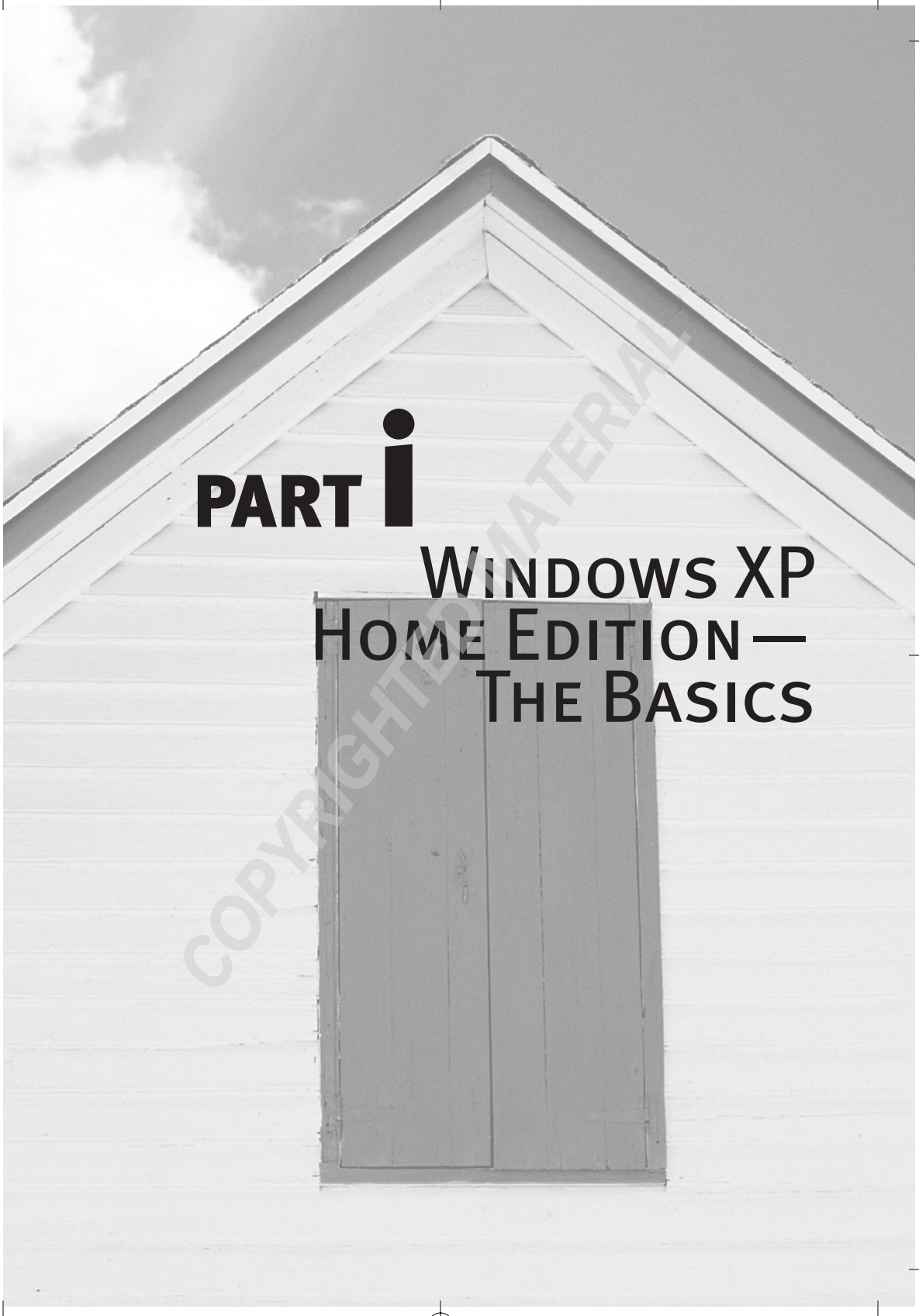


PART I

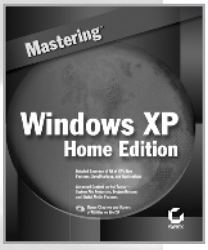
Windows XP Home Edition—The Basics

Chapter 1

Introducing Windows XP Home Edition

This chapter discusses what Windows XP Home Edition is, what it does, and who it's for. It covers in some detail the features and improvements in Windows XP Home, so that you'll know what the operating system offers, and mentions which chapter of the book covers which feature.

The chapter then discusses whether you should upgrade from your current version of Windows. As you might imagine, the answer depends on which version of Windows you're currently running, what you're trying to do with it, and what degrees of success and satisfaction you're experiencing. But for most people who have adequate hardware, Windows XP offers significant improvements over all previous versions of Windows.



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At the end of the chapter, you'll find a discussion of the main ways in which Windows XP Professional differs from Windows XP Home, because you may want to consider Professional rather than Home if you need any of the additional features that Professional offers.

What Is Windows XP Home Edition?

In a nutshell, Windows XP Home Edition is the latest version of Windows aimed at the consumer market. Windows XP Home comprises a feature set designed for home users, while its more powerful (and more expensive) sibling Windows XP Professional offers features designed for professional and corporate users.

If you've used Windows before, or if you're currently using Windows, you may wonder what the big deal is. The good news is that Windows XP *is* a big deal, especially if you've had less-than-satisfactory experiences with Windows in the past. Windows XP isn't the be-all and end-all of operating systems, but it's a great improvement on its predecessors.

As you probably know, through the second half of the 1990s and up until 2001, Microsoft offered two main categories of Windows versions for personal computers: the Windows 95 family and the Windows NT family. In the Windows 95 family were Windows 95 itself, naturally enough; Windows 98; Windows 98 Second Edition, which (despite its unassuming name) was a major upgrade to Windows 98; and Windows Millennium Edition, also known as Windows Me. In the Windows NT family were Windows NT versions 3.1, 3.5, 3.51, and 4, each of which came in a Workstation version and a Server version, and then Windows 2000, which came in a Professional version and several Server versions.

The Windows 95 family, widely referred to as Windows 9*x* in a brave attempt to simplify Microsoft's inconsistent naming, offered impressive compatibility with older hardware (*legacy hardware*, as it's sometimes politely termed) and software (*legacy software*), including full (or full-ish) DOS capabilities for running games and character-based programs. These versions of Windows kept their hardware demands to a reasonable minimum. They were aimed at the consumer market. When things went wrong

(which happened regrettably often), they became unstable. And they crashed. Frequently.

Many of those people—both professionals and home users, who couldn't stand or afford to lose their work because of Windows 9*x*'s frequent crashes—migrated to Windows NT instead. (Others tried OS/2 while it lasted, then returned disconsolately to Windows. Others went to Linux, and mostly stayed with it.) NT, which stands for New Technology, had a completely different underpinning of code than Windows 9*x*. NT was designed for stability, and as a result, it crashed much less frequently than Windows 9*x*. Unfortunately, though, NT wasn't nearly as compatible as Windows 9*x* with legacy hardware and software. Most games and much audio and video software wouldn't run on NT, and it was picky about the hardware on which it would run. (Actually, this wasn't unfortunate at all—it was deliberate on Microsoft's part, and probably wise. But the result was far from great for many users.)

So for the last half-dozen years, users have essentially had to decide between stability and compatibility. This led to a lot of unhappy users, some of whom couldn't run the software they wanted, and others who kept losing work or at least having to reboot their computers more than they should have had to.

