

## Tech Tips for the Basic Computer User

Last week, I wrote an entry on [my blog](#) that began like this:

“One of these days, I’m going to write a book called, ‘The Basics.’ It’s going to be a compendium of the essential tech bits that you just assume everyone knows—but you’re wrong.

“(I’ll never forget watching a book editor at a publishing house painstakingly drag across a word in a word processor to select it. After 10 minutes of this, I couldn’t stand it. ‘Why don’t you just double-click the word?’ She had no clue you could do that!)”

Many readers chimed in with other “basics” that they assumed every computer user knew—but soon discovered that what’s common knowledge isn’t the same as universal knowledge.

I’m sure the basics could fill a book, but here are a few to get you started. All of these are things that certain friends, family or coworkers, over the years, did *\*not\** know. Clip, save and pass along to...well, you know who they are.

\* You can double-click a word to highlight it in any document, e-mail or Web page.

\* When you get an e-mail message from eBay or your bank, claiming that you have an account problem or a question from a buyer, it’s probably a “phishing scam” intended to trick you into typing your password. Don’t click the link in the message. If in doubt, go into your browser and type “www.ebay.com” (or whatever) manually.

\* Nobody, but nobody, is going to give you half of \$80 million to help them liberate the funds of a deceased millionaire...from Nigeria or anywhere else.

\* You can hide all windows, revealing only what’s on the computer desktop, with one keystroke: hit the Windows key and “D” simultaneously in Windows, or press F11 on Macs (on recent Mac laptops, Command+F3; Command is the key with the cloverleaf logo). That’s great when you want examine or delete something you’ve just downloaded to the desktop, for example. Press the keystroke again to return to what you were doing.

\* You can enlarge the text on any Web page. In Windows, press Ctrl and the plus or minus keys (for bigger or smaller fonts); on the Mac, it’s the Command key and plus or minus.

\* You can also enlarge the entire Web page or document by pressing the

Control key as you turn the wheel on top of your mouse. On the Mac, this enlarges the entire screen image.

\* The number of megapixels does not determine a camera’s picture quality; that’s a marketing myth. The sensor size is far more important. (Use Google to find it. For example, search for “sensor size Nikon D90.”)

\* On most cellphones, press the Send key to open up a list of recent calls. Instead of manually dialing, you can return a call by highlighting one of these calls and pressing Send again.

\* When someone sends you some shocking e-mail and suggests that you pass it on, don’t. At least not until you’ve first confirmed its truth at snopes.com, the Internet’s authority on e-mailed myths. This includes get-rich schemes, Microsoft/AOL cash giveaways, and—especially lately—nutty scare-tactic messages about our Presidential candidates.

\* You can tap the Space bar to scroll down on a Web page one screenful. Add the Shift key to scroll back up.

\* When you’re filling in the boxes on a Web page (like City, State, Zip), you can press the Tab key to jump from box to box, rather than clicking. Add the Shift key to jump through the boxes backwards.

\* You can adjust the size and position of any window on your computer. Drag the top strip to move it; drag the lower-right corner (Mac) or any edge (Windows) to resize it.

\* Forcing the camera’s flash to go off prevents silhouetted, too-dark faces when you’re outdoors.

\* When you’re searching for something on the Web using, say, Google, put quotes around phrases that must be searched together. For example, if you put quotes around “electric curtains,” Google won’t waste your time finding one set of Web pages containing the word “electric” and another set containing the word “curtains.”

\* You can use Google to do math for you. Just type the equation, like  $23*7+15/3=$ , and hit Enter.

\* Oh, yeah: on the computer, \* means “times” and / means “divided by.”

\* If you can’t find some obvious command, like Delete in a photo program, try clicking using the right-side mouse button. (On the Mac, you can Control-click instead.)

\* Google is also a units-of-measurement and currency converter. Type “teaspoons in 1.3 gallons,” for example, or “euros in 17 dollars.” Click Search to see the answer.

\* You can open the Start menu by tapping the key with the Windows logo on it.

\* You can switch from one open program to the next by pressing Alt+Tab (Windows) or Command-Tab (Mac).

\* You generally can’t send someone more than a couple of full-size digital photos as an e-mail attachment; those files are too big, and they’ll bounce back to you. (Instead, use iPhoto or Picasa—photo-organizing programs that can automatically scale down photos in the process of e-mailing them.)

\* Whatever technology you buy today will be obsolete soon, but you can avoid heartache by learning the cycles. New iPods come out every September. New digital cameras come out in February and October.

\* Just putting something into the Trash or the Recycle Bin doesn’t actually delete it. You then have to \*empty\* the Trash or Recycle Bin. (Once a year, I hear about somebody whose hard drive is full, despite having practically no files. It’s because over the years, they’ve put 79 gigabytes’ worth of stuff in the Recycle Bin and never emptied it.)

\* You don’t have to type “http://www” into your Web browser. Just type the remainder: “nytimes.com” or “dilbert.com,” for example. (In the Safari browser, you can even leave off the “.com” part.)

\* On the iPhone, hit the Space bar twice at the end of a sentence. You get a period, a space, and a capitalized letter at the beginning of the next word.

\* Come up with an automated backup system for your computer. There’s no misery quite like the sick feeling of having lost chunks of your life because you didn’t have a safety copy.

What are your favorite basics-that-you-thought-everyone-knew? Let us know in the comments for this column at [nytimes.com/pogue](http://nytimes.com/pogue)!

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#### 1149 comments so far...

- 
- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. October 2nd, 2008 12:38 pm | The windows default for the recycle Bin is 10% of the local drive. With modern HD reaching 1TB do you really need 100GB of recycle Bin.. It is easy to modify using Recycle Bin’s properties<br>— Posted by Reggie Clark  |
| 2. October 2nd, 2008 12:41 pm | 3 shortcuts I use hourly!<br>Ctrl X (cut)<br>Ctrl c (copy)<br>Ctrl v (paste)<br>— Posted by susan   |
| 3. October 2nd, 2008 12:43 pm | Wow — I didn’t know about ANY of these keyboard shortcuts, and I’ve been using both Mac’s and PC’s for years!<br>Please write that book!<br>— Posted by Jason   |
| 4. October 2nd, 2008 12:44 pm | Ok, I knew “some” of them....<br>— Posted by Jason  |
| 5. October 2nd, 2008 12:46 pm | Really basic Mac tips.<br>In Apple Mail, you can hover the cursor over a url link and the actual url will be revealed, so you can see that “ebay security” is really “ebay.zxy8.com.”<br><br>In Apple Safari, you can customize the bar at the top, so add the + - buttons and you can enlarge the text - and in webkit, the pictures too - very easily. If you pull a tab straight down, it makes a new window. If you pull a tab sideways, the tab changes places so you can organize what you’re doing.<br><br>You can drag a photo or document on to an icon in Apple’s dock and the program will open. If you drag it on to the Mail icon, a new mail message opens with the thing attached. |

(And one less basic tip, if you open Safari’s Activity window, you can option-click on an item and it will download.)

– Posted by jonathan

- 
6. October 2nd, 2008 12:55 pm  
You can actually use the right mouse button with a Mac! Most switchers I know keep complaining they can’t click with the right mouse button anymore... but you can easily change this ‘preference’ in the ‘preference pane’ (Apple->System preferences).  
– Posted by Lieven
- 
7. October 2nd, 2008 1:11 pm  
A little less known one I enjoy frequently and teach even more frequently is ctrl+enter for entering web addresses.  
Typing google in the address bar and then pressing ctrl+enter puts the www. in front of it and the .com behind it and proceeds to go to the address.  
Shift+enter does .net, and ctrl+shift+enter does .org  
– Posted by Joe W
- 
8. October 2nd, 2008 1:16 pm  
Here’s some more bits of “common knowledge”.  
Files can be moved from one folder to another by dragging the file icon over the icon of the destination folder.  
There are roughly 1000MB’s in 1GB. Photos are usually under 7MB. Mp3’s are usually under 4MB. And Word documents are nearly always under 1MB. Unless you hoard photos and mp3’s by the tens of thousands, the smallest hard drive available for that new computer will be more than enough space. Save your money.  
If you buy a new computer with Vista, upgrade to 2GB of RAM. You can afford the upgrade because you’ve saved money by getting the small hard drive.  
Microsoft Office costs \$150. Most don’t even use half of Office’s extra features. Open Office, Google Docs, ZoHo Apps, and WordPad are free. You’re not saving that much with the small hard drive.  
Google does not exist so that you can search for “www.nytimes.com”. That’s what your browser’s address bar is for. But Google does appreciate the extra ad revenue you’re giving them.  
– Posted by Andy B
- 
9. October 2nd, 2008 1:18 pm  
undo, cut, copy and paste often work, even when you think they might not. You can recover files, deleted text, closed tabs, who knows what. For windows, they are control-z, control-x, control-c, control-v – all in a row. On a mac, it’s command, instead of control.  
– Posted by Alex
- 
10. October 2nd, 2008 1:19 pm  
Thanks, fantastic tips. keep them coming, specially the keyboard tricks.  
– Posted by BG
- 
11. October 2nd, 2008 1:25 pm  
Hey there - hitting the Space bar twice does the same thing on a BlackBerry as it does on the iPhone. Don’t quote me on this - but I think the same is true for Palm devices as well.  
Thanks!  
– Posted by Ryan Basham
- 
12. October 2nd, 2008 1:25 pm  
“\* On the iPhone, hit the Space bar twice at the end of a sentence. You get a period, a space, and a capitalized letter at the beginning of the next word.”  
This works on Blackberry too.  
– Posted by Brad
- 
13. October 2nd, 2008 1:26 pm  
Ctrl + Left or Right while editing text. Jumps to the beginning of the previous (Left key) word or to the beginning of the next (right key) word. Reduces the number of Left/Right button presses drastically.  
– Posted by Joel K
- 
14. October 2nd,  
You can save time entering new web addresses in Internet Explorer by pressing Ctrl-Enter. For example, typing nytimes and pressing

2008  
1:28 pm

Ctrl-Enter would automatically add a [www.](http://www.nytimes.com) prefix and a [.com](http://www.nytimes.com) suffix and will load the [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) page. Unfortunately, this only works with [.com](http://www.nytimes.com) domains.

– Posted by Ken

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15. October  
2nd,  
2008  
1:29 pm

Shortcut for saving:  
Ctrl+s  
so important if you’re writing any document. Works in gmail as well for drafts.

– Posted by Mike

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16. October  
2nd,  
2008  
1:36 pm

one of the best keyboard shortcuts:  
alt+d = takes you to the address bar of most modern web browsers and Windows (file) explorer (some people think of it as My Computer window). This way you can easily type in the next address or drive letter you want to jump to instead of using the mouse to highlight it.

– Posted by mark s

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17. October  
2nd,  
2008  
1:37 pm

When typing a web address into MS Internet Explorer’s address bar, you can type, for example, “nytimes” (no quotes) and then press Ctrl+Enter on the keyboard and the address will complete itself into “www.nytimes.com”

– Posted by TAG

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18. October  
2nd,  
2008  
1:38 pm

Double-clicking on a window’s title bar will:  
1) Toggle between maximizing and restoring the window in Windows;  
2) Minimize the window to the Dock in OS X.

– Posted by David (not Pogue)

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19. October  
2nd,  
2008  
1:40 pm

How about ...  
1. Hard drives fail, applications crash. Be sure to constantly save your work, and back it up regularly to an external hard disk. If you’re paranoid, back it up to two hard disks, and leave one hard disk with a friend (so if your house burns down, you still have a backup ... you might not have a computer, but you’ll have a backup!)  
2. In Firefox, you can do a quick-search of a webpage by hitting the “/” key, followed by whatever you’re searching for.  
3. Most web browsers are configured to use a search engine. You can type in your search text (“david pogue blog”, etc.) into the address bar, rather than going to Google or other search engines. Some browsers will take you directly to the first match, some will take you to a list of results.  
4. When typing out an email address, it doesn’t matter if you’re typing CAPS or lowercase.

– Posted by Akshay

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20. October  
2nd,  
2008  
1:42 pm

Another: right click on something to get a little menu of commands that apply to it (called a context menu). If you have a mac and only one button, use control click.

I thought everyone knew this but this summer I found a long time windows user who asked me “wait, how did you do that?” and had never known!

– Posted by DV Henkel-Wallace

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21. October  
2nd,  
2008  
1:43 pm

On Windows, double-clicking the blue top of a window (the title bar) will maximize the window, or return it to its former size if it’s already maximized (much easier than mousing to the “maximize” button at the upper right).

– Posted by Mike Duffy

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22. October  
2nd,  
2008  
1:44 pm

This is BRILL! I’ve been looking for the keyboard shortcuts book for years ... please write it, David. And until then - keep posting blogs about them!!!

– Posted by Catherine

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23. October  
2nd,

Edit - Paste Special in Word is very useful when trying to copy something from a web page into a Word Document - choosing

- 
- 2008  
1:45 pm
- “unformatted text” means it removes all the formatting, and just pastes the basic text from the page...
- Posted by Peter C
- 
24. October 2nd, 2008  
1:46 pm
- triple-clicking a word will highlight the entire paragraph. On the Times site, however, this will also open a window with a definition of the word you clicked.
- Posted by griff
- 
25. October 2nd, 2008  
1:47 pm
- What a great collection of tips. I just shared them with my family and three e-mail groups of people at work. Never knew about using the space bar to scroll down an entire Web page until today.
- Posted by Jon Belmont
- 
26. October 2nd, 2008  
1:49 pm
- \* You can double-click a word to highlight it in any document, e-mail or Web page.
- Except when reading articles on nytimes.com, where it automatically pops up a webpage that shows a dictionary definition of the word you just clicked on. Kind of annoying.
- Posted by Brian
- 
27. October 2nd, 2008  
1:49 pm
- navigating around a huge spreadsheet, an easy way to get to the last row with data in it is to hold down “end” and press the down arrow. You can easily get back to cell A1 with control+home from wherever you are in the spreadsheet.
- Posted by Emily
- 
28. October 2nd, 2008  
1:49 pm
- Press F11 in windows to maximize (or minimize) your web browser.
- Posted by BD
- 
29. October 2nd, 2008  
1:51 pm
- “\* You don’t have to type “http://www” into your Web browser. Just type the remainder: “nytimes.com” or “dilbert.com,” for example. (In the Safari browser, you can even leave off the “.com” part.)”
- In the IE, just type “nytimes” and hit CTRL Enter and “.com” will also be added.
- Posted by anaperes
- 
30. October 2nd, 2008  
1:51 pm
- when using a drop-down menu e.g. “file”, press (not click) “file” and slide down to the item you want and let go
- Posted by John Stickney
- 
31. October 2nd, 2008  
1:53 pm
- David Pogue for President! ( Or maybe the new Treasury Secretary)! Thanks
- Posted by Clare Bell-Fuller
- 
32. October 2nd, 2008  
1:54 pm
- Great post. My comments:
- “\* You can double-click a word to highlight it in any document, e-mail or Web page.”
- Try triple-clicking or quad-clicking too. They will select the line, and the sentence, respectively.
- “\* You can enlarge the text on any Web page. In Windows, press Ctrl and the plus or minus keys (for bigger or smaller fonts); on the Mac, it’s the Command key and plus or minus.”
- This only works if the web site developer followed current browser standards. If, instead, they hard-coded the font to, say, 12 points, it won’t shrink or grow using this method.
- “\* Whatever technology you buy today will be obsolete soon, but you can avoid heartache by learning the cycles.”
- Sure, but that doesn’t mean they won’t work fine. Most people would say my film camera is obsolete, but it still takes great pictures. You can avoid the heartache by not buying into the “need” to constantly have the latest and greatest. You can save tons of money that way too.
- Thanks for a great column.

– Posted by dg

- 
33. October 2nd, 2008 1:57 pm  
I google washingtonpost.com from the New York Times search box. If an ad comes up, I click it and make the Post give the Times a nickle.  
– Posted by Kacoo
- 
34. October 2nd, 2008 1:58 pm  
A. Simply pressing F1 will bring up Help for the program you are in.  
B. If you wish to open programs with your keys rather than the slower mouse cursor, follow this easy procedure to create the key sequence.  
1. Right click on the program icon and select Properties. 2. Go to the “Shortcut key” box and key in the chosen sequence. (e.g. I use Cntrl-Shift-w to open Word, Cntrl-Shift-x for Excelso on). I even use the F keys.) 3. Press OK and you are done.  
C. When jotting down notes with Windows dandy little Notepad program (find it in Accessories), press F5 to instantly and automatically time stamp your notation with the current date and time. This is a wonderful feature for creating contemporaneous notes that trial judges really, really like. I maintain over 100 notes pads on various clients, vendors, financial institutions, transactions, customer support calls, and much more.  
– Posted by LarryAt27N
- 
35. October 2nd, 2008 2:00 pm  
In Microsoft Word - Shift+F3 makes a word change from all uppercase to all lowercase to just the first letter upper case and so on.  
In Adobe PhotoShop, Alt+i+i allows you to resize an image.  
On Windows, Alt+F4 will close any program.  
– Posted by Jason
- 
36. October 2nd, 2008 2:01 pm  
Great tips! A couple more:  
Use ctrl-alt-delete simultaneously to bring up the Windows Task Manager to zap something that’s stuck & grinding its gears, by highlighting it (‘Not responding’) and clicking on End Task;  
Super-simple: Use the ‘Esc’ key to, ah, escape when you have something on full-screen with no visible control keys.  
– Posted by Charles
- 
37. October 2nd, 2008 2:04 pm  
Will someone tell the idiots at Microsoft not to mess with shortcut keys. I rarely used the mouse. But recently, I bought Mircrosoft Office 2007, and it has been a nightmare. The menus have changed, re-arranged. Everything requires the click of a mouse or learning new shortcut commands.  
– Posted by V. Prabhu
- 
38. October 2nd, 2008 2:04 pm  
on a MacBook, you can utilize right-mouse-click functions by putting two fingers (one at a time) on the trackpad and then using your thumb (or other finger) to press the bar  
– Posted by tjc
- 
39. October 2nd, 2008 2:04 pm  
One of my favorites is Alt+left arrow to hit the back button on a browser. I know for a fact this works in IE and Firefox (the only 2 browsers I use at work and at home). It makes surfing so much easier!  
– Posted by John
- 
40. October 2nd, 2008 2:08 pm  
Nice set of tips all collected in one place. Thanks!  
This one piece of advice is correct, but the explanation isn’t quite right:  
\* When you’re searching for something on the Web using, say, Google, put quotes around phrases that must be searched together. For example, if you put quotes around “electric curtains,” Google won’t waste your time finding one set of Web pages containing the word “electric” and another set containing the word “curtains.”  
Google generally only shows pages containing every word you typed in the search; using quotes will limit the search results only to web pages where the words inside the quotes appear together (ignoring punctuation).

