Part 1: Understanding Windows XP Basics

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Starting Up and Logging In

When Windows XP is installed, it requires that an account be set up for at least one user. If you are using Windows XP Home Edition, and you only set up one account without a password, when you turn on your computer, you are taken directly to the desktop. If you are using Windows XP Professional or Windows XP Home and have a password, when you turn on the computer, you are taken to the login screen where the user account can be selected. You can create an account for each person that will be using the computer, or you can create multiple accounts for yourself. Additionally, each of these profiles can be customized.

To use the login screen, do the following steps:

1. Turn on your computer, if it isn’t on already. The computer runs through its startup procedures. If your computer only has one user account and that account does not have a password, you may be taken directly to the Windows XP desktop. If this is not the case, continue with the following steps.

2. A welcome screen, as shown in Figure 1-1, appears. Your screen will have different usernames than in Figure 1-1. Additionally, your screen may have a different number of user account icons and names.

3. On this screen select your account by clicking the appropriate square graphics (icon) or username.

4. If you don’t have a password on your account, you are taken to the desktop. If the user profile you selected has a password associated with it, an entry box appears (see Figure 1-2). In this case, click the...
A user account is an account that can be customized for one or more users. Each user account can have a user profile that contains settings specific to that account.

You can set up a user account profile for each person using the computer. Task 209 shows you how to set up new profiles.

Once you are done using Windows XP, you should log out of your account.

Pressing Ctrl+Alt+Del on the welcome screen will present you with a dialog box for entering the username and password.
While some people choose to leave their computer running, there are times when you will want to turn your computer off. Even if you choose to leave your computer on, you may find that it makes sense to log off. Logging off is the process of closing the desktop and returning to the Windows login screen.

The following steps walk you through logging off and turning off your computer:

1. Click the Start button.
2. Determine if you will leave the computer on or turn the computer off. If you want to leave the computer on, select the Log Off button. This takes you to the Windows Welcome screen (see Figure 2-1).

3. If you’ve decided to turn the computer off, choose the Turn Off Computer button. The window in Figure 2-2 appears. When this dialog box is displayed, you cannot do anything more in Windows XP.

**Figure 2-1:** The Windows Welcome screen.
4. If you need to go back to Windows, you click the Cancel button.

5. If you want to turn off the computer, select the Turn Off button. This causes Windows XP to shut down safely. Some computers will even turn the power off. Others will shut down Windows XP and display a screen that says it is safe to turn off your computer. Once you see such a screen, you can safely press your computer’s power button.

6. If you want to simply turn your computer off and then back on, choose the Restart button. This causes the computer to go through the process of turning off, logging off, shutting down, and then immediately starting back up. You will generally not do this unless you have installed new software that asks you to restart your machine.

7. Select the Stand By button if you are using a notebook computer or if you are interested in saving power, but don’t want to completely turn off your computer.

8. If available, select the Hibernate button if you want to completely turn your computer off, yet have it ready to start up relatively fast. If you don’t see a Hibernate button, press the Shift key when the Turn Off Computer dialog is displayed. If the hibernate function is supported by your computer, pressing the Shift key changes the Stand By button text to “Hibernate.” You can then click this button to hibernate the computer.
Activating Windows

If you installed or updated Windows XP on your machine, you will need to activate it. Activation requires letting Microsoft know about your copy of Windows so it can be verified as a legal copy. If your machine came with Windows XP preinstalled, you most likely will not need to activate your copy. If you do need to activate your copy, a message is displayed daily in your notification bar, if not more often. You'll also have an Activation icon in your notification area.

1. Click on the Activation icon in the notification bar. Alternatively, you can click the Start button and then choose All Programs ➤ Accessories ➤ System Tools ➤ Activate Windows. Either action starts the installation process and presents the window in Figure 3-1.

![Figure 3-1: The activation window.](image)

2. Select the way you will activate your copy of Windows XP. The easiest method is over the Internet with an Internet connection, or you can call a Microsoft representative. Select the option you will use.

3. Press the Next button. This takes you to additional instructions based on the option you selected in Step 2.

4. Follow the instructions on the screen.

   If you chose to call a representative, an ID is generated and you are presented with information to use when calling Microsoft. Follow the information on your activation window (as shown in Figure 3-2). This will determine the number you should call as well.

5. If you choose to activate using the Internet, you are presented a screen asking if you would also like to register your copy of Windows XP in addition to activating it. If you do not register, your activation will process. If you choose to register, the registration screen appears (see Figure 3-3).
There is a limited number of times that you can activate your copy of Windows. You should only need to activate it once. If you need to reinstall Windows XP on your machine, you will need to reactivate the copy.

Activation is a process from Microsoft to ensure that copies of Windows XP are not stolen or shared. The basic licensing agreement limits the number of machines (usually to one) that a copy of Windows XP can be installed on.

If you choose to do an Internet activation, Windows XP attempts to find a connection. If a connection is not found, you are prompted to use a modem or other source to connect to the Internet. If you are not connected to the Internet, you will have to call a Microsoft representative.

