

Basics 3 – Intro to Windows

The Windows Operating System:

What is an Operating System? The software that runs, monitors and controls every function performed on a computer. Some version of Microsoft Windows is the operating system that runs on most personal computers.

There are several different versions of the Windows Operating System created by Microsoft. The newest is Windows Vista. Computers #4, 14 and 15 in the library computer lab run this version. Windows XP was the version that came before Vista. Computers #1, 2, 3 and 16 run this version. Before Windows XP was Windows 2000. Computers #5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 run this version. Even older versions of Windows include Windows 95, Windows 98 and Windows ME.

Windows Terms:

Desktop - The main screen you see on the monitor after the computer has been started. It displays icons that represent files or programs.

Icon - A small picture that stands for a program or file on your computer.

Taskbar - The taskbar is the bar running along the bottom of the desktop that lists all open folders and currently running programs.

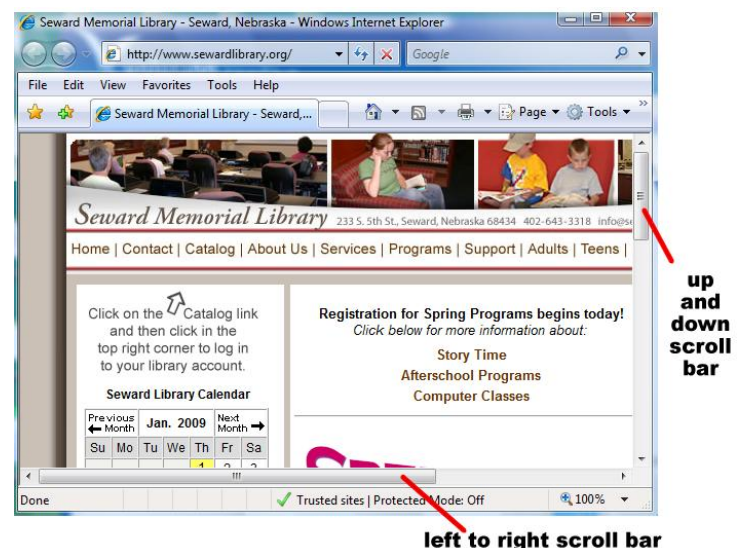
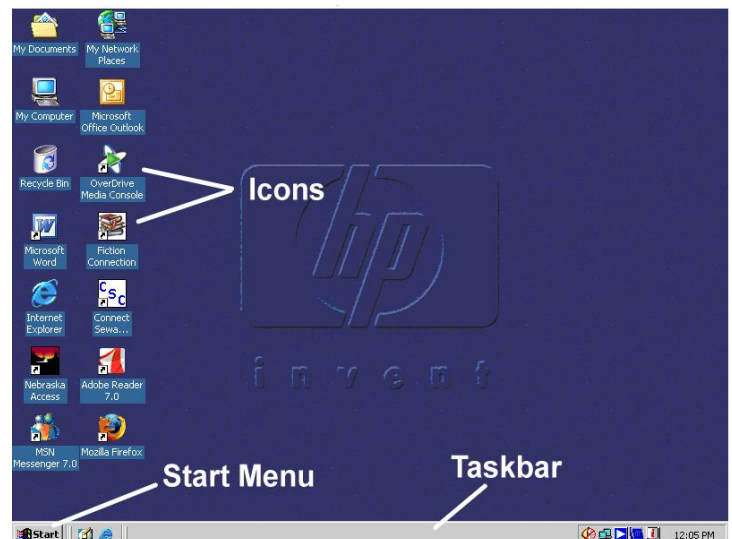
Wallpaper - the image on your desktop is called Wallpaper or the Desktop Background.

Screensaver - a moving image or animation that prevents damage to a monitor caused when a screen stays unchanged for too long. A screensaver will start automatically after the computer hasn't been used for a certain time period.

Start Button - The Start button displays a menu when you click on it. A menu is a list of items from which you can select things to tell a computer.

Window - A window is an area that displays information on the desktop. Windows contain icons, information, or documents.