– Posted by Rick

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41. October 2nd, 2008 2:09 pm  
A tip for Texans on filling in the “State” box. Type tt and then Enter. Texas will be entered into the box. No more having to scroll down to the bottom of the list of states.

– Posted by Susan

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42. October 2nd, 2008 2:10 pm  
as you said, on Macs, command+tab switches programs. but an equally useful tool is command + ~ (upper left corner), which switches between windows within the open application. for instance, you can easily toggle between multiple word documents, while command + tab would toggle through all your words documents as well as mail, firefox, etc.

on a related note, F9 gives you a view of all open applications, while F10 gives you a view of all open windows within an application. from there, you can click the one you want to enter – an alternative to the command+tab or command+~ !

finally, F8 switches to dashboard.

– Posted by Austen

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43. October 2nd, 2008 2:10 pm  
It’s true that you need not type http/www. to go to a web site – usually.  
But sometimes, inexplicably you do need to type www before the address.

Not sure why.

– Posted by Keith

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44. October 2nd, 2008 2:11 pm  
Use ctrl-tab to move from tab to tab within a browser  
Use ctrl-y to repeat the last action – I only really use this in Word, Excel, and Powerpoint  
Use Alt-F4 to close a window/program  
When switching between windows/programs using Alt-tab, by holding the Alt key you can see the program icons for you to keep “tab-ing” until you reach the one you want

– Posted by albert

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45. October 2nd, 2008 2:12 pm  
Cool! I’ve been on computer my entire life and it had never occurred to me that shift/space paged up. The control-enter trick for webpages is also very nifty 😊 Great list!

– Posted by Anne

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46. October 2nd, 2008 2:12 pm  
You can text questions to Google. Enter a question like “Pizza 97212” to Google (466453) and Google will text back pizza restaurants in Portland, OR. This also works for sports scores, flight times, and businesses like taxi cabs.

I’ll never pay for 411 again.

– Posted by Dan

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47. October 2nd, 2008 2:13 pm  
Option+click (Mac) closes all open windows on desktop at once.

– Posted by chris

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48. October 2nd, 2008 2:14 pm  
Ctrl + T in Internet Explorer opens a new browsing tab. There is a similar function for Safari using Command, I believe.

Also, instead of the painstaking task of highlighting a whole document or web page with the mouse cursor, hit Control + A to select all.

– Posted by Alex L.

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49. October 2nd, 2008 2:15 pm  
If you are tired of flash ads and other ads blinking and blaring at you on webpages, download and install Mozilla Firefox. Then, install the Adblock Plus add-on. It blocks almost all advertising on websites. It works fantastically well. (I do not work for Mozilla)

– Posted by JH

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50. October  
A range of text, or cells in excel, or just about anything, can be



2nd,  
2008  
2:15 pm

selected by clicking the beginning point, THEN THE SHIFT KEY, then the end point. No need to drag over the entire range.

– Posted by Dan Ryan

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51. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:16 pm

In Windows (don’t know about Apple), you can select multiple files that are in a row by highlighting the first, holding down on the Shift key, then highlighting the last one. All in between will be selected.

You can also individually select multiple files not in order by highlighting the first, holding down on the Ctrl key, and clicking each additional file.

– Posted by Huckleberry

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52. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:16 pm

Create a user account on your computer that is \*not\* an administrator and use it for everything except installing/updating software or configuring your system. If you are not logged in as an administrator, (with very few exceptions) a virus cannot install itself on your machine.

– Posted by Rick

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53. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:17 pm

you don’t need to type in .com to reach a domain ending in .com: simply type nytimes in the address line, then control then enter

– Posted by ES

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54. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:17 pm

On the Mac, there is a list of keyboard shortcuts included in System Preferences...

System Preferences/Keyboard & Mouse/Keyboard Shortcuts

With the Mac, keyboard shortcuts are consistent and universal from application to application - so command-Z is undo in every application for instance. And why oh why did Apple drop the “Open Apple” and “Closed Apple” logos from the command keys? So silly! Oh, and these commands have been around since well, before Windows 😊

Also, you can toggle the mouse for left and right handed use on the Mac, so if you prefer to use your index finger for primary click, and middle finger for secondary (right click traditionally), you can.

David - shame on you for propagating the myth that Mac’s don’t have right click. Mac’s have had right click for a long long time... you should know better.

– Posted by Steve516

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55. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:17 pm

In any browser, hitting backspace takes you to the previously viewed page, just like the back button on the toolbar. Does anyone know the keyboard shortcut for the forward button?

Also, in most programs, I find control+F for “find” is very useful, rather than manual searching.

– Posted by ForwardThinker

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56. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:19 pm

Open files with one click

It just makes sense that if you can do the same thing in Windows with a single click of the mouse that you can do with two clicks, you’d take the shorter route, right?

If you want to change your two clicks to one, click Start, click My Computer. Under the Tools menu, click Folder Options. Now click the General tab in the dialog box, click Single-click to open an item (point to select), and then click OK. This makes everything in Windows exactly one click faster.

– Posted by J Bart Gordon

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57. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:19 pm

Another good one (for Windows) I’ve had more than a few people thank me for telling them:

Alt+F4 closes the active window, the same as if you click the top-right “x” button.

This useful to know if you ever get the cascade of pop-ups (you guys know what I’m talking about) or accidentally click to open a bunch of selected files and it opens a new window for each...you can close the windows much faster with repeated Alt+F4 strokes than trying to chase and click individual windows.

In general, anytime you find yourself doing painfully repetitive tasks,

check the menu which always tells you if there is a keyboard shortcut. Also note that menus are generally keyboard navigable as well...look for the underlined letter (like the “F” in “File” in almost all menus) and Alt+ will drop down that menu. (E.g., Alt+F, Alt+S is the equivalent of File->Save in programs with standard menus.)

Key board shortcuts in general can greatly increase productivity.

– Posted by Othar Hugh Manati

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58. October 2nd, 2008 2:21 pm

Add: When typing the URL in your browser, ANY browser on the mac will let you type: nytimes (enter) to get [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com). On the PC, type nytimes Control+Enter for the same thing.

Oh, and when typing a URL into a browser, make sure to type it in the ADDRESS bar, not the search field on your homepage.

– Posted by Rick Blank

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59. October 2nd, 2008 2:22 pm

You can use Windows+Lock to lock the computer.

You can use Print-screen to put the screen in your clipboard, and later do Ctrl-V to paste the screen in a Word document.

You can enter sentences in autocorrect, i.e. for example you can enter your name “Paul Newman” as pn in autocorrect, so that you do not have to type it all the time (you have to be careful though).

F1 for help (most should know that)

– Posted by V. Prabhu

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60. October 2nd, 2008 2:22 pm

In many Windows document-based programs, Ctrl-Tab will switch between open documents, much like Alt-Tab will switch between apps in Windows.

– Posted by terry

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61. October 2nd, 2008 2:22 pm

alt+enter opens a new tab for whatever you typed in the address bar in most browsers (or google search bar, if you have it installed), so you don’t have to go through the steps of opening a new window or tab and then typing where you want to go.

– Posted by Adam

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62. October 2nd, 2008 2:25 pm

When web pages, backspace takes you back to the previous page on all browsers.

– Posted by VJ

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63. October 2nd, 2008 2:26 pm

These little things are fun. Here are a few I use often on Windows XP:

- Your browser address bar is also a search bar.

- Alt + F4 quits the current program. If nothing’s open, it’ll bring up the shutdown options. Ctrl + W closes only the active window.

- In browser:

Alt + left arrow = Back

Alt + right arrow = Forward

- Selecting stuff

Ctrl + A = select all

Shift + left/right = selects one letter at a time

Ctrl + Shift + left/right = selects one word at a time

Shift + up/down = selects one line at a time

- Home/End top/bottom of the page only in a web browser. In a word processor, it’s only the beginning/end of a line. Add Ctrl to go to the top/bottom of a page.

– Posted by Brian H

---

64. October 2nd, 2008 2:26 pm

And next week, you can go back and explain that instead of double-clicking a word, you can just drag the cursor over it!

– Posted by Barnegat Leight

---

65. October 2nd, 2008 2:27 pm

Left clicking on “safely remove hardware” will automatically bring up options of external devices to disconnect - I always used to right click and bring up the whole menu until someone told me this a month ago 😊

I’m surprised that most people don’t know the ones you wrote in the

list - I knew all but two or three. Growing up with computers probably helps, though - when I help my parents (in their mid 50s) with basic computer shortcuts, I’m always surprised because they don’t know some really simple things (such as dragging and dropping files from one window to another).

– Posted by ANR

---

66. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:27 pm

Ctrl + right arrow = beginning of word  
Ctrl + left arrow = end of word  
Ctrl + up arrow = beginning of para  
Ctrl + down arrow = end of para  
In excel:  
Select a stack of data by Ctrl + Shift+ relevant arrow key  
Move up and down by arrow key  
Ctrl+end = end of file  
Alt+F4 close windows  
Backspace: go to previous folder in windows, go to previous document in internet explorer  
Ctrl A: select all  
shift + delete: delete permanently  
There are many more shortcut keys that I use....should be listed in windows help

– Posted by V. Prabhu

---

67. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:28 pm

You can use the backspace key to navigate to the previous webpage, rather than mousing to the “back” button.  
In Firefox, CTRL+K or COMMAND+K will navigate your cursor to the Google search bar, so you can type in your searches without taking your hands from the keyboard.

– Posted by Hoainam

---

68. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:29 pm

We have come so very far from the “whistle switch”.

– Posted by Bill Beck

---

69. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:29 pm

Press F5 to refresh/reload a web page  
In most programs, press:  
Ctrl + S to save  
Ctrl + P to print  
Ctrl + A to select all contents

– Posted by VK

---

70. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:31 pm

How much music can you store? For 128kpbs files (the sort you mostly get from iTunes) you’ll get about a minute for every megabyte of file size.

– Posted by David D

---

71. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:31 pm

“Alt-Tab” to toggle between different programs. “Alt-Shift-Tab” to toggle in reverse.

– Posted by tapatio

---

72. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:31 pm

I learned all of these from doing anything I could to avoid using the touchpad on my laptop to navigate in word processing. Pressing Ctrl+Shift and the left or right arrow key will select the word that direction from the cursor. Repeatedly pressing the arrow key while keeping Ctrl+Shift held down will select multiple words. Use Ctrl+Shift plus the down or up arrow key and you are able to select multiple lines in the same manner. Switching from up and down to left and right fine tunes the selected text. Shift+End selects text from the cursor to the end of the line, Shift+Home selects from the cursor to the beginning. Add PageUp and PageDown to your Shifts and Ctrl for added fun. Also, navigate from word to word without the mouse by holding Ctrl while pressing the left or right arrow. Ctrl and the up or down arrow moves from paragraph to paragraph.

– Posted by Aaron

---

73. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:31 pm

Loved these tips but didn’t love that I can’t print them because they are presented in a blog. Some of us don’t automatically remember all these and need to refer to them at a later time; ergo, being able to print them would be even more useful than just reading them.

I know blogs are “cool” but I am not the only one in the world who needs the uncool device of printed copy to refer to later. Shame on you or the NYTimes.

– Posted by Ellen Richards

- 
74. October 2nd, 2008 2:32 pm Triple clicking will select a whole paragraph. A block of text can be selected by clicking at the beginning and then shift-clicking (holding the shift key while you click) at the end of a block.  
– Posted by Justin Brockie
- 
75. October 2nd, 2008 2:35 pm Two of my favorites:  
In Firefox (and now the new IE6) you can highlight a word or phrase in a webpage, right click on it and have it do a Google search, which will open in a new tab in the current window (if you have the browser set up to open new tabs in the current window). Not sure if this works in Safari tho...  
In OS X, you can set the mouse to have a primary and secondary click, just like in Windows XP/Vista, which acts as a Ctrl+click.  
– Posted by nathan
- 
76. October 2nd, 2008 2:35 pm Wow, I had no idea about the shift-space key or the shift-tab! One word of caution, though - some laptops don't have the same keyboard shortcuts because the keyboards are different. I happen to do “page up” or “page down” with the function+arrow keys, but some desktop keyboards have specific buttons for that.  
I'm also fond of ctrl+tab to move within tabs in firefox.  
– Posted by Danielle
- 
77. October 2nd, 2008 2:35 pm - On your keyboard, hit windows key + E to bring up windows explorer  
- On your keyboard, hit windows key + F to bring up search window  
- In your browser, just type the name of the site and hit ctrl + enter key and it will fill in the rest, e.g. instead of typing [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), just type nytimes and hit ctrl + enter [Note: Only works for sites with [www](http://www). - .com combination.  
-  
– Posted by pgb
- 
78. October 2nd, 2008 2:36 pm Andy - you said:  
“Google does not exist so that you can search for “[www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)”. That’s what your browser’s address bar is for. But Google does appreciate the extra ad revenue you’re giving them.”  
I would appreciate it if you could quickly jot down a few lines that explain how Google’s ad revenue system works in such cases?  
– Posted by Shiv
- 
79. October 2nd, 2008 2:39 pm You don’t even have to type .com just type nytimes and hit cntr/enter  
– Posted by gregory
- 
80. October 2nd, 2008 2:42 pm I’m ashamed to admit that I learned a few things and I’ve been using Macs (home) and PCs (work) for about 15 years...  
– Posted by Mozza
- 
81. October 2nd, 2008 2:44 pm I would like to add, but I’ve had a rough day with too many obvious questions from colleagues...  
– Posted by SubtleKnife
- 
82. October 2nd, 2008 2:46 pm When your cell phone is ringing in a public place, you should push any button on the side of the phone as soon as possible to silence the ringer. The call will still be there and ringing, just not audibly. You can then answer the phone at your convenience, or you can let it go to voicemail if it is not an appropriate time to answer the phone.  
It never ceases to amaze me to see people who think their only two

options are to answer the phone or to let it ring outloud until voicemail picks up. Letting your phone ring repeatedly in a public place is not acceptable.

– Posted by Mike

---

83. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:46 pm

RFM  
– Posted by John

---

84. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:46 pm

Please write the book. I’ve been using a Mac for years, but did not know half of your tips.  
– Posted by oy

---

85. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:46 pm

I use Alt F4 at the end of the day to shut down my computer when I want to get out of the office quick. Hit it once to close open programs, again to bring up the shut down menu.  
– Posted by Gabriel

---

86. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:47 pm

Alt + Left Arrow Key in your web browser to browse back one page like Alt + Tab for flipping between windows, if you use multiple tabs in your webbrowser, flip between tabs with Ctrl + Tab. same thing works in Excel by the way.  
– Posted by JC

---

87. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:50 pm

“\* You can double-click a word to highlight it in any document, e-mail or Web page.”  
Not on the New York Times’s website, at least not without a considerable degree of annoyance. Attention nytimes.com webmasters: if we need the definition of a word, we’re capable of looking it up ourselves! No unnecessary, non-optional popup needed!  
– Posted by Markus

---

88. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:51 pm

The Print Screen button is the best (and Alt-Print Screen for just the active window). When giving screen directions or creating a manual it is best to use a picture.  
– Posted by Adam

---

89. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:51 pm

I’m always surprised by the folks who don’t know that you can highlight columns in Excel and double click on one of the column dividers to make them fit the contents.  
And how you can highlight a large area in Excel by clicking on one corner and shift-clicking on the other.  
– Posted by Nolamargot

---

90. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:53 pm

Bless you, my son.  
– Posted by Louise Passick

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91. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:53 pm

In a browser address bar type the name such as “nytimes” without the quotes then press ctrl-enter. It will automagically add the [www.](http://www.nytimes.com) at the beginning and [.com](http://www.nytimes.com) at the end. Useless if you’re going to a non [.com](http://www.nytimes.com) address, but otherwise useful.  
– Posted by Patrick

---

92. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:54 pm

Triple left click anywhere in a paragraph will highlight the entire paragraph, so you can copy it, cut it, etc.  
– Posted by JMS

---

93. October  
2nd,  
2008  
2:55 pm

On a PC, press the “Print Screen” key (at the top right, and may be labelled “PrScr”) to capture what’s on the whole screen. You can paste the screen image into a Word document or other places. Paste by pressing Control+V.  
– Posted by Larry Lawrence

---

94. October

In windows, holding down the “window” key and the letter “e” at the

- 
- 2nd, 2008 2:56 pm same time opens the explorer (file directory) window.  
– Posted by KC
- 
95. October 2nd, 2008 2:56 pm ...And thanks for not including the words “idiots,” “dummies,” “morons,” “half-wits,” “simpletons” or “Alaskan governors” in the title... Many regular, intelligent people don’t know — and need to know — this stuff!  
– Posted by Dan T.
- 
96. October 2nd, 2008 2:58 pm The F5 key will refresh the webpage.  
– Posted by Josh S
- 
97. October 2nd, 2008 2:59 pm Google does not exist so that you can search for “www.nytimes.com”. That’s what your browser’s address bar is for. But Google does appreciate the extra ad revenue you’re giving them.  
– Posted by Andy B
- I rarely type an address into the address bar. I put it in Google in case I have mistyped. I would rather not find a surprise after hitting enter.  
– Posted by Josh
- 
98. October 2nd, 2008 3:01 pm I am surprised by how few people, even practiced writers, are unaware of the split-screen function in MICROSOFT Word. Clicking on the little blue button in the upper-right hand corner (above the scroll bar) of a Word screen will divide the screen in half; each will now have its own scroll bar. It’s possible, then, to keep one section of your document in front of you while scrolling down or up in the other portion of your screen. A great way, for example, to compare an opening and closing paragraph of a longer document. (The “Window” tab from the top menu will also activate and de-activate this function.)  
– Posted by RL
- 
99. October 2nd, 2008 3:01 pm I’m continually asked to hit “anykey” to continue. Anyone know where the “anykey” button is?  
LOL!!! Just kidding!!! 😊  
– Posted by Capt. Concernicus
- 
100. October 2nd, 2008 3:02 pm Triple click to select the whole paragraph (Mac, don’t know about Windows)  
– Posted by Frank
- 
101. October 2nd, 2008 3:05 pm You don’t need iPhoto or Picasa to shrink a large photo for email. In Vista, right click on the photo, choose “send to”, then “mail recipient”. That brings up a dialogue box which lets you choose an appropriate size. Will work if multiple images are selected also.  
– Posted by manraygun
- 
102. October 2nd, 2008 3:07 pm Along with Ctrl-x, Ctrl-c, and Ctrl-v (cut, copy, paste), don’t forget Ctrl-a to select all of the current doc or window.  
– Posted by MT
- 
103. October 2nd, 2008 3:07 pm I would like to have an automatic backup program, but I haven’t been able to find how to do it. I have bought and installed an external hard disk, but it takes a long time to backup to it, so I don’t use it much.  
I have a PC and an old keyboard. There is no Windows key.  
– Posted by Morris S.
- 
104. October 2nd, 2008 3:08 pm Yes BG; keyboard shortcuts are always greatly appreciated!  
– Posted by Amy B
- 
105. October 2nd, I agree that the copy, cut, and paste shortcuts are widely unknown and useful hourly. Same goes with control+f or command+f to find

2008  
3:12 pm

(in most applications).