Figure 3-2: The activation window for calling a representative.

6. Fill in the registration information or press the Skip button. Windows XP then attempts to connect to the Internet. If the connection fails, Windows XP provides you with questions to help connect. If the connection succeeds, the activation process occurs. Once activation is completed, a confirmation message appears, stating that you have successfully activated your copy of Windows.

Figure 3-3: The product registration window.

7. Close the window.
Enabling Fast Switching between Users

Task 209 shows how to set up multiple users on Windows XP. Each user can have his or her own account that contains individual settings, documents, and other files. For example, a family could have an account for the parents and a separate account for a child.

Windows XP can be set up to switch between these different accounts. Although Windows XP can be set up to force you to log out before switching to a different account, it can also be set up for fast switching, which allows you to switch between accounts without stopping and turning off all programs. This allows you to switch between different users’ accounts much quicker. The following steps show you how to confirm that fast switching is turned on:

1. Click the Start menu and then select Control Panel.
2. Double-click User Accounts to see the User Accounts window (see Figure 4-1).
3. Click on Change The Way Users Log On or Off. This changes the User Accounts window to the one in Figure 4-2.
4. To enable fast switching, check the box next to Use Fast User Switching. If you instead remove the check, fast user switching is turned off.
5. Click the Apply Options button to save any changes. You are returned to the primary User Accounts window. You can close this window. If you checked the box indicated, the fast switching option is set on, and you can now switch users without closing all the programs:
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**Task 4**

**a.** Click Start, then click the Log Off button. The Log Off dialog box appears (see Figure 4-3).

![Image of User Accounts window](image1)

**Figure 4-2:** The User Accounts window.

![Image of Log Off dialog box](image2)

**Figure 4-3:** The Log Off dialog box with fast switching turned on.

Note that if you have fast switching turned off, you are presented with the Log Off dialog box in Figure 4-4.

![Image of Log Off dialog box](image3)

**Figure 4-4:** The Log Off dialog box with fast switching turned off.

**b.** Click on the Switch User button to be shown the Welcome screen or Login dialog box.

**c.** Click on the icon or username for the user account you want to switch to.
Setting Your Computer’s Clock and Time Zone

Your computer has a clock that keeps the date and time. Additionally, this clock can keep track of daylight saving time and more. Some computers’ clocks run a little fast or a little slow. As such, after a while you may need to adjust the clock. If your computer is connected to the Internet, you can have it automatically update the time on a regular basis (see Task 6). By default, the clock is displayed on the right-hand corner of the taskbar, as shown in Figure 5-1.

1. To change the time, use the Date and Time Properties dialog box. You can access this dialog in one of two ways. The quick way is to double-click on the time in the taskbar. If the time is not displayed in the taskbar, you can display this dialog by selecting the Control Panel option on the Start menu (Select Start, then Control Panel). Once you’ve displayed the Control Panel, select Date and Time. The Date and Time dialog appears (see Figure 5-2).

2. To set the date, start by setting the year. You can do this by either clicking on the up and down arrows to increase and decrease the date, or by selecting the year and typing in a new one.

You can then select the month by using the drop-down list. The calendar of days changes according to the year and month you select. Leap years are also considered in the displays of days. You can pick the day by clicking on it.
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3. The time is displayed as both an analog clock and with numbers. You can change the time using the numbers. To change the time, select the part of the time you wish to change, either the hours, minutes, seconds, or whether it is P.M. or A.M. Select this by clicking on the numbers.

4. Once a portion of the time is selected, click the up and down arrows or type in a new number to change that portion of the time.

5. Switch from A.M. to P.M. or P.M. to A.M. by clicking on the current value and then clicking the up or down arrow.

6. Once you are done setting values, click the Apply button to apply the new date and time to the system.

7. If you want to adjust the time zone, select the Time Zone tab at the top of the dialog. A display similar to Figure 5-3 appears.

8. Select your time zone from the drop-down box. If the time zone you select includes daylight saving time, a check box is displayed as shown in Figure 5-3. Check the box to observe daylight saving time. Uncheck the box to ignore daylight saving time. If your time zone selection does not include daylight saving time, the check box is not displayed.

9. Select Apply to set the new time zone on your computer.

10. Select OK to close the dialog.

Figure 5-3: The Time Zone setting.

note
Only valid values will be accepted. For example, you can’t enter a number greater than 59 in the minutes or seconds field.

note
The computer’s clock is used to mark files with the date and time when they are created or saved. Because of this, you’ll want to keep the clock as accurate as possible.

note
The world display in Figure 5-3 will center the time zone you select on the map.
Setting the Clock Automatically

Task 5 showed you how to set your clock manually. You can also configure your computer to automatically adjust your computer’s clock to make sure it is always accurate.

1. Access the Date and Time Properties dialog by double-clicking on the time in the taskbar. If the time is not displayed in the taskbar, you can display this dialog by selecting the Control Panel option on the Start menu (select Start, then Control Panel). Once you’ve displayed the Control Panel, select Date and Time. The Date and Time dialog shown in Figure 6-1 appears.