The Windows 9*x* line culminated in Windows Me, which tacked some stability and restoration features onto the Windows 9*x* code base. NT culminated in Windows 2000 Professional, which featured increased compatibility with programs over NT (which wasn't saying all that much), a smooth user interface, and usability enhancements.

Windows 2000 Professional was arguably the most stable operating system that Microsoft had produced until Windows XP came along. (Some oldtimers reckoned Windows NT 3.51 was more stable.) But Windows 2000 Professional's stability came at a price: It had no interest in running any games or other demanding software that wouldn't conform to its stringent requirements. And while it was compatible with quite an impressive range of legacy hardware, many items still wouldn't work. Even up-to-date hardware could be problematic, especially if it connected via USB.

Since the late 1990s, Microsoft had been promising to deliver a consumer version of Windows that melded the stability of NT and the compatibility of Windows 9*x*. In Windows XP Home Edition, that version of Windows is finally here.

What's New in Windows XP Home Edition?

This section outlines the most striking and appealing new features in Windows XP, starting with installation and upgrading, moving through the user interface and visible features, and ending up with the features hidden under the hood.

Some of these new features fall into convenient categories, and this section presents them in categories. Others don't; this section presents these features individually.

Easier Installation and Updating

Windows XP includes several features designed to make it easier to install and keep up to date. These include Dynamic Update and Windows Update; the Files and Settings Transfer Wizard; more Wizards for a variety of tasks; a wider selection of device drivers; simplified installation for multifunction devices; and effective uninstall back to Windows 98 and Windows Me.

Dynamic Update and Windows Update

If you're installing Windows XP, one of the first new features that you'll notice is Dynamic Update, which runs during setup and offers to download the latest patches, packages, and fixes so that they can be installed during the setup process.

Dynamic Update may prove to be a great feature. It goes hand in hand with its terrible twin, Windows Update, which runs periodically after setup and offers to download the latest patches, packages, and fixes and install them so that your copy of Windows is as up to date, secure, and compatible as possible. (You can also run Windows Update manually whenever you want to.)

Files and Settings Transfer Wizard

Making its debut in Windows XP is the Files and Settings Transfer Wizard, a feature that Windows users have been demanding for a good 10 years. The Files and Settings Transfer Wizard provides a way of transferring designated files and settings from one computer to another, or from

one installation of Windows to another on the same computer. You'll still need to reinstall all your programs on the new computer or new installation of Windows, but you can transfer your data and a good amount of information about your work environment easily.

If you're migrating from an old computer to a new computer, or if you're installing Windows XP as a dual-boot with an existing version of Windows, you can use the Files and Settings Transfer Wizard to clone your existing Desktop and files and transfer them to the new computer or new version of Windows.

More Wizards to Make Tasks Easier

Windows XP includes a slew of Wizards designed to walk you through complicated processes (and some that aren't so complicated). Perhaps most welcome are the improvements to the Network Setup Wizard (discussed in Chapter 20), which provides effective configuration of simple networks and Internet connection sharing, and the two Hardware Wizards, the Add Hardware Wizard and the Found New Hardware Wizard.

On the less useful front, Windows XP also includes Wizards such as the Desktop Cleanup Wizard, which pops out periodically like the neighborhood dog and tries to persuade you to let it herd the stray icons on your Desktop into a folder where they'll be available but less obtrusive. If you refuse, it wags its tail and goes away for a while.

More Device Drivers

Windows XP comes complete with drivers for a large number of devices, including scanners, digital still cameras, digital video cameras, printers, and so on. So there's a better chance than with another version of Windows (say Windows Me or Windows 2000) that when you plug in a new device, Windows XP will be able to load a driver for it and get it working without any fuss.

You'll probably want to take this improvement with a grain of salt. It's great when Windows XP installs a new device without any effort on your part. But to enjoy the latest features and the best performance from a new device, you may well need to install the driver that comes with the device or (better) download the latest version from the manufacturer's Web site rather than wait for updated drivers to filter through Windows Update.

Simplified Installation for Multifunction Devices

Apart from having more drivers (as described in the previous section), Windows XP makes it easier to install multifunction devices—for example, a multifunction printer/scanner/fax device (the kind that people sometimes call *hydra* machines), a PC Card that combines a network interface card with a modem, or a sound board with extra features.

Previous versions of Windows tended to recognize the component pieces of multifunction devices separately in sequence. If you installed a hydra, Windows would recognize the printer and demand the installation software for it. Once that was done, Windows would recognize the fax and demand the software for *that*. After that, it would recognize the scanner and suggest you might want to install yet more software. Windows XP improves on this social ineptitude by recognizing multifunction devices as such the first time you introduce it to them, and so it demands the installation software only once.

Effective Uninstall Back to Windows 98 and Windows Me

Windows XP Home provides an effective uninstall feature for rolling back the Windows XP installation to your previous installation of Windows 98 or Windows Me. You can't uninstall Windows XP Home and revert to an operating system other than these two. (Windows XP Professional supports upgrading from and uninstalling back to a different set of previous versions of Windows, as you'll see later in this chapter.)

Effective Multiuser Capabilities

Windows XP provides far better multiuser capabilities than Windows 9*x*. You'll notice this at once when you start Windows XP, because by default the Welcome screen that's displayed when Windows starts lists each user who has an account on the computer.

While Windows 9*x* let anybody log on to the computer by creating a new account, Windows XP requires an existing account in order to log on. By default, no account has a password in Windows XP Home, though, so in effect anybody can log on using one of the existing accounts until you require passwords—and you ought to require passwords immediately to protect your data.

Windows 9*x* let you create a profile for each separate user, so that each user could have their own Desktop, Start menu, and set of programs; but it didn't offer any features for preventing one user from seeing another user's files. By contrast, Windows XP takes the approach of NT and Windows 2000, which keep each user's files separate, so that no user can see another user's files unless they have been shared deliberately.

Windows XP goes further than NT and Windows 2000, though, in that it lets multiple users be logged on at the same time, each with programs running. Only one user can be actually *using* the computer, or *active* in Windows XP parlance, at any one time, but the other user sessions continue running in the background (*disconnected*, in Windows XP parlance). When you've finished with the computer for the time being, you can log off Windows, just as you did in previous versions of Windows. Logging off closes all the programs you were using and frees up the memory they took up. But if you stop using the computer only temporarily, you may prefer to *switch user*, which leaves your programs running but lets someone else use the computer in the interim. Further encouraging you to switch user, Windows' default screen saver setting is to display the Welcome screen after 10 minutes of inactivity, performing the equivalent of a Switch User command as it disconnects the user but leaves their session running hidden in the background.

Enhanced User Interface

Windows XP has a completely revamped user interface with a large number of visual enhancements and improved functionality. Some of the visual enhancements improve usability, while others are mere eye candy. But the overall effect is mostly easy to use and mostly looks good—and if you don't like the look, you can restore the "classic" Windows look with minimal effort.

The following sections discuss the main changes to the user interface.

Redesigned Start Menu

Windows XP sports a redesigned Start menu that's supposedly easier and quicker to use. Whether you find it so depends on your experience with the Start menu found in Windows 9*x* and Windows 2000. But don't worry if you like the "classic" Start menu—you can restore it easily enough with a few clicks of the mouse, as discussed in Chapter 10.