I also think some basic HTML would be nice to teach (how to create links, text enhancements, etc.) but that might be too ambitious.

– Posted by KJ

---

106. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:12 pm

Using the “Print Screen” key with Windows copies the entire monitor image to the clipboard. This can then be pasted into Paint or another graphic-enabled or graphic manipulation program.

This comes in handy for those things you think you can’t make a copy of or an image from a webinar or other presentation you think could be useful to you. You can also use in Word, etc. to make step by step illustrations of setup or configuration screens for training others.

– Posted by MT

---

107. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:15 pm

If you “run out of mouse pad,” all is not lost!

Just lift your mouse, reposition, and continue.

[This, based on a real life experience with a work colleague.]

– Posted by singdaw

---

108. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:15 pm

A really simple one I felt like an idiot for not realizing when it was shown to me: whenever there’s a pull-down list on a website, say for selecting the country in which you live, you can type the first letter of your selection and the list will jump to the first entry under that letter. This really comes in handy because some of these lists are long.

– Posted by John

---

109. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:17 pm

Start (Windows) key + e will bring up My Computer

– Posted by TB

---

110. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:17 pm

In a browser window,  
ALT-(LEFT-ARROW) = back (DELETE also works)  
ALT-(RIGHT-ARROW) = forward  
F5 = refresh

for macs, replace ALT with COMMAND

– Posted by Dylan

---

111. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:17 pm

It is amazing how many people don’t realize that after entering words in a search box, you can just hit the Enter key instead of using the mouse to click the Search button. And the same goes for the address box in a browser or the last box on almost any online form.

– Posted by wayne

---

112. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:17 pm

I would end these simple Windows word processing shortcuts for editing email messages, Word documents, text files, etc.

Home key to move cursor to the beginning of a line

End key to move to the end of the line.

Ctrl + Home to move to the beginning of the document

Ctrl + End to move to the end of the document

Add the Shift key to these to make selections. E.g. Shift + End to select everything from the cursor position to the end of a line. Shift + Ctrl + End to select everything from the cursor position to the end of a document.

For example, to quickly select everything in a document (e.g. to delete or copy), use Ctrl + Home to move the cursor to the beginning of the document, then Shift + Ctrl + End to select everything in the document.

– Posted by AA

---

113. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:18 pm

In Windows XP professional version (most likely what you use at work) you can hit windows key + “L” to lock your desktop quickly. This keeps your prankster coworkers away from your computer. The “Alt” key highlights the toolbar allowing you to then hit the underlined letter instead of using your mouse. For example Alt + “F” opens the file menu, Alt + “E” opens the edit menu. Once you learn the key combinations, you won’t have to take your fingers off the keyboard to

navigate through windows. Alt + “F4” closes the active window in most programs.

– Posted by Justin

---

114. October 2nd, 2008 3:19 pm

“If in doubt, right-click.”  
Whatever it was you needed to do and weren’t sure how to is probably right there.

– Posted by Steve Tryon

---

115. October 2nd, 2008 3:19 pm

It’s not just double-clicking to select a word that works. Triple clicking on a word will select the entire paragraph the word is in. Hitting Ctrl + A will select the entire document, which is great for copying pages from a form document into a new one.

– Posted by Jim Calloway

---

116. October 2nd, 2008 3:20 pm

I’m always amazed that people don’t know that you can copy objects from one folder to the other by holding down the alt (PC) or option (Mac) key while dragging.

– Posted by Hugh D’Apostrophe

---

117. October 2nd, 2008 3:20 pm

My list of windows shortcuts:

When in a browser, pressing CTRL-TAB will allow you to switch between the tabs you have open (if you have multiple tabs open) and CTRL-Shift-Tab will allow you to switch backwards between tabs. This also works in most other types of programs with tabs.

CTRL - W will close the active tab, and

CTRL - T will open a new tab.

CTRL - B will open your bookmarks in your browser.

Adding shift to the Alt-Tab shortcut explained above will allow you to switch between applications backwards (Alt-Shift-Tab)

Windows Key + R - Opens the Run Program Dialog

Windows Key + M - Minimize all windows

Windows Key + Shift + M - Maximize all windows

Windows Key + F - Find files on your computer

Windows Key + E - Open Windows Explorer / My Computer

Windows Key + L - Lock your computer

Alt+F4 - Close the program you are using

Ctrl-W - Close the file you have open without closing the entire program.

F2 - Allows you to rename a file you have selected when browsing under my computer.

F5 - Refresh a web page, or refresh folder contents on your harddrive.

Pressing CTRL-F5 in your browser will refresh a webpage plus force your browser to re-download all the images on the page, instead of pulling them from the cache.

F3 opens the Find feature in many applications, such as notepad, word, and most browsers, as does CTRL-F.

As mentioned above, CTRL-Z is frequently used for UNDO, and in varying programs, CTRL-Y or CTRL-Shift-Z will allow you to automatically REDO whatever you just undid (especially helpful if you pressed redo a few times in a row to undo more than one action, pressing redo multiple times will get you back to where you were before you undid everything.

Pressing F6 in your browser will allow you to edit the address bar (which will allow you to visit a different website) without making you have to go and click in it.

CTRL - P is frequently used for Printing in most programs.

CTRL - A will usually select all text in a word document or text file or even in your browser.

Holding CTRL while you click in a text box in Internet Explorer will select its entire contents.

As mentioned above, double-clicking a word will allow you to select a word without dragging the mouse across it from beginning to end.... However, triple-clicking will frequently allow you to select the entire paragraph in your browser or in documents.

I could go on forever.

– Posted by Jason Spradlin



- 
118. October 2nd, 2008 3:20 pm  
And my favorite Mac gadget - if you’ve mislaid your glasses, click on the phone number you need in the Address Book, click on “Large Type” and the phone number will fill the screen.  
– Posted by Leslie
- 
119. October 2nd, 2008 3:21 pm  
When entering a state code into a drop down box on a web page you can just type the first letter of the state. If that doesn’t get the correct state press the first letter again until you do. - I live in Connecticut so I press C three times.  
– Posted by Howie
- 
120. October 2nd, 2008 3:21 pm  
These are great ... some were new, others not. But here is another great one that I just learned yesterday ... Google has a language translation tool that is real slick at [translate.google.com](http://translate.google.com) You can select what language to translate from and to, copy paste in the paragraph or website, and within a few seconds the text is translated for you.  
– Posted by ALambl
- 
121. October 2nd, 2008 3:21 pm  
I disagree with Andy who posted #8. Extra hard drive space is cheap, and it’s usually the first thing you run out of, as graphic and audio files become exponentially larger. (Especially if you do a lot of home photography or digital home video.) It’s also the hardest to upgrade because you can’t easily transfer everything over to a new drive. So you end up adding a brand new second hard drive, which splits your files in different places and complicates a later upgrade to a new computer.  
  
In contrast, it is easy to add extra RAM memory down the road. So my advice is to pay some more for a larger hard drive that will serve you for years and upgrade your memory later, when it feels necessary and after memory prices come down.  
– Posted by Bob Jenkins
- 
122. October 2nd, 2008 3:21 pm  
On the Mac, you can take a customized screenshot of the screen by using the keys: Command + Shift + 4.  
You’ll see a +-shaped cursor. Use the mouse / trackpad to click and drag the area of the screen to “photograph.”  
To take a screenshot of the whole screen, use Command + Shift + 3.  
Among other things, this is handy for capturing long-winded computer error messages and spontaneously recording online transactions.  
– Posted by ANK
- 
123. October 2nd, 2008 3:22 pm  
In Windows to lock your desktop instead of ctrl-alt-del use the short cut: Windows key + L.  
– Posted by Jodie
- 
124. October 2nd, 2008 3:22 pm  
double-click to highlight a word, double-double-click to highlight a sentence (or sometimes a paragraph), triple double-click to get a sore finger 😊  
– Posted by Jim
- 
125. October 2nd, 2008 3:22 pm  
A single keystroke is the way to go: click Page Down to scroll down a page, Page Up to go back a bit. And if your page starts looking funky because you’re scrolling too far too fast: F5 refreshes the page on the web & in Word.  
– Posted by beth
- 
126. October 2nd, 2008 3:22 pm  
What’s the cycle for iPhones? Same as the iPod?  
– Posted by Lance L
- 
127. October 2nd, 2008 3:22 pm  
A couple more for web browsers like IE, Firefox, and Safari:  
- Ctrl+T opens a new tab  
- Ctrl+W closes the active tab (this can also close active windows in applications such as Excel, Word, etc.)

- Ctrl+click on a link will open this in a new tab

– Posted by Sam

---

128. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:23 pm

A really useful OS X tip: choose Apple Menu>System Preferences>Universal Access, and enable Zoom if it isn’t already. Then type Command-Option-+ to zoom the entire screen up. Type Command-Option- (minus) to zoom back down to normal. It’s a fast and easy way to zoom onscreen videos up to full screen, among other uses.

In the same window, you’ll find my favorite OS X prank: Command-Option-Control-8.

– Posted by Richard Lainhart

---

129. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:24 pm

Scrolling the cursor through entire words (rather than individual letters) –

Windows: Ctrl + arrow

OS X: Alt + arrow

Add “Shift” to highlight as you move through the text.

Similarly, to delete entire words, use “Backspace” (when cursor is on the right side of the word to be deleted) or “Delete” (cursor on the left of the word) in combination with Ctrl and Alt, respectively, for Windows and OS X machines.

– Posted by sunmi

---

130. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:24 pm

If you are having a problem in Windows and need to ask somebody for advice, try this: in Windows, use the Print-Screen button on your keyboard to take a picture of what’s on your computer screen. You can then paste that (CTRL-V) into a Microsoft Word document. Double click on it in Word and you will get options to crop it and resize it. Then email it.

Showing somebody the problem you are having is a lot easier than trying to describe it.

– Posted by Mike Richter

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131. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:24 pm

to select the entire address in the address bar, just click on the icon at the left of the address (mac).

– Posted by cindy

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132. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:24 pm

Very simple, but one I’ve seen a lot of people not use:

On most web forms (login pages, search boxes, comment forms like this one), you can hit enter instead of clicking submit. By extension, don’t hit enter after inputting information unless you’re ready to submit the form.

Annoyingly, this is not universally true, as some designers make OnEnter refresh the page instead....

– Posted by Jacob

---

133. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:24 pm

One my dad (now 87) told me years ago, “Whatever is your usual time between saves, you will eventually lose that much work.” My version: “Backups are your friend.”

Steve Tryon’s first rule of networking: “If it looks like a rat’s nest, it probably is.”

My dad’s immediate corollary: “The scary thing is, if it wasn’t, you wouldn’t be able to tell the difference.”

Dad started his programming on an IBM mainframe with 256K main memory.

– Posted by Steve Tryon

---

134. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:25 pm

No, no, no....

We need an even DUMBER book!

I can’t use my real name here, because I have to admit that my wife is severely confused by the most fundamental operations on a normal GUI desktop, Mac or PC. (I do this for a living - I’m not omniscient either, but I get along.)

It’s true (as major researchers like Ted Nelson have often pointed out) that there is very little that is “intuitive” about the “intuitive” GUI desktop.

Click vs. drag? Obvious?  
Move vs. copy? Obvious?  
Folder-within-folder navigation? Obvious?  
Differences among volumes? Obvious?  
Disks vs. flash drives? Obvious?

Well no, not really, until you are taught.

The desktop metaphor has gotten quite complex over the last 20 years, as the examples in David’s post indicate. Many of us have caught up incrementally, but many have missed many “obvious” facilities (like Tab for stepping among where-to-type, and its extension with modifier keys to select among apps and windows in a whole-desktop context).

My wife (and many others) need the ~20 page “intro to ‘standard’ desktop operations” that SHOULD be at the start of every entry-level computer book.

Does it exist? Is it a “Missing Manual?”

– Posted by XXX

---

135. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:25 pm

Windows-L locks Windows

– Posted by Geoff

---

136. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:25 pm

Wouldn’t it be nice if all web developers actually paid attention to tab order so you could in fact tab reliably between fields on a form instead of focusing some random control.

– Posted by Houston

---

137. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:25 pm

In any drop-down menu or file open box, etc., just highlight one of the first choices/files then click the first letter of the one you’re looking for - it will take you straight to the beginning of the choices/files with that letter.

This can save A LOT of scrolling time.

– Posted by Caitlin

---

138. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:25 pm

Alt+Tab shows all open windows and cycles through them one at a time.

– Posted by Phil

---

139. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:25 pm

You don’t have to type .com at the end of web addresses. Simply type the address and then hold down the control key while pressing enter.

To get to this website you only type nytimes then ctr+enter. works for any .com address.

Outlook has the same mechanism as apple mail apparently, you can hover over any link in an email and the real address will show in a tooltip on the cursor. That way you can always tell where the link will really take you to.

In firefox and chrome the real url shows in the bottom bar of the browser when you hover over a link, again so you can check where it wants to really take you.

Phishing emails always start with dear customer or some generic wording, real emails from your bank or paypal know your name and begin emails by addressing you by your name, not customer.

– Posted by Sandi

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140. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:25 pm

For old hands at XP who find themselves a little lost in Vista: the Start Menu’s search box in Vista is a serious stress-reliever. If you don’t know where to look to find something, a network setting or some configuration setting that you always used in XP: don’t hunt for it, don’t get mad, just search on it. It has always worked perfectly for me.

Also, the System Restore function has been greatly improved and made much easier to handle in Vista... I’ve already had to use it a couple of times because of corrupt dlls. I think that it has the potential to save even a novice user from a costly and frustrating experience with the Chicken-Head-Biting Team or whatever retail tech support they would otherwise use to recover their systems.

If you don’t know where to find it, just search on System Restore (see point #1.) Make sure it is indexing your files regularly, it should by

default. The interface is simple.

– Posted by Jim C

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141. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:25 pm

Weekly articles are great - feedback is even better!  
How about F7 - spell check - works in every Microsoft application and open office, etc

There should never be words misspelt - 😊

– Posted by Dan

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142. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:25 pm

As usual Dave, you’ve provided some valuable info to those that need it most, the newly initiated computer user.

– Posted by DH

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143. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:26 pm

I’d buy that book!  
For my Mother-in-law.

– Posted by Darren

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144. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:26 pm

I’m always amazed at the number of people that do not understand the use of the tab key in a word processor and use spaces instead. It also drives me crazy when I see folks backspace over several sentences to fix an error. I’m pretty computer literate still I learned a lot from your list. You do know that your planned book - which should sell quite well - will not actually reach your intended audience.

– Posted by Steve

---

145. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:26 pm

Just for BG:

Ctrl is the little brother of Alt.

Alt+Tab switches between programs; Ctrl+Tab switches between open documents / windows / tabs in the current program. (+Shift to go backwards)

Alt+F4 quits a program, Ctrl+F4 closes the document.

These are a little more obscure, but often useful:

Ctrl+Esc also opens the start menu (handy if you find yourself without a dedicated Windows key).

Ctrl+Alt+Del usually gets you to the task manager, but in an XP Pro environment, it gets you the Windows Security screen (with a taskman button). Ctrl+Shift+Esc skips straight to the taskman.

PrintScreen copies what’s on your display to the clipboard, so you can paste into Word or Paint or whatever. Ctrl+Alt+PrintScreen copies only the currently active window.

– Posted by Mark

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146. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:27 pm

Yes, MORE!! And I happily volunteer to be the guinea pig...if I can follow and use the tip, anyone can.

While many folks know so much, every day in USA, so,me buys their first digital camera, first computer etc. And many, like me, are in our 60’s and older. I used computer at my office before retiring as Deputy Director....but with IT person just down the hall. Now “Home Alone” .....scary territoty.

– Posted by Joan McKniff

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147. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:27 pm

I recently discovered that my mother, who’s been using computers since the early 90s, didn’t know that if you’re viewing one web page and want to go to a different url, you don’t have to close the browser and start all over before typing the new url.

Relatedly, the existence of tabs in a tabbed browser is a basic, as is triple-clicking to select a whole url or whole line of text.

Also, right-clicking or control-clicking for contextual menus.

The space bar for pausing and unpausing music or a dvd is a classic, too.

– Posted by Carin

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148. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:27 pm

oh! and if you’re a mac laptop user, don’t forget about the fantastic ‘two-finger drag’ to scroll - check the settings for the trackpad in system preferences.

– Posted by cindy

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149. October 2nd, 2008 3:28 pm

I tried out that control D “hide all windows, revealing only what’s on the computer desktop, with one keystroke: Windows key+D in Windows,” while I was reading this post in an NYT message in Outlook, and instead of hiding the windows it closed and deleted the message. But I have used many of these other tips, and most of the time they do work.

– Posted by Jim M

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150. October 2nd, 2008 3:28 pm

On the Mac:

1. In any dialog box where you see a blue button, just press the Return key instead of mousing to the button. (In older operating systems, the button would have a dark border around it.)
2. In a browser, to navigate to the address area, press Command - L and start typing the enter the web address.
3. In the Finder, to copy a file from one folder to another, select the file’s icon, hold down the option key, drag the icon to the new place, and let go of the mouse button.
4. In the Finder, to place a file in the Trash, select the icon and type Command-Delete. To empty the Trash, it’s Shift-Command-Delete.

– Posted by Jim Kessler

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151. October 2nd, 2008 3:29 pm

Need a calculator and don’t want to hunt around for it?  
In Windows, start/run/  
Type the word calc  
Click Ok

– Posted by Margaret Rouse

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152. October 2nd, 2008 3:29 pm

I use these frequently on my Mac, since a screenshot is worth a thousand words. (If you get paid by the word, don’t use screenshots.) ;-]

Cmd + shift + 3 = Full screen  
Cmd + shift + 4 = selection  
Cmd + shift + 4 + spacebar = active window

There may be similar keyboard shortcuts on the PC, but I don’t know what they are, since I haven’t really used my PC since I got the Mac about two years ago.

– Posted by Michael Burke

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153. October 2nd, 2008 3:29 pm

When you’re linking from page to page, sometimes you’re also opening new windows — and sometimes not. When you want to go back, you can close your window and find you’ve closed everything. To check on what closing a window will do, look at the Back button on your browser. If it is colored, use it to go back, because closing the window will take you farther back unexpectedly. If Back is gray, you’re on the base of a possible chain of windows, so closing the window will take you where you expect to go.

