

Part 1

Navigating and Managing Files and Folders in Windows XP

In the first part of this book, you'll become familiar with the Windows XP Home Edition interface and learn how to view and manage files, folders, and disks. File management is an important basic skill that you'll use often in working with Windows, so studying this first will give you an advantage in everything else you learn about later in the book.

Navigating and Managing Files and Folders in Windows XP

Chapter 1 • Getting Started with Windows XP Home Edition	3
Chapter 2 • Navigating in a Window	21
Chapter 3 • Managing Files, Folders, and Disks	35
Chapter 4 • Setting File Management Options	63

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Getting Started with Windows XP Home Edition

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Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition is the latest version of the Windows operating system for personal computers. It provides an easy-to-use graphical interface for managing files, running programs, and connecting with the Internet. This chapter explains how to start and exit from Windows and the purpose of some of the items you see on-screen. You'll also learn how to open the built-in Help and Support system and how to look up information in it.

Starting Windows

Windows XP Home Edition starts automatically when you turn on your computer—you don't need to do anything special to start it. Windows takes from 1 to 3 minutes to load when you turn on the computer, and while it loads, you see messages and introductory graphics on the screen.

When Windows finishes loading, you see the Windows desktop, which is discussed more in the next section.



Operating system

The software that creates the interface between you and your PC, so that you can issue commands. The operating system also makes the computer aware of its devices (such as disk drives and printers) and manages any connections to other computers or to the Internet.

Desktop

The background area in Windows, on which everything else sits.

If the PC happens to be set up for multiple users, a screen appears before you get to the desktop, asking which user you are. Just click your username to continue, or click Guest if you don't have a username. Chapter 14 covers the setup and maintenance of usernames on a multiuser system.

Learning the Parts of the Screen

If you are brand-new to the Windows **operating system**, this section will help you get up to speed on basic navigation and terminology.

The **desktop** is the background you see on-screen. When you first install Windows XP, the picture on the background shows a green-meadow landscape, but you can change that picture (as you'll learn in Chapter 11) or remove the

picture entirely, leaving a solid-color background. Everything that happens in Windows starts from the desktop, and most of the other parts of the screen are connected to it.

Start Button and Start Menu

The Start button, in the lower-left corner, is your gateway to the **programs** you can run and the settings you can adjust. When you click the Start button, a two-column menu opens.

In the left column are frequently used programs, along with an All Programs option. Click All Programs to see a complete list of programs you can run. To run one of the programs on the All Programs list or in the left column, simply click it. You'll learn more about running programs in Chapter 5.



At the top of the right column are shortcuts to various special-purpose folders:

My Documents is a storage folder for data files you create in **applications** such as Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel. Chapter 5 covers working with programs.

My Pictures is a storage folder for photographs you have scanned or transferred from a digital camera. See Chapter 8.

Program

At the most basic level, a program is nothing more than executable computer code—that is, code that causes something to happen. For example, you might run a program that sets your computer's clock to the correct date and time, or that provides an on-screen calculator for your use.

If you've used earlier versions of Windows, the Windows XP Start menu might seem strange to you. If you prefer, you can go back to the look-and-feel of the classic Start menu. To do so, right-click the Start button and choose Properties. Then click Classic Start Menu and click OK. You'll learn how to do more of this type of customization in Part IV.

Application

A program that performs a useful task, other than simply keeping the computer up and running. For example, the Microsoft Word application is a word processor. Most applications these days are complex, consisting of multiple subprograms and many interrelated files. Many people use the terms *program* and *application* interchangeably.

My Music is a storage folder for music and video clips used in Windows Media Player. See Chapter 9.

My Computer opens a file management window in which you can browse all the drives on your computer. See Chapter 3.

TIP

Earlier versions of Windows included a My Computer icon on the desktop. If you miss that, you can create a My Computer shortcut on the desktop, as explained in Chapter 7.

My Network Places helps you find and view files and folders on other computers in your **local area network (LAN)** if you have one. See Chapter 15. This shortcut doesn't appear if you don't have a network.

Local area network (LAN)

A group of computers that are physically located in the same building and are connected to one another with cables, infrared signals, or some other networking scheme, in order to share files and printers.



Farther down in the right column is an assortment of useful commands, each of which is covered later in the book:

Control Panel enables you to customize how Windows looks and performs. It's covered in Chapters 11 through 13.

Help and Support opens the Help and Support Services window, where you can get information about Windows functionality. It's covered later in this chapter.