The Start menu appears as a panel containing two columns (shown in Figure 1.1). The right-hand column remains the same unless you customize it. The left-hand column starts off with items Microsoft thinks you ought to know about immediately after installation. It then automatically reconfigures itself to show your most used programs. You can pin an item to the Start menu to prevent it from moving and keep it available.

FIGURE 1.1: The redesigned Start menu contains a static column of choices on the right and a variable column of choices on the left.

As you can see in the figure, the current user's name appears in a bar across the top of the Start menu, and the Log Off button and Turn Off Computer button appear at the bottom of the menu.

Redesigned Explorer

Explorer windows use a pair of technologies called WebView and ListView to present context-sensitive lists of tasks you may want to perform or other locations you may want to access. If that sounds a bit vague, that's because WebView and ListView mean that what you see in an Explorer window changes depending on the item that's displayed.

For example, when you select a file (as in Figure 1.2), you see a list of File and Folder Tasks (including links for Rename This File, Move This File, and Delete This File), a list of Other Places (other folders you may want to access from this folder), and a list of Details (which contains information about the file selected and is off the screen in the figure). When you select a folder, Explorer displays a list of File and Folder Tasks (including links for Rename This Folder, Copy This Folder, and Publish This Folder to the Web). When you select your My Network Places folder, you get a Network Tasks list (including links for View Network Connections and Set Up a Home Network). When you select the Recycle Bin... Okay, you get the idea.

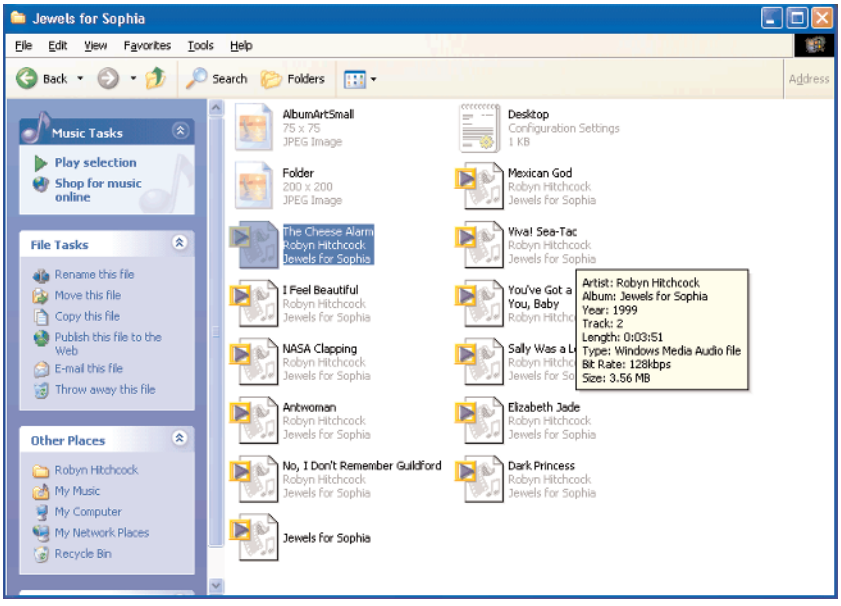

FIGURE 1.2: Explorer windows use the new WebView and ListView technologies to present lists of tasks associated with the selected item.

Context menus (right-click menus) in Explorer are also improved, with more context-sensitive commands added where appropriate. But most of the action takes place in the Tasks list for the selected item. That's because some 80 percent of users apparently weren't using the context menus successfully—an impressive and frightening statistic thrown up by Microsoft's research on Windows users.

Redesigned Control Panel

Windows XP also has a redesigned Control Panel (shown in Figure 1.3) that uses WebView and ListView technology to present Control Panel as categories of items and actions you can take with them. (If you regard Control Panel as an oddly behaved Explorer window, it should come as no surprise after reading the previous section that Control Panel uses WebView and ListView.)

New users will likely find the Category view of Control Panel easy to use. Users comfortable with the regular manifestation of Control Panel in Windows 9*x*, Windows NT 4, and Windows 2000 will probably prefer to use the Classic view.

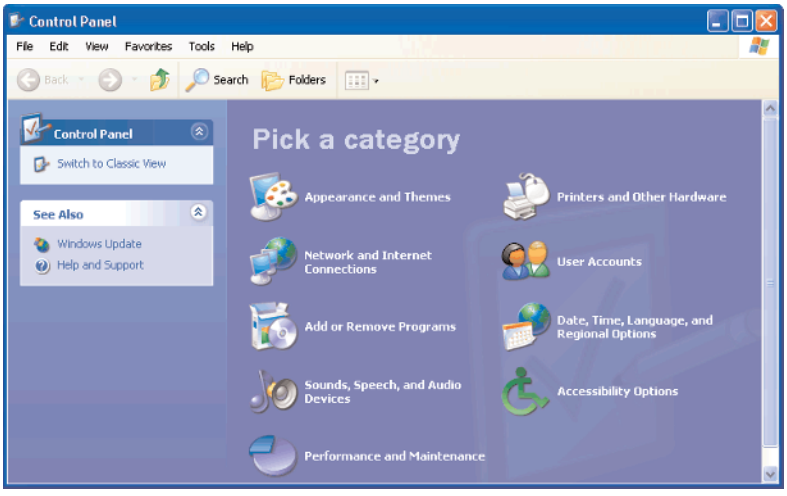

FIGURE 1.3: Control Panel also uses WebView and ListView by default, dividing its bevy of icons into categories. You can use the Classic view to see all the icons at once.

Eye Candy

To complement its highly graphical interface, Windows XP includes a dangerous amount of eye candy. Most people will like at least some of it. Some users will love all of it. And no doubt some people will claim to detest every pixel of it.

The prime example of eye candy is the My Pictures Slideshow screen saver, which lets you set up an automated (or mouse-controlled) slideshow of designated pictures instead of a regular screen saver. This feature seems destined to be widely popular.

Less assured of a rapturous welcome are the staggering amounts of adornment in the interface, such as shadows under the mouse pointer and under menus; the color gradient in the title bar of windows; and the effect of sliding icons, controls, and Taskbar buttons. This overbearing emphasis on graphics places heavy demands on your graphics card and processor, and if your computer's hardware tends to the lukewarm rather than the hot, you may find that the eye candy exacts an unacceptable performance penalty. Microsoft has had the sense to let you set performance options to balance the demands of appearance against your need for performance, so you can turn off the least necessary effects and speed up your computer.

Taskbar Changes and Enhancements

Windows XP includes a number of tweaks to the Taskbar. These seem designed for beginners, so if you're an experienced Windows user, you may find some good and others bad. Fortunately, you can change the Taskbar's behavior back to how it was in previous versions of Windows. You'll find the details in Chapter 10.

Taskbar Locking

By default, the Taskbar is locked in Windows XP Home so that you cannot resize it or move it. Presumably this is intended to help prevent users from dragging their Taskbar to an inaccessible line at the edge of the screen, but it will annoy experienced users who want to be able to resize and move their Taskbar freely. (You can unlock it easily enough.)

Taskbar Scrolling

If you read the previous paragraph, you probably started raising objections: If the Taskbar is a fixed size, the buttons for the running programs must become tiny and useless as soon as you've got 10 or more programs running.