– Posted by Bob H

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154. October 2nd, 2008 3:29 pm

You can limit Google’s search engine to a particular website by using the “site” qualifier. For example, entering in the search field  
site:apple.com cocoa  
will save you from having to buy chocolate.

– Posted by Paul Foraker

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155. October 2nd, 2008 3:29 pm

-F5 refreshes your screen in Windows.  
-Control A selects everything.  
-The Home key takes you to the top of the web page and the End key to the bottom (you don’t have to scroll).  
-Control F opens the search box to search for a word or phrase in most programs and web pages.

– Posted by mm

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156. October 2nd, 2008 3:30 pm

Here’s a basic tip I published on mactoids.com today. If you need to find the original file for an alias on your Mac - just click the alias to highlight it and press Command+R. The Finder will open showing you exactly where the original file is located, no matter how deeply

nested in folders.

Here’s the previous Mac tip, published two days ago. Running multiple applications on a Mac can clutter up the screen with open windows. You can click the app’s icon on the Dock to bring that window to the front, but still cluttered. To have only the active window display, hold down Command+Option when you click the app icon on the Dock. Now all the windows are hidden except for the active window of the App you clicked. Repeat as you switch between apps.

— Posted by Brent Sheets

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157. October 2nd, 2008 3:31 pm

Great list  
Please add  
in Windows IE and Firefox  
Type the site name such as nytimes and hit Ctrl-Enter instead of just Enter  
It will add www in front and .com at the end

— Posted by Tim

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158. October 2nd, 2008 3:31 pm

And I just tried control D in Foxfire and instead of closing windows it brought up Del.icio.us to link to this blog posting. I guess the bottom line is that applications can intercept these codes for their own purposes. I do use the ^C copy all the time in Windows XP.

— Posted by Jim M

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159. October 2nd, 2008 3:31 pm

Another good OS X/Safari tip: option-click a link to download the focus of the link to your system, instead of opening it in the browser. It’s useful for saving PDFs for later viewing, for example.

— Posted by Richard Lainhart

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160. October 2nd, 2008 3:31 pm

Hitting the Space bar twice at the end of a sentence to get a period, a space, and a capitalized letter at the beginning of the next word has existed on the Blackberry since its inception circa 1999.

— Posted by JC

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161. October 2nd, 2008 3:32 pm

You can “print” a document even when you don’t have a printer hooked to your computer. I often do this on vacation with my laptop. Typically, I want to “print” a receipt that proves I actually made a reservation or paid for theater tickets.  
Click on “print” or (on a PC) use Cntrl-P.  
This brings up the print dialog box. Drop down the list of printers to reveal “Microsoft Office Document Image Writer.” Now you will be asked where you would like to store this image. At some future time, that image can be printed to paper when a printer is available to you.  
-=\Walter

— Posted by Walter Gajewski

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162. October 2nd, 2008 3:32 pm

yes, you can right click on a mac - HOWEVER - unlike a PC - there aren’t right click ‘context menus’ to go with that right click. so . . . its not the actual right click function people complain about on a mac - its the right click CONTEXT menu that’s missing.

I actually learned something here. thank you.

(ps - windows button + M (for ‘Minimize’ works to reveal the desktop also - however I like the D better NOW!)

— Posted by rocco

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163. October 2nd, 2008 3:32 pm

Dear David,  
You write:

> \* Nobody, but nobody, is going to give you half  
> of \$80 million to help them liberate the funds  
> of a deceased millionaire...from Nigeria or  
> anywhere else.

In that regard, I’m wondering if this is also a scam. I received it in the mail a couple of days ago:

=====

Dear Fellow American:

I need to ask you to support an urgent secret business relationship with a transfer of funds of great magnitude.

I am Ministry of the Treasury of the Republic of America. My country has had crisis that has caused the need for large transfer of funds of 800 billion dollars US. If you would assist me in this transfer, it would be most profitable to you.

I am working with Mr. Phil Gramm, lobbyist for UBS, who will be my replacement as Ministry of the Treasury in January. As a Senator, you may know him as the leader of the American banking deregulation movement in the 1990s. This transaction is therefore 100% safe.

This is a matter of great urgency. We need a blank check. We need the funds as quickly as possible. We cannot directly transfer these funds in the names of our close friends because we are constantly under surveillance. My family lawyer advised me that I should look for a reliable and trustworthy person who will act as a next of kin so the funds can be transferred.

Please reply with all of your bank account, IRA and college fund account numbers and those of your children and grandchildren to [wallstreetbailout@treasury.gov](mailto:wallstreetbailout@treasury.gov) so that we may transfer your commission for this transaction. After I receive that information, I will respond with detailed information about safeguards that will be used to protect the funds.

Yours Faithfully:  
Minister of Treasury  
Barrister Henry “Hank” Paulson.

=====

I’ve looked up Henry Paulson on the internet. He seems like a good, Christian man and he seems like he really needs the money.

Should I do as he asks?

– Posted by Mrs. Six-Pack, Wasilla, AK

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164. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:34 pm

Thanks for not ever forgetting US Mac users !! You can learn something new everyday!

– Posted by Stephanie Hryckowian

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165. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:34 pm

In English, commands are often action-object (e.g. “Delete the sentence.”). In computer-ese, commands are mostly object-action (e.g., “select sentence, delete”). This distinction seems to trip up some newer users.

Selection first, action second! This rule applies whether manipulating files in the OS, formatting a bit of text in a word processor, or forwarding an email.

– Posted by Brent

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166. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:35 pm

To save electricity, on Windows, use Power Options in the Control Panel to set how many minutes of idle time before your monitor, hard drive, and computer turn off.

Most laptops have an external plug on the back that allows you to plug in a second monitor.

To backup important files, I mail them to a gmail account I have set up for only that purpose.

– Posted by Jay Cutcher

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167. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:35 pm

When you put more than one word in a Google search it will normally return only pages that have all of those words on them (not two sets of pages). The great thing about using quotes around a phrase in a Google search is that it will only return pages that have that exact phrase, with those exact words in that exact order. Great for finding bits of song lyrics or pieces of lines of poetry.

– Posted by bobr

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168. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:36 pm

Triple click in text will select the paragraph or section. The one that amazes me is how many people will close a program by File, Exit rather than the close button in the upper right (x). Or how many people don’t understand that a minimized program is still open or how to restore it. Back in the day, Windows 3.1 shipped with a super duper tutorial that had a lot of information about resizing and closing windows, as well as some quick tips. But now we’ve evolved...I guess.

– Posted by Norma

- 
169. October 2nd, 2008 3:36 pm  
ctrl+L - goes straight to browser address bar  
ctrl+k - goes straight to search box in browser  
ctrl + send - to send emails in Outlook/gmail  
r - for reply in yahoo/gmail emails and ctrl+r in Outlook  
add various search engines in the search box in firefox  
  
Common knowledge or sense is a myth  
— Posted by Mrinal
- 
170. October 2nd, 2008 3:36 pm  
I would take the tips about chain/spam email a little further.  
“There is no information of any value that you would only hear about by forwarded email. If the information is true, you would hear about it on the news. Information you get by email is always suspect and almost always wrong.”  
— Posted by Hans
- 
171. October 2nd, 2008 3:36 pm  
As for e-mailing photos, I recommend going to the file where they are, selecting which ones to send, and then right clicking and selecting “Send”. This will then pull up a prompt asking if you want to shrink the pictures for e-mailing, to which a 4 MB set of photos might turn into 200 KB!  
— Posted by Peter Kaplan
- 
172. October 2nd, 2008 3:37 pm  
I work with several people who don’t know these and I’ve had to help them with this:  
  
In Excel, there are tabs that represent different worksheets. You can sort by column, or parts of columns simply by highlighting what you want to sort.  
  
When you download an attached email, the menu tells you where it is being downloaded to. You can choose the location if you don’t like what comes up.  
  
On an older Mac keyboard, there is often a button (triangle with a line under it) that opens your drive.  
  
Publish this book please, I work with easily 10 people who should buy it.  
— Posted by Mocha MP
- 
173. October 2nd, 2008 3:38 pm  
“\* You can adjust the size and position of any window on your computer. Drag the top strip to move it; drag the lower-right corner (Mac) or any edge (Windows) to resize it.”  
  
Except when you can’t! 😊  
  
There are dozens of windows in Windows without a resize context menu item, for which I can position my mouse at an edge or corner and click-drag with no effect. And of course there’s the automatic positioning that always seems to cover the data you need, but the parent window is not movable because the child window is open and blocking the focus change.  
— Posted by Gerard R
- 
174. October 2nd, 2008 3:38 pm  
Many hardware problems are because something isn’t quite plugged in.  
You do not need an expensive computer to do photomanipulation - you need RAM.  
— Posted by Andy P
- 
175. October 2nd, 2008 3:38 pm  
Windows + E opens up Windows Explorer (the windows file manager)  
— Posted by JJ
- 
176. October 2nd, 2008 3:39 pm  
Like Susan and Alex, I am always teaching my friends common (and universal) keyboard shortcuts:  
They mentioned control [command on a mac] + c for copy; control + x for delete; control + v for paste  
  
In addition control + b for bold; control + i for italic; control + u for underline are pretty universal for entering formatted text  
  
Also people rarely think about right-clicking and using the context menus — which often are the easiest way to do things. Among other things, particularly in dialog boxes, a right-click (and the appropriate choice from the context menu) often works for cut and paste



functions when a keyboard shortcut does not.

– Posted by Al Gordon

---

177. October 2nd, 2008 3:41 pm

If web pages are slow to load, speed things up by typing control Q.  
– Posted by bug

---

178. October 2nd, 2008 3:41 pm

You are wrong about sensor size, pixel count and quality. Too many pixels on a small chip can lead to noise, but the quality of the processing in the camera can improve noise. The bits of A to D conversion is also a big factor; so is lens quality.  
It would be possible to make a very large one pixel, one bit sensor that yields either a totally black or totally white photo. Not what I would call quality.  
Please do not dumb down your information.  
– Posted by Phil C

---

179. October 2nd, 2008 3:41 pm

2 more things about web searches: You don’t have to use “+” between words any more, but + people + still + do + it!  
Also, don’t bother putting “the”, “and”, “of” and so forth in web searches unless they are part of a longer phrase within quotation marks.  
– Posted by Derek

---

180. October 2nd, 2008 3:42 pm

Control a highlites whole document  
Control 2 will double space it. If double spaces, control 1 will reduce to single space.  
F7 spell checks in most MS programs.  
thanks for list and do book soon.  
– Posted by Vitb9Doc

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181. October 2nd, 2008 3:43 pm

Hi David,  
I’m usually the guy at my office who gets asked how to do the basic computer stuff, but you taught me a few things with this column, most notably the Windows key-D thing. I never use the Windows key for some reason.  
Other stuff:  
1 - Site specific searching within Google, using Google advanced search.  
2 - Google has university-specific search pages for many large universities worldwide at [www.google.com/univ/columbia](http://www.google.com/univ/columbia) or [www.google.com/univ/mcgill](http://www.google.com/univ/mcgill) etc. They usually work than the local search engine on the university website, even if it’s supplied by Google!  
3 - Use The EDIT-PASTE SPECIAL command when you’re cutting and pasting formatted text (say, from a website) into Word or any other word processor. That way you avoid pasting formatting you don’t want into the document.  
4 - You can do a basic screen capture with the PRINT SCRN key and paste it into Word (or many other programs) with the PASTE command.  
5 - Use Alt codes for special characters, such as alt-0246 for the lower case letter “o” with umlaut, or alt-0174 for the registered trademark “R” symbol. A complete list is online at <http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/international/accent/s/codealt.html#accent>  
6 - You can insert both text and images into otherwise inaccessible corners of Word documents using the INSERT-TEXT BOX command.  
7 - You can put shortcuts on your desktop to any hard drive or directory your computer is connected to, even if it’s on a network.  
8 - You simply shouldn’t be using versions of Internet Explorer older than 7.x. It’s dangerous.  
9 - Just because a particular piece of software comes pre-installed in Windows, that doesn’t make it the “official” version. You can use Firefox, Chrome or Opera instead of Internet Explorer. You can use Total Commander instead of Windows Explorer and Thunderbird or Eudora instead of Outlook Express. It’s allowed.

10 - Don’t use the Microsoft Comic Sans font. Ever. For anything.  
– Posted by Mark

---

182. October 2nd, 2008 3:43 pm  
Tip: Do not post online unless you trust the website 100%. You cannot truly undo things online. If you posted your credit card number on the website, and later removed it, chances are it’s still around, for example in Google Cache. Same goes for emotional comments on the message boards, emails, etc.  
– Posted by Jeck Wild

---

183. October 2nd, 2008 3:43 pm  
You can sometimes identify who a phone number belongs to by typing the number into google. (Often doesn’t work for cell phones.)  
– Posted by Diana

---

184. October 2nd, 2008 3:43 pm  
Here’s another way to avoid an overflowing trash bin: press Shift+Del to delete selected file(s). This sends the files straight to oblivion without an intermediate layover in the Trash Bin! Just be careful, as this is generally irreversible.  
– Posted by Bob Cruz

---

185. October 2nd, 2008 3:43 pm  
I did not know about making the screen big (on a mac) by pressing CTRL while using scroll wheel. Very neat. Maybe not an actual time saver or shortcut, but neat anyway.  
– Posted by john Paul

---

186. October 2nd, 2008 3:43 pm  
You know what’s funny ? I live in Italy and I have no idea if this would be something also american but when someone told me about the “copy” and “paste”, they explained it to me this way:  
“You have to use ctrl “c” = copy, and ctrl “v” for Vinavyl.”  
(Vinavyl is a liquid glue like Elmers)  
– Posted by peggy

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187. October 2nd, 2008 3:44 pm  
control u u will close open programs and turn off the computer. if you have already saved any changed files, you can turn off the monitor and walk away.  
– Posted by jt

---

188. October 2nd, 2008 3:45 pm  
The first tip you have states “You can double-click a word to highlight it in any document, e-mail or Web page”. Taking that to the next level, triple-clicking selects the entire sentence or paragraph.  
– Posted by Srini C

---

189. October 2nd, 2008 3:45 pm  
Another phone trick for most voice mail: If you get voicemail that says “Joe is not available. You can leave a message ....[long winded stuff about options] you can go directly to the beep by pressing the \* key.  
With regard to the [www](http://www). in front of google.com and others: It can almost always be left out. Some sites [I think it has something to do with microsloth web servers] won’t work without it. The <http://> is never needed.  
Also, if you have an HTML file on your machine, you can just paste the complete filespec into the browser location window and open it. [I deliberately don’t set the default handler for html to the browser; I usually want to edit or at least view the html].  
Other shortcut keys: Ctrl - insert: copy  
Shift-insert: Paste  
Shift-Del: Cut  
– Posted by jt

---

190. October 2nd, 2008 3:45 pm  
I love using Ctrl + K to jump to the search bar in Mozilla Firefox  
– Posted by shahinsting

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191. October 2nd,  
Along with the standard Undo, Cut, Copy, and Paste, I’m always amazed at how many people in my Photoshop Elements classes do

2008  
3:46 pm

not know:  
Control-O = Open  
Control-S = Save  
(Command for the Macs of course)  
Very few people realize the keyboard commands appear with the Menus’ drop down list.  
— Posted by Dan Cooper

---

192. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:46 pm

Oh yeah, a major one I forgot:  
- If you already know the web address of a site you want to visit, i.e.: [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) or [www.cbc.ca](http://www.cbc.ca) for example, YOU DON’T NEED TO TYPE IT INTO A SEARCH ENGINE LIKE GOOGLE. Just type it directly into the address bar at the top of the web browser!  
— Posted by Mark

---

193. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:47 pm

alt+printscreen will copy the top window to the clipboard. use ctrl+v to paste it into an already-open word document [to save and email error messages to tech support].  
— Posted by jt

---

194. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:48 pm

My cranky tips:  
1. Don’t waste your money on an iPhone. No one really needs one and it’s just a toy, not for adults. Bad software, bad customer support, married to AT & T, one of the worst companies on earth.  
2. Using Google to “do math” is helpful in what way?? Windows comes with a calculator.  
3. Never try the latest web browser, these are creepy and don’t work with half the stuff out there.  
4. Flash doesn’t help you from more than a few feet away outdoors, plus that’s a photography tip, not a computer tip.  
5. Time = money. Don’t waste your time with Snopes.com, just delete and don’t give it another thought or moment. And chastise those you know that waste your time with this stuff, noting that these newbs usually get kind of whiny when you politely ask them to cease and desist — better to just block their E-mail, then you can honestly say, ‘uh, no, I didn’t get that’ at the next family/Rotary get together you see them at.  
Computers are still way too difficult for people to use...  
Al  
— Posted by Al Martino

---

195. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:48 pm

My favorite is the Ctrl F combination that brings up the FIND subwindow  
Within the find subwindow, I regularly use the “replace all” function  
Rgds  
Mike  
— Posted by Mike R

---

196. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:48 pm

A couple simple mouse click “modifiers” I find many users don’t know is that if you have a list of things in Windows Explorer or almost any list-like thing, (file names, thumbnails.), you can use Ctrl-Click to add/toggle the list of selected items and you can use Shift-Click to select a contiguous group of items.  
You can then drag and drop, delete, or right click on the selected group to do something with it.  
— Posted by Steve

---

197. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:49 pm

Three tips I use often:  
1) Triple click to select an entire paragraph  
2) When you need a calendar in a pinch (and don’t have MSOutlook), double-click the clock icon. Just remember to hit cancel when you are done.  
3) If you want to remove all the formatting from text quickly, copy it (Ctrl+c) to the Notepad application, recopy it (Ctrl+A to select all and Ctrl+C to copy) and paste it back to your document (Ctrl+V). No more annoying font or HTML coding.  
— Posted by Nathan

---

198. October 2nd, 2008 3:49 pm

Great post. But...  
“You don’t have to type “http://www” into your Web browser.”  
Unfortunately, not entirely true. It works with most of the websites, but not all. I regularly get empty pages or errors when omitting the “www”. Don’t ask me about the technical side. It’s just what I see.  
“On the iPhone, hit the Space bar twice at the end of a sentence. You get a period, a space, and a capitalized letter at the beginning of the next word.”  
Thanks. I have to admit I didn’t know that.  
– Posted by Kodia

---

199. October 2nd, 2008 3:49 pm

Re tip “You don’t have to type “http://www” into your Web browser. Just type the remainder: “nytimes.com” or “dilbert.com,” for example. (In the Safari browser, you can even leave off the “.com” part.)” You could add that typing just the name – “dilbert” – in the browser bar and hitting adds “http://www.” before and “.com” after for you.  
– Posted by Steve Phelps

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200. October 2nd, 2008 3:50 pm

When I’ve taught computer classes the ALT+Tab in Windows and CMD+Tab on the Mac for switching between applications is the shortcut that gets ooohs and aahs, just after the cut, copy, paste mentioned in another post.  
– Posted by Kurt

---

201. October 2nd, 2008 3:50 pm

Super-useful tips on a Mac:  
Command-Shift-4 to change the cursor to a crosshair. Click and drag to select a small portion of the screen, then let go. That snapshot is saved to your desktop as a .png graphic.  
Command-Shift-3 to capture a picture of your whole screen, saved as a .png graphic on your desktop.  
– Posted by www.redphonecomputers.com

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202. October 2nd, 2008 3:52 pm

Windows Key  
+ E opens Windows explorer  
+ F opens file search dialogue  
+ R opens Run dialogue box  
+ Pause/Break opens System Properties dialogue  
+ M minimize open windows  
+ SHIFT M restore windows  
+ D min open windows and toolbars  
+ D reopens windows shut above  
+ L locks Windows XP  
+ F1 show the Windows help dialogue  
+ Tab cycle thru buttons on taskbar  
– Posted by Charles C

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203. October 2nd, 2008 3:52 pm

Hey, those are great hints at working more efficiently - thanks!  
While this is far from news to many users it has been a lifesaver many times for me - like sending a Powerpoint with the full sized images embedded: Compressing already compressed jpeg images (or Stuffed files) through mail programs and servers can create problems beyond lost quality you paid a lot to get into the camera memory in the first place. Several web based services will upload your large files of any kind, like 90+ mb of photos, for free. For instance YouSendIt.com has been very reliable for over four years for me, friends and business associates. Of course, they want you to upgrade past 100 mb, for a “small” recurring fee. If you can’t break-up a file into several uploads you may have to upgrade. But, they ask before they email reminders of their enhanced services available to you, so I remain a happy unhassled user. I’m sure there are other services like this as good or better. Reviews - comments?  
– Posted by Steve Colton

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204. October 2nd, 2008 3:52 pm

There is a keyboard shortcut for cycling through your open windows on the PC. Hold Alt and click the Tab key until it highlights the window you want, then release. If you want to switch back and forth from the most recent window, just click Alt-Tab once. This often is much quicker than clicking when copying and pasting into different

documents or windows. Especially if you are using the Ctrl-X, Ctrl-C and Ctrl-V to cut, copy and paste.