Search helps you locate a file or folder stored on one of your PC's drives. See Chapter 3.

Run opens a text box in which you can type a command that you want to run. This is an advanced feature that beginners will seldom use.

At the bottom of the Start menu are buttons for logging off and for turning off, or shutting down, the computer. Shutting down is covered later in this chapter. Logging off is applicable only if you have multiple users set up; see Chapter 14.



Icons

Icons are the small pictures that sit on the desktop. They represent files, folders, or applications to which you might want quick access. Windows XP comes with a Recycle Bin icon on the desktop, and you can add your own favorite items there, too (see Chapter 7).



Some icons represent the actual file or folder, such that deleting the icon on the desktop will delete the original item. Other icons are merely **shortcuts**, or pointers, to the original item. Shortcut icons can be distinguished from regular icons by the small, curved arrow in the corner. Deleting a shortcut icon does nothing to the original item.

Taskbar

The taskbar is the horizontal bar at the bottom of the screen. The Start button is at the left end, and a clock is at the right end. In the middle are rectangular bars for any open applications or other windows. (If you don't have anything open, this area will be empty.)



You can switch between windows by clicking the bar for the window you want to work with. Chapter 5 goes into that in more detail.

Other programs you install may also add icons to the desktop; for example, if you have Microsoft Office installed, a Microsoft Outlook icon appears on the desktop.

Shortcut

An icon that points to an object, such as a file or folder, stored on one of the computer's drives. Shortcuts provide quick, easy access to frequently needed files without your having to place the files themselves on the desktop.

In earlier Windows versions, a Quick Launch toolbar appeared by default to the right of the Start button. See Chapter 2 if you want to enable it in Windows XP.

System tray

The area to the left of the clock in the taskbar, which displays icons for any programs that are running behind the scenes in Windows. Examples of such programs might include a virus protection utility, a fax program, or an instant messaging program such as MSN Messenger.

The area to the immediate left of the clock is the **system tray**, displaying the icons for any programs that are running in the background. Chapter 7 explains how to work with system tray programs.

NOTE

If you see a left-arrow (<) button there, it means that some of the system tray icons are hidden; you can click that button to display them. When the system tray is open, the button changes to >.



Using Help and Support

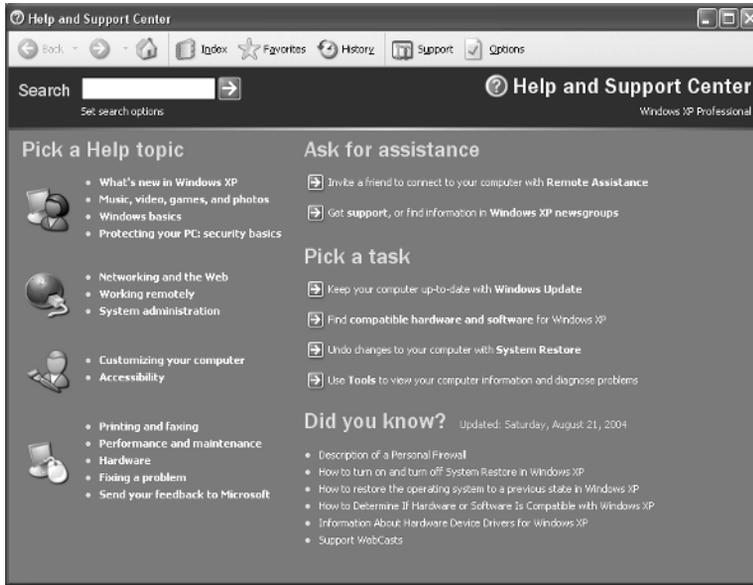
Windows XP doesn't come with a printed manual, but all the information that would have gone into a manual (and more) is available through the Help and Support utility.

To open Help and Support:

1. Click the Start button, then click Help and Support.



2. The Help and Support Center window opens.

**TIP**

You can press the F1 key as a shortcut to performing these steps.

There are several ways to locate information in the Help and Support Center window, as the following sections explain.

