



KEYS to *ORGANIZING* your **VIRTUAL **REFERENCE DESK****

First Step: Organize Your Desktop



Desktop Real Estate

Have you heard the term "desktop real estate"? Basically it means how much stuff can fit on your computer screen. It is directly related to your display resolution—the maximum number of pixels that can be displayed on a monitor. This number is always expressed as some number of horizontal pixels times some number of vertical pixels. Common display resolution settings include 800x600, 1024x768, 1162x864, and 1280x1024.

As display resolution increases, desktop real estate increases. More real estate means that everything on the screen—icons, fonts, menus, and buttons—shrinks in size.

If you would like to change your resolution to get more desktop real estate, follow these directions:

1. Go to your Desktop, right-click anywhere, and choose Properties to launch the Display Properties.
2. Click the Settings tab.
3. Under "Screen area," move the slider to the right to increase your resolution. As you do this, the simulated display shrinks everything onscreen.

4. Try setting your screen area to a higher or lower resolution.
5. Click Apply.
6. You will be greeted with a pop-up window that says your screen may flicker during the resizing process. Click OK.
7. If you do not like your new resolution setting, click Cancel and try again. Click OK if everything looks good.

After adjusting your monitor resolution, you may need to tweak the monitor's settings to resize its horizontal and vertical positions.

Quick Launch

For frequently used applications, simply drag a desktop icon to the Quick Launch portion of the Windows Taskbar (this is the area to the immediate right of the Start menu). Clicking on any Quick Launch icon allows you to start a program, such as Internet Explorer, without going to the desktop. (This is the best way to open a second browser window while you are helping a patron in the Librarian Console.)

Accessing My Computer

If you need fast access to My Computer, drag the My Computer icon from the Desktop to the Start button. Now you have created a cascading shortcut to all the My Computer functionality, which expands to reveal all your drives, folders, and files.

Second Step: Learn Multi-tasking and Keyboard Shortcuts



When you are helping patrons in co-browsing or materials-sharing sessions, you may have as many as five windows open at once. Here are some tips and tricks to help you manage multiple windows successfully.

Keep track of the windows that you have opened by looking at the Taskbar. You can cycle through each window by holding down the ALT key, then pressing down the TAB key. Release both keys to view the

selected window.

Each window has Minimize, Restore and Close buttons in the upper right corner. You can also right-click anywhere on the blue title bar to get a menu for the same functions.

Windows Logo Key

The fastest way to minimize a number of open windows, or to go to the Desktop, is to use the Windows logo key (located on the keyboard between the CTRL and ALT keys). Here are some useful Windows logo key commands:

- Windows logo: Opens the Start menu
- Windows logo + M: Minimize all open windows
- SHIFT + Windows logo + M: Undo minimize all
- Windows logo + D: Goes to the Desktop (This acts as a toggle. Use it again to return to your previously open window.)
- Windows logo + E: Opens Windows Explorer

Keyboard Commands

Here are the most commonly used keyboard commands that work in any Windows application:

- CTRL + A: Select all
- CTRL + C: Copy
- CTRL + X: Cut
- CTRL + V: Paste
- CTRL + Z: Undo the last command
- CTRL + Y: Repeat the last command
- CTRL + F: Find a word in this document or on this Web page

HINT: If you forget these keyboard commands, you can always see them in the pull-down File and Edit menus for any Windows application.

Right Mouse Button

All Windows operating systems since Windows 98 make extensive use of the right mouse button. You can right-click anything on the Desktop, including the Taskbar. Right-clicking on the Taskbar allows you to cascade or minimize all open windows. Our advice is to right-click anything and everything just to see what happens! The keyboard equivalent of the right mouse button is SHIFT + F10.

Highlighting Items in Drop-Down Menus

To select or highlight two or more items in a drop-down menu, hold down the SHIFT key for consecutive items, the CTRL key for non-consecutive items.

Using Windows Explorer

Windows Explorer is your hierarchical cabinet for all the folders and files on your computer and on your network. You can use Windows Explorer to move, copy, rename, view, save and delete files and folders. Unfortunately Microsoft considers Windows Explorer an expert's tool and makes it difficult to find.

Your best method of opening Windows Explorer is to use Windows logo + E. Another way is to right-click the Start menu and select "Explore."



Third Step: Practice Browser Tips and Tricks

In Internet Explorer, you can store and organize frequently used Web links using the Favorites menu or the Links toolbar. Using the Links toolbar is quick and easy because you can drag the icon from the Address bar directly to the Links toolbar. Or drag any link from a Web page onto the Links toolbar. Once you have a set of links there, you can use the right mouse button to move, rename, delete, etc.

You can place folders on the Links toolbar with these steps: 1) Go to the Favorites menu. 2) Click Organize Favorites. 3) Click on the Links folder. 4) Click on the Create Folder button. 5) Drag and drop your links into the new folder.

Save a file to share

When you want to share a file that you have found on a Web page (e.g., PDF files such as tax forms), follow these simple steps to save the file.

- Right click on the link to the file (do not open the file).
- Choose “Save target as.”
- Change the location to save the file to your desktop. From there it is easy to use the Materials Sharing function of your virtual reference software.