![Figure 6-1: The Date and Time Properties dialog box.](image1)

2. Select the Internet Time tab. The dialog in Figure 6-2 appears.

![Figure 6-2: The Internet Time tab.](image2)
3. If the Automatically Synchronize With An Internet Time Server check box is not selected, the information on the screen will be protected (“grayed out” and cannot be modified). Make sure the check box is selected.

4. Click the Update Now button to update the current time immediately. The computer accesses the Internet site listed in the Server box. By default, this is time.windows.com. If you would prefer to get the time from a government site, or if the site is busy, you can change this to time.nist.gov.

5. Leave the Automatically Synchronize With An Internet Time Server check box checked if you want to have the time on your computer updated once a week. Otherwise, uncheck the box. The dialog tells you the next time it will update the time.

6. Windows XP provides a couple of Web sites for synchronizing your computer’s time. You can also type in a different server name in the Server box. If you are unsure of sites for getting the time, it is best to not change the value. If you do enter an invalid site and then press the Update Now button, the error message shown in Figure 6-3 appears. You can then use the drop-down box to select a correct site.

![Date and Time Properties dialog box](image)

Figure 6-3: www.Jones123.com is an invalid site for obtaining the time.

7. Select OK to exit the dialog.
Adjusting Your Computer’s Volume

Many computers ship with fancy keyboards with lots of extra buttons. Some computers also include volume controls on the computer’s keyboard that change the system’s volume. You can also change the volume directly within Windows XP. If your computer has stereo speakers, you can even change the volume on each speaker independently. You can get to the advanced volume control by selecting Start, then All Programs ➪ Accessories ➪ Entertainment ➪ Volume Control. To access more options for volume, including adding a quick-access button on your taskbar, use the following steps:

1. Select the Control Panel from the Start menu.
2. Double-click on Sounds, Speech, and Audio Devices. The Sounds, Speech, and Audio Devices window appears (see Figure 7-1).

   ![Figure 7-1: The Sounds, Speech, and Audio Devices window.](image)

3. Select Adjust the system volume by clicking on it. The Sounds and Audio Devices Properties dialog appears (see Figure 7-2).
4. Drag the slider in the Device Volume section to change the volume. Moving toward Low decreases the volume; moving toward High increases the volume. You can also click anywhere on the volume scale. The volume slider moves to where you click, and a tone sounds at the selected volume level.
5. If you want more control over the volume, you can select the Advanced button in the Device Volume area. This displays the Volume Control dialog box in Figure 7-3. Here you can adjust various volumes within your system.

**cross-reference**

To learn about more specific settings related to volume and speakers, see Task 218.

**caution**

If your computer has speakers with volume controls on them, be aware that this volume control is generally independent of the volume setting in Windows XP. The volume you set on the speaker will generally be the maximum volume that Windows XP is able to set.

**note**

If you'd like to turn the volume completely off, you should check the Mute box.
To learn how to assign sounds to different actions in Windows XP, see Task 45.

**tip**
Windows XP has a number of preset defaults for volume. You can select the appropriate one for your computer’s speaker configuration using the Advanced Audio Properties dialog, which is available from the Advanced button in the Speaker settings.

**note**
If your computer has a sound card, the Volume Control dialog displays the name of the card at the bottom. Figure 7-3 shows a system with a Creative Sound Blaster PCI card.

**note**
You can adjust the volume of your speakers independently by selecting the Speaker Volume button in the Speaker Settings area of the Sounds and Audio Devices Properties dialog.

6. When you are satisfied with the volume level, click OK to save and exit the dialog. If you want to remain on the Sounds and Audio Devices Properties dialog, click the Apply button to save your settings.

7. To make it easier and faster to change the volume, you can add a volume control to your notification area (the area on the right side of the taskbar). To do this, check the box next to the Place Volume icon in the taskbar. This results in a Speaker icon appearing.

8. Left-click the Speaker icon in the notification area. The slider control in Figure 7-4 appears. You can move the slider to immediately change the computer’s volume. You can also right-click the Speaker icon to quickly access the Sound and Audio Devices Properties dialog (Adjust Audio Properties) and the Volume Control dialog.
You can customize Windows in a number of ways. One feature that you can set is to turn the monitor off automatically if the computer is unused for a fixed amount of time. While a screen saver can be used, you will often find that at times it is better to have your computer screen simply turn off. There are a number of reasons to do this. The obvious reason is to conserve energy. You may also want the monitor to turn off simply to reduce the light coming from it when the computer is not in use.

1. Right-click on an open area of your desktop and click Properties from the menu. The Display Properties dialog box appears.
2. Select the Screen Saver tab. The dialog box in Figure 8-1 appears.

![Figure 8-1: The Display Properties dialog box.](image1)

3. Click the Power button in the Monitor power section. The Power Options Properties dialog appears (see Figure 8-2).

![Figure 8-2: The Power Options Properties dialog box.](image2)
4. Select the amount of time that you would like to wait until the monitor turns off. You select this from the drop-down list next to the Turn Off Monitor: Text. You are given a limited number of choices, ranging from one minute to never, as shown in Figure 8-3.

