SECTION 4 - INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMON DESKTOP AND WINDOWS 95

What is Windows 95?
What is the Common Desktop?
How do I navigate around the Common Desktop?
Menus

⇒ **WINDOWS 95**

Windows 95 is a computer system which is in widespread use on pc's and is in widespread use in the Library. It is a system which allows you to access files and programs on the pc. In Windows the programs and files stored on the pc are represented as pictures (icons) on a desktop.

⇒ **THE COMMON DESKTOP**

When you login to the network the computer will show the common desktop. This displays along the left hand side icons for commonly used programs which can be manipulated via the mouse and screen pointer. The first section of this guide shows you how to manipulate icons and windows, how to give commands to the computer using menus, and how to start programs.

⇒ **WINDOWS EXPLORER**

A key program in the Windows system is Windows Explorer. This program allows you to carry out the basic filing tasks needed to organise your work on the pc, such as copying files between disks and making file folders.

⇒ **MULTI-TASKING**

The Taskbar, which appears at the bottom of the screen, (the bar with 'start' on it) allows the user to run more than one application at once.

The ability to organise windows on the desktop and files on a disk, and to switch between different tasks, represents the basic knowledge necessary to use the common desktop.

⇒ **THE MOUSE**

In Windows you give commands to the computer using a small pointing device which sits next to the keyboard - the mouse. The mouse should be held with the wire 'tail' pointing away from you and with its sides parallel to the side of your desk.

- Hold the mouse in a relaxed way and slide it around on your desk or on the mouse mat if you have one.

You'll notice that as you move the mouse around, the pointer moves around on the screen. The mouse has a rotating ball on the underside (take a look, it won't bite) which transmits the mouse's movements to the computer - which in turn makes the pointer move in the same direction as the mouse.

- Make the pointer point at specific items on the screen by moving the mouse.
- Make sure you can point at each corner of the screen.

If the mouse runs off the edge of the mouse mat or table, it's OK to pick it up and put it down again. The pointer will stay where it is while you do this.

⇒ **ICONS**

Each of the items on the screen is called an icon. An icon is a small picture on the screen that represents an element of the computer system. An example is the My Computer icon.

Selecting an Icon
You normally have to select an icon before giving the computer a command concerning it. You select an icon by moving the mouse pointer over it and pressing once on the left mouse button. This is called clicking the mouse.

- Click on the My Computer icon on the screen
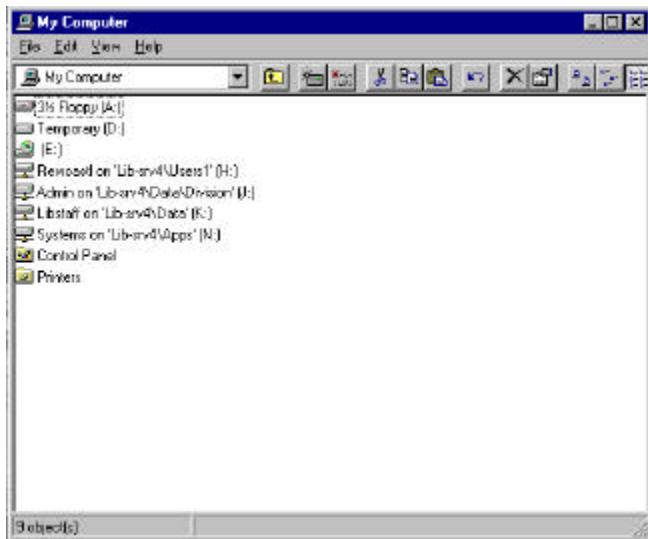
You'll notice that when you click on an icon the whole icon changes colour to indicate that it has been selected.

⇒ **DOUBLE CLICKING**

In Windows this is the usual means to carry out an action such as opening a folder or starting an application. To double-click, the mouse must be held still while the left button is quickly clicked twice.

- Move the mouse over to the My Computer icon and double-click on it.

You will know when you have double-clicked successfully because a window will appear labelled My Computer at the top:

Problems?

