

Tried and true tips for Windows

By Graeme Eggins.

Based on readers' tips recorded by New York Times columnist David Pogue.

NB: not all shortcuts will work on all Windows systems.

David Pogue is my favourite writer on computers. You will find him on The New York Times site. Just type his name in the search box on page 1.

In late 2008 he wrote a column called "essential tech tips you thought everybody knew--but nobody, including you, knows them all."

Nothing he's ever written has ever prompted a reaction like that column. In six days, more than 1,150 readers added comments to the online version of his column at <http://nytimes.com/pogue>

From this experience, Pogue said he learned that:

When you get a computer, phone, camera or other gadget, there's no single, uniform, obvious place to learn the basics. You're on your own. As a result, everybody knows 40 or 80 percent of what there is to know--but everybody knows a *different* 40 or 80 percent.

I've been through a good sample of the tips Pogue's readers have posted on the net and divided them into three categories – general Windows including Excel, Web including email and Word related.

We'll start with the general tips:

* You can double-click a word to highlight it in any document, e-mail or Web page. Double clicking will select the sentence.

* Windows most popular shortcuts:

Ctrl X (cut)

Ctrl C (copy)

Ctrl V (paste)

Ctrl A (select all)

Ctrl Y (redo)

CTRL F (find)

Control-X, Control-C, and Control-V have been a standard for all applications since they first appeared on the Macintosh in 1984 (as Command-X, etc.). Windows copied them from Apple in the first popular version of Windows, Windows 3.0, in 1990.

* Look at the toolbar in MS Word for all the very common commands like "save", "bold", etc...there are shortcut cut key commands listed right next to the commands

* You can adjust the size and position of any window that less than full size on your computer. Drag the top strip to move it; drag any edge to resize it.

- * You can open the START menu by tapping the WINDOWS key.
- * You can switch from one open program to the next by pressing ALT + TAB.
- * Instead of clicking into MY COMPUTER from your desktop simply hit the WINDOWS key + E. This action will bring up your WINDOWS EXPLORER menu.
- * You can enlarge or reduce an entire Web page or document by pressing the CONTROL key as you turn the wheel on top of your mouse.
- * In dialog windows (windows without the minimize and maximize buttons) pressing ENTER is the same as pressing the OK button and pressing ESC is the same as pressing the cancel button.
- * Press the WINDOWS key + M minimizes all applications and takes you to the start screen.
- * A very useful free programme available on CNET'S Download. com site is **Belarc Advisor**. It gives you a printout of all the programs installed on your computer along with their serial keys and most importantly, reveals which Windows updates are needed.
- * How to move your mouse:
 - keep the heel of your hand stationary, planted on the desk; don't move your whole hand
 - The mouse should never move more than 2.5cm (an inch) and usually 1.3cm (half an inch).
 - Flick the mouse by pivoting from the heel of your hand to move it
- * CTRL-HOME takes you to the very beginning of a document; CTRL-END takes you to the end
- * "Save" is not a command you wait to use until you have finished typing a letter or document. "Save" should be used at the beginning and repeatedly all through the middle of creating a document, not just at the end.

As soon as you start working, and open a blank document, before you type anything, you should hit "Save" (or "Save As" in some programs). Give the document a title, and save it in the appropriate location.

Then, while you work on the document, every five minutes or so, hit the Save command.

This way, if for any reason the computer crashes, or the program crashes, or the power goes out, you will not lose the whole letter. You will probably be able to recover everything you did up until the last time you used the Save command.

* You can “print” a document even when you don’t have a printer hooked to your computer. This can be handy when you need to “print” a receipt that proves you actually made a reservation or paid for airline tickets.

Click on “print” or (on a PC) use CTRL + P.

This brings up the print dialog box. Drop down the list of printers to reveal “Microsoft Office Document Image Writer.”

You will be asked where you would like to store this image. At some future time, that image can be printed to paper when a printer is available to you.

* You don’t need a graphics programme to shrink a large photo for email. Just right click on the photo; choose “send to”, then “mail recipient”. That brings up a dialogue box which lets you choose an appropriate size. Will work if multiple images are selected also.

Alternatively, if you use XP, download Microsoft’s simple **Image Resizer**. It allows you to R click your big photo and resize it as a copy with a few clicks.

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/Downloads/power toys/Xppowertoys.msp>

* “If in doubt about what to do next, right-click.”

Whatever it was you needed to do and weren’t sure how to is probably right there.

* Just putting something into the TRASH or the RECYCLE BIN doesn't actually delete it. You then have to EMPTY the Trash or Recycle Bin.