5. Once you’ve made your selection, click Apply to save your choice and remain on this dialog.

6. You may want to set up different scenarios for managing when your monitor will turn off. For example, if you are watching a streaming video on the Internet or if you are giving an automated presentation on your computer, you may want the monitor to remain on even though you are not pressing keys or using the mouse. At other times you may want the monitor to turn off after 20 minutes. You can set up multiple scenarios and save them with names. These scenarios are called schemes. A number of schemes for different power options already exist. Additionally, you can add new ones.

7. To save your settings as a new scheme, select the Save As... button in the Power schemes pane on the Power Options Properties dialog. A box pops up where you can enter a name for your scheme.

8. To change to a different scheme, select from the Power Schemes drop-down list.

9. When you are done selecting and saving schemes or with changing the time for the monitor to turn off, select OK to exit the Power Options Properties dialog.
Locking and Unlocking the Computer

If you are worried about others getting onto your computer, you may want to lock Windows XP to keep them out. Locking the computer requires that a password be entered before anyone can start using it again. There are two ways to set up a password and lock your computer. One is to use a screen saver with a password. This is covered in Task 10. The other is to force your computer to lock immediately.

Making the changes in this task also requires that you enter a password when you first turn on your computer. In fact, your Welcome screen will change to a dialog that requires a username and password to be entered. Note that if you or another user doesn’t have a password, you can leave that information blank.

1. Go to the User Accounts window. Do this by selecting Start, then Control Panel. From the Control Panel select User Accounts.
3. Choose the task Change the Way Users Log On or Off. The window in Figure 9-1 appears.

![Figure 9-1: The User Account window for changing logon and logoff options.](image)

4. If the box next to Use the Welcome Screen is checked, uncheck it. This will also protect and uncheck the Use Fast User Switching box (if it was selected). If the Use the Welcome Screen box was not checked, skip this step.

cross-reference
For most people, a screen saver password is a better option than fully locking the computer. See Task 10 for setting a password using a screen saver.

caution
A person with administrator-level access can use his or her own password to get back into the computer. Only non-administrator-level people will be locked off the computer. See Task 213 for changing a user’s account type.

caution
Making the changes in this task will impact how you get into and out of Windows XP. You can always change the settings back if you don’t like the differences.
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5. Click the Apply Options button. You will now find that when you log off of your computer, you are given a dialog box for logging in instead of the normal Welcome screen. If you are using Windows XP Home Edition with only one account, you will now have a login dialog when you start your computer. If you want the normal Welcome screen returned (or in XP if you want to skip the sign-on process), simply repeat Steps 1 through 4 and check the Use the Welcome screen box instead of unchecking it.

6. If you are at the User Accounts window, close it by clicking the Windows close button (the small \( \times \) in the top-right corner). Your computer is now set up to where you can immediately lock it.

7. Press the Ctrl, Alt, and Delete keys all at the same time. The Windows Security dialog appears. If you are shown the Windows Task Manager dialog instead, make sure you followed Steps 1 through 6.

If you don’t have a Lock Computer button, you can change your settings to present the Lock Computer button by following Steps 8 and 9.

8. Add or change a password by selecting the Change Password... button. The password for locking the computer can be the same password that you use to log in to Windows from the Welcome screen. If you already have a password, you can skip this step. If not, be aware that you will need to use this same password when you log in to Windows XP.

9. Click the Lock Computer... button to lock the computer. The Unlock Computer dialog appears (see Figure 9-2).

![Unlock Computer](image)

Figure 9-2: The Unlock Computer dialog.

Entering the correct password returns you to Windows.
Locking Your Computer with a Screen Saver

Almost everyone uses a screen saver on his or her computer. There are several reasons for using a screen saver. Originally screen savers were used to prevent images from burning into the monitor’s screen. With current hardware, this is really not an issue.

The other reason many people use a screen saver is to hide the information being displayed on their computer when they are away. If you are concerned with people getting onto your computer when you are away from it, you may also want to do more than just hide the information with a screen saver. You may also want to lock the computer. Task 9 shows you one way to lock your computer with a password. Another is to add a password to your screen saver.

1. Go to the Screen Saver tab on the Display Properties dialog.
   a. Right-click on the background of your desktop where there are no windows being displayed. This presents a pop-up menu.
   b. Select Properties. The Display Properties dialog appears. Select the Screen Saver tab. The dialog box in Figure 10-1 appears.

! Figure 10-1: The Screen Saver tab in the Display Properties dialog box.
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As an alternative to right-clicking on the desktop, you can also get to the Screen Saver tab on the Displays Properties dialog by going through the Control Panel.

a. Select Start, then Control Panel.

b. On the Control Panel, select Appearance and Themes. This presents you with the appearance and theme tasks.

c. Select Choose a Screen Saver. The Displays Properties dialog is displayed with the Screen Saver tab selected.

