for under \$100. It should be able to contain many months of backups. When it runs low on space simply delete the oldest to make room for the new backups.



About The Author

Dick Evans has been in the tech industry for more than forty years. Beginning his career in the '60s on IBM mainframes, he has been a Programmer, a Data Processing Manager (now called Information Systems Manager), a Consultant, a Teacher, and a Writer.



In the early days of computers, Dick was programming IBM 1401's using punch cards and the Autocoder language. Later on, he founded a users group in New England for users of the IBM System/3s that were using the RPG programming language. That group is still in operation today. And he formed a Wang users group in Rhode Island for Wang VS computers. He was later involved with NEMUG, the New England Mid-Range Users Group for IBM Midrange computers. He served on the board and as president of that group and Webmaster for NEMUG until 2009. He is currently Vice President at the Charlotte County Computer Group, a Computer Club in SW Florida.

He has been published in a number of computer publications and spoken at conferences here in the USA and abroad. He is currently retired from the faculty at Rhode Island College and consulting/writing part-time, holding teaching seminars, and maintaining a number of Websites. He maintains a blog with technical "stuff" discussed at his weekly training classes, a Computing Web site at rwevans.com, and a ministry site at dickevans.org.

He has authored a number of technical articles and books including "Advanced Office 2007", a textbook which he used when teaching at Rhode Island College, "Quick and Easy Web Sites", a step-by-step book on creating a simple site. and a book on Kindle called "Windows Tips".

View articles Dick has written on the Daves Computer Tips blog site and feel free to participate in his free weekly training on Zoom.