– Posted by Eric

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205. October 2nd, 2008 3:53 pm  
The Windows + D was new for me - Thanks! One shortcut I use a lot is pushing F12 for “Save as” in Windows. Happy New Year!  
– Posted by David (Dudu)

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206. October 2nd, 2008 3:53 pm  
Windows-key-L locks the computer.  
– Posted by chrisw

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207. October 2nd, 2008 3:54 pm  
Select a large block of text w/out scrolling past your end point by inserting your cursor where you want to start>hold down the Shift key and insert the cursor at the end of the block. Select all is Control A (Command A on a Mac). Works in most apps. 😊  
– Posted by Preferred Customer

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208. October 2nd, 2008 3:54 pm  
dpogue said:  
> Google is also a units-of-measurement and  
> currency converter. Type “teaspoons in 1.3  
> gallons,” for example,  
> or “euros in 17 dollars.”  
> Click Search to see the  
> answer.  
Don’t forget, in Google, you can hit enter, instead of clicking search.  
– Posted by Karl

---

209. October 2nd, 2008 3:54 pm  
For those who use track changes in Microsoft Word, pressing Ctrl+Shift+E is a nice shortcut that turns them on and off. Similarly, Ctrl+Shift+= converts regular text into superscript (and back).  
– Posted by Kathy

---

210. October 2nd, 2008 3:55 pm  
In the Firefox browser, if you right click any tab, the menu includes the command Undo Close Tab, which has saved my bacon a few times when I forgot to record a URL before closing a tab.  
– Posted by Charles C

---

211. October 2nd, 2008 3:55 pm  
Try ctrl + F. You can find a specific word in any document WIndows, Mac, and Linux.  
– Posted by Steve

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212. October 2nd, 2008 3:55 pm  
Also, I have found this to be a very helpful link...  
<http://www.internet4classrooms.com/winkeyboard.htm#fi>  
– Posted by Eric

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213. October 2nd, 2008 3:56 pm  
Circuits  
The New York Times  
Thursday, October 2, 2008  
- From the Desk of David Pogue -  
-----  
.....  
\* You can double-click a word to highlight it in any document, e-mail or Web page.  
.....  
Correct - EXCEPT for all articles on the [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) web page. It is very frustrating to read an article and double click on a line to highlight it and then instead: you get a surprise a new web page to explain the meaning of the word or phrase you clicked on.  
At least give us an option to turn this annoying feature off, and allow the double-click to work as it does in the rest of the [www](http://www.nytimes.com).  
– Posted by Bruce C

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214. October 2nd, 2008 3:56 pm

You can actually resize photos from with Windows — without resorting to third party software. Simply right click on the photo and select “Resize Pictures.”

— Posted by Peter

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215. October 2nd, 2008 3:56 pm

The power of the [fn] key on Mac laptops is amazing. That key used in combination with other keys works miracles. For years I was frustrated by my inability to do a “forward delete” with the Mac laptop delete key. But, holding down the [fn] key while hitting the delete key causes a forward delete! There are several other uses for the [fn] key that are all revealed in Mr. Pogue’s Mac Missing Manuals.

— Posted by Cory Faith

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216. October 2nd, 2008 3:56 pm

Best-in-class free tools for Windows users:

Photo organizer: [picasa.google.com](http://picasa.google.com)  
Antivirus: [free.avg.com](http://free.avg.com)  
Anti-spyware: [spybot.de](http://spybot.de)  
Sound recorder and editor: [audacity.sourceforge.net](http://audacity.sourceforge.net)

— Posted by [www.redphonecomputers.com](http://www.redphonecomputers.com)

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217. October 2nd, 2008 3:57 pm

One thing I’ve seen, almost without fail, on every email list I’ve joined over the past 20 years: Someone will see a post to the list by an individual, then write what’s obviously a personal reply and meant just for that one individual. Then they hit reply, without noticing that they’re sending the message to the entire list, NOT just the intended recipient. It might seem basic and obvious, but many otherwise intelligent people don’t seem to understand the difference between an email list address and a personal address.

— Posted by Scott L

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218. October 2nd, 2008 3:57 pm

Here is a few for windows machines

If you have a machine that is screensaver password protected at anytime you can hit windows key + L to auto lock the machine simple type in your password to unlock your machine.

Instead of bringing the mouse all the way over to the start button simply hit ctrl + esc at the same time and it will bring up your start menu.

Want to use the run command simply hit windows key + r this will bring up your run box type anything you want in there “calculator” “cmd” for a command prompt “iexplore” your browser “mspaint” for Microsoft paint leave the quotes out of course this is a very quick and easy way to get to these apps.

My last two, instead of ctrl + alt + del to get to task manager simply right click on your task bar and select task manager. Instead of clicking into my computer from your desktop simply hit windows key + e, this will bring up your windows explorer menu

Hope these help ENJOY!

— Posted by EG

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219. October 2nd, 2008 3:57 pm

To quickly lock a Windows XP (or higher) system - {Window Key}-L. Works best if you have a password on the user account.

— Posted by John

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220. October 2nd, 2008 3:58 pm

One I use many times a day is ctrl & f to Find a word on a web page or word or excel document.

— Posted by Ray

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221. October 2nd, 2008 3:58 pm

Yes, more please!

— Posted by LDL

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222. October 2nd, 2008 3:58 pm

Your tip about enlarging the screen font with the control key and the scroll wheel made me chuckle. My son did just that and taught us that particular shortcut/trick when he was two years old!

It took a little while of us looking perplexed and saying, “HOW did

you do that?” until we figured out how.

Thanks!

– Posted by Nutrageous

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223. October  
2nd,  
2008  
3:59 pm

Joe W put in the address bits that you forgot! I like the ctrl S frequently when I’m in word for Save (while I’m typing); lost a few too many things at a power fail.

– Posted by vince V.

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224. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:00 pm

You don’t have to go to an online dictionary site to find a word’s definition. In the Google search field, type “define” followed immediately by the word you want defined. For example, you could type

“define immaculate conception” without the quotes.

==\walter

– Posted by Walter Gajewski

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225. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:00 pm

Wow. I’ve been using a computer for 25+ years and I didn’t know the one about scrolling a page with the space bar. Amazing.

Peter

<http://www.FlashlightWorthy.com>

Recommending books so good, they’ll keep you up past your bedtime.



– Posted by Peter

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226. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:00 pm

dpogue said:

> You can switch from one open program to the next

> by pressing Alt+Tab (Windows) or Command-Tab (Mac).

On Windows Alt+Tab switches between open `_windows_`.

On Mac Command+Tab switches between open `_programs_`;

On Mac Command-~ will cycle through the current program’s open windows.

Also, Command-W will close the current window (or Tab if the application supports tabs.

Command-} and Command={ (requires shift key) will cycle through the tabs for most programs.

– Posted by Karl

---

227. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:02 pm

When replacing a shaded selection, you do not have to delete it first. Typing or Pasting over the shaded text deletes the old text.

Thanks for the double click hint to select a word. Where have I been?

– Posted by Ron

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228. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:02 pm

Use tinyurl.com or something like it when you want to send someone a long email address.

The Google keyboard shortcuts are great. In Google Reader: j and k for moving from one post to the next or previous; s for star. In gmail: ga for go to all messages shows everything that’s been archived, gs goes to starred messages, etc.

Drag links from the address window to your toolbar (below the address) in Firefox to make buttons for favorite sites. In Windows XP, drag shortcuts for frequently used programs down to the Quick Launch menu at the bottom of the screen.

– Posted by Jennifer

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229. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:04 pm

How about a list of keystrokes for foreign word accents, etc?

– Posted by gilmour1

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230. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:05 pm

Triple-click in a paragraph to select the entire paragraph.

– Posted by Jamie Smith

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231. October  
2nd,  
2008

Pressing Command-Shift-4 together on a Mac gives you the ability to do a customizable screen capture of anything on your screen in any program. The screen capture is a `img`.

4:06 pm

program. The screen capture is a jpg.

– Posted by Timothy Post

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232. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:07 pm

No need to space twice after a period, even if that is what you learned in typing class!

– Posted by Jane

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233. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:07 pm

David:

You cannot enter senate.gov in the address bar and hit enter to get to [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov).

They could fix that in about 5 seconds, though.

– Posted by BobCat

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234. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:07 pm

In MS Word, suppose you want to copy/delete only a vertical strip of text, and not the entire page. You can do this by pressing the Alt key, and selecting just the text you need. You can do this across pages of a multi-page document too - keep the Alt key pressed, and drag your mouse pointer (keeping the left button pressed) all the way to the end of the document.

– Posted by Pramod

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235. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:08 pm

My favorite - you can undo Office’s meessy automatic bulleted/numbers list “feature”.

Format > AutoFormat > Options > AutoFormat As You Type > Uncheck “Automatic bulleted lists” and “Automatic numbered lists” and you can build an outline as you need to.

– Posted by John Hanzel

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236. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:08 pm

While holding down the Alt key, tap the Esc key to cycle through all open files and applications. Unlike the Alt-Tab keystroke which shows only the icons of the open files and applications through you are cycling, the Alt-Esc keystroke combination shows a full page from each open file and application through which you are cycling.

– Posted by Brad

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237. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:09 pm

There’s an even quicker way to enter an internet address. You can leave off the .com. E.g., just type “nytimes” then CTRL + Enter.

– Posted by David Latimer

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238. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:09 pm

If you use paste special in excel for values or formats often, you can add them as buttons to your edit toolbar.

View>Toolbars>Customize

On the commands menu, select Edit

On the right side, scroll down and select Paste Formatting. Click and drag the icon to the edit toolbar.(Your mouse will have a little box attached to it with an x or a +, a plus indicates that you can drop the icon there)

– Posted by Megan

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239. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:10 pm

Gotta disagree with Andy B about the smaller hard drive ... with \*everything\* going digital, and the price savings minimal for the smaller drive, go for the bigger one - always (three truths: you never have enough RAM, never have enough hard drive space, and never a big enough monitor).

Even those who don’t “hoard” photos or music files, they’ll always accumulate more ... and digital video. It goes on and on. I’m shopping for a new hard drive (to use as a backup with Apple’s Time Machine) right now.

Todd

– Posted by Todd

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240. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:10 pm

As a computer teacher...teaching Kindergarten through 8th grade, I was thrilled to read your comments about basic computer users. Needless to say computer users are getting younger and younger but games seem to be the emphasis not basic tech knowledge. That’s what we try to overcome.

The one that bugs me...and that I teach and reteach is, when something is highlighted, or selected and you wish to change it,



DON’T CLICK DELETE, just type the change. So many youngsters, and oldsters, as well, want to hit delete or pick up the mouse...a totally unnecessary move! Thanks for the article!!

– Posted by Bruce Stern

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241. October 2nd, 2008 4:10 pm

To highlight a long block of text without having to drag the cursor all through it, left-click to put the non-blinking cursor mark at the beginning of the text, scroll down and place the blinking cursor at the end and hit SHIFT-left click.

If your desktop is cluttered with icons, try creating folders on the desktop with names like Utilities or Financial Documents and dragging icons into them. Double-click the folder to open it.

Although these aren’t Windows features per se, many programs have their own keyboard short-cuts that override Windows short-cuts. Some of these may be customizable.

For an extensive list of Windows keyboard shortcuts: <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/126449>

– Posted by Sideline Viewer

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242. October 2nd, 2008 4:12 pm

This would be less common, but I don’t understand whatever happened to it – for Macs, if you hear of an “Apple” or “Open-Apple” key on the keyboard, this refers to what is now called the Command key (which may have an apple, and/or a cloverish thing, and/or whatever else they put on them these days). Back 12 years ago when they were teaching us Macs in elementary school, it was always the Open-Apple key. Whatever happened to it?

– Posted by Michel

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243. October 2nd, 2008 4:13 pm

In firefox a link can be opened in a new tab by simply clicking it with the middle button. Tabs can also be closed by clicking them with the middle button if you don’t care to find the 8x8 pixel x

– Posted by Torin

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244. October 2nd, 2008 4:14 pm

please write the book asap, i need it!

– Posted by elisabetta beraldo

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245. October 2nd, 2008 4:15 pm

Clicking on a web site’s logo in the upper left corner will usually take you to the site home page. I’m always surprised when people don’t realize this.

– Posted by Michael Moore

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246. October 2nd, 2008 4:15 pm

If you right click on most Web-page tables you can export them to Excel for editing or doing calculations.

If you have pasted text into a Word document and gotten the formatting screwed up, find a section that’s formatted correctly and use the Format Painter to paint it into the bad part (Look for the little paintbrush icon)

You can highlight text by holding the shift key down and using the up or down arrow keys. Add the control key to do it a paragraph at a time.

– Posted by KM

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247. October 2nd, 2008 4:15 pm

You don’t need to highlight and delete a web address to put a new one in. Just click on the icon in the address bar and type over it.

Oh, and never, ever stop backing up.

– Posted by Mary Lee

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248. October 2nd, 2008 4:17 pm

With most modern word processors, you can click-and-hold a graphics file in Explorer (Windows) or Finder (Mac), then drag it into your wp document. The word processor will insert your graphic at the place in the document where you dropped it.

That licensing agreement that you just clicked OK ... I agree ... OK on might actually be a legal contract that binds you to certain actions. (OK, I do this myself. But I KNOW that I do!)

The beige box that holds a computer’s working parts is NOT called a “hard drive”.

Any computer made in the last ten years spends 99 per cent of its time waiting for you to press a key. So, no, you don’t need to upgrade to a faster processor.

Even two-finger typists can type as fast as they can talk with a little practice.

Spill-chuckers kin make miss takes two. You still need to know the English language.

There is this thing called word wrap. You don’t have to hit Enter at the end of every line.

– Posted by Michel Clasquin-Johnson

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249. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:19 pm

Print Screen captures the entire screen image, which you can then paste into a document, email.

Alt + print screen captures just the window you are working on.

– Posted by Sebi

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250. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:19 pm

I teach a mid-level computer class (PC) for seniors and knew most of your hints. Here are more, as fodder for your book someday.

To highlight a segment (large or small) in MSWord or Excel, click at the beginning of the segment. Release the mouse. Hold Shift. Click at the end of what you want.

Save OFTEN.

If you mess up a document, try the Undo button. If that doesn’t work, close the document. When prompted whether you want to Save, click No. Reopen the document. (Anything you hadn’t saved will be gone. See hint just above.)

When you want to type a new location in the address bar of the Internet, click once on what’s there, which highlights it. Then start typing the new address. (Many people think you have to delete the old one first.)

In Word, if you can’t remember the filename of a document you want, use Search and Advanced Search and search for a word or phrase that is unusual but is in that document.

Use Insert | Symbols to get a cents sign, foreign alphabets, wingdings, etc.

Use Disk Cleanup periodically. If you wonder what to check for cleanup, highlight an item and read the description at the bottom.

By the way, your hint about dragging a window by the title bar only works if you are on Restore Down (have a SINGLE box with white bar at the top, next to the X for closing the program).

– Posted by blee

---

251. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:20 pm

UNDO and REDO

As stated by many other, Ctrl+Z is the UNDO command that in many cases will un-do the last action you took.

Ctrl+Y will REDO what you just un-did.

– Posted by Joe O’Connor

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252. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:20 pm

In Microsoft Excel, if you select data you want to graph, you can press F11 (on Windows) to create an instant graph/chart with default settings. This works on Macs also, if Expose settings are changed so that F11 is not assigned.

– Posted by Michelle Baldwin

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253. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:21 pm

David - You are really on to something! It may very well become the most useful computer book ever written. I know lots of tips and tricks and am always looking for something to make my day easier.

I particularly appreciate the Shift + Delete, the e-mail “goodbye for good” combo in Outlook. Another good one is dragging a FedEx, UPS or DHL tracking number into Google search bar, this takes you directly to tracking update for the package. Write that book, I will definitely buy it.

– Posted by Kimberly

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254. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:22 pm

Great stuff. I think of myself as moderately knowledgeable (several friends think of me as their guru), but I only knew about half of these items. So David, write the book, but keep it very very simple. Here’s a truly basic one that hardly any of the mouse-centric computer-users in my workplace are aware of:

It’s much quicker not to use the mouse for many basic functions. For

example, instead of mousing to the “Save” or “Quit” buttons, just press Control-S (Save) or Control-Q (Quit) or Control-W (Close an open doc or window) or Control-A (Select all in an open doc). For Macs, use Command instead of Control.

– Posted by Bruce

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255. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:23 pm

I think a website would be better where users can generate content and viewers can vote on the usefulness and they can be sorted by relevance, because the book would become obsolete too quickly. Sorry, Dave!