The windows default for the recycle Bin is 10% of the local drive. With modern HD reaching 1TB do you really need 100GB of recycle Bin. It is easy to modify using Recycle Bin’s properties

* When in doubt about how your computer is performing, restart it. It often works when nothing else will.

In Windows, restarting solves 99.9% of all problems.

Also, in Windows, make sure that you do Windows Updates

(<http://www.windowsupdate.microsoft.com>) weekly. And of course, in Windows, you MUST have an anti-virus program running at all times.

* When backing up very important files always make at least two copies. After backing up -check the discs to make sure that they have all of the information you need and that they aren’t duds. Label the disks clearly - print a list of the disk contents if necessary - and date them. Keep the copies in different locations, preferably one off your property.

* In Windows, double-left-clicking the blue title bar on any Window will maximize it to full screen size.

* If you buy a new computer with Vista, upgrade to 2GB of RAM. You can afford the upgrade because you've saved money by getting the small hard drive.

* When jotting down notes with Windows NOTEPAD program (find it in Accessories), press F5 to instantly and automatically time stamp your notation with the current date and time. An American user wrote: "This is a wonderful feature for creating contemporaneous notes that trial judges really, really like"

* If your desktop is cluttered with icons, try creating folders on the desktop with names like **U3A notes** or **Financial Documents** and dragging icons into them. Double-click the folder to open it.

* In Microsoft Excel, if you select data you want to graph, you can press F11 (on Windows) to create an instant graph/chart with default settings.

* When you need a calendar double-click the clock icon. Just remember to hit cancel when you are finished.

* Whatever technology you buy today will be obsolete soon, but you can avoid heartache by learning the cycles. New iPods come out every September. New digital cameras come out in February and October.

A comment: "Sure, but that doesn't mean they won't work fine. Most people would say my film camera is obsolete, but it still takes great pictures. You can avoid the heartache by not buying into the "need" to constantly have the latest and greatest. You can save lots of money that way too."

* Use the ESC key to escape when you have something on full-screen with no visible control keys.

* If you occasionally have to physically pull the plug on your computer to get it turned off (e.g. when it's not responding) try the easy way - press and hold the on/off button of your computer for **five seconds**.

* Sometimes operating your mouse wheel is too "jumpy" for reading. Instead, press the wheel (while over the text area). The cursor will change to an up/down arrow. Now moving the mouse up or down **VERY SLOWLY** will affect the speed of scrolling more smoothly. To end this feature, press the mouse wheel again.

- * When a screen or program freezes, press ALT, CTRL, DELETE at the same time. Your Windows Task Manager will pop up. Highlight the program in question and click on the END TASK button to close it out.
- * Windows lists (like the right side Explorer window showing file names and sizes, etc.) will resize all column widths with the keyboard combination CTRL+SHIFT+'+' (that is, the numeric keypad plus sign). It's a quick, undocumented remedy when some content is truncated.
- * If you use a laptop a lot, consider connecting a proper keyboard to give you larger keys and a 10-key number pad. You can put the normal keyboard down lower in a more ergonomic position and it's better for your hands and wrists.
- * To delete a file without having to empty Recycle bin later just Drag and drop file into the Recycle bin while pressing the SHIFT key.
- * This trick will only work for Mac users. If you spill coffee or something, do like you're pressing command-Z on the table. The spilt drink will instantly return to the cup. Amazing
- * On many mobile phones, press the SEND key to open up a list of recent calls. Instead of manually dialling, you can return a call by highlighting one of these calls and pressing SEND again.
- * Another phone trick for some voice mail: If you get voicemail that says "John is not available. You can leave a message Etc etc you can try to go directly to the beep by pressing the * key. Does not work on all set-ups.

General keyboard shortcuts

Press ...

SHIFT+DELETE Deletes selected item permanently without placing the item in the Recycle Bin.

CTRL while dragging an item will Copy the selected item.

F2 Renames selected item.

CTRL+RIGHT ARROW Moves the insertion point to the beginning of the next word.

CTRL+LEFT ARROW Moves the insertion point to the beginning of the previous word.

CTRL+DOWN ARROW Moves the insertion point to the beginning of the next paragraph.

CTRL+UP ARROW Moves the insertion point to the beginning of the previous paragraph.

CTRL+SHIFT with any of the arrow keys highlights a block of text.

CTRL+ESC Displays the Start menu.

BACKSPACE View the folder one level up in My Computer or Windows Explorer.

ESC Cancel the current task.

For an extensive list of Windows keyboard shortcuts go to:
<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/126449>