2. Select the box next to On Resume, Password Protect. This sets the screen saver to prompt for a password. If you want to turn off the password, unselect this box.

3. Click Apply to save any changes to your settings. Click the OK button to save any changes and to close the dialog. Select Cancel to leave without saving any additional changes.

When returning from the screen saver after it is displayed, you will need to enter your password, if you have one set. Figure 10-2 shows the dialog box for entering your password.

Figure 10-2: The screen saver password dialog box in Windows XP Professional.
Getting Help

When something goes wrong, when you run into a problem, or when you need to know how to do something, what do you do? First, of course, you should turn to this book. Another solution is to turn to Windows XP itself for help. Windows XP has a robust help system and support center that can solve nearly all of the issues that come up. To use the help and support system, you need to launch the Help and Support Center window.

1. From the Start menu, select Help and Support. The Help and Support Center window appears (see Figure 11-1). From this window you can select help in a number of different formats and for a number of different issues.

2. Select by clicking on any topic on this page that interests you or that may solve your problem.

3. You can search for help and support on a specific word or set of words by first entering the word in the Search entry box.

4. Press the Enter key or click the arrow button to start searching. The results are displayed in a results box, as shown in Figure 11-2.

The search results are displayed in different groupings. The Suggested Topics are considered the best results for your search criteria. The Full-Text Search Matches are search results that contained the specific words that you entered into the search box. In Windows XP Home Edition, the Full-Text Search Matches are only provided if no Suggested Topics were found. The third area is Microsoft Knowledge Base results, which contains help topics found on the Microsoft Knowledge Base Web site. Results are only provided in this section if you are connected to the Internet.
It is amazing what you can learn by jumping into the Windows XP help system. Taking a few minutes every now and then to simply look through some of the help topics can lead to lots of interesting discoveries of tips and tricks. It can be like turning to a random task in this book!

Help and troubleshooting are two different things. Help is information on a topic or process. Troubleshooting is an attempt to resolve an actual problem or issue.

See Tasks 249 through 261 for a number of tasks that focus on troubleshooting specific hardware and software issues you may run into.

When searching, enter specific search words rather than sentences.

5. Click on the title bar of each section to list the results. Click on the specific result to see detailed help. The detailed help is displayed on the right side of the window.

6. You can also search for a word by looking in the help index. From the Help and Support Center window (or nearly any other Help window), select the Index button from the toolbar at the top of the screen. The Index in Figure 11-3 appears.

7. Search the index or scroll through it. Double-clicking on a topic selects it. You can also single-click the Display button. The detailed help is displayed on the right side of the window.

Figure 11-2: The Search Results screen.

Figure 11-3: The help index.
Customizing Help Screens

One of the best features in Windows XP is the help and support features. As you learn to use Windows XP, you may find that you consult the help and support pages a number of times. If so, there are a number of settings that you can change to customize the icons and text. To set these options, use the following steps:

1. Select Help and Support from the Start menu. This displays the Help and Support window.

2. Click on the Options icon near the top-right side of the window. The Help and Support Center Options window appears (see Figure 12-1).

3. Click on Change Help and Support Center Options. This changes the display on the right side of the window to the options shown in Figure 12-2.

4. Check the Show Favorites on the navigation bar if you want the Favorites icon displayed on the toolbar within the Windows Help and Support system. Uncheck this if you want the Favorites icon removed.

5. Check the Show History on the navigation bar if you want the History icon displayed on the toolbar within the Windows Help and Support system. Uncheck this if you want the History icon removed.
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6. Select the size for the font you would like used in the Windows help system. Your options are Small, Medium, and Large.

7. Select the display option for the icons in the navigation bar. You can choose to show text labels for all icons in the toolbar, to show no labels in the toolbar, or to show only default text labels. Figures 12-3 to 12-5 show the toolbar with each of these options.

8. Close the Help and Support Center window. Your selections take place the moment you make them. When you have completed your selections, you can close the Help and Support Center window.

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**Figure 12-2:** The primary Help and Support Center options.

**Figure 12-3:** All icon text labels shown.

**Figure 12-4:** No icon text labels shown.

**Figure 12-5:** Default icon text labels shown.

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**Task 12**

You can turn on text labels for all of the icons if you are not familiar with all of the standard icons used in Windows XP. If you are familiar with all of the icons, you can turn off the text labels to make more room.

**Tip**

Clicking the History icon on the toolbar presents you with a list of help and support pages that you have recently visited.

**Note**

Cross-reference

To learn how to customize the results you get from searching within the Windows XP help and support system, see Task 13.
Setting Search Options for Help

Windows has a robust help and support system that you can use to find answers to questions and issues you have regarding Windows XP and many of the programs installed on it. In Task 11 you learn how to use Help in Windows XP. In this task you learn to customize a number of features for searching the Windows XP Help system. This includes options such as setting the maximum number of items displayed in search results, how search phrases are treated, and more. The following steps walk you through customizing your search options:

1. Select Help and Support from the Start menu. This displays the Help and Support window.

2. Click on the Options icon near the top-right side of the window. The Help and Support Center Options window appears, as shown in Figure 13-1.