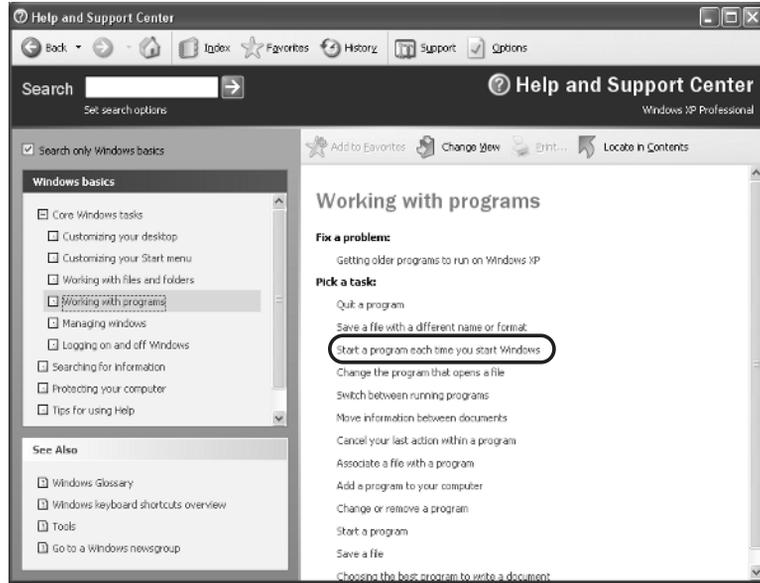
Browsing Help Topics

From the main Help and Support Center window, you can browse some popular **topics** much as you might skim a book to look for a subject of interest. Just follow these steps:

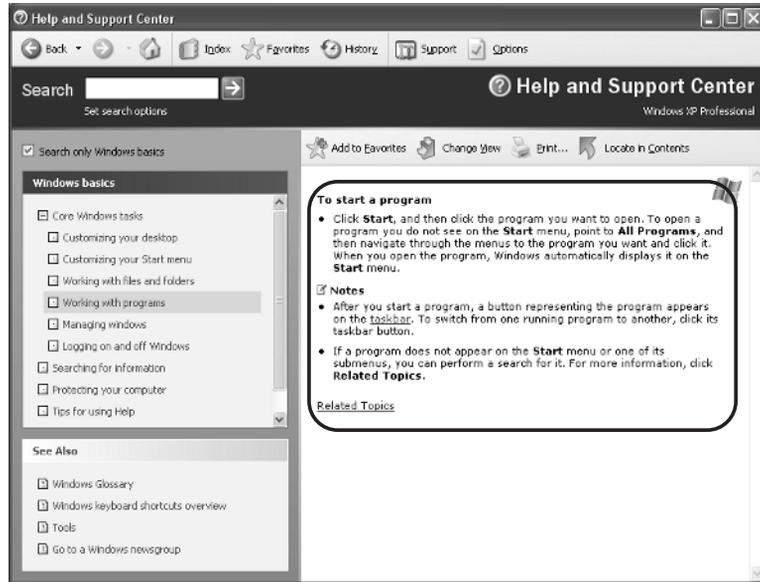
1. In the left column, click a topic to browse, such as Windows Basics, for example. This opens a two-pane window.
2. In the left pane, click the subject area you want. A list of help articles appears in the right pane. Click the name of the help article you want to read, such as Start a Program.

Topic

The Windows help system uses the term *topic* rather broadly. It can refer to a subject category that contains multiple help articles or to an individual article.



3. The article you clicked appears in the right-hand pane.



4. (Optional) If you want to return to the preceding screen, click the Back button  in the top toolbar. You can return to the opening screen at any time by clicking the Home button .

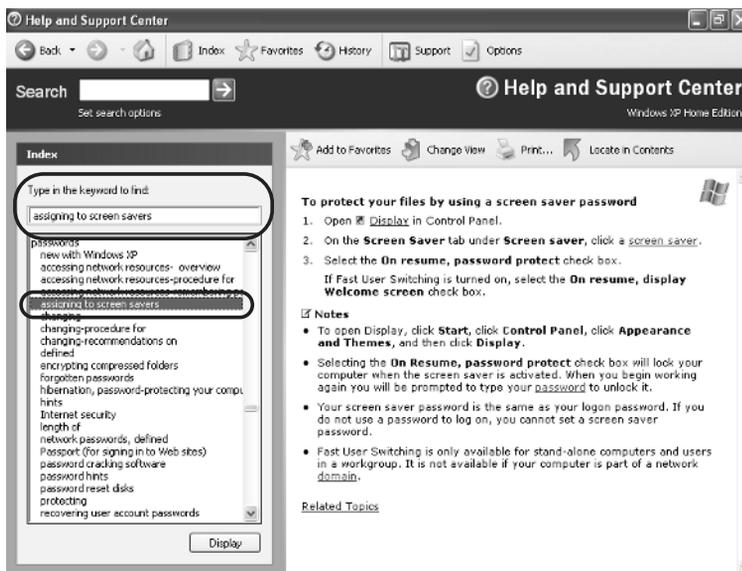
When you point to a title, the mouse pointer turns into a hand, just as when you're working with hyperlinks on a Web page. Chapter 17 talks more about Web pages.