Two other changes come into play here, of which the first is Taskbar scrolling. When the Taskbar is locked, Windows keeps the buttons bigger than a minimum size. To accommodate the buttons, Windows increases the depth of the Taskbar, but displays only its top row. On the displayed portion of the Taskbar, Windows puts scroll buttons so that you can scroll the Taskbar up and down one row of buttons at a time.

Taskbar Button Grouping

The second change that makes Taskbar locking reasonable is Taskbar button grouping.

By default, Windows XP groups related taskbar buttons once you've opened enough windows to more or less fill the taskbar. Whereas other versions of Windows displayed one taskbar button for each program window, Windows XP groups them onto a pop-up menu from a single taskbar button. For example, if you open nine Internet Explorer windows in Windows 98, Windows displays nine Internet Explorer buttons on the taskbar. Having all these buttons can make it easy to find the window you want, but the buttons take up a lot of space (or each button on the taskbar gets shrunk to a tiny size to fit them all in).

In Windows XP, if the program has multiple open windows, the taskbar button displays the number of windows, the title of the current active window or last active window, and a drop-down arrow. To access one of the other open windows, click the taskbar button. Windows displays a list of the windows by title (shown in Figure 1.4). Select the window you want, and Windows displays it.

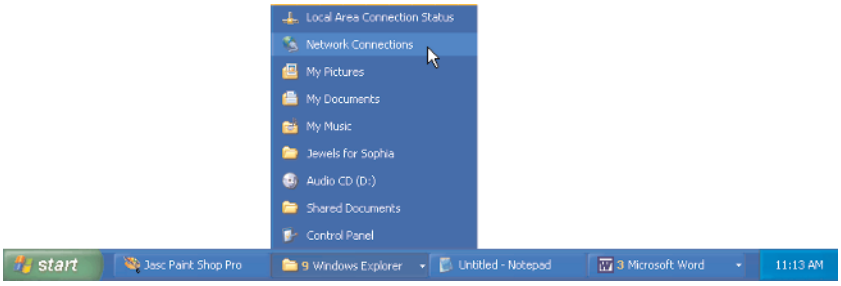

FIGURE 1.4: Several windows represented by a single taskbar button.

Notification Area

By default, Windows XP Home collapses the notification area (also known as the System Tray) so that only the icons you've used most recently are displayed. To display the other icons in the notification area, click the << button at the left end of the notification area.

Better Audio and Video Features

Windows XP includes a slew of new features and improvements for audio and video. These include a new version of Windows Media Player; better

features for grabbing and handling images from digital input devices such as scanners and cameras; and Windows Movie Maker, a modest video-editing program.

Windows Media Player Version 8

Front and center among the improved audio and video features of Windows XP is Windows Media Player version 8, which combines a video and DVD player, a CD player, an Internet radio tuner, and a jukebox for playing and organizing digital-audio files such as Windows Media Audio (WMA) files and MP3 files. Windows Media Player 8 comes with a number of visually interesting *skins* (graphical looks) that you can apply at will. You can even create your own skins if you have the time and talent to invest.

All in all, Windows Media Player 8 is a huge improvement over the 98-pound weakling version of Windows Media Player shipped with all previous versions of Windows except Windows Me. (Me included Windows Media Player 7, which offered many of the features of version 8.) Windows Media Player can even burn audio CDs at the full speed of your CD-R or CD-RW drive.

Windows Media Player is a strong program, but two missing features will disappoint many users:

- Windows Media Player has no codec (coder/decoder) for playing back DVDs. If you want to watch DVDs, you'll have to add a codec of your own—and almost certainly pay for the privilege.
- Windows Media Player can encode audio to the universally popular MP3 format—but only if you add a third-party encoder. You'll probably have to pay for this too.

Chapter 22 discusses Windows Media Player.

My Music Folder and My Pictures Folder

Like several of its predecessors, Windows XP uses custom folders for music (the My Music folder) and pictures (the My Pictures folder). Again like its predecessors, it tries none too subtly to persuade you to save your music in these folders. But Windows XP goes further, in that it makes these folders much more useful than they were in earlier versions of Windows.

As you'd expect, the My Music folder and the My Pictures folder use WebView and ListView to present customized lists of actions you can

take with music files and picture files. Some of these actions tend to the commercial—for example, the Order Prints from the Internet link in the Picture Tasks list, and the Shop for Music Online link in the Music Tasks list. But others are solidly useful—for example, the Play All link in the Music Tasks list, which lets you play all the music in a folder without spelunking into it, or the View As a Slide Show link in the Picture Tasks list, which lets you set a whole folder of pictures running as a slideshow with a single click.

Not surprisingly, the My Music folder works hand in hand (or is it glove?) with Windows Media Player. Windows Media Player is definitely happy for you to keep your music in the My Music folder, though it will let you keep your music elsewhere as well. Better yet, Windows Media Player's features for cataloging music tracks are flexible enough to keep track of music files even when you move them from one folder to another.

The My Pictures folder works closely with Windows Image Acquisition, Image Preview, and Paint (all three of which are discussed in the next section). The folder includes a slideshow applet and a filmstrip view, and it can publish your pictures to the Web.

Better Image Acquisition and Handling

Windows XP provides strong features for capturing images from scanners, still cameras, and video cameras. It also provides better throughput for video streams, though unless you have a duplicate computer running an older version of Windows to use as a benchmark, you could be forgiven for failing to go into raptures over the improvement. Less cynically, the improvement in throughput is unquestionably a good thing, and on decent hardware, Windows XP delivers adequate-to-impressive video performance; but the chances of your confusing your PC with your Dreamcast remain poor.

One of the central tools for image acquisition and handling is the Scanner and Camera Wizard. This Wizard has a variety of duties, including transferring image files from still cameras and digital media (for example, CompactFlash cards and SmartMedia cards) to the computer. Most of its capabilities stay on the useful side of the esoteric. For example, you can scan multiple pages into a single image file, an ability that can come in handy in both home and business settings.

Windows XP provides some basic tools for handling still images. As mentioned in the previous section, the My Pictures folder acts as a default repository for images and provides some basic image-handling

abilities, such as rotating an image. The Image Preview feature lets you examine an image (and annotate a fax). And Paint, the basic image-manipulation and drawing package that's been included with Windows since Windows 3.*x*, has been beefed up as well. Paint can now open—and save—JPEG, GIF, TIFF, and PNG images as well as Windows bitmap (BMP) files, making it about five times as useful as before.

Windows Movie Maker

Windows XP includes Windows Movie Maker, a basic package for capturing video, editing video and audio, and creating video files in the Windows Media format. You won't find yourself making the next *Timecode* or *Traffic* with Windows Movie Maker, but it's good enough for home-video editing. You can also create video slideshows with still images, for those family occasions on rainy weekends or holidays.

Chapter 23 discusses how to get started with Windows Movie Maker.

CD Burning

Windows XP comes with built-in CD-burning capabilities. You can burn CDs from an Explorer window with minimal effort. You can also burn CDs directly from Windows Media Player, which lets you easily create audio CDs that you can play in regular CD players.

Chapter 24 discusses how to burn CDs.

Compressed Folders

Windows XP has built-in support for compressed folders in both the ubiquitous ZIP format and the Microsoft Cabinet (CAB) format. You can create ZIP folders containing one or more files or folders. Better still, you can view the contents of a ZIP or CAB folder seamlessly in Explorer as if it were a regular folder.