3. Click on Set Search Options. The display on the right side of the window changes to the search options, as shown in Figure 13-2.

4. Change the number in the box if you want more (or fewer) results to be displayed when searching. While the default value is 15, you can change this to any number you like. More results can be returned if the number is set higher.

5. Check the box next to Turn On Search Highlight if you want to have the words you are searching for highlighted in the results returned. This is checked by default.

6. Check the box next to Suggested Topics if you want to have suggested topics returned when you search. Suggested topics may not have the exact search word or words you entered for your search. Rather, they are help documents that may be related.
7. Check the box next to Full-Text Search Matches if you want Windows XP to search for the specific words you entered into the search box. When this option is checked, you can also select two additional options:
   
a. Check the Search in Title Only option if you want to just check titles for the words you entered. If you check this option, the search will not look at the information within the help documents for your keywords. This almost always results in fewer finds.
   
b. Check the Match Similar Words option if you want help to find similar words to the ones you entered. This almost always results in additional results being found.
   
8. Check the Microsoft Knowledge Base if you are connected to the Internet. This option searches the Microsoft Knowledge Base Web site for information related to your search terms. When you have selected this option, you are given a number of additional options that you can set:
   
a. Select the name of a product. By default, All Microsoft Products is selected; however, you can change this option if you want to only check for information related to a specific product.
   
b. Select the Search For: option if you are searching for more than one word. Among your choices, you can set this option to look for the exact phrase you entered or you can set it to look for any or all of the words you entered.
   
c. Check the box next to Search in Title Only if you want to just search the titles on the Microsoft Knowledge Base Web site. You will generally get more results if you don’t check this box.
Creating a Help and Support Favorites List

If you find that there is a help page you want to remember, or if there is a help page that you go to often, you should add it to your list of Favorites. You can also add search results and other pages to your list of Favorites. You can then keep this list of Favorites just a click away. A Favorites icon can be included on the Help and Support Center toolbar (see Task 13). When you select the Favorites icon, you are presented with the list of Favorites similar to what is presented in Figure 14-1.

Figure 14-1: Favorites in the Help and Support Center.

To add items to Favorites, use the following steps:

1. Locate a topic within the Help and Support Center. This can be any page within the help system. Task 11 shows how to use Help.

   On the help pages displayed, an Add to Favorites icon will be included. Figure 14-2 shows the result of searching for “Pinball” and then selecting the result that was listed. You can also see that there is an Add to Favorites icon right above the information on playing with Windows games.

2. Click the Add to Favorites icon. The item is added to your Help and Support Favorites list and a message appears, confirming that the item was added (see Figure 14-3).

3. Click OK on the message. Your new favorite item has been added.
Remove items out of your Favorites list if you don’t need to remember or go to them any more. This keeps your list from getting so big that it isn’t very useful.

You can rename items in your Help and Support Favorites list. Click the item to select it in the list. Then click the Rename button at the bottom of the list. This places the cursor in the name and allows you to make changes.

cross-reference
See Task 146 to learn how to save your favorite Web pages in Microsoft Internet Explorer.

4. Click on the Favorites icon at the top of the page, and note that the new item has been added to the Favorites list. Figure 14-4 shows the Favorites list from Figure 14-1 after following these steps and adding the search results from “Pinball.”
Using the Knowledge Base

Windows XP Help and Support includes access to the Microsoft Knowledge Base. If you are connected to the Internet, then when you use the Help and Support system, Windows XP not only looks on your machine for help, but it also queries the Microsoft Knowledge Base Web site. This site includes additional information, tips, tricks, tutorials, and more. Additionally, it includes information on specific Microsoft products. The information in over 250,000 articles is made available when you do searches and other help requests.

1. Select Help and Support from the Start menu. This displays the Help and Support window.

2. Enter a word or group of words into the Search Box and press Enter or click the button to start searching. The search results page appears. Figure 15-1 shows the search result page after the term Games is entered.

3. Click the Microsoft Knowledge Base heading to show the search results that were found in the Knowledge Base. If you are not connected to the Internet, a warning similar to the one displayed in Figure 15-2 appears.
You can set options to force the Knowledge Base to only look for help on a specific product. By default, it looks for articles on all Microsoft products. To change this to an individual product, you can change a search option. Task 13 covers changing search options.

If you are connected, the top articles found in the Knowledge Base appear. The results will vary depending on what search terms you use.

4. Click on the title of the article you want to read. This displays the article on the right side of the Help and Support Center window, as shown in Figure 15-3.

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**Figure 15-2:** Error trying to access Microsoft Knowledge Base when not connected to the Internet.

**Figure 15-3:** A displayed Knowledge Base article.
Getting Basic Information about Your System

Do you know the basic information about your system? For example, do you know the speed of your processor? How much memory does your computer have? What type of processor is being used? You can find all of this information in fewer than 10 steps.