Clearing Cache

Your browser stores graphics and text from the Web sites you visit. This information is stored in files on your hard drive called cache or Temporary Internet Files. It is quicker for the browser to pull graphics and text from the cache than downloading the entire site again.

Unfortunately, over time, your browser's cache grows. A cache full of outdated information is worse than no cache at all. It causes problems with Java applets, causes you to see out of date text or images, and makes your browser sluggish. Also, with the virtual reference software developed by 24/7 and Tutor.com, you must clear the cache before you begin any monitoring session.

Here's how to clear cache and Temporary Internet Files.

Netscape 4.X

- Select Edit, and then click on Preferences.
- Select Advanced, and then click Cache.
- Click on Clear Memory Cache and Clear Disk Cache buttons.

Explorer 5.X or 6.X

- Select Tools, then click on Internet Options.
- Select the General tab.
- Click on Delete Files.

AOL

- Select My AOL.
- Select Preferences, and then click WWW.
- Select Delete Files.

Keyboard Shortcuts

You can use keyboard shortcuts to perform common browser functions (in both Netscape and IE) and give your mouse hand a break.

- **Home:** Jumps to beginning of page.
- **End:** Jumps to end of page.
- **Esc:** Stops loading current page.
- **F5:** Refreshes the screen.
- **F11:** Toggles between full screen and regular view of the browser window. (Good for screen shots.)
- **Back Space:** Goes back one page.
- **Alt + Left Arrow:** Goes back to the previous page.
- **Alt + Right Arrow:** Goes forward to the next page.
- **Alt + Home:** Goes to your homepage.
- **Ctrl + N:** Opens a new browser window. (Be careful with this method of opening a new browser window. The new window will be identical to the one that is active so you might think that a new one wasn't really opened.)
- **Ctrl + R:** Reloads the current page.
- **Ctrl + B:** Opens the Organize Favorites or Bookmarks window.
- **Ctrl + D:** Adds the current Web page to your Favorites or Bookmarks.
- **Ctrl + H:** Opens the History folder.
- **Ctrl + F:** Finds text on current page. (*Remember that this works in Word Documents, Excel Spreadsheets, and more.*)

Opening a Frame in a New Window

Navigating Web sites that use frames can be confusing, especially if you would like to send a link to someone or bookmark a page from a framed site. Both

Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator allow users to open a framed page in a new window. Right-click the link you want to open and choose "Open Link in New Window" from the menu. The frame will appear in its own browser window. Remember that this does not work in the 24/7 or Tutor.com Librarian Consoles.

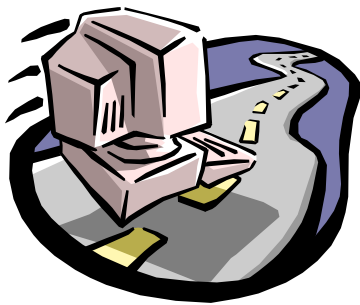
Copying a URL

Sometimes the URL displayed in the address bar is very long. To highlight the complete URL, click one or more times in the address bar, then use CTRL C to copy and CTRL V to paste.

Installing and Using Acrobat Reader

To view and print PDF (Portable Document Format) files requires Acrobat Reader software. Many people successfully download the free software but then don't know how to install it. It helps your patrons if you have some clear, step-by-step [instructions](#) for downloading and installing Acrobat Reader.

With PDF files, you use the Acrobat Reader toolbar for various functions, including Print, Search, Select Text or Image, Copy, etc.



Fourth Step: Make Your Web Searching Efficient and Effective

Install the Google Toolbar

If Google is your search engine of first choice, install the [Google Toolbar](#) in your browser. Using this toolbar, you can enter your search terms from the browser toolbar itself, without going to the Google start page. You also have one-click access to Google Image searching or to the advanced search screen. Use the highlight function of the Google Toolbar to find your search terms on the Web page.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The Google Toolbar now includes a pop-up blocker as an option. If you use this option, you'll need to disable it when using most chat reference software. Click on the Toolbar and go to Options.

Dual Window Browsing

Here's a nifty trick to use with a page of search engine results. You can drag links from one window to another for faster surfing. Instead of clicking on a link and waiting for the page to load, you can speed up your searching by using more than one browser window. Open two browser windows next to each other (or cascade them). Then simply drag a link from the page you are reading and drop it into the other window. To do this, left-click the link and drag it to the other browser window, then release the mouse button. The link will automatically load into the window.

Tips for Super Searchers

Here are some tips for maximizing your Web searching:

- ✓ Choose the right tool for the question. Don't use a search engine when a directory like [LII](#) or the [Open Directory](#) will give you better, more authoritative results.
- ✓ Take a few seconds to think through the search terms that you will use. Use a concept search engine like [Teoma](#) to gather related terms.
- ✓ Learn to quickly use the advanced search features in Google. (See Joe Barker's [Googling to the Max](#).)
- ✓ Know [how to find the information contained in databases](#) that are "invisible" to search engines.
- ✓ Subscribe to regular e-mail reports on search engines ([Search Day](#) or [Search Engine Watch](#)).
- ✓ Organize the sites that you use most frequently, utilizing the Links toolbar, Favorites, your own Web page, or Web-based bookmarks.
- ✓ If your search strategy clearly isn't working, try something else!