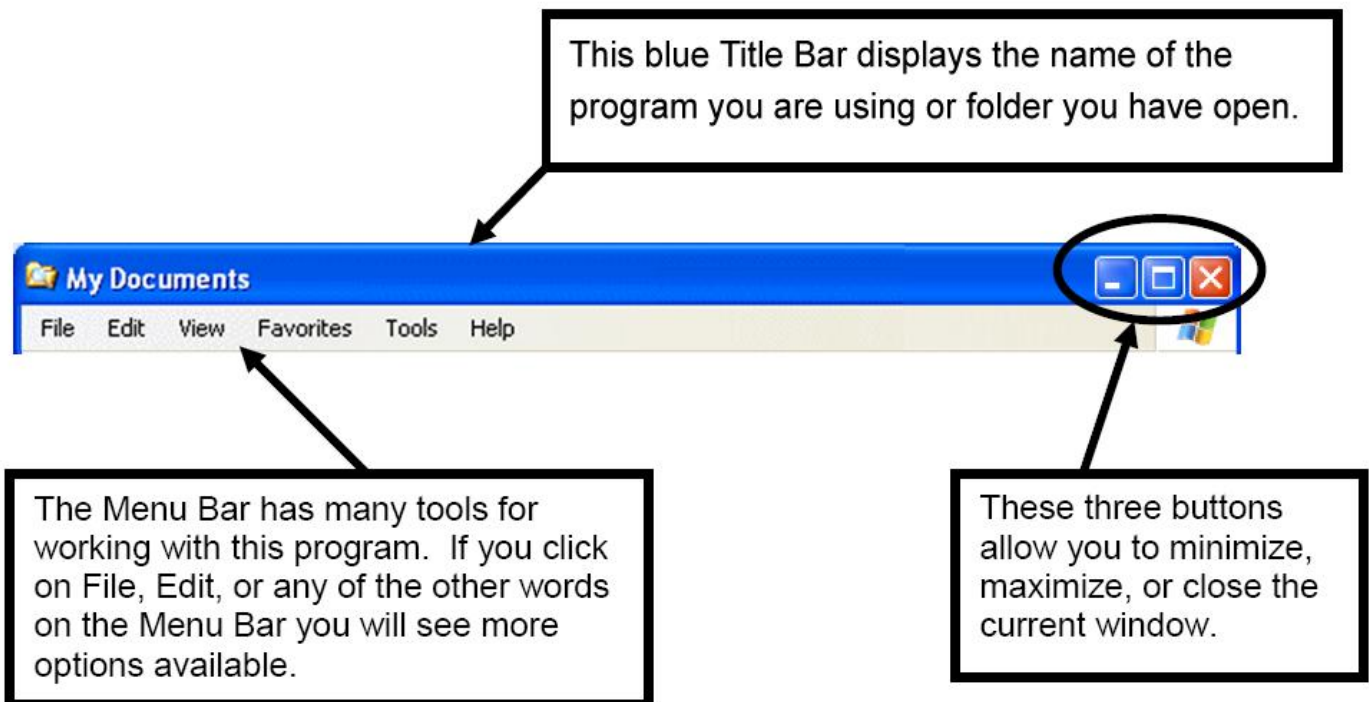
Scroll bar - Scroll bars appear in some windows and allow you to control what portion of the window content is visible. Scroll bars may appear both on the right side of the window (for up and down scrolling) or the bottom of the window (for left and right scrolling.)



A window with scroll bars is pictured above.

Working With Windows:

Although the information inside of each window may be different, there are common elements to every window.



What do these buttons do?



Minimize



Maximize

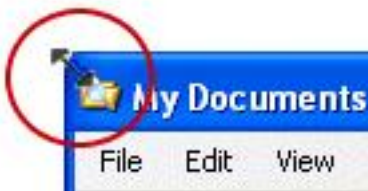


Close

The **Minimize** button will shrink an open window so that it is no longer visible on your desktop. It looks like the window has been closed. However, the window is still open, and you will now see a button on your taskbar displaying the name of the window.

The **Maximize** button will increase the size of the window so that it fills your entire screen.

The **Close** button closes the window.



Minimizing can help you to work with multiple windows at once. Another way to work with more than one window is by resizing. To resize a window move your mouse to an edge or corner of a window until you see a double-sided arrow. Then, click and drag to make the window bigger or smaller.

Close a window from the taskbar:

When you have an open window, a button representing that window will appear on the taskbar (bottom of your screen.) You can switch from window to window by clicking on those buttons on the taskbar. You can also close a window by right-clicking on the button and then clicking (with the left button) on "Close". This will do the same thing as clicking on the "X" in the top right corner of a window.

Create desktop icons (shortcuts):

If you would like to create an icon for a program on your desktop, you can do this by making a "shortcut". For example, if you would like the program "Solitaire" to be an icon on your desktop, you can first find it using your "Start" menu, but when you get to it, click with your right mouse button instead of your left. In the menu that comes up select "Send To:" and then click on "Desktop (create shortcut)". You can now open up Solitaire from the desktop instead of using the Start menu.

The Windows Key:

Between the Ctrl and the Alt keys on the keyboard, there is a special Windows Key. Pressing this key is like clicking on the Start button on the screen.