Double-clicking takes a little practice. Two problems are usually encountered when people first try it:

- If you move the mouse while double-clicking, this will simply move the icon. Try again.
- If you click too slowly, all that will happen is that two single clicks will be registered and you will merely have selected the icon. Try again.
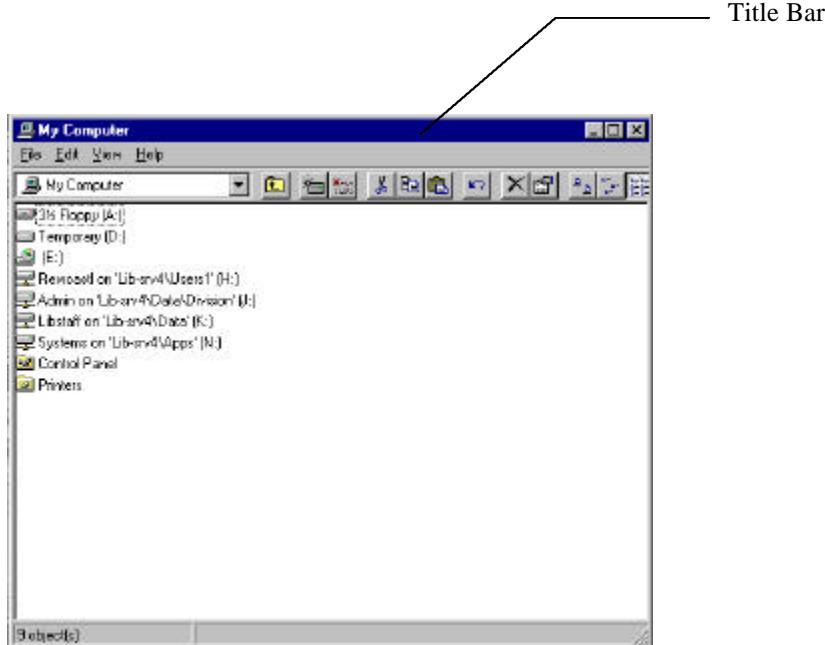
⇒ WINDOWS

There are two types of window that you can obtain by clicking on icons. They can be either program windows which display the activities of an application program, or a folder window which shows you all the elements of the system within that folder (which may be files or more folders) as icons. You can use the mouse to move a window, change its size, and scroll up to see more of its contents.

Moving a Window

You can move a window in much the same way as you moved an icon.

- Double-click on My Computer icon to open it

- Move the mouse over the Title Bar of the My Computer window as illustrated below. Note that the Title Bar doesn't include the grey boxes at the end or the icon a the left-hand side; avoid these for now.

- Now click and drag the window by clicking and dragging on the Title bar. Notice how the whole window moves. You can rearrange the whole screen by moving windows around. This doesn't affect what the various icons and windows do: it's merely for your convenience.

Re-sizing a window
The borders of a window allow you to change the window size by dragging the mouse cursor.
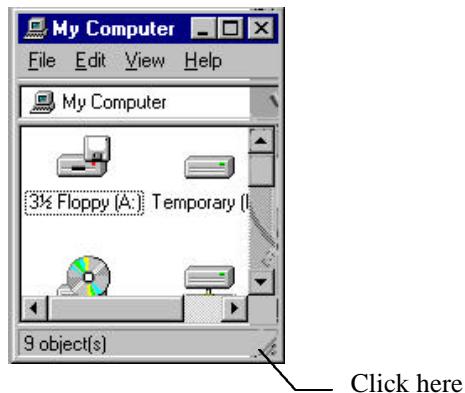
- Move the mouse cursor to the right edge of the My Computer window. When you're at the right spot, the pointer will change to a horizontal double-headed arrow. Click and drag the pointer to the left.

You'll notice that the window changes size. You can drag the edge of the window as far as the edge of the screen if you like. Some of the icons may now be hidden.