Improved Features for Sending Attachments

Windows XP includes improved features for sending files and folders as attachments to e-mail messages. Instead of blindly attaching the files and folders identified by the user, Windows offers to optimize the file size and

display size of the pictures so that they transfer faster and fit onto the recipient's screen when they arrive. If the recipient is using Windows XP, they get to choose whether to open the file or files at the original size or at the optimized size.

Because this feature can actually change the files sent, it seems suspect. But if it reduces the number of multimegabyte digital pictures landing on your ISP's mail server, you may well find it a positive feature—even if you choose never to use it yourself.

Chapter 16 discusses how to use Outlook Express for e-mail, including attachments.

Search Companion

Windows XP includes Search Companion, an enhanced search feature for finding information both on your PC and in the wider world. You can use Search Companion to search for files, for computers or people online, or for information in Help and Support Center. Search Companion brokers the search requests that you enter and farms them out to the appropriate search mechanisms.

You can choose between having Search Companion appear in a straightforward and unexceptionable window and having it manifest itself using one of various animated characters reminiscent of the Microsoft Office Assistant.

Chapter 6 discusses how to use Search Companion.

Easy Publishing to the Web

Windows XP makes it easier to publish files or folders to a Web site by using a Web-hosting service. Windows XP includes a feature called Web Digital Authoring and Versioning (WebDAV for short) that lets you save information to the Web from any program rather than having to use the regular Web-publishing protocols.

Chapter 18 discusses how to publish information to the Web.

A Sane Implementation of Autoplay

If you've used Windows 9*x*, NT 4, or 2000, you'll know all about the Autoplay feature and how it used to drive people crazy. You remember Autoplay—the moment you insert a CD, it starts playing the music from it or installing

any software it contains. By default, Autoplay was enabled, so you had to switch it off (or override it by holding down the Shift key while closing the CD tray) to prevent this from occurring.

Windows XP includes a new version of Autoplay that's improved in several ways. First, you can customize it. Second, you can configure it to take different actions depending on what the CD (or other medium) contains. For example, you might want Windows to play your audio CDs automatically when you insert them (okay, you don't—but you *might*), or you might want Windows to display a slideshow automatically when you insert a CD containing nothing but pictures.

What's that about *other medium*? That's the third thing: In Windows XP, Autoplay works for CDs, DVDs, assorted flash cards (including CompactFlash, Memory Stick, and SmartMedia), PC Cards, Zip and other removable disk drives, and FireWire hot-plug external drives.

More Games

Windows XP includes more games than previous versions of Windows. Some of these are single-player games (for example, Spider Solitaire). Others are multiplayer games that you can play across the Internet via MSN's Zone.com Web site.

Remote Desktop Connection

Windows XP Home includes Remote Desktop Connection, a technology that lets you use your computer to access a remote computer (for example, your computer at the office) that's running Windows XP Professional. Once you've connected to the remote computer, you can control it as if you were sitting at it.

Chapter 19 discusses how to use Remote Desktop Connection.

A More Useful Winkey

A what? *Winkey*, pronounced "win-key" rather than as the diminutive of *wink*, is the Windows key on the keyboard—the key with the Windows logo. Most keyboards have one or two Winkeys, usually located next to the Alt key or keys.

Windows XP includes more functionality for the Winkey. You can still press the Winkey to open or close the Start menu, but you can also use it

in a number of key combinations. For example, pressing Winkey+M issues a Minimize All command, and pressing Winkey+Shift+M issues an Undo Minimize All command.

Improvements for Portable Computers

Windows XP includes several improvements for portable computers.

First, Windows XP supports processor power control, which lets the computer make use of features in chips such as Intel's SpeedStep, in which the processor runs at full speed when the computer is plugged into the main power supply (or told that it's plugged in) but at a lower speed to save power when it's running on battery power (or told that it is).

Throttling back the processor like this reduces the computer's power usage a bit, improving battery life, but in most portables, the screen consumes far more power than the processor. Windows XP also targets the screen, providing a couple of features designed to reduce power use when the computer is running on battery power. First, Windows XP turns off the display when the user closes the computer's lid, on the basis that the user probably isn't looking at the display. Second, it runs the screen at a dimmer brightness when the computer is running off the battery. The cynical among you will point out that the better-designed portables implement both these functions already in hardware. Still, it shouldn't do any harm to have Windows help out for the manufacturers who design their machines a little less carefully.

Windows XP also includes some other less obvious visual enhancements, such as support for ClearType, a Microsoft text-display technology that improves the look of fonts on LCD screens that have digital interfaces. While these screens aren't strictly confined to portables, that's where the bulk of the market is.

Faxing

Windows XP Home contains a built-in fax client that's more than adequate for most home needs and many home-office needs. You can send faxes from any program that supports printing, and you can specify whether to print out incoming faxes automatically or store them in a folder. You can even configure different fax/modems to take different roles. For example, if you use faxes extensively, you might want to keep separate incoming and outgoing fax lines. You'll need a modem for each of the phone lines involved, but that's about as difficult as it gets.

More Help

Windows XP delivers more Help—and more different types of Help—than any other version of Windows.

If you've searched fruitlessly for information in the past, you'll be aware that Windows' Help files have never exactly delivered the ultimate in user satisfaction. Digging information out of Help often felt so difficult that if you knew Windows well enough to find Help on the right topic, you could probably solve the problem without Help's assistance.

Windows XP takes a new approach to Help. There are Help files on your hard drive still, but they're integrated into a program called Help and Support Center. Help and Support Center not only works with the Help files but also with the Microsoft Knowledge Base (a database of support queries) and other online sources of information. For example, if you run a query within Help and Support Center to find information on hardware, it might return some information from local files, some information from the Microsoft Web site, and some information from hardware manufacturers' Web sites, all packaged into one window so that you can access the information conveniently.

Help and Support Center also provides a gateway to other areas of support, including Microsoft Assisted Support and Microsoft Communities, and to programs that you can use to get help from other users (such as Remote Assistance) and troubleshoot your computer (such as System Configuration Utility and System Restore).

The following sections discuss some of the Help and Support Center features. Chapter 3 discusses how to use Help and Support Center.

Microsoft Assisted Support

Windows XP's Microsoft Assisted Support feature lets you automatically collect information on a problem you're having and submit it to Microsoft electronically. A Microsoft technician then sends a solution, which appears as a pop-up in your System Tray. You can read the response in the Help and Support Center window and apply the wisdom it contains to fix the problem.

Microsoft Assisted Support is designed to bypass the problems inherent with tech support via phone call, namely that it's difficult for the user to tell the Help technician what's wrong with their computer; it's even harder for the technician to get a good idea of what's going wrong without knowing a fair bit of technical information about the computer; and

waiting on hold for tech support is nobody's idea of fun, especially if you're paying for a long-distance call as well as for the support.

Support Communities

Instead of contacting a Microsoft technician via Microsoft Assisted Support, you can try to get support from one of the support communities that Microsoft is building online. These comprise the Windows Newsgroups, which are Microsoft-hosted newsgroups dedicated to Windows, and MSN Communities, forums and message boards on MSN for discussing how to use Windows, Microsoft software, and computers in general.

Remote Assistance

Remote Assistance is an ingenious feature by which you can get assistance from a friend or other knowledgeable person remotely by computer.