See "Working with Help Topics" later in this chapter to learn about the features of the help articles themselves, including what the various colors of underlined text signify.

Using the Help Index

If you know the name of the feature you want to learn about, you can look it up in the index. Just as in a book, the index is an alphabetical listing of terms.

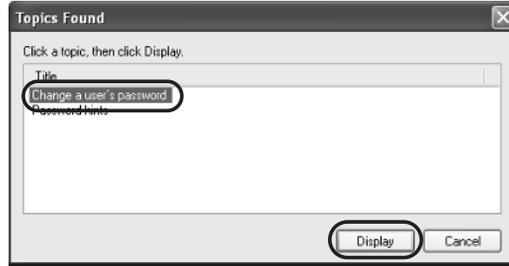
1. In the Help and Support Center window, click Index. The left pane displays an index list. (If there was anything in the right pane from a previous activity, it remains there for the time being.)
2. Begin typing the word or phrase you want in the text box above the list. The index list will automatically scroll to that word's portion of the list. When you see the word you want, double-click it; or if it's a topic heading (such as "passwords" in the following figure), double-click an article beneath it. That article appears in the right pane, as though you had browsed for it.



3. Some topics display a Topics Found **dialog box** when you double-click them, listing multiple topics that feature the word you chose. If that happens, click the article you want to read (in this case, "Change a user's password") and then click Display.

Dialog box

A mini-window that appears on-screen asking for more information about what you want to do. It gives you the opportunity to make choices about the way a particular command will execute, such as printing or saving your work. A dialog box can be distinguished from a regular window because it contains at least one command button, such as Display, OK, Cancel, Yes, or Close.



Searching for a Help Topic

If you aren't sure of the official name for what you want to know, try the Search feature. It does a full-text search for a particular word and brings up a list of every topic that contains that word.

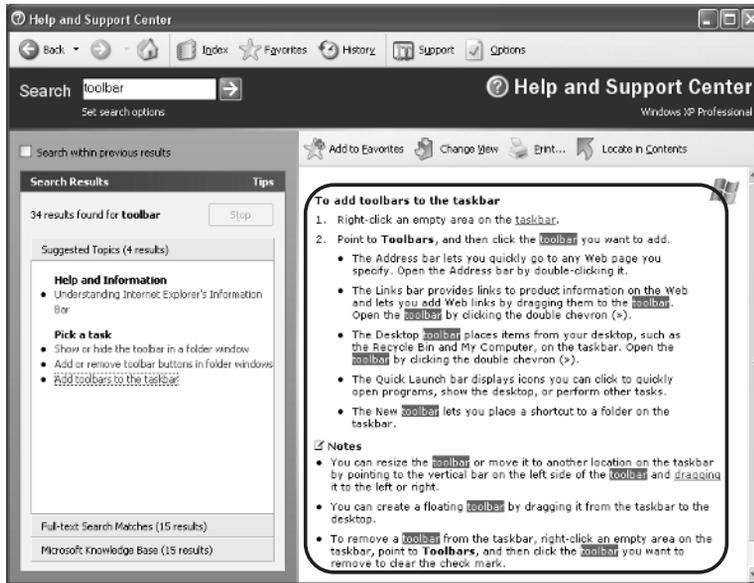
For example, suppose you have upgraded from Windows Me, and you miss that little toolbar that used to appear next to the Start button. (It's called the Quick Launch toolbar, by the way, but let's say you don't know that.) You could search for the word *toolbar*, in the hope that something about that missing item will turn up.

1. Type a word in the Search text box near the top of the Help and Support Center window and then click the right-arrow button .



2. In the Search Results pane that appears, click the topic that most closely matches what you want. The article for that topic appears in the right pane, with all instances of the searched-for word highlighted.

There is also a search feature in Windows itself that lets you search the complete text of all files on your entire computer. You'll learn about it in Chapter 3.



Working with Help Topics

Regardless of how you arrive at a particular help topic, you work with it the same way. The following sections explain what you can do with a help topic after locating it.

Working with Underlined Text

Depending on the article, you might see red-, green-, and/or blue-underlined text in it.