- Restore the My Computer window to its original size by again clicking and dragging.
- Now move the pointer to the bottom of the My Computer window until it again becomes a double-headed arrow. Note that it will be a vertical arrow this time. Again alter the size of the window and return it to normal.
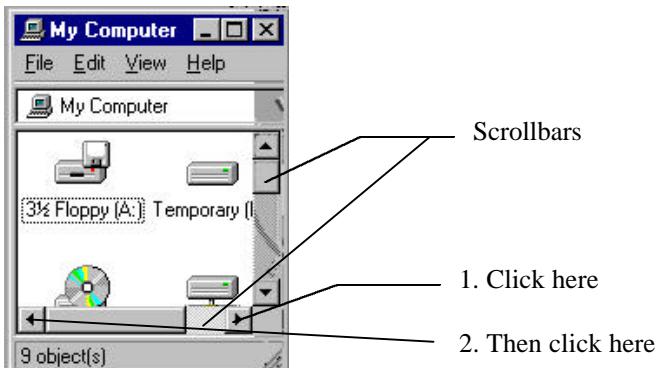
We've scaled the window both horizontally and vertically. It's possible to do both at the same time.

- Move the pointer to the bottom right hand corner of the window. When it becomes a diagonal double-headed arrow, click and drag the window to make it half of its previous size and leave it that way.

Click here

Scrollbars

You'll notice that some of the icons in the My Computer window are now hidden or half hidden. Also some boxes have appeared at the bottom and sides of the window. These are called **Scrollbars**

Scrollbars

1. Click here

2. Then click here

- Move the pointer over the horizontal arrow near the bottom right corner of the window and click repeatedly on it.
- Try this with the horizontal arrow near the bottom left corner.

Clicking on the arrows of a scrollbar enables you to move your view on the window to uncover hidden icons.

- Try this again with the vertical scrollbar at the right of the window.

Note that the grey rectangular box in each scrollbar also moves as you click on the arrows. This box lets you know where you are in a window. When the box is at one of the ends of a scrollbar, your view is on the edge of the window.
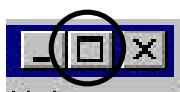
- Click and drag the grey rectangular box in the vertical scrollbar.

You'll see that this also moves your view on the window. This allows you to move quickly to another area of the window.

Maximising a window
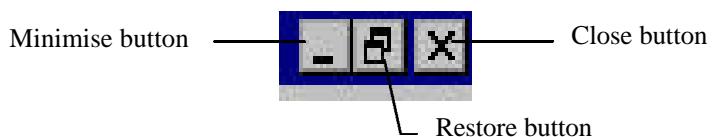
Maximising a window is a quick way to make it fill the full screen so you can see more easily what's in it.

- Open the My Computer window if its not already open by placing the pointer over the My Computer icon and double-clicking. There are three small boxes in the top right hand corner of the title bar. Click on the middle button.

This maximises the window by making it take up the whole screen. Any other windows that were open are now hidden behind this window.

The three boxes will not look like this:

Minimise button ——— ——— Close button

Restore button

The Restore button controls the resizing of the My Computer window.

- Click on the restore button

This returns the My Computer window to the size it was before it was maximised.
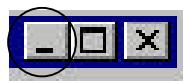
Minimising a Window
Minimising a window reduces it to a button on the **taskbar**, the grey strip across the bottom of the screen, so that you can attend to other things on the screen.

- If the My Computer window is shut, reopen it by double-clicking on its icon:

- Click on the Minimise button:

The window will disappear, but the box marked My Computer will remain in the task bar.

- Click on the My Computer button in the taskbar:
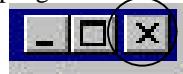
The My Computer window will once again be visible on the screen.

Closing a window
When you've finished with a window you can close it.

Reopen the My Computer window, if it's shut, by double clicking on its icon.

- Clicking on the Close button in the top right hand corner will close the window:

- An alternative way to close the window is to double-click on the icon representing the window in its top left corner.
- Try using both these methods of closing the My Computer window.