Here's the brief version of how Remote Assistance works. You send out an invitation file via e-mail, via MSN Messenger instant messaging, or via a file saved to the network (for example, in a business environment) or floppy disk. Your helper receives the invitation and responds to it. Remote Assistance sets up a secure connection between their computer and yours, using a password to verify their identity. Your helper can then view your screen remotely and chat with you (via text chat and voice). If you trust your helper, you can even let them control your computer so that they can take actions directly.

Chapter 19 discusses how to use Remote Assistance.

Help Queries: Errors, Events, and Compatibility

You can use Help queries to search for information on error messages, event messages, and compatibility. Help and Support Center's integrated approach lets you search seamlessly across multiple Web sites (for example, the Microsoft Knowledge Base and the hardware manufacturer's Web site) to find the information you need

Tools Center

Help and Support Center includes a Tools Center that gives you quick access to information about your computer (My Computer Information and Advanced System Information) and its configuration (System Configuration Utility); network diagnostic tools (Network Diagnostics); the System Restore feature; and more. In addition to the tools that Microsoft

makes available in the Tools Center, OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) can add tools of their own, so you may also find custom tools provided by your computer manufacturer.

Many of the tools accessible through the Tools Center are also accessible in other ways through the Windows interface. For example, Windows XP includes an improved version of Disk Defragmenter, which you can use to keep your hard disk from becoming fragmented (fragmentation decreases performance). You can run Disk Defragmenter from Tools Center, but you can also run it from the System Tools submenu of the Start menu (Start ➢ All Programs ➢ Accessories ➢ System Tools ➢ Disk Defragmenter). Similarly, you can run Windows Update from inside Help and Support Center. This can be convenient, but it offers no great advantage over running Windows Update from the Start menu.

Fixing a Problem Tool

Help and Support Center includes an area called Fixing a Problem that contains a number of troubleshooters for walking you through the steps of diagnosing and curing various common problems. Fixing a Problem isn't a panacea, but it's a good place to start, and it can save you a call to a guru or even a trip to your local computer shop.

Device Driver Referral Site

Help and Support Center contains a system for referring searches for drivers that don't come with Windows or with the hardware device. When you plug in a new hardware device, and Windows finds that it doesn't have a driver for it and you can't supply a driver, Windows invites you to send information about the hardware to Microsoft. Once you've sent the information, you can take a variety of actions depending on what information is available. For example, you might be able to view a list of compatible devices (if any), search for information on compatible devices or Knowledge Base articles about the hardware, or find a link to the vendor's Web site.

Other Help Improvements

Help and Support Center includes assorted other Help improvements that can save you time. For example, you can print out a whole chapter of Help information at once instead of having to slog through it screen by screen. And you can open multiple Help and Support Center windows at

the same time. This makes it easier to pursue different avenues of exploration for the information you need. When you find useful information, you can create a favorite for it so that you can access it quickly again when you need it.

Network Connectivity

Windows XP provides various improvements in network connectivity, from creating a home or home-office network to joining a computer to two separate networks. There are also great improvements in Internet connectivity, discussed in the next section.

Network Setup Wizard

The Network Setup Wizard simplifies the process of creating a network; sharing printers, Internet connections, and other resources; and configuring protocols and security.

Chapter 20 discusses how to use the Network Setup Wizard to set up a network.

All-User Remote Access Service

The All-User Remote Access Service lets you create a credential for all users of the computer so that they can share a connection. For example, you can make your high-speed Internet connection available to all the users of the computer without divulging the account password to them. The name is a bit intimidating, but the process is easy.

Alternative TCP/IP Configuration

Windows XP provides an alternative TCP/IP configuration that allows you to connect to a network that has a DHCP server and to a network that doesn't without changing your TCP/IP settings. For example, you might use a laptop at work (where the network has a DHCP server) and at home (where your network doesn't).

Network Bridging

Windows XP's network-bridging capability lets you use a computer with two or more network adapters to join two separate networks. You're perhaps unlikely to have two (or more) networks at home or in a small

office—unless you have a wired network to which you've added a wireless component to provide roaming capabilities for some of the computers.

Internet Connectivity and Web Browsing

Windows XP provides a number of enhanced features for Internet connectivity and Web browsing, from favorites for Internet connections to a new version of Internet Explorer.

Internet Connection Favorites

Windows XP lets you create favorites for your Internet connections. By using favorites, you can switch easily from one Internet connection to another. This is a great time-saver if you use multiple ISPs or (perhaps more likely) travel frequently and need to use different dial-up numbers from different locations.

Internet Connection Sharing and Internet Connection Firewall

Like Windows 98 Second Edition, Windows Me, and Windows 2000, Windows XP includes an Internet Connection Sharing (ICS) feature that lets you share an Internet connection on one computer with one or more networked computers. Windows XP's version of Internet Connection Sharing has some tweaks; for example, you can disconnect the shared Internet connection from another PC if you need to use the phone line that the connection is using. Windows XP includes a Quality of Service Packet Scheduler that works to optimize the utilization of a shared Internet connection.

Internet Connection Sharing is a great convenience, particularly if you have a high-speed connection such as a DSL or a cable modem—but it lays your network open to assault from the Internet. Windows XP goes one better than its predecessors by including a firewall (called *Internet Connection Firewall*) to protect the Internet connection (whether shared or not).

Chapter 21 discusses Internet Connection Firewall.

New Version of Internet Explorer

Windows XP includes Internet Explorer 6, the latest version of Internet Explorer. Even if you feel you've already had it up to here with new ver-

sions of Internet Explorer, stifle your impatience, because Internet Explorer 6 offers a number of welcome innovations, including the following:

- You can save images, music, and videos more easily to your computer.
- The new Media bar lets you listen to streaming audio directly in Internet Explorer and (perhaps a less welcome feature) access WindowsMedia.com easily.
- IE 6 provides better handling of cookies and digital certificates for securing information transfer and authenticating content.
- IE 6 can automatically resize an image you've displayed directly. If you've ever used Internet Explorer to open a digital photo, and found it displayed bigger than your screen so that you could see only part of it, you may appreciate this feature. (But you'd be better off opening the photo in Paint in the first place.)
- IE 6 has more integrated functionality for handling different file types. This won't strike you over the head; you'll simply find that more file types open without your being prodded to download and install extra components. For example, IE 6 has built-in support for Macromedia Flash and Shockwave animations, and support for Cascading Style Sheet (CSS) Level 1. The net result is that more animations will play without your needing to add software, and documents formatted with CSS1 style sheets will be displayed as their authors intended. (They may still look horrible, but at least you'll know that they're meant to look that way.)

Chapter 15 discusses how to configure and use Internet Explorer.

MSN Explorer

Windows XP includes MSN Explorer, an Internet client dedicated to MSN. If you don't have an ISP, you may want to use MSN Explorer to connect to the Internet.

.NET Passport Integration

In order to implement many of its Internet services, Windows XP relies heavily on Microsoft's .NET Passport feature. For example, you need to get a .NET Passport in order to use Windows Messenger for instant

messaging, to use Hotmail (Microsoft's Web-based e-mail service), to create Web pages on MSN, or to visit a Web site that requires a Passport sign-in (for instance, to download certain files from the Microsoft Web site).

.NET Passport (or, more simply, just *Passport*) is an electronic identifier that's associated with your user account on your PC. (If you use the same Passport with multiple PCs, it can be associated with multiple user accounts.) You can sign up for a Passport by using an existing e-mail account. If you don't have an e-mail account, Microsoft encourages you to base your Passport on a Hotmail account or an MSN account.