– Posted by Charles

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256. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:23 pm

ALT-PrintScreen captures only the active window to the clipboard (as opposed to the whole screen when hitting just PrintScreen)

– Posted by chrisw

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257. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:24 pm

On the Mac, if you are in a Terminal window and want to view a file, you can type “open filename” and the correct application will launch with the file open.

If you don’t like the default application, you can use specify one with open -a

Example

```
open -a /Applications/Adobe\ Reader\ 8/Adobe\ Reader.app  
report.pdf
```

– Posted by Karl

---

258. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:24 pm

The graphical user interface is great for many tasks but usually makes file maintenance particularly painful. Grab mouse, select file, release mouse, hit F2, change file name, grab mouse, select next file, release mouse, hit F2, change file name, etc., etc., etc.

But you can make this much easier by using the tab key. When working in Windows Explorer, one you the file in “file name edit mode”, after you make your changes, you can just hit the tab key. This will save your changes, select the next file, and place you in file name edit mode.

– Posted by Joe O’Connor

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259. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:25 pm

One previous poster mentioned that double-clicking on a word in a NY Times article presents a definition of that word. Two other posters also mentioned this, but opined that it was a bad thing.

Wrong. This is such a fabulous use of the Web, all sites should adopt it. Why would anyone want to highlight (presumably to copy) a single word? You drag across a section or sentence to highlight and copy it - still doable on nytimes.com. The reference feature saves lots of time (copy, paste into electronic dictionary - or just look up in a real dictionary), and is even better for people - you get a bio. I wish washingtonpost.com did this.

– Posted by Allen

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260. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:26 pm

I can’t seem to find a way to delete an unwanted site in my browser unless I delete History, wherein lies sites I have searched for ages it seems and wish to preserve. I want to eliminate just one, sticking out like a sore thumb,

on the list. How do I do it? I expect to find the answer here tom or the next tom and tom and tom....

We need more of these easy-to-digest tips from Mr. Pogue. Thanks.

– Posted by Roman Rapido

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261. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:31 pm

In Excel, if you want to place the exact same information in cell A2 as what’s in A1, simply put your cursor in A2 and click Control-D. This duplicates the cell exactly. (I’m surprised how often I use this.)

Excel again - If you want to key in days of the week, or months in the year, or even the four quarters of the year, simply type Monday, January or Q1 in a cell and press Enter. Then place your cursor back into that cell; roll your cursor over the black dot in the lower right-hand corner until the cross changes to all-black; drag that cross either down (column) or across (row) and it will fill in (Tuesday, Wednesday, etc.) automatically. If you use abbreviations, it will follow your lead. This will work also for numbers or the alphabet. It

will not work for the seasons of the year however (yes, I tried just for fun!).

– Posted by Vicki

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262. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:31 pm

CONTROL-Z

I am shocked at how many people don’t know that you can UNDO your most recent typing in almost any context by hitting control-z. This should be taught in grammar school!

Art

– Posted by Art M.

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263. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:34 pm

When using a Mac product (Safari, Mail, etc), put your cursor over a word and press ctrl+command-d to open the word in the dictionary. I just wish this worked in Firefox on Mac!!

@#24 and #26: Double-clicking a word in NYTimes in Safari on Mac highlights the word. What browser are you using that opens a dictionary?

– Posted by Jim

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264. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:35 pm

With 238 replies, I think David is well on his way to enough material for his shortcut book!

– Posted by Bill Sharpe

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265. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:36 pm

Don’t write the book, David. In just under 4 hours, your readers did it.

– Posted by Brooklyn Robb

---

266. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:37 pm

On the tip about Ebay, It’s the same with Paypal, along with not clicking on the links and writing the URL manually they both have an e-mail address where you can forward these e-mails and they supposedly investigate and eventually stop them. The e-mail address is [spoofof@ebay.com](mailto:spoofof@ebay.com) and [spoofof@paypal.com](mailto:spoofof@paypal.com). As far as your tip for zooming in and out, is there a way to reset it to default size????

– Posted by Adam Gordon

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267. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:38 pm

Yes, I’ve learned a few things - from your column and from the reader comments as well - but here’s one I haven’t seen yet. To close ALL open windows on a Mac (permanently) use option + command + w

– Posted by Bronx Richie

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268. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:39 pm

If you use the File menu and select the print command, one of the check boxes I never noticed is “Selection.” I use this to print portions of web pages that aren’t set up to print well to paper.

– Posted by Rick Talcott

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269. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:42 pm

Here’s one I haven’t seen here yet.

In Windows when you have a dialog box with OK or CANCEL for example, you can select the default action by hitting the space bar instead of clicking on it. The default action is the one with the dots around it.

Regarding needing www in front of a URL, that has to do with the way the site is setup in the DNS servers. It has nothing to do with Internet Explorer or Microsoft servers.

– Posted by Sy

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270. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:42 pm

Changing double click to single click was a revelation I discovered some years ago by accident. I even had to go back to find out how to do it before writing this because it is not intuitive. Control panel, hardware, and it’s in folders - go figure, but what a time saver.

– Posted by Phillip Helslander

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271. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:45 pm

It’s all about not using the mouse. These probably aren’t common knowledge, but are two of my favorite Windows keyboard shortcuts. (1) F2 lets you rename any highlighted file. And in Excel, it lets you edit any highlighted cell. It works in a similar but hard to define way

in other places too. (2) Alt + Space drops down the window control menu. So Alt + Space then “n” minimizes any window without having to touch the mouse. There should absolutely be a list of all Windows keyboard shortcuts somewhere.

– Posted by Jason

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272. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:51 pm

Not sure these are listed already but here goes:

Selecting Files

Use Shift left click to select a range of files

Ctrl left click to select individual files

Copying Files

From one folder to another select(see above) the files you want to copy and hold the control key down, then drag the files to the new directory.

Alt-Enter forces a line break in an Excel cell.

– Posted by Bruce Nikolai

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273. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:54 pm

“\* Come up with an automated backup system for your computer. There’s no misery quite like the sick feeling of having lost chunks of your life because you didn’t have a safety copy.”

Oh, wow! Like we haven’t heard that one before ... 😊

Now where’s the 2-part column on how to actually \*find\* an “automatic backup system” that

1. is user-friendly
2. is software-based so that backups can be made on standard external harddrives in various locations
2. actually works (and doesn’t hang up halfway through the backup)

– Posted by Thomas C Gerber

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274. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:55 pm

What a wonderful bunch of tricks. But selecting the ones to try to remember is turning out to be a major chore.

– Posted by Jim

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275. October  
2nd,  
2008  
4:56 pm

In PowerPoint, hit F5 to start the slide show at the beginning. (You don’t have to look for the menu item or the little slide show icon!) If you want to start the show at the current slide, Shift-F5. I use both of these all the time but no one seems to know about this shortcut.

And finally, if you want to blank the screen so people are looking at you rather than some irrelevant chart, hit “b” in slide show mode.

– Posted by John Goodenough

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276. October  
2nd,  
2008  
5:00 pm

To right click on a MacBook: place two fingers on the trackpad and click.

To scroll up or down on a MacBook: place two fingers on the trackpad and move them up or down (or left or right for left/right scrolling).

And for those savvy enough to use keyboard shortcuts but still a little flummoxed when they shift from a Mac to a PC or vice versa, the command key on a Mac plays the same role as the ctrl key on a PC.

– Posted by jh

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277. October  
2nd,  
2008  
5:04 pm

Some favorites (for Windows):

- 1) Double click the icon at left side of title bar to close the window (useful if the X in the top right is extended beyond the reach of the screen or is covered by something else).
- 2) When dragging a dropping files, sometimes it is copied and sometimes it is moved (depending on whether it’s being moved to the same drive or a different one. Instead of dragging with the left mouse button, try dragging with the right mouse button. When you let go, it’ll give you the option of whether you want to move or copy. I use this all the time if I have doubts about what will happen.
- 3) Hit the Windows Key + L to lock the computer. This is great for when you step away from your computer and want to keep it protected (but w/o putting it to sleep).
- 4) In Vista, Ctrl-Shift-Esc brings up the Task Manager directly rather than what Ctrl-Alt-Del does.
- 5) Windows Key + E opens up My Computer.

Other great windows shortcuts:

[http://www.windownetworking.com/articles\\_tutorials/Win dows-](http://www.windownetworking.com/articles_tutorials/Win%20dows-)

[XP-Keyboard-Shortcuts.html](#)

– Posted by Greg

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278. October 2nd, 2008 5:08 pm

change your DNS server from “automatic” to Open DNS, a super-fast and free online DNS. It will speed up your web surfing. The website include instructions almost anyone can follow. [www.opendns.com](http://www.opendns.com)

– Posted by Paul

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279. October 2nd, 2008 5:09 pm

In Windows (don’t know about MAC - still a barbarian) when searching, \*, in front of something gets you everything that has that ending.

Want to find that spreadsheet you made last week? Use your search mechanism, type \*.xls, and you’ll get every Excel file (thus the wisdom of advanced search, and the date range fields)

A most useful thing for very many: a tutorial on how to customize your toolbars. Constantly amazed at the folks who don’t know it can be done, never mind know how to do it.

Warren

– Posted by Warren Evans

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280. October 2nd, 2008 5:09 pm

In an Internet Explorer window supporting tabbed browsing (e.g. IE7 with IE7Pro installed), you can use Ctrl+Tab to visit any tab that you have opened.

– Posted by Pramod

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281. October 2nd, 2008 5:09 pm

Not all windows can be resized. In general, if you don’t see a maximize button, it can’t be resized.

The proper cut/copy/paste keys are SHIFT-DEL/CTRL-INS/SHIFT-INS. The CTRL-X/C/V nonsense is a Microsoft-ism, which unfortunately many lazy/incompetent programmers have hard-coded into web pages (i.e. they make the non-standard MS method work, while the standard CUA method does not).

And while double-clicking a word does select it, it also has the bad habit of selecting the space between it and the next word (unless it’s at the end of a line), which often necessitates swiping the word to get the correct selected text. Or, if it’s an interface with a cursor (as opposed to a read-only web page), holding SHIFT and using cursor movement keys is faster than reaching for the mouse.

– Posted by Thanny

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282. October 2nd, 2008 5:10 pm

When I go online, I just type the name and end with the CTRL/ENTER key combo to finish the necessities.

– Posted by ED

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283. October 2nd, 2008 5:10 pm

Control Z in windows usually undoes the last action .. something disappears? Bring it back with control z.

great columns, useful comments!

– Posted by Toby Fouks

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284. October 2nd, 2008 5:12 pm

Links and buttons appearing on web pages in an internet browser only require a single click, not a double-click.

– Posted by Chris

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285. October 2nd, 2008 5:12 pm

Here’s a tough one to recognize:

What appears to be an accurately formatted Windows dialog box pops up while you are web browsing that says “Your computer is running in a suboptimal mode - click here to reallocate your browser resources.” (or somesuch similar wording)

If the formatting of the dialog box DOESN’T match your present operating system (Windows 95 on a Vista system, for example, or any Windows format on a Mac) do what you can to dismiss that window without its doing anything. If you accept the dialog, you will be loading software you don’t want onto your system from someplace you don’t want to be. These things are used in some advertisements.

If the dialog looks good, you can only depend on your sense of skepticism and knowledge about how your system should be working to know whether this is internally generated and perhaps valid or totally bogus.

Good luck... (I had one at work yesterday that my office’s virus filter recognized and suppressed, though it still corrupted my browser’s window.)

– Posted by tomP

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286. October  
2nd,  
2008  
5:14 pm

I thought it was common knowledge that you should NEVER try to insert a Mini-CD or DVD (one of those little 3-inch ones) in a slot-loading drive. At best, you may not get your disc back. At worst, you may damage the drive.

My local computer parts dealer didn’t know that.

– Posted by Chris

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287. October  
2nd,  
2008  
5:15 pm

Some of us find using a mouse convenient. For instance, if I want to clear my screen of all windows, I simply go down to the left, near the start button, and click on the desktop icon. If I am mousing at the time, why take my hands off to use the keys?

– Posted by Barbara

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288. October  
2nd,  
2008  
5:17 pm

“... (Instead, use iPhone or Picasa–photo–organizing programs that can automatically scale down photos in the process of e-mailing them.)” I think you mean iPhoto.

– Posted by Bob

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289. October  
2nd,  
2008  
5:18 pm

In Excel, to start a new line of text in a cell, hit ALT+Enter.

– Posted by wt

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290. October  
2nd,  
2008  
5:18 pm

Best. Column. Evar!!!

I am bookmarking and saving for more reading later. TONS of tips in the comments too and thanks to everyone who posts them!

– Posted by Carl Pietrantonio

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291. October  
2nd,  
2008  
5:24 pm

thank you

– Posted by lahail

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292. October  
2nd,  
2008  
5:25 pm

Why is this column titled Tech Tips for the “Basic” Computer User? Level of sophistication has nothing to do with the amount of technical minutiae that someone does, or does not, know. Some of these tips I did not know. But is that because I didn’t have time to pore over help screens or just play with machines, the way other people do? By the way, it would help that, instead of writing a book, you had all the tips organized on a web site somewhere.

– Posted by Michael

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293. October  
2nd,  
2008  
5:25 pm

In Word (and OpenOffice), cntl + will delete the entire word; a great time saver over hitting 6-8 times to remove a word.

Great list...get that book going!

– Posted by David Tussey

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294. October  
2nd,  
2008  
5:25 pm

Nice job hitting my pet peeve. Yes, “You can double-click a word to highlight it in any document, e-mail or Web page.” EXCEPT WHEN READING AN ARTICLE ON THE NEW YORK TIME SITE! If you try it in a news article, a window pops up, presumably the unholy spawn of a co-marketing alliance between the Times and answer.com. That’s not what I want: I want to highlight the word, as I have done in windowing systems going back to the dawn of time (or at least the X window system). Please stop! Or, tell me how to turn it off, short of blocking all javascript from nytimes.com.

– Posted by Tony

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295. October  
2nd,  
2008  
5:25 pm

\* “You can double-click a word to highlight it in any document, e-mail or Web page.”

Except on the NYT. The NYT will do a search on the word selected in this manner.

– Posted by -JimP

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296. October 2nd, 2008 5:32 pm

CTRL-Z is Undo and CTRL-Y is Redo. CTRL-S is usually Save, press it often. CTRL-A selects all text. CTRL-F searches and usually F3 searches for the next match even if you have closed the search dialog. F2 renames files and other things. The SCROLL-LOCK key is useless, but it does light up an indicator like CAPS-LOCK.

In dialog windows (windows without the minimize and maximize buttons) pressing ENTER is the same as pressing the OK button and pressing ESC is the same as pressing the cancel button.

If you need to enter data into a web page (like logging in or searching) there is usually no need to actually press the submit button, instead press ENTER.

CTRL-HOME takes you to the very beginning of the document instead of the beginning of the line; CTRL-END takes you to the end. CTRL-BACKSPACE deletes the whole word, CTRL-DEL usually works the same way. CTRL-LEFT and CTRL-RIGHT move the text cursor left or right by a whole word. Holding SHIFT will select in this case too.

Double clicking a word will select the whole word, but triple clicking selects the whole sentence and quadruple clicking selects the whole paragraph.

There are many shortcut keys with the Windows key, like WIN-F, WIN-L, WIN-PAUSE. The key that is between the right Windows key and right CTRL opens a context menu just like clicking with the right mouse button.

Double clicking the title bar of a window will maximize that window, double clicking the window icon (on the left side) will close that window. In Windows XP and earlier in opened folders that icon in the left corner acts like the folder itself in many ways, you can even drag-and-drop the folder from there. In Vista you can drag-and-drop the icon in the address bar instead. IE works similarly.

If you drag-and-drop items from one window to another you don’t have to have the windows side by side, you can just drag it to the target window’s button on the Task Bar, and after a few seconds it brings up that window and you can drop whatever you were dragging.

– Posted by Henri Vasserman

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297. October 2nd, 2008 5:35 pm

When teaching people how to use a Mac, I always suggest that they use what I call “punish yourself.” I tell them, that, for instance, if they are going to the menu to create a new folder, they should go to the menu. Seeing that there is a Shift+Command+N symbol to the right, they should leave the menu and use the keystroke shortcut. After a half dozen times of “punishing themselves” this way they will forever after know the keystroke shortcut for that action. Then use this same “punish yourself” to learn any keystroke shortcut they are apt to use often.

– Posted by Philip Russell

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298. October 2nd, 2008 5:39 pm

Don’t save a file from your shiny new copy of the latest Word in its own format unless you know the recipient has the same version: use an earlier Word format, or rich text format (rtf) to make sure it will open.

– Posted by Cary

---

299. October 2nd, 2008 5:40 pm

cntl + A selects all the text (or objects). It is essentially “select All”. Incredibly useful if you want to paste an entire document or spreadsheet into another one.

– Posted by David Tussey

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300. October 2nd, 2008 5:40 pm

Single click to select, double click to open. If you are not sure how to do something try drag and drop, it will work 95% of the time, at least on a Mac it does.

– Posted by John McDonnell

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301. October 2nd, 2008 5:44 pm

MS Office:  
Select text...  
Ctrl + [ makes text smaller.  
Ctrl + ] makes text bigger.  
Ctrl + various numbers will increase/decrease line spacing and more.



Ctrl + = will delete  
Ctrl + Enter inserts a page break (inserting a new page.)  
Scott  
– Posted by Scott

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302. October 2nd, 2008 5:48 pm  
Good on you, Pogue! I knew spacer bar trick because my snail mail piles up in front of new aluminum Mac keyboard and slips to the spacer bar doing exactly that. Your list in today’s e-mail was chock full of goodies and I can’t wait for the book. Thanks, Good Buddy!  
– Posted by Cullen Athey

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303. October 2nd, 2008 5:50 pm  
Great article, David. Here’s one from the graphic arts crowd: if you can successfully print something on your desktop printer, it doesn’t mean you can automatically print the same thing with good results on a commercial press.  
– Posted by Tracey Lawrence

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304. October 2nd, 2008 6:09 pm  
In the words of David Cassidy, “I think I love you.”  
Thanks for the tips. (And...stop the presses...I just learned that if you drag an email into Outlooks “Contacts” link, that it opens a new contact box with the email in there!  
– Posted by Carolyn

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305. October 2nd, 2008 6:15 pm  
my fave-highlight and drag to desktop every time you want to save a pithy phrase, a joke, a picture. that’s on the mac. never used anything else  
– Posted by denyadog

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306. October 2nd, 2008 6:28 pm  
Ready to send that Outlook Express email you just typed? Hit Ctrl+Enter  
There are plenty of other OE shortcuts using Ctrl. Use the drop down menus to see what they are.  
I wish there was a shortcut for sending a link from a webpage. I haven’t found one for Firefox nor IE.  
– Posted by Carol

---

307. October 2nd, 2008 6:28 pm  
You can also use Google as a converter. Type the phrase in the form “x type1 in type2 ” into the search box.  
try:  
6 centimeters in inches  
100 USD in yen  
40 cups in gallons  
30 C in F (or 30 Celsius in Fahrenheit)  
– Posted by J Greene

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308. October 2nd, 2008 6:29 pm  
My first computer was an early Osborne, complete with Wordstar III and DB2, running on C/PM. Our son was eight years old at the time and mastered both programs within a matter of weeks.  
He is now in his early 40s, a computational neurobiological statistic for a teaching and research hospital.  
Because of him, I have always told friends and business associates that the best IT resource for their home equipment is the brightest 16-year-old in the neighborhood.  
That’s a basic tech tip that is seldom passed along.  
– Posted by Lee Maltenfort

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309. October 2nd, 2008 6:30 pm  
In macs, hold down the command key and click on the name of a window to see the folder hierarchy. Move up the list to open any folder in the hierarchy. Very useful for finding where a file is and opening its folder. (I would like to know the windows equivalent)  
– Posted by Dave Carmean

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310. October 2nd, 2008 6:31 pm  
The flip side of the scale-down-a-photo before emailing it tip is that if you want to print the photo, you should go back to the original, full-scale photo. That’s what all those megapixels are for.