⇒ **MENUS**
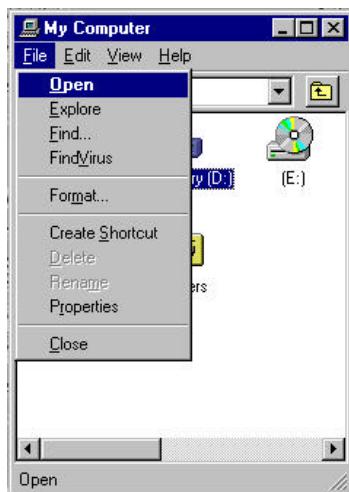
In the Windows 95 /Common desktop environment you can give commands and manipulate fields within windows using Menus. You can select a command from a menu using the mouse.

Window Menus
You'll notice that there is a line of words near the top of the My Computer window which start with File, Edit, View, and Help.

This is called the Menu Bar. Almost all windows will have a menu bar.

- To see what the menus can do, first select the Temporary (D:\) icon with the mouse.
- Click on the word File in the menu bar. You will see a menu appear on your screen:
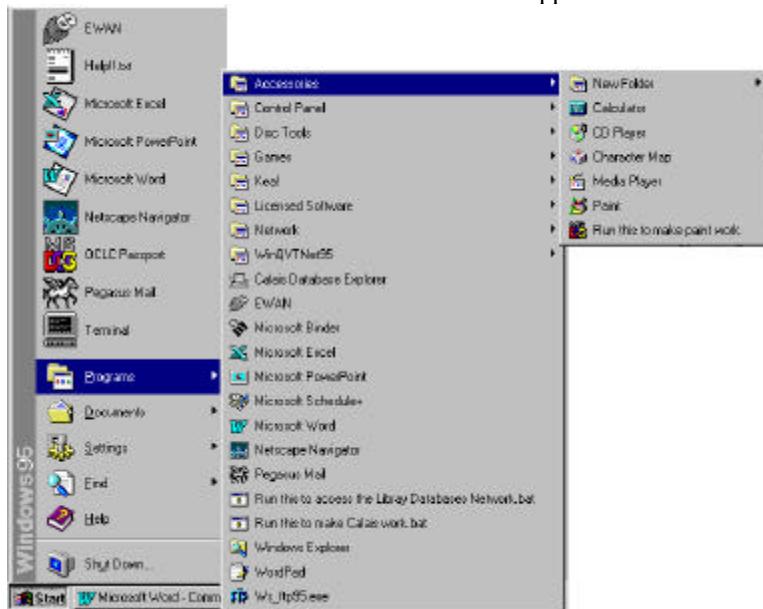
Each of the words in the menu bar will pop up a menu if you click on it. The options in the menus offer various commands that you might wish to perform on the icon that you have selected, or on the window you have open.

- Now move the mouse pointer and click on the Open option.
- A new window will appear, this time labelled Temporary (D:\). You have opened the d:\ drive icon as if you had double-clicked on it. Double-clicking is a shortcut for choosing Open from the File menu.
- Now choose Close from the File menu from the d:\ drive icon. This will shut the window. Practise opening and closing the windows using both the menus and double-clicking on the icons.

Using the Start menus
In Windows 95 it is also possible to open applications from the Start button on the taskbar:

- Move the mouse to the Start button on the taskbar. Click once and a menu will appear.
- Move the pointer up the menu until it rests on Programs. A new menu will appear beside the first.
- Go to Accessories and a third menu should appear. The screen should look something like this:

A list of all programs and pictures of all common desktop menus is available at
k:\isd\systems\95menus

⇒ **THE TASKBAR**

Often when you use Windows you will have more than one application or task running simultaneously. Sometimes one window will fill the screen and the windows for the other tasks will be hidden behind this window.

For every window that you have open, whether a folder or an application window, a new button will appear on the taskbar. Clicking on any of these buttons will bring that window to the front.

Remember: You have already seen how to minimise and restore applications that you are running using the taskbar.

- Click on any buttons that you can see on the taskbar and close the window by choosing close from the File menu or clicking on the close window icon on their title bar.
- When there are no windows open or buttons on the taskbar, double-click on the My Computer icon. Then open the Calculator from the Accessories menu in the Programs menu on the Start menu.