Green-underlined text indicates that a definition of the underlined word(s) is available. To see the definition in a pop-up box, click the word. In the figure that follows, the green-underlined word *drag* has been clicked, and, as you can see, its definition has popped up.

- If a program doesn't appear on the **Programs** menu or one of its submenus, you can perform a search for it, create a **shortcut**, and then

drag
To move an item on the screen by selecting the item and then pressing and holding down the mouse button while moving the mouse. For example, you can move a window to another location on the screen by dragging its title bar.

Blue-underlined “**Related Topics**” text indicates that there are topics related to the article that you’re currently viewing. Click Related Topics to see a list of topics you can jump to. In the following figure, the blue-underlined Related Topics has been clicked. Notice that the underlining goes away when the associated list appears.



Blue-underlined text with an arrow symbol indicates a link to a window or feature in Windows itself. These shortcuts appear in some help topics to give you a head start in performing a task. If you were to click Add or Remove Programs in the example below, the Add or Remove Programs dialog box would appear.

1. Open  [Add or Remove Programs](#) in Control Panel.

Changing the Help Window View

By default, the Help and Support Center window takes up the whole screen. If you would like a smaller window, click the Change View button . This hides the left pane, leaving only the right one (the one containing the help article).

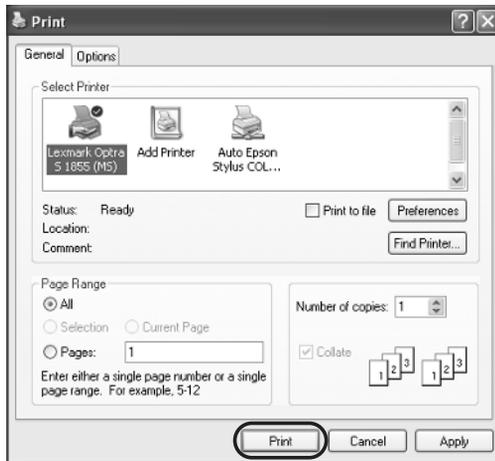
Printing a Help Topic

We’ll get into printing in more detail in Chapters 5 and 13, but here’s a quick preview—enough to get you started printing the information you find in the help system.

1. Display the help topic you want to print, then click the Print button .
2. The Print dialog box opens. Change any of the print settings if needed, then click Print.

Blue-underlined Related Topics text turns red when you move the mouse over it.

A blue-underlined link to a program feature turns red after you click the link to open that feature. It remains red even after you close the feature’s window.



To close the Print dialog box without printing, click Cancel. See Chapter 2 for more information about dialog boxes.

Browsing Support Options

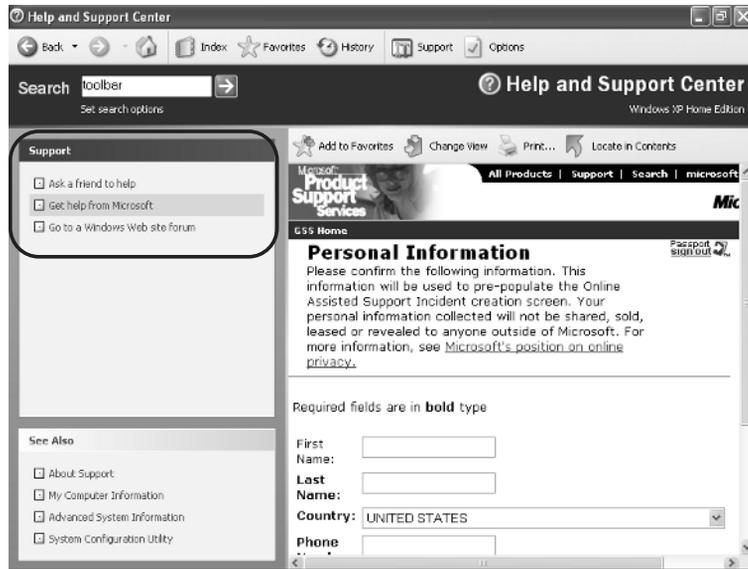
In Windows XP, Microsoft has changed the name of the help system to *Help and Support*, and there's a reason for that. You can click Support to display a selection of topics that detail how you can get more help if you still have a question or problem after reviewing the help system's offerings.

To check out the support features:

1. Click the Support button  .
2. Several categories of support options appear in the left pane. Click the one you want. For example, you might click Get Help from Microsoft. In the following figure, I have clicked that, and it has connected me to a Web page that's now asking for my contact information so that help can be provided.