1. Select My Computer from the Start menu. The My Computer window appears (see Figure 16-1). Some of what is displayed in the main portion of your window will most likely be different from what is in Figure 16-1. Within this window, you can see your computer’s hard drive(s) and other storage devices. You’ll also be able to see some — but not all — connected devices that are on your machine. In Figure 16-1, you can see that my computer has a 3 1/2-inch floppy drive, a regular CD drive, a separate CD-RW drive, and an Intel PC camera all hooked to it.

2. Select the View System Information system task from the left side of the My Computer dialog window. This displays the General tab in the System Properties dialog box similar to Figure 16-2. From this dialog, you can see a number of key pieces of information about your computer:

- **The version of Windows you are running.** The computer from Figure 16-2 is running Microsoft Windows XP Professional Version 2002.
- **The name and company that registered the copy of Windows.** The computer from Figure 16-2 was registered to Brad Jones with a company name of “Windows XP in 10 Steps or Less.” As you can see, there are a limited number of characters for the company name.
- **The registration number.** This is the unique number for your copy of Windows. This number was determined based on the registration key entered when Windows was installed.
Understanding Windows XP Basics

- **The processor type and speed.** The computer in Figure 16-2 has an Intel Pentium II processor that runs at 400 MHz. Your computer may have a different processor and most likely a faster speed.

- **The amount of RAM.** The computer in Figure 16-2 has 512MB of RAM, which is quite a bit for a home computer. RAM is the amount of memory your computer has available. Windows XP Home or Professional requires 128MB of RAM or higher.

3. Select the Hardware tab in the System Properties dialog box for more advanced and specific information on your computer.

4. In the middle of this dialog click the Device Manager button to display the Device Manager, shown in Figure 16-3.

5. You can right-click on items in this list and select Properties from the pop-up menu to get more detailed information. Be cautious, however. If you make changes to any values, you can cause Windows XP to no longer be able to recognize a device on your computer.

- **cross-reference**

  To see what printers you have installed on your computer, follow the first few steps in Task 219.

- **note**

  You can expand the information in the Device Manager by clicking the plus signs. If there is a dash next to the item, the item is already expanded. If there is neither a plus sign nor a dash, you cannot expand that item any farther.

- **caution**

  Changes made in the properties dialogs in the Device Manager impact how Windows XP sees your computer’s hardware. A wrong change can cause Windows XP to no longer recognize a piece of hardware.

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**Figure 16-2:** The System Properties dialog box.

**Figure 16-3:** The Device Manager.
Automatically Keeping Windows Up-to-Date

Windows XP is not perfect. As people continue to use it in new and unique ways, they find problems and issues. Microsoft works hard to address these issues in a timely manner. Many of these problems can be resolved by providing an update to Windows XP. If you have a connection to the Internet, you can apply any updates automatically or manually. In this task you learn the steps to configure Windows XP to automatically retrieve and install these updates. You also learn how to set checkpoints so you can be alerted before retrieving, downloading, or installing any updates.

To set up Windows XP to allow for automatic updates, use the following steps:

1. Select the Control Panel by clicking on it on the Start menu.
2. Select Performance and Maintenance by clicking on it in the Control Panel. The Performance and Maintenance window appears (see Figure 17-1).

![Figure 17-1: The Performance and Maintenance dialog window.](image)

3. Click the System icon near the bottom of the window. The System Properties dialog appears.
4. Select the Automatic Updates tab. The dialog in Figure 17-2 appears.
5. Select the option you’d like implemented for notifying and applying updates from the Notification Settings pane:

- Select the first option to automatically download any updates and wait. Once they are downloaded, an icon is placed in your notification area. You can then decide when to install the updates by clicking on the icon when you are ready.

- Select the second option if you want to be automatically notified when updates are available, as well as when they have been downloaded to update. This option allows you to have the most control, while still allowing you to be automatically informed.

- Select the third option if you don’t want to be notified or have automatic updates occur.

6. Click the Apply button to update your settings. You can close the window.

When an update is available, then if you have selected to be notified, an icon will be placed in the notification area. To proceed with the installations, you click on the icon in the notification Window and follow the instructions. If you selected automatic downloads and automatic updates, you won’t need to do anything.
Manually Updating Windows XP

As stated in Task 17, Windows XP is not perfect. As people continue to use it in new and unique ways, problems and issues are found. Many of these problems can be resolved by providing an update to Windows XP. If you have a connection to the Internet, you can list, select, and apply any updates that you would like. The process is outlined in the following steps:

1. Click the Start menu, then select Control Panel.

2. Click on the Windows Update link in the See Also box on the left side of the Control Panel window. This launches the Web page displayed in Figure 18-1.

Figure 18-1: The Microsoft Windows Update page.

3. Click the Scan for Updates link on this page. The computer then uses the Internet to find updates. A status of this search is displayed on the right side of the window. When the scan is complete, you are presented with an updated window similar to Figure 18-2 that indicates the search is completed. This gives you a summary of any updates found and allows you to review and add others.