Passport enables many cool features—but it also locks you into using Microsoft technologies when you may not want to use them. Worse, it can (or *could*) give Microsoft a way to track some of your actions online. Microsoft protests that it is committed to your online privacy, and does give you the choice of opting out of some of the tracking features, but you don't need to be paranoid to find Passport's possibilities frightening.

You can use Passport Wallet features to (in Microsoft's words) "simplify your online shopping experience"—in other words, spend money faster online and with less effort. You get to decide whether this is a good idea. (Hint: Evaluate Passport Wallet carefully. Don't rush into anything.)

What's Hiding under the Hood

The features mentioned so far catch the eye—some even on a cursory scan of the Windows XP Desktop and interface.

Less glamorous, but more important in the long run, are the enhancements hiding under Windows XP's hood. This section discusses the major enhancements that you probably *won't* see.

Protected Memory Management

Windows XP improves on Windows 9*x*/Me by offering fully protected memory management. Windows 9*x*/Me didn't protect the areas of memory used by the operating system. This meant that if a program tried to store information in memory already used by another program or by the operating system, the program could crash not only itself but also the operating system. If you've used any version of Windows 9*x* for any length of time, you're probably familiar with these crashes. Typically, you see a succession of instances of the Blue Screen of Death with assorted error messages, and eventually have to perform a warm reboot (Ctrl+Alt+Delete) or a hard

reboot (by powering the computer down and back up again). In the meantime, you lose any unsaved work in the programs you're using.

With protected memory management, Windows XP can handle memory errors with more aplomb. When a program tries to access memory that doesn't belong to it, Windows XP can close the program without affecting any other running program. You still lose any unsaved work in the guilty program, but all your other programs continue running.

While Windows XP is dealing with the misbehaving program, you can move the program's window so that it doesn't obstruct your view of any other programs you have open.

System File Protection

Windows XP offers a feature called System File Protection that protects your system files from ill-advised actions on your part.

Windows XP tries to persuade you not to view the contents of folders that you probably shouldn't be messing with, by refusing to show them to you until you demand it show them. You can then delete system files if you want (except for any file that's actively in use, which is locked automatically). But the next time that Windows boots, or if it catches the damage you've done before you reboot it, it replaces the files you deleted without notifying you.

This is about all you need to know about System File Protection.

System Restore

Windows XP offers a System Restore feature similar to but more effective than the System Restore feature in Windows Me. System Restore automatically creates restore points both periodically and each time you make a change to the system—for example, by installing a program or a driver. You can also create system restore points manually. When one of your changes leads to an unwelcome result, such as your computer failing to boot, you can use System Restore to roll back the change to an earlier point at which the system was working properly.

Chapter 12 discusses how to use System Restore.

Device Driver Rollback

Device drivers have long been the bane of Windows—okay, *one* of the banes of Windows. By installing the wrong driver, or a buggy driver, you

could render your computer useless until you reinstalled Windows (or turned in frustration to another operating system).

Windows XP tracks the drivers you install and lets you roll back the installation of the driver—in other words, you can revert to the driver you were using before.

Better yet, Windows XP stores details of the previous driver in what's called the *Last Known Good Configuration*—the configuration used the last time the computer seemed to be running okay. This means that if installing a new driver prevents your computer from booting as normal, you can boot into Safe mode and use the Last Known Good Configuration to restore the previous driver.

NTFS

Where Windows 9*x* versions used the FAT (File Allocation Table) and VFAT (Virtual File Allocation Table) file systems, Windows XP prefers NTFS, the NT file system. NTFS provides security features (including file-level security) and stability that FAT and VFAT do not.

Compatibility with Windows 9*x* Programs

Windows XP aims to be able to run all programs that would run on Windows 9*x*, Windows NT, and Windows 2000. As you'll know if you've struggled to run a Windows 9*x* program on NT or Windows 2000, this is quite a challenge. NT-based operating systems (including Windows XP) handle memory and hardware access in a different way than Windows 9*x* operating systems. These differences mean that programs designed for Windows 9*x* often won't run satisfactorily on NT and Windows 2000.

Being able to run these legacy programs is a big feature of Windows XP—but because Microsoft has implemented this feature very successfully, it remains hidden most of the time. Usually, you can simply install a legacy program and run it without complications. Behind the scenes, Windows XP may be running the program in its Compatibility mode or applying one of its new AppFixes to the program (to prevent it from detecting the wrong operating system and from causing problems such as referencing memory once it's been freed up), but you often won't know about it. You may need to specifically run some programs in Compatibility mode, and you may see Windows Update automatically downloading new information for AppFixes to keep your copy of Windows up to date, but most of the time, your old programs will simply work—which of course is the way it should be.

Should You Upgrade to Windows XP Home Edition?

Whether you should upgrade to Windows XP Home Edition depends on your needs, how well your current version of Windows is fulfilling them, and whether your hardware is up to the test. The decision is wholly yours (of course), but the following sections offer some suggestions, depending on where you're coming from.

Windows 9*x*

If you're using one of the versions of Windows 9*x*/Me—Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows 98 Second Edition, or Windows Me—the main attractions of Windows XP Home are much greater stability, the enhanced user interface, and the extra features that Windows XP includes.

Exactly which extra features Windows XP includes depends—obviously enough—on which version of Windows 9*x*/Me you have. Not surprisingly, later versions of Windows 9*x* offer more features than earlier versions. For example, the Internet Connection Sharing feature debuted in Windows 98 Second Edition, so ICS might be a reason to upgrade to Windows XP if you have Windows 95 or Windows 98 (first edition), but not if you have Windows 98 Second Edition or Windows Me. (The Internet Connection Firewall feature, however, is new, and is a strong attraction unless you're already using an effective hardware or software firewall.) Likewise, Windows Me includes Windows Media Player 7, a version that greatly improved on the earlier, anemic versions of Windows Media Player but isn't as capable as Windows Media Player 8, the version included in Windows XP. From Windows Me, the new version of Windows Media Player provides only a modest incitement to upgrade, whereas from earlier versions of Windows 9*x*, it provides much more encouragement—assuming you're interested in multimedia, that is.

Whichever version of Windows you're using, you'll need to make sure that your hardware is up to scratch for Windows XP. Very generally speaking, if your computer is capable of running Windows 98 or Windows Me at a decent clip, it should be able to run Windows XP without much trouble (though you might need to add memory).

You'll find details of Windows XP's hardware requirements in Chapter 2.

Windows 3.1

If you're still using Windows 3.1 and DOS as your main operating system, Windows XP Home Edition represents a considerable upgrade. There are two major considerations in taking this step:

- Unless you've installed Windows 3.1 on a modern system (as you might have done for backward-compatibility with ancient programs), you'll almost certainly need to get a new PC to run Windows XP. You *could* upgrade an older system, but it'd be a real grandfather's ax of an upgrade: hard drive, processor, RAM, graphics card... (Don't you remember the anecdote? There's this guy in the bar (or wherever) who says "I have my grandfather's ax. My father replaced the handle, and I gave it a new blade. But it still cuts great!" Your upgraded Windows 3.1 computer would be like that ax.)
- If you will need to continue running DOS programs and 16-bit Windows programs (rather than upgrading to 32-bit programs that provide similar functionality), check to make sure that these programs are compatible with Windows XP before upgrading. As mentioned earlier, Windows XP runs older 32-bit Windows programs quite impressively, but it has problems with some 16-bit programs.

Windows 2000 Professional

If you're currently using Windows 2000 Professional and are happy with it, stick with it for the time being. The "natural" upgrade path from Windows 2000 Professional is to Windows XP Professional Edition, but make this upgrade only after carefully evaluating the benefits that Windows XP Professional will provide. If Windows 2000 Professional is currently fulfilling all your computing needs, stick with it.

Should You Upgrade to Windows XP Professional Edition Instead?

So you've decided that Windows XP offers features that you must have—but should you get Windows XP Home Edition or Windows XP Professional

Edition? This section discusses the biggest differences between the two. This isn't an exhaustive breakdown of all the differences—just the ones that will probably affect your decision the most.

Intended Usage

As its name suggests (and is designed to suggest), Windows XP Professional is geared toward use in a professional setting—for example, in an office or in a corporate setting. That doesn't mean you can't use it at home if you want, just that it has features designed for use in office and corporate settings. For example, it's designed to connect to Windows 2000 servers running Active Directory domains, and it has features for being managed remotely by administrators. Professional also has features for using a portable computer as a complement to a desktop computer (rather than instead of a desktop computer) and lets you easily synchronize files between two computers.

By contrast, Windows XP Home is designed for home use. It features more relaxed security settings than Windows XP Professional, comes set up for sharing files and folders easily among users of the same computer, and has no interest in being managed remotely by administrators or anyone else.

Cost

As you'd expect, Windows XP Professional is more expensive than Windows XP Home, though if you need the extra features it offers, it's affordable enough. But you'll certainly want to avoid first buying Windows XP Home and then upgrading to Windows XP Professional.

Hardware Requirements

Windows XP Professional runs adequately on the same hardware as Windows XP Home. While Professional doesn't actually *need* better hardware than Home, it probably *appreciates* better hardware more than Home does, because its extra features (detailed after the next section) need some extra memory and processing power.

Upgrade Paths to Windows XP

You can upgrade to Windows XP Professional from Windows 98, Windows 98 Second Edition, Windows Me, Windows NT 4 Workstation, and

Windows 2000 Professional. You can upgrade to Windows XP Home from only Windows 98, Windows 98 Second Edition, and Windows Me.

Windows XP Professional Features

Professional is essentially a superset of Home: It has all the features that Home has, plus extra features. You can also look at this the other way around, and say that Home is a subset of Professional. In some ways, this might be truer, as Home can be regarded as Professional with a number of features—some very attractive, some less so—taken out.

The following list details the features that Professional has that Home does not have, in descending order of excitement.

Multiple monitor support—for both desktops and laptops Several versions of Windows have had multiple monitor support for desktops: By installing two or more graphics cards, each hooked up to a monitor, you can spread your Desktop across two or more monitors, giving you far more space to view multiple programs. Windows XP Professional includes multiple monitor support like its predecessors, while Windows XP Home supports only a single monitor. Windows XP Professional also includes a new technology called DualView, which lets you hook up two monitors to a single graphics card that supports two interfaces. Relatively few AGP and PCI graphics cards support two interfaces, though you'll find a number of cards with digital outputs (for LCD panels) that have a regular VGA connector as well. Most of the excitement here is for laptops, most of which have a connector for an external display as well as the internal connector for the built-in screen. Instead of using the external display to display the same image as the built-in screen, you can use DualView to make the external display an extension of your Desktop. This is a wonderful feature for laptop users who crave more screen space.

Personal Web Server and Internet Information Services Windows XP Professional includes Personal Web Server and Internet Information Services, which let you run a modest-scale Web server on XP.

Fax sharing As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Windows XP Home has strong fax features for the individual user. Windows XP Professional goes one better by letting you

share a fax/modem with other computers: Your computer can provide fax services to other computers to which it is networked, or your computer can send a fax via a fax/modem on another computer. These features can save a great deal of time and effort, not to mention phone lines.

Backup and Automated System Recovery (ASR)
Windows XP Professional includes a Backup utility and an Automated System Recovery feature that can be activated from boot-up to restore a damaged system. Windows XP Home doesn't have these features—though, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, Windows XP Home does have the System Restore feature for rolling back the installation of bad drivers and programs.

Offline files Offline files let you cache (store) copies of files located on network drives on your local drive so that you can work with them when your computer is no longer connected to the network. Windows XP Professional can encrypt the Offline Files database to help keep the information in the files secure. Windows XP Home doesn't offer offline files.

Multiprocessor support Windows XP Professional Edition offers multiprocessor support, while Home doesn't. You probably won't care about this omission in Home unless you're one of the (very) few people who have a multiprocessor computer at home, but in a way it's rather sad, because the multiprocessor code is all written and available—Microsoft just decided to take this functionality out of Home, presumably to provide another point of differentiation with Professional. So if you do have a multiprocessor machine, and you want to use both processors, you need Professional rather than Home. (You might also consider Linux, which will love the extra processor and will cost you less.)

Remote Desktop Windows XP Professional offers Remote Desktop technology, while Home doesn't. Remote Desktop is a little confusing because of the terminology. The Remote Desktop component lets you make a computer available for remote control. Professional has this capability; Home doesn't. The Remote Desktop *Connection* component lets you use a computer to access a remote computer that's running Remote Desktop. Both Professional and Home have Remote Desktop

Connection. So you can use a computer running Home to access a computer running Professional, but not the other way around. If you need to be able to connect to your computer remotely via Remote Desktop Connection, you need Professional rather than Home. (Alternatively, you can use NetMeeting's remote features to control a Home computer, or one of the many third-party remote-control packages.)

Ability to upgrade from more versions of Windows You can upgrade to Windows XP Professional from Windows 98, Windows 98 Second Edition, Windows NT 4 Workstation, and Windows 2000 Professional.

Security features Windows XP Professional includes a number of security features that Windows XP Home lacks. For example, Windows XP Professional lets you control access at the level of individual files as well as folders, while with Windows XP Home, you can control access only at the folder level. Windows XP Professional supports the Encrypting File System (EFS) for encrypting files on the local disk; Windows XP Home does not support EFS.

Networking features Windows XP Professional has many networking features that Windows XP Home does not. These include the Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP), the Client Service for NetWare, Simple TCP/IP Services, and the Multiple Roaming feature. If you need to connect to a NetWare server, or if you need to use roaming profiles, you'll need Windows XP Professional rather than Windows XP Home.

Management features Windows XP Professional has extensive management features that allow remote administration. Windows XP Home can't log on to an Active Directory domain, so it doesn't have management features associated with domains and remote administration. For example, Windows XP Home doesn't support Group Policy or Microsoft's IntelliMirror feature. Similarly, Windows XP Professional can wake up a laptop via a CardBus LAN card, while Windows XP Home cannot.

One other thing—there will be a 64-bit version of Windows XP Professional for the Intel Itanium processor. By contrast, Windows XP Home runs only on 32-bit Pentiums and their equivalents.

What's Next

This chapter has discussed what you need to know about Windows XP Home Edition in order to decide whether to upgrade to it, stay with your current version of Windows, or buy Windows XP Professional Edition instead.

In the next chapter, Robert Cowart discusses how to install Windows XP Home Edition, both as an upgrade and as a clean installation from scratch.