Notice that both windows are represented by boxes on the taskbar. The window at the front will be inset, as if it was a button that had been pressed:

Click on the other button on the taskbar. Notice how the My Computer window will come to the front and its button will become inset:

There is another way to switch between applications, which does not involve you have to click on anything.
- While holding the [Alt] key down, repeatedly press the [Tab] key (the key with 2 arrows facing in different directions at the left of the keyboard).
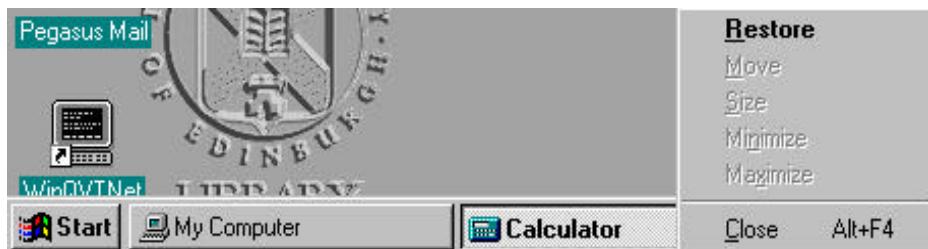
A small grey box appears in the middle of the screen containing icons for each of the windows represented on the taskbar (that is windows that are currently open - even if minimised). As you press [Tab] each one in turn will be selected by having a box placed around it.

- When the window shows the My Computer window icon, release the [Alt] key

You will be switched to whatever task is selected when you release the [Alt] key - so you should now see the My Computer window open on the screen in front of you.

You can also close programs from the taskbar:

- Click with the **right** mouse button on the icon in the taskbar for the window or application which you wish to close. This time choose the Calculator icon:
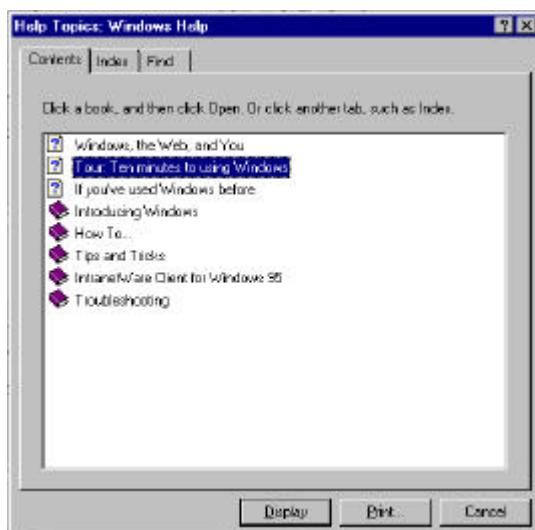
- Select Close from the menu which will appear when you do this and click on it.

The Calculator window will be closed and only the My Computer window will remain open.

⇒ **MORE WINDOWS 95 INFORMATION**

Online help is available on the common desktop

- Click on the Start menu and choose Help:
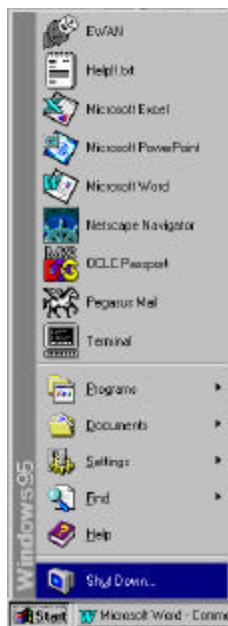
- Click on the Ten Minute Tour option for a brief online tutorial on Windows 95. This will give you extra help and practice in using Windows 95.

This tutorial is highly recommended.

⇒ **SHUTTING DOWN**

To avoid damaging files, and to get the opportunity to save work if you haven't, always shutdown Windows before you turn off your computer.

- Click on the Start button and choose "Shut Down" from the menu

The Shut Down boxes allow a number of options:

- Choose Shut down the computer.

- If someone else will be logging onto your computer or you will be logging on later choose the 3rd option "Close all programs and log on as a different user"

- Then click on "Yes".

Wait until the computer displays a message that it is safe to switch off.

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i Taken from Windows 95 from Scratch - EUCS.