- 
- Posted by Ben
- 
311. October 2nd, 2008 6:40 pm  
ALT + F4 = Closes a window  
— Posted by Cherie
- 
312. October 2nd, 2008 6:44 pm  
(on a mac and in Office and iWork) - the wee picture of the file in the toolbar at the top can be dragged to an email, the desktop etc. It copies the file to that location. BUT only if it is saved ... and that is the difference between the radio button and the cross in the red dot on the top left.  
Really handy for copying from open files to a USB drive, emailing attachments etc.  
very cool list - keep them coming 😊  
Greg  
— Posted by Greg Carroll
- 
313. October 2nd, 2008 6:45 pm  
If your e-mail program one day pops up a window telling you your password is incorrect, don't bother typing anything in. Just hit Cancel, get out of the program, and go back in. If the program was working a day earlier, it has the right password, and having you type in different guesses is just going to make it remember the wrong password.  
— Posted by Gregg
- 
314. October 2nd, 2008 6:47 pm  
In Windows, go to Start, Run... and type "msconfig".  
Click the Startup tab: this is your real startup. If your computer starts getting slow, you just go here and de-select qtask.exe, for example. If you don't know what a particular program is, just search "hkcmd.exe" and someone somewhere has probably documented what that does.  
Also! If Windows wants you to restart after an update and it keeps popping up to the point of annoyance, do this:  
Go to Control Panel, to Administrative Tools, to Services and find the Automatic Updates service, right click, and select stop.  
Also, does Windows take too long to shut down? You can hold down the power button on most systems and the computer will just turn off as it did in the good old days. I've never had a problem. You can apparently lose files this way, but I think that is just a hoax to let Microsoft have the time to upload your entire usage history before you shut down. [Really, has anyone ever developed a problem by doing this?]  
You can also set up your laptop to stay on when you shut it in Windows. (I do this with mine to use it as a stereo system/giant iPod ... hook it up to speakers, and you can put in and take out CDs and they will automatically play ... and also when I'm running large calculations and I have to leave the coffee shop I don't have to stop them).  
Right click on the Desktop > Properties > Screen Saver Tab > Power... > Advanced Tab, and then tell Windows what to do when you close your lid.  
— Posted by Jason
- 
315. October 2nd, 2008 6:55 pm  
WRITE THE DAM BOOK  
— Posted by Richard Springer
- 
316. October 2nd, 2008 6:55 pm  
Another basic: after hitting forward to send an e-mail, delete (using any mentioned methods) all of those "forwarded to" email addresses makes it a lot easier on the recipient. No more scrolling through dozens of addresses to get to the heart of the e-mail. Some people do not realize you can edit forwarded or reply e-mails.  
— Posted by Walter Davis
- 
317. October 2nd, 2008 6:58 pm  
Great column and I learned a lot. Will print out for future reference. But there's one thing I learned the hard way recently, being less adept at Mac than on a PC – the following is not, at least in my experience, true for a Mac –  
"Just putting something into the Trash or the Recycle Bin doesn't actually delete it. You then have to \*empty\* the Trash or Recycle Bin."

To my recent surprise, I discovered that the Mac actually does delete things you put in the trash. Yikes! Was that a rude awakening. I asked a Mac person about it and he just looked at me like I was out of my mind. Well yes, I find it sometimes necessary to go through my trash and make sure something is or isn’t there. And I like having that backup.

I’ve now created a folder right next to the Mac trash titled “Tentative Trash.” I put stuff there first and leave it for a while, just in case, before actually releasing it to the hereafter by putting it in the real Mac trash.

Just in case I’m actually right about this, and it’s generally true for Macs, thought your readers might want to know. It’s nice having that temporary, limbo sort of place and I was really not happy to learn I’d lost stuff, or couldn’t go through it to double check, with my Mac.

– Posted by Frances Thronson

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318. October  
2nd,  
2008  
6:58 pm

In Windows you can get File Explorer window real quick by:  
right-click the “Start” button and click “Explore”

Use google toolbar to access bookmarks across any computer.

Buy a Fingerworks iGesture pad on EBAY and you’ll never miss using a mouse again.

Use a free program like KeyTweak to remap the CapsLock to be a Shift key. This prevents me from turning Caps On by accident. (remap the Scroll Lock key to be the CapsLock if you want to keep the function around). I used to remap the Windows Key, but use the WindowsKey-D to get to my desktop a lot.

– Posted by Dan

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319. October  
2nd,  
2008  
7:01 pm

In Safari: command-I puts a website’s content in a new mail file, command-shift-I just puts the url in an email. Real quick to tell someone about a website.

– Posted by JJ

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320. October  
2nd,  
2008  
7:02 pm

For #151: Put a shortcut to Windows calculator on your desktop for quick calculations.

For easy back-up:

Put a shortcut to C: on your desktop to bring up the entire list of files; then put a shortcut to your external back-up drive to bring it up. You can then drag files which you have just changed to the back-up drive quickly and easily. I back up all my financial and photo files constantly this way. They are also usable from the back-up drive if necessary.

I also have a shortcut on the desktop for the Accessories:System Tools:Character map for quickly copying foreign language characters to be inserted in a document.

Thanks to everyone for all the tips. As an old DOS user, I’ve always used keyboard shortcuts — but I now have lots of new ones. Incidentally, I highlighted the tips I didn’t know, copied them by right clicking, and pasted them into a Word document which I kept open on the screen. I’ll sort them later into a usable list.

– Posted by Joan Smith

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321. October  
2nd,  
2008  
7:14 pm

Escape! Escape!

David wrote, “\* You can open the Start menu by tapping the key with the Windows logo on it.”

But you can make it go away with the Escape key. Use the Escape key anytime you need to get out of a dialog box. For example, if I press it while I’m composing this message—poof—the text goes away.

– Posted by Jason L-S

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322. October  
2nd,  
2008  
7:16 pm

Remember when giving keyboard shortcuts to newbies that some will hit the keys in sequence and not simultaneously. So make sure they understand that both keys must be pressed down at the same time.

Be sure to explain things very precisely. Some users will glance for a second and then think they’ve been unsuccessful. It reinforces their prejudice that “these things are too complicated for me.”

It’s also important to not use loaded language and make them think

you’re talking down to them. They’ll shut down mentally and nothing you say will get through.

A lot of older users, even those who have been using a computer for a decade or more, don’t know ANY of this. so be patient and don’t laugh at them. They still regard computers as a mystery, so they are afraid to do anything which is the least bit adventurous. Some seniors are so used to learning things by doing that they won’t read any manuals. I know of 2 like that. One even ruined an IBM Thinkpad screen by using an eraser and finally steel wool trying to take an icon off his screen. He thought it was painted or etched into the window.

– Posted by Kenn Fong

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323. October  
2nd,  
2008  
7:20 pm

Access any Windows menu command without using a mouse.

In Windows, the words in the menu bar will have one letter underlined. Hit alt and that letter to open the menu. eg alt-f to open the file menu. You can select an item using the arrow keys or keep using the alt-letter combinations.

If you have menu commands you use a lot, learning the sequence of keys will save lots of time and reduce the chance of injury. For example, in Photoshop you can use alt-i-i to resize images or alt-e-a to scale things.

– Posted by Justin McGuire

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324. October  
2nd,  
2008  
7:22 pm

When using a BlackBerry, holding a letter key for a few seconds changes it from lower case to upper case.

– Posted by Ken Goldman

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325. October  
2nd,  
2008  
7:22 pm

Just thanksomuch for the great ‘basics’ refresher!

If you do a book on it, find me...I am perfect for the job of Momgirl Friday for the task. We could do it online, such is so easy.....just don’t title it ‘...for dummies’. such slang in a title is very bad psychology,even in jest.

e

– Posted by Elle Smith Fagan

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326. October  
2nd,  
2008  
7:23 pm

I agree that a lot of this was not beginners stuff, but rather just obscure tricks that most advanced users don’t know because they don’t memorize every keyboard shortcut.

Back to real beginners stuff, the mouse: The best thing you can do to a novice is teach them how to move the mouse:

– keep the heel of your hand stationary, planted on the desk; don’t move your whole hand

– The mouse should never move more than an inch – usually half an inch

– Flick the mouse by pivoting from the heel of your hand to move it

– The distance you go will increase with the speed you move: a quick half inch goes farther than a slow half inch

– If you want to go further in one direction after you’ve reached the half inch or inch, pick up the mouse, move it back, set it down, and repeat, all without moving heel of your hand.

– Bonus tip: When using menus, click (up and down) on the menu item, don’t just hold down the mouse button; that way you can scan the stuff in the menu at your leisure without keeping pressure on your finger; when you want to select something, move to it and click again.

Demonstrating this stuff makes it much clearer than reading it, of course.

– Posted by Mark

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327. October  
2nd,  
2008  
7:45 pm

Click on the windows desktop and press F1 for help type “windows keyboard shortcuts” and select the topic “Windows keyboard shortcuts overview” you will a listing of ALL the really useful, generic keyboard shortcuts.

– Posted by Kim

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328. October  
2nd,  
2008  
7:45 pm

My favorite learning tool is regular reading of great Pogue columns like this one on tips.

– Posted by Fran Rodgers

- 
329. October 2nd, 2008 8:00 pm I'll buy the book, David! And great comments from your readers - thanks to all.  
— Posted by Branch
- 
330. October 2nd, 2008 8:16 pm When your computer is attached to a projector and you want to blank the projected image but not your screen hit the B key and then hit B again to bring back up the projected image when you finish with whatever you didn't want projected.  
— Posted by as
- 
331. October 2nd, 2008 8:19 pm When you want to send someone a large quantity of files, you can put all the files you want to send into a folder, go to the directory containing the folder, right click it, and press "Sent To" ->"Compressed(zipped) Folder". Now all the files are one 'zip' file.  
To open a .zip file, simply right click it, and press "Extract All..."  
Maybe this is too advanced for the average user... but I have countless people ask me how to open the file i sent them, because i didn't want to sit there click files for 10 minutes.  
— Posted by Ben Rothman
- 
332. October 2nd, 2008 8:32 pm Did you know you can turn a Windows computer off now like every other appliance on Earth by physically pushing the power button? Most people I talk to are afraid to do so because they think the computer will (still) tell them when they boot up again that they should be ashamed for not shutting the computer down properly: (obviously) clicking the START button.  
  
I'm sure someone will point out that sometimes pushing the power button does NOT turn off a Windows computer (because some program won't shut down—who knows why?). I guess I should be ashamed after all....  
— Posted by Victor Milenkovic
- 
333. October 2nd, 2008 8:33 pm When ever you have a set of cells in Excel that should be filled with the same number, just select all of them, type your number and hold the key CTRL while you hit RETURN and you fill them all at one time with out cutting and pasting.  
— Posted by Carlos Aguilar
- 
334. October 2nd, 2008 8:44 pm First I need to tell you something funny: at the top of the website I opened in order to view both the column and the tips, it says in a bright yellow banner "This page can be a scam. Proceed with caution!"  
For those who want to save these tips in hard copy form, here's what I did. I highlighted everything, top to bottom and copied it to a new document. I saved it and I will wait a few days and add whatever else comes in and then edit out the dups, and the political rhetoric someone snuck in and I will have a reference copy to use until David publishes his book.  
Thank you David and everyone else for this wonderful source of info. Altho I don't understand why anyone would want to take their hand off the mouse to use keys, most of the info was very useful.  
I'm dumbfounded that I didn't know about clicking on a word to highlight it, or to get around having to enter www. and .com by hitting Ctrl-Enter! Learn something new everyday - still - at 72.  
— Posted by Arlene
- 
335. October 2nd, 2008 8:51 pm On the Mac, you can make any document a PDF. Select "Print", and then hit "Save as PDF" in the lower left hand corner of the dialog. Type in a filename, hit OK, and you have a PDF file.  
— Posted by Syd Polk
- 
336. October 2nd, 2008 8:55 pm You suggest setting up an automatic backup system as a basic but don't make any suggestions re: how to, or what sort of system to use. How about a tutorial for dummies like me.  
— Posted by gunjar
- 
337. October 2nd, 'You generally can't send someone more than a couple of full-size digital photos as an e-mail attachment:"

2008  
9:02 pm

But you can send just about whatever you want using [yousendit.com](http://yousendit.com) or [transferbigfiles.com](http://transferbigfiles.com)

– Posted by yod

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338. October  
2nd,  
2008  
9:11 pm

Be aware with SDHC cards that your old USB card readers will not support them, making it is necessary to outlay more money for a new card reader.

Save on battery power by taking the memory card out of your camera and plugging it into a card reader, once you start to take hundreds or thousands of photos in the one session you will notice the difference.

Reboot your computer once you have finished downloading photos, it will be too slow otherwise (Windows XP)

Click on the small photos in a gallery to show the larger version (You would be surprised how many people don’t know this.)

Don’t put the batteries from your plug-in flash in your pocket after you have taken 1000 photos, you will catch on fire or at least make burning smells.

– Posted by Tim Chuma

---

339. October  
2nd,  
2008  
9:26 pm

David,

I always have many apps open at once, and it si great to be able to rotate through them with this Keyboard Shortcut: Command (or Ctrl on a PC) + Tab. Then you jsut tab tab tab till you get to the App you want!

GREAT column!

– Posted by Nancy in Atlanta

---

340. October  
2nd,  
2008  
9:42 pm

Copy & paste between windows - even between applications!

– Posted by ssprince

---

341. October  
2nd,  
2008  
9:49 pm

Great tips!

– Posted by Joseph Singer

---

342. October  
2nd,  
2008  
9:54 pm

This is a tip not for computer novices, but for computer experts trying to explain something.

Most people might not know the language you’re using. Visual instructions can help when they’re confused.

If they do not know what minimize is (it happens), don’t waste time explaining it to them. Tell them to go to the right corner, and find the button that looks like an underscore, and press that.

Or tell them to hit Win-M, Win-D, whatever.

They might not know what Win is, or might head for the start menu - “Do you see the button on your keyboard which looks like the microsoft sign?” If they haven’t figured it out, say “The four little squares on the same keyboard button.”

Control is the key that says “Ctrl” - some people might type in C-O-N-T-R-O-L.

Of course, you have to tailor this to the level of understanding, but whenever someone doesn’t understand something, go visual on him.

– Posted by JustAGuy

---

343. October  
2nd,  
2008  
9:56 pm

If you have a newer mac (anything with an intel chip and a bunch of iBook G4s), you can scroll up and down in web pages and documents and such by swiping across the trackpad with two fingers instead of one.

– Posted by Andy

---

344. October  
2nd,  
2008  
9:58 pm

“Save” is not a command you wait to use until you have finished typing a letter or document. “Save” should be used at the beginning and repeatedly all through the middle of creating a document, not just at the end.

As soon as you start working, and open a blank document, before you type anything, you should hit “Save” (or “Save As” in some programs). Give the document a title, and save it in the appropriate location. Then, while you work on the document, every five minutes

or so, hit the Save command.

This way, if for any reason the computer crashes, or the program crashes, or the power goes out, you will not lose the whole letter. You will probably be able to recover everything you did up until the last time you used the Save command.

– Posted by Wheat Williams

---

345. October  
2nd,  
2008  
10:11 pm

Control-X, Control-C, and Control-V have been a standard for all applications since they first appeared on the Macintosh in 1984 (as Command-X, etc.). Windows copied this standard from Apple in Windows 3.0, the first popular version of Windows, circa 1990. How in the world is it that so many computer users do not know these key commands, after all those decades? I think Command-X, Command-C and Command-V were the very first thing I learned when somebody showed me my first Mac in 1984.

– Posted by Wheat Williams

---

346. October  
2nd,  
2008  
10:13 pm

when you are in a folder in Windows that has lots of folders or files in it, start typing the name of the folder or file you are looking for to move quickly through that list to the folder or file you want.

get a gmail account if you want to send large files! Tons of room and bandwidth.

I read through this list so far and used ctrl c and p to send my favorites to myself in an email.  
Thanks.

How about a computer tips wiki?

– Posted by Soz

---

347. October  
2nd,  
2008  
10:22 pm

Switch between (Mac) Window Views:

Command 1 = Icon View

Command 2 = List View

Command 3 = Column View

Go back or forward between (Mac) windows instead of clicking the back or forward triangle in upper Left of window:

Command Left bracket = Back

Command Right bracket = Forward

I teach a Basic Mac class for a Mac Users Group in a retirement community. Lately, even the more experienced users are sticking around for it! We learn something new every day since we all have different experiences. To share them with others is the best part of being a computer user, whichever platform you use. (I use both)

And many thanks to David Pogue!

– Posted by Carol S.

---

348. October  
2nd,  
2008  
10:24 pm

Another tech tip: to get to a “.com” site all you have to do is type the main part of the URL and hit Control/Enter. No “http://www” or “.com”

For instance, just type “nytimes” and hit Ctrl/Enter.

– Posted by Malcolm Byrne

---

349. October  
2nd,  
2008  
10:36 pm

A “...” at the end of a menu entry indicates that clicking on that entry will have no immediate effect, but simply open a dialog for further options and commands.

So if you are not sure about what a menu entry does, are curious, and see the “...”, relax and click it. In fact I often find some cool software functionality by exploring obscure menu entries.

– Posted by Rodrigo de Salvo Braz

---

350. October  
2nd,  
2008  
10:50 pm

There’s so many here I’m not sure if this is up here yet but on a macbook if you drag two fingers down on the mousepad it will scroll down the page

– Posted by DL Duffy

---

351. October  
2nd,  
2008  
10:52 pm

You do not have to type nytime.com; you can type nytimes then “control” “enter”.