4. Click on Review and Install Updates from either the left side of the window or the right. This lists the critical updates that you should install. You can remove any updates by scrolling through the list and clicking the Remove button.

5. Add any additional updates. Critical Updates and Services Packs list the items that are considered critical. You can also add additional updates that are not considered critical. In Figure 18-2, you see two other categories: Windows XP Updates and Driver Updates. Click on these links to see the list of items. You can then click the Add button to add them to the list of updates to install. Once you have selected all the items you want to update, you can continue.
6. Click the Review and Install Updates link on the left side of the page. This presents you with information similar to what is in Figure 18-3, with the items you had selected listed.

Figure 18-2: The Microsoft Windows Update page with found updates.

Figure 18-3: Total Selected Updates window.

7. Click the Install Now button. Depending on what is being updated, you may be prompted to accept licensing agreements, to reboot your computer, or to enter additional information. What occurs depends on what updates are being installed. When everything is completed, a page appears, saying that installation is complete. You can close this window or you can choose to view the installation history.
Installing New Software

Invariably you will want to install new software onto your computer. While many programs come with installation routines built in, you should consider following the steps when installing a new application. Before starting the installation process, you should close any unnecessary programs and save any files. Many software programs have you restart your computer as a part of the installation process. This restart can cause any unsaved changes to open files and documents to be lost. As such, it is best to save and close everything before starting a new program installation.

1. Close any unnecessary programs and save any important files.

2. Select Control Panel on the Start menu.

3. Click on Add or Remove Programs. A window appears that lists programs that have been installed on your computer. Figure 19-1 shows a computer that has only had Microsoft Office installed. This window tells you the amount of space used by each program, as well as how often you use the program. Only programs that are designed to register with Windows are displayed in this list.

4. In the Control Panel, click the Add New Programs icon on the left side of the window. This changes the options in the window to allow you to install new programs from a CD or diskette, as shown in Figure 19-2.

5. If you are installing from a CD or diskette, click the CD or Floppy button or press Alt+F. A wizard appears that will walk you through starting the installation of new software. Figure 19-3 shows the initial screen of the wizard.
Programs are installed onto your hard drive. If you don’t have enough free space on your hard drive, you may not be able to install a program. See Task 239 to learn how to clean up unused files.

**Tip**
When possible, it is best to use the procedures in this task when installing software.

Some older programs may have trouble running in Windows XP. For help, see Task 250.

6. Follow the steps in the Install Program from Floppy Disk or CD-ROM Wizard, starting with the first step of inserting the CD or floppy disk into your computer. The wizard launches any installation programs associated with the program you are installing if they haven’t already started. During the installation you may be asked to restart your computer. If prompted, be aware that you may not be able to correctly run the program you are installing until you do restart your computer.

When the installation is complete, you should see the message shown in Figure 19-4.

7. Press OK. You are done installing and can close the Add or Remove Programs window.
Removing Application Software

When you find that you are no longer interested in using a program, you may want to remove it from your system. Additionally, there are times when you want to clear older programs off your computer’s hard drive to make more room for other stuff. One thing to keep in mind is that you should never go to the hard drive and simply delete the program files. Instead, you should go through the following steps.

Before starting the process to uninstall software, you should close any unnecessary programs and save any files. Many software programs have you restart your computer as a part of uninstalling. This restart can cause any unsaved changes to open files and documents to be lost. As such, it is best to save and close everything before starting a new program installation.

1. Close any unnecessary programs and save any important files.
2. Check the Start menu to see if the program contains an uninstall routine. If an uninstall program has been provided that is compatible with Windows, it should be listed on the Start menu.
3. Select Start menu, click All Programs, and then follow the menus to the program you want to uninstall. For example, you can see in Figure 20-1 that Microsoft Age of Empires II has an uninstall program provided on the menu. If an uninstall program is provided, click on it and follow its instructions. If an uninstall program isn’t provided, follow the remaining steps in this task.

![Figure 20-1: Checking the programs menu for an uninstall program.](image-url)
4. Select the Control Panel on the Start menu.

5. In the Control Panel, click on Add or Remove Programs.

The Change or Remove Programs information is displayed. This is a list of programs that have been installed on your computer and registered with Windows XP. This window tells you the amount of space used by each program, as well as how often you use the program. Only programs that are designed to register with Windows will be displayed in this list. Figure 20-2 shows the Change or Remove Programs window with two installed programs.

6. Click on the name of the software product you want to uninstall. This displays additional information about that program. For example, in Figure 20-2, you can see the last day that Age of Empires II was used. Additionally, you see the amount of disk space it uses and how often it is used. To see the detailed information on other products, click on their name.

7. Click the Change/Remove button beside the software product you want to uninstall. This launches the uninstall program specific to the software you are removing. Follow the instructions on the screen to remove the software. When you have completed the instructions, you should be returned to the Change or Remove Programs window. The program you uninstalled should no longer be listed.

8. If your program was not listed in the Change or Remove Programs window, check with the help files or documentation provided with the software for instructions specific to that software.