NOTE

If you choose Ask a Friend to Help, you'll be guided through the Remote Assistance feature, which is covered in detail in Chapter 21.



3. Work through the prompts to ask a question, look up information, or whatever you need to do.

Closing the Help System

When you are finished using the Help and Support Center window, click the red Close button  to close it.

Using What's This?

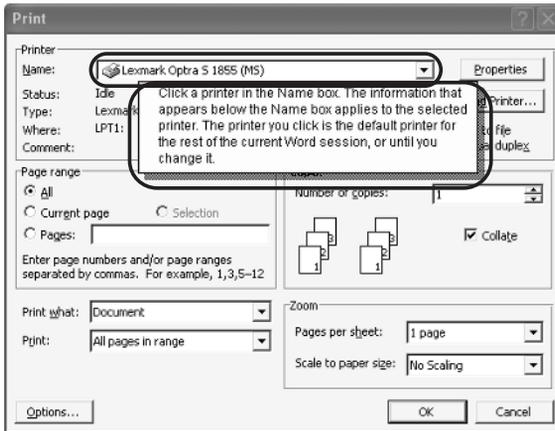
Besides the formal help system that you've just seen, you can also get informal, on-the-spot help in many dialog boxes. Whenever you see a question mark in the top-right corner of a window, you can do the following:

1. Click the question-mark button . The mouse pointer changes to an arrow with a question mark.



If you have changed your desktop appearance or scheme, the Close button may not be red. Chapter 11 explains desktop appearance options.

2. Click the part of the dialog box that you would like help with. If help is available for that object, it appears. For example, here the Name box was clicked, and then, as you can see, a help box popped up.



Shutting Down Windows

When you are finished using your PC, you shouldn't just turn off the power, because that could cause later problems in Windows. Instead, you should use the Shut Down command on the Start menu to ensure that Windows shuts down in an orderly way that closes all open files and saves your work in any open programs.

When shutting down, you have two options: Turn Off and Restart. If you are going to be away from the PC, you will probably want to turn it off. If the computer is acting strangely and you want to start fresh, you will want to restart.

Turning Off or Restarting the PC

To turn off or restart the PC:

1. Click the Start button. The Start menu opens.

2. Click Turn Off Computer.



3. A box appears, asking what you want to do. Click Turn Off or Restart, depending on which you want to do.

The third option, Stand By (or Hibernate), puts the PC in a low-power-usage mode but leaves it turned on. See the following section.



If you chose Turn Off, Windows shuts down; and, if your computer will allow it, Windows turns off the computer's power switch. If not, a message appears on-screen instructing you to turn off the power yourself. (Don't forget that the monitor has a separate power switch.) If you chose Restart, the PC resets itself and reloads Windows. (It takes about 1 minute.)

Using Standby or Hibernate

Some computers have power management features that enable you to put them in a low-power, "sleeping" state when you aren't using them, rather than

shut them down entirely. Some people prefer this to shutting down the computer—it helps them save electricity but they don't have to wait for Windows to reload when they return to the computer.

While the computer is in this state, any programs you were using remain open, along with any data files. When you want to start working again, you just press a button and everything springs awake again, just as you left it. The computer still uses a tiny bit of power to maintain its memory of the system's status, but the big energy-burning components shut down, such as the display and the hard disks.

Follow these steps to put the computer to sleep:

1. Click the Start button. The Start menu opens.
2. Click Turn Off Computer.
3. Click Stand By.

Then, when you are ready to wake the computer up, simply press its power button. (Don't hold it down; just press and release.) The computer springs back to life.

WARNING

In earlier versions of Windows, some computers occasionally had trouble waking up from standby. The computer would appear to be "dead" because it wouldn't come out of its sleep state. If you experience this, try holding down the computer's power button for 5 seconds to force it to restart. Then contact your PC manufacturer to see if a fix is available.

Hibernate has the same end result as standby, but works differently. Hibernate uses a small amount of hard-disk space to store the contents of the computer's memory before shutting down completely. Then, when it wakes up from hibernation, it reads that data from the hard disk and rewrites it back to memory, and suddenly you are exactly where you left off.

Because hibernate stores memory content to the hard disk, the computer doesn't use any power at all while it is hibernating. This is great for laptops because of the limited battery power, but it isn't very useful for desktop PCs because they are always plugged in. Unless you have a laptop, the hibernate option does not appear by default.

TIP

You can enable or disable hibernate and set automatic standby and hibernate thresholds using Power Options in Control Panel. You'll learn more about these power settings in Chapter 20.