– Posted by Peggy Boehm

- 
352. October 2nd, 2008 10:57 pm  
So when will Amazon release version two of the Kindle?  
– Posted by Peggy Boehm
- 
353. October 2nd, 2008 10:57 pm  
I re-name a lot of jpeg and mp3 files and use these two shortcuts in XP all the time. Highlight the file to be renamed and hit f2. This will allow re-naming. To quickly navigate to the beginning of the file name “shift + home”.  
– Posted by Don K
- 
354. October 2nd, 2008 11:00 pm  
In response to:  
“One of these days, I’m going to write a book called, ‘The Basics.’ It’s going to be a compendium of the essential tech bits that you just assume everyone knows—but you’re wrong.”  
Pretty much every supposed “tips” you wrote has been known to most people, myself included. There’s nothing new in here. Just a waste of space and megabytes...  
– Posted by JC
- 
355. October 2nd, 2008 11:36 pm  
I have been astounded to see letters with tables built by tabing from professional secretaries and other people I would expect to be competent “wordprocessors”. In Word use the Table function, or its icon on the menu bar and build tables easily.  
– Posted by Ray Z
- 
356. October 2nd, 2008 11:48 pm  
In Google you can also type “17 dollars in euros,” which is a bit more natural than “euros in 17 dollars” but gives the same answer.  
– Posted by T Stein
- 
357. October 2nd, 2008 11:51 pm  
An earlier post bemoaned the inability to print blog entries. If you want selected ones, highlight them, and either cut and past into a blank document, or after highlighting, put the cursor on any word and drag the saved selection from the web page to the desktop. It will be a clipping which can be dragged into a blank document. If you have several, drag them one after another into the document. At least this works in Mac.  
– Posted by Wayne
- 
358. October 2nd, 2008 11:58 pm  
I once set up an excel spreadsheet and used one, two or three asterisks ( \*, \*\*, \*\*\* ) in certain cells to denote different things (to me at least). Then I tried to search on them, but oh yeah, the asterisk is the wild card, so a regular find doesn’t even recognize it.  
Just put a tilde ( ~ ) in front of the asterisk (or asterisks) in your search terms box and it then treats it like any other character.  
I’ve never used the tilde anywhere else...  
– Posted by Scott Roth
- 
359. October 3rd, 2008 12:14 am  
After typing a word in Word, Shift+F7 will bring up a thesaurus window from which you can select a synonym.  
– Posted by Rob
- 
360. October 3rd, 2008 12:47 am  
Double-clicking the title bar in Windows will maximize the window... and you can drag and drop the icon at the beginning of the address in your browser onto the bookmark toolbar to add a new bookmark instantly (works in Firefox... don’t know about Internet Exploder...  
– Posted by Glen
- 
361. October 3rd, 2008 1:07 am  
Mac \*does\* have a right-click contextual menu - I’ve used it for many years. (re #162)  
Learned from trial and error on my new laptop trackpad:  
A double tap with 2 fingers brings up a right-click contextual menu.  
Double tap and slide to highlight.  
One tap releases, like letting go of holding down the mouse button.  
Double tap equals click.  
Slide 2 fingers to scroll, like someone has said. (maybe everyone knows these)  
Command- tab is my most used shortcut. (Don’t hold down the tab



key, just tap tap) Fast as lightning. Who wants to travel over to the dock to find an icon to switch programs? Then you might see you have too many open programs so when your tap lands on the icon, move one key over and tap on Q to close the program and keep going (you are holding down the command key this whole time).⌘W, ⌘C ⌘V ⌘x ⌘Q ⌘A I use all the time and they’re listed on the right side of the drop down menus. And ⌘click is essential, and space-bar scroll - it drops you exactly one page. I learned all these keyboard shortcuts from a book - written by.....David Pogue! And from your column, David, I learned about option-arrow and its variations.

And other things I use after I discovered them:

Move a file by dragging its icon, not the words part.

In column view, with a folder with lots of files, click the first letter of the file name to go to that section. It refines when you add the second letter if you’re fast enough. This is invaluable in iTunes.

Press the ‘enter/return’ key instead of navigating to click on a highlighted ‘yes’ button. This is a \*must\* but not in the non-existent instruction book.

Control-delete was good to learn here - I use right arrow-delete: its one handed on my keyboard.

⌘ delete equals “put in trash”.

– Posted by Suzy S.

362. October  
3rd,  
2008  
1:27 am

More Windows keyboard shortcuts:

On Windows, you know about using Tab and Shift+Tab to navigate the fields on a form.

Did you know when you land on a checkbox field, the spacebar will toggle the checkmark?

– Posted by David

363. October  
3rd,  
2008  
1:29 am

Your book will need a section for people like me who don’t know the basics:

What does it mean to Tab?

Where is the Windows key?

What is a GUI?

I now know to click on the house icon to get back to my homepage but only because my daughter told me

– Posted by Peggy

364. October  
3rd,  
2008  
1:29 am

In Excel, use CTRL+Page Up or CTRL+Page Down to move to the next and previous worksheets/tabs respectively.

– Posted by San

365. October  
3rd,  
2008  
1:36 am

Pressing Ctrl+F in Firefox reveals a small Find toolbar at the \*BOTTOM\* of the browser window. You can click Prev and Next buttons, as well as highlight all matching words on the page.

The same functionality is available in IE7, search google for “inline search”. Install the free add-on from IEforge.com.

Similar to Firefox, IE7 has a huge numbers of third-party add-ons & extensions, many are free.

In IE7:

Tools->Manage Add-ons->Find More Add-ons

– Posted by David

366. October  
3rd,  
2008  
2:18 am

Another essential in my book (which few novices use)...

The Activity Monitor (for the Mac)...

It’s the real dashboard of my computer providing real time information about:

-my Internet data transfer rates (am I getting nothing when I am expecting something or has some application decided to do a massive upgrade without asking),

-memory available (maxed out? maybe the reason for the system slowdown)

-CPU (maxed out in some vicious cycle?)

I have mine automatically started when I boot up so it’s always available...

(the alternative is the iStat menu (iSlayer.com) which gives similar “at a glance” system info).

Can’t imagine computing without this info...

– Posted by Scott

- 
367. October 3rd, 2008 2:20 am
- “\* You don’t have to type “http://www” into your Web browser. Just type the remainder: “nytimes.com” or “dilbert.com,” for example. (In the Safari browser, you can even leave off the “.com” part.)”
- Firefox figures out .com/.org etc. part, too
- Posted by Jerzy Celichowski
- 
368. October 3rd, 2008 2:48 am
- How about:
- If you have a Mac (or are thinking about getting one but afraid to for this reason) and frustrated with the lack of a right-mouse button, just buy a regular USB mouse of your choice. The right button will “Just Work” as soon as you plug it in, and it does exactly what it’s supposed to do.
- Posted by Adam Batkin
- 
369. October 3rd, 2008 2:56 am
- When editing in iMovie, you can copy and paste a movie clip to replace footage ruined by someone walking in front of your video camera. Extract the sound from the ruined clip.
- Posted by Wendy
- 
370. October 3rd, 2008 3:03 am
- To select a block of columns or rows
- Click on the first column or row and then point at the last one you want and hold the SHIFT key down and click once with the left mouse button
- To insert columns or rows in Excel, select the number of columns or rows you want at the location that you want them to come in and then hold the CTRL key on the keyboard and press the + key on the numeric keypad.
- To delete columns or rows - as above but use CTRL and -
- Posted by Les Worrall
- 
371. October 3rd, 2008 3:21 am
- Answer to Roman Rapido (260). Go to History. On the menu select “Show all History” just above Clear History. The whole History will be displayed. Select the one you don’t want and press delete.
- Why rely on History to save hard sought web pages? Use Bookmrks instead.
- Posted by Wendy
- 
372. October 3rd, 2008 3:50 am
- Some other Windows Key (Winky) shortcuts
- Winky + e: Starts Windows Explorer
- Winky + f: Starts the Find in files dialogue
- Winky + m: minimises all windows
- Winky + ctrl + m: restores all minimised windows
- Winky + r: Starts the Run dialogue
- Winky + fi: Starts Windows Help
- Winky + Pause: Starts System Properties
- I’ve mapped Winky + m to my mouse wheel button meaning I can clear my desktop quickly with a simple click. Wonderful when working on something confidential or personal and someone walks into my cube.
- Posted by Tom
- 
373. October 3rd, 2008 4:02 am
- Shiv-
- Google’s ad revenue is correlated to the number of click-throughs a given advertiser receives through google. This is why they make so much money, because they are the simplest and best search engine, and everyone has an account with them. Example: You type in “new york news” and the Daily News is first. Why? Not because they are the premier, but because they paid for it. They pay google every time someone “clicks through” (cost-per-click) onto their website. Because Google brings audiences to advertisers (first thing you learn in journalism 101 btw)
- Anyway that’s how they make money when noobs use google search instead of their address bar and/or bookmarks.
- as an aside, if you have a business competitor and you are bored, its always fun to click through and raise their google bill...
- Not that I would do that
- Posted by rockgirlMN

- 
374. October 3rd, 2008 4:09 am
- On a Mac, if you want to add a degree mark after a number, e.g. 2°, type the number then option-shift-8
- Posted by Deborah
- 
375. October 3rd, 2008 4:15 am
- Holding down the fn key and clicking the DELETE key will delete text to the RIGHT of the cursor.
- Option key + the k key will give the ° degree symbol
- Please publish a book with these kinds of tips. Please organize it in such a way that subjects can be easily found. Keep the text brief and the book itself small. Although I appreciate your publications, your THE MISSING MANUAL MAC OS X is much too large for me to handle.
- Posted by Marylou
- 
376. October 3rd, 2008 4:21 am
- press the “Windows-logo” and “e” - that opens up windows Explorer.
- In word - if you want to edit a list, than mark the text you want to place higher or lower on the list. “Shit”+”Alt” and use “Up”, “Down” and even “Left” and “Right” buttons to navigate the text.
- Posted by Krenchel
- 
377. October 3rd, 2008 5:15 am
- In MS Word:
- You can select a sentence in one click by pressing Control (Ctrl) and clicking anywhere on the sentence.
- Select the whole text in a document (also applicable to webpages and PDFs): Ctrl+A
- Add a new page: Ctrl+Enter
- Press Shift+Scroll down / up button to select a few sentences or a paragraph.
- Check the word count of an article: Alt+T+W
- Posted by Akhil
- 
378. October 3rd, 2008 5:21 am
- Thanks for the great tips. The Windows button+D to minimise all windows was a new one to me, as I’ve always used Windows+M. This does the same thing, but it won’t toggle. Windows+D toggles and is therefore preferable. My own keyboard favourites that I pass on to as many people as possible, are Ctrl+C to COPY, Ctrl+X to CUT, and Ctrl+V to PASTE. Word processing is mainly keyboard work, so why waste time taking your hand away from the keyboard to fiddle with a mouse?
- Posted by Lionel Beck
- 
379. October 3rd, 2008 5:26 am
- If you want to buy an Apple anything, iMac, Ipod etc, you can check out where it is in the product cycle at <http://www.macrumors.com/> and click on the Buyers Guide - it ill tell you whether to buy or not. Also useful for all sorts of Mac information
- Posted by Erryl
- 
380. October 3rd, 2008 6:20 am
- Have to love this. Starting out on the Mac, I didn’t realise all the keyboard shortcuts that were available (1991). They have just increased enormously since then.
- My favourite:
- Control-Shift-Eject button to turn off screen and sleep
- And to save receipts, important screens etc just Command-P and choose PDF and then Save PDF to Web Receipts Folder. I just love the ability in OS X (since 10.1 ?) to print to PDF.
- Greg
- Posted by Greg Lane
- 
381. October 3rd, 2008 6:34 am
- You’ve disseminated this misconception for far too long: “\* The number of megapixels does not determine a camera’s picture quality; that’s a marketing myth. The sensor size is far more important.”
- That may be true if you never crop or edit pictures and view them all as 4 X 6 prints (so you don’t need a lot of pixels in your picture) and take pictures by candlelight (so you do need good low-light performance), but in general, no.

The pixel count affects how much you can crop and enlarge, or just plain enlarge, a picture.

The size of each pixel affects the signal to noise ratio, visible as artifacts in pictures taken in dim light.

The larger the sensor size for a given number of pixels, the better the low-light performance.

Both large sensor sizes and large pixel counts are necessary for good pictures that can be cropped and/or enlarged to be taken in low light.

– Posted by jeffrey frey

---

382. October  
3rd,  
2008  
6:56 am

on MacOSX:  
Ctrl-Opt-Cmd-8  
inverts the screen.

If you have to read tons of text, to switch this every couple of minutes helps the eyes to relax a bit.

– Posted by Thomas\_U

---

383. October  
3rd,  
2008  
7:14 am

Shortcuts For Google Chrome

- CTRL+T: Opens a new tab
- CTRL+W: Closes current tab, or Chrome if only one tab left
- CTRL+E: Puts the cursor in the search/address bar
- CTRL+PGUP/PGDN: Cycles through tabs
- CTRL+(1,2,3...): Selects first tab, second tab, third tab...
- F3: Search in page, with search term locations noted on scroll bar
- Highlighting a word or phrase and right clicking will let you do a Google search for that word or phrase in a new tab

– Posted by Matt

---

384. October  
3rd,  
2008  
7:45 am

A tip for Windows login passwords - you can just change the number at the end of your password each time you are prompted to change it eg: Password1, Password2, Password3 etc.

– Posted by Nicole

---

385. October  
3rd,  
2008  
8:41 am

Props to Sy #comment-333629 and shame on Mr. Pogue for misinformation about the [www.](#) prefix.

– Posted by Dante

---

386. October  
3rd,  
2008  
8:45 am

When are you going to write the book with all this stuff and when can I get it? And how are you going to give credit to all these good folks!

– Posted by Ben Furuta

---

387. October  
3rd,  
2008  
8:54 am

“You can hide all windows, revealing only what’s on the computer desktop, with one keystroke: Windows key+D in Windows, F11 on Macs (or, on recent Mac laptops, Command+F3; Command is the key with the cloverleaf logo).”

Doesn’t work from Eudora on Mac under Tiger. Haven’t tried with previous versions of OS X.

– Posted by elf

---

388. October  
3rd,  
2008  
8:55 am

(this is from xls but try it in any win app)  
On the help search type in ‘keystroke’ and this is a result you get...

“Print a list of shortcut keys

If the Contents tab isn’t visible, press ALT+C to display it.

Select the heading Shortcut Keys, press ALT+O, and then press P.

Click Print the selected heading and all subtopics.

Select the printing options you want. “

– Posted by MAF

---

389. October  
3rd,  
2008  
8:57 am

“You can tap the Space bar to scroll down on a Web page one screenful. Add the Shift key to scroll back up”

You can also simply use the Page Up and Page Down keys to navigate a web page. No having to remember when it’s Shift or Ctrl.

– Posted by elf

- 
390. October 3rd, 2008 9:20 am  
This may already be up, but you can also use Google if you need international monetary values. Type in yen and the value in dollars will come up as the first search result. type in peso — same thing.  
First result.  
— Posted by Mary
- 
391. October 3rd, 2008 9:23 am  
Your “computer tricks” column was great, but I’ve got a VERY important warning to add to your last one about using an automatic backup service. I’ve been using Carbonite for the past year or two, and was very happy with it until my laptop was stolen and I actually had to use their backup service. The I discovered that they pick-and-choose the files they want to back up, and don’t even warn you that certain files in folders you’ve selected for backup won’t be backed-up. As a result, I lost my entire Sunbird calendar (everything I’m scheduled to do for the next two years, which will cost my thousands of dollars). I also lost all the treasured mini-movies taken with my digital camera on vacations. This company is incredibly irresponsible and cavalier when it comes to their customer’s data!  
— Posted by Storm Cunningha
- 
392. October 3rd, 2008 9:26 am  
Answer to Forwardthinker’s question:  
*In any browser, hitting backspace takes you to the previously viewed page, just like the back button on the toolbar. **Does anyone know the keyboard shortcut for the forward button?***  
To move forward, just hold the shift key and click delete/backspace.  
— Posted by macpet
- 
393. October 3rd, 2008 9:34 am  
Many small tips, but, here’s a few:  
Hit the “ESC” key when you’re in a Microsoft Outlook email and it will take you out of it  
Look at the toolbar in Microsoft, for all the very common commandslike “save”, “bold”, etc...there are shortcut cut key commands listed right next to the commands  
To go to the top or bottom of any webpage or computer page you’re working on, hit the “Ctrl” “Home” or “Ctrl” “End”. It takes you to the top or bottom instantly.  
I could go on forever with “TIPS”.  
— Posted by Kristi Luther
- 
394. October 3rd, 2008 9:35 am  
Good list!  
Tell folks to turn their flash off when taking pictures in large auditoriums, stadiums, etc. The flash just sets your camera to correctly illuminate the back of heads directly in front of you, but darkens the subject on the stage. Judging from all the flashes going off at concerts it appears most people don’t realize this.  
— Posted by Jon Klement
- 
395. October 3rd, 2008 9:43 am  
Fantastic article, and great adds by all! I don’t recall seeing Control Y ... that’s for redo.  
— Posted by Cindy Hartman
- 
396. October 3rd, 2008 9:49 am  
Most cell phones have an outer button that will silence the ringer for incoming phone calls. If you receive a call during a meeting, you can just push this button rather than running out of the room with your phone ringing the whole time.  
Also, here is Microsoft’s list of shortcuts.  
<http://www.microsoft.com/enable/products/keyboard.aspx>  
— Posted by Chetna
- 
397. October 3rd, 2008 9:51 am  
Since I’m posting comment #360 - you’ve obviously scratched on a fun niche.  
My book, “Computer Ease” explores these shortcuts and the basics of common sense computing.  
Love your columns!  
— Posted by Helen Gallagher
- 
398. October  
With windows XP, Ctrl + F will open a search box on web pages as

3rd,  
2008  
9:57 am

well as in documents and spreadsheets.  
– Posted by Bruce Douglas

---

399. October  
3rd,  
2008  
9:57 am

If you are having trouble pasting something or if you want it to be in the same font as the other material in the document, instead of clicking on paste or `ctl+v`, click on “Edit”, “Paste Special”, then “Unformatted Text.” That takes out all of the formatting in what you are pasting and it adopts the formatting where you are pasting it.  
– Posted by Shannon Phillips

---

400. October  
3rd,  
2008  
9:59 am

Ellen said - “Loved these tips but didn’t love that I can’t print them because they are presented in a blog.”  
You can print most anything just by highlighting & copying to your favorite word processing program. