

Windows Wonderland

By Lorrie Jackson

WHY A TECHTORIAL?

What will I learn today?

You will learn how to use a PC running Windows efficiently and effectively.

What hardware and/or software does the techtorial apply to?

The techtorial applies to anyone using a PC with the Windows operating system.

Which National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers does the techtorial address?

The techtorial will help teachers accomplish standard 1b in particular.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has developed a set of National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers. Standards or Performance Indicators are included for each techtorial to help teachers and administrators improve technology proficiency. For a complete description of the standards indicated, go to [NETS for Teachers](#), click Standards in the menu bar on the left, and then click the arrow to the right of Standards and Performance Indicators for Teachers.

WINDOWS WONDERLAND

Most PCs use an operating system by Microsoft called [Windows](#). An operating system is simply a user-friendly interface that makes it easy to find and organize files, print documents, open and close programs and applications, and so on. Every few years or so, Microsoft introduces a new -- and presumably improved -- version of Windows. The versions most commonly found on school computers include Windows 98, Windows 2000, Windows ME, and Windows XP.

If you use any of those versions of Windows at school or at home, this techtorial will introduce you to some of the basics -- as well as some of the tips and tricks -- of your "Windows Wonderland."

THE TASKBAR

When you turn on your computer (and monitor), you see a screen called the *desktop*. A computer's desktop is very much like an actual desk top; whatever you're working with -- files, folders, programs, and so on -- will be found somewhere on the desktop.

You usually will find the *taskbar* at the bottom of the desktop (to the right of Start). The taskbar lists the tasks you currently are working on; in other words, the programs that are currently open. If you're reading this techtorial from the Internet, for example, your taskbar contains a box for your Internet browser. Open a Word document. Notice that the taskbar now shows two boxes: one for your browser and one for the Word document.



Open your e-mail program, and the taskbar shows three boxes, and so on. All open programs appear on the taskbar.

The taskbar also allows you to choose how programs will be arranged on your desktop. Are you typing in Word as you surf the Web? Do you want to easily see both the Word document and the browser window at the same time? Place your cursor on an empty section of the taskbar (not in a program box), and right-click the mouse. In the menu window that appears, select Tile Windows Vertically; open programs will be displayed side-by-side. Click Tile Windows Horizontally, and

open programs will be displayed top-to-bottom. Click Cascade Windows, and open programs will be arranged one on top of another.

Sometimes, the taskbar is moved to the top, right, or left of the desktop. Sometimes, the size or shape of the taskbar changes. To reposition or resize the taskbar, click any edge of the taskbar and drag it to the desired size and position.

You also can hide the taskbar by right-clicking the taskbar and choosing Hide Taskbar; by right-clicking the taskbar and choosing Properties>Taskbar Options>Auto hide; or by clicking Start>Settings>Taskbar & Start Menu>Auto hide.

STUDENTS AND THE TASKBAR

Some students are very good at multi-tasking on a computer. Your students probably can play a game, surf the Web, create a Word document, and send an e-mail at virtually the same time! As you walk past students' desks, they'll hide the tasks they shouldn't be doing beneath the tasks they should be doing. Remember that the taskbar displays all open programs; you can use it to find out *everything* students have open on the desktop.

If students hide the taskbar, make it a rule that the taskbar must be visible at all times.

On some versions of Windows, you can prevent problems, including resizing or hiding the taskbar, by right-clicking and selecting Lock Taskbar.

OFF TO A GOOD START

The word Start at the bottom left of the desktop indicates the Start menu. Click Start to find icons (images) and/or names of programs you use frequently. You also might find some or all of the following:

- **Programs (or All Programs):** Click to see all the software applications on your computer.
- **Favorites:** Click to find saved Internet favorites.
- **Documents (or My Documents):** Click to open the folder in which most users save Word documents.
- **My Recent Documents:** Click to see a list documents read, typed, or changed within the last few days. (Hint: If you lose a document, the best place to start looking for it is in My Recent Documents. After you find and open the missing file, go to File>Save As, and note where the document is saved.)
- **Search (or Find):** Click to access the tool used to find lost files and programs.
- **Control Panel (or Settings):** Click to access tools for selecting computer options: volume, screen savers, add/remove programs, and much, much more.
- **Help (or Help and Support):** Click to access online help.
- **Run:** Click to open a window in which you can type the name of a file, document, or program you want to open.
- **Shut Down:** Click to shut down the computer.

SHORTCUTS TO SUCCESS

Are you looking for an easier way than searching through a list of programs to open programs in Windows? You can put a shortcut for your most-used programs on your desktop or in the Start menu. Shortcuts also speed up students' computer work and make it easier for younger students to find programs. Open a shortcut to one of your favorite programs:

- Click Start>Programs (or All Programs) and find the program for which you want to make a shortcut.
- Click the program's icon (image) and drag the icon to the desktop.
- The icon on the desktop is a shortcut -- a quick way to open the program.
- You also can drag the icon to the Start menu to make it part of your quick list of programs.

IN CONTROL

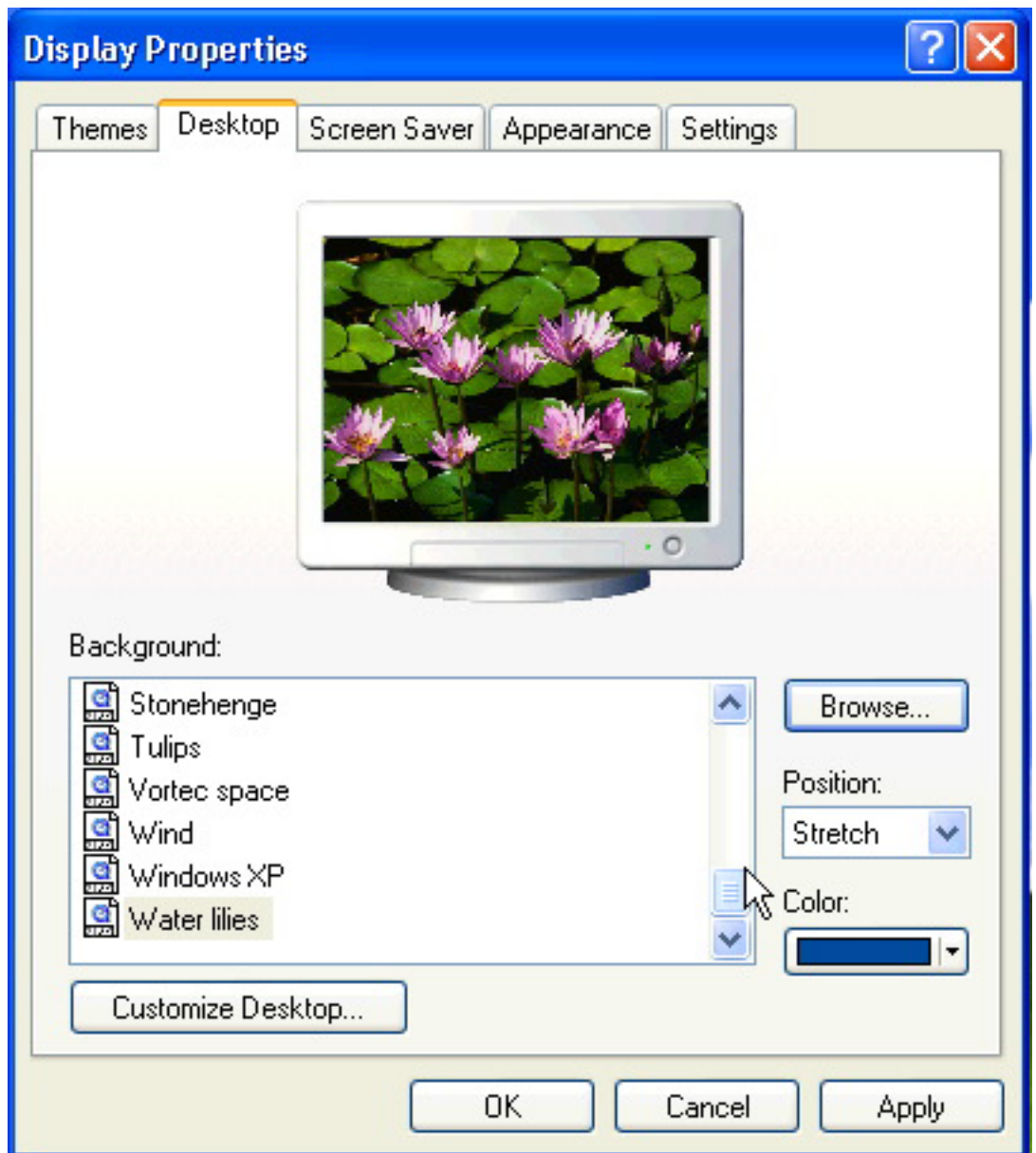
Click Start and Control Panel to find options for changing the look and sound of your computer. Some ways you can use the Control Panel to customize Windows are:

- **Accessibility Options:** Make using the computer easy by adjusting sound, mouse/keyboard controls, and the display for students with vision, hearing, or motor impairments.
- **Display (or Appearance and Themes>Display):** Click Desktop to change the desktop's background or screen saver.

Why not put a picture of your class, your dog, your school on your desktop?

Save a scanned or digital camera picture to your desktop.

Click Start>Control Panel>Display>Desktop (or Start>Control Panel>Appearance and Themes>Display>Desktop).



Click Browse and change "Look In:" at the top of the window to Desktop.
Double-click your picture, and then click Open.
Select Center from the Position menu (or try Tile or Stretch for fun!)
Hit OK.
Your picture should appear on your desktop!

- Printers: Add new printers, delete print jobs that are not working, and change the computer you automatically print to.
- Sounds, Speech, and Audio Devices: Do you hate the alerts and other sounds of your Windows computer? Change the sounds or add some of your own!

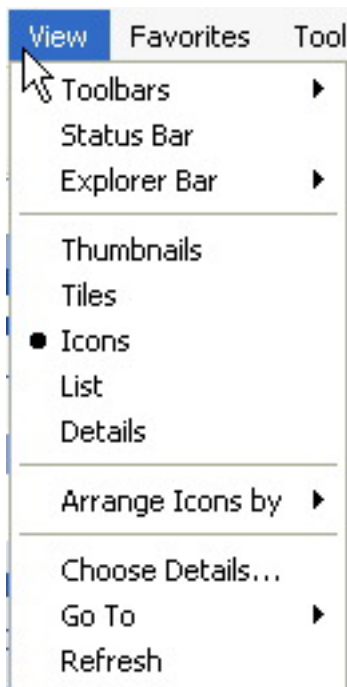
FILE MANAGEMENT

Many computer users save files on their desktops. After a while, the desktop becomes messy and files become difficult to find. Unclutter your desktop by creating folders for your files:

- Right-click on any empty spot on your desktop.
- Click New>Folder. A new folder will appear on the desktop.
- Type a name for the folder and hit Enter.
- Drag any files you choose into the new folder.
- You also can create folders within folders: just open a folder and follow the steps above to create a subfolder!

How can you make it easy to find documents in a crowded folder?

- Double-click to open the folder.
- Click View, and select List or Details to make an orderly and compact list of the files in that folder.
- Click View, and select Thumbnails to see small versions of pictures or clip art.



Hint: When looking in a folder for a file you've forgotten the name of, click View and select Detail. Then click Date Modified to organize files by the most recent one, then scroll to find files opened or changed on the day you think you last opened the missing file!

TELL ME MORE!

Where can I learn more about using Windows?

Try Internet4Classroom's list of [Windows/PC](#) tutorials and help sites for more information on using Windows!

What's next?

Next week's techorial will be: Surf Like a Shark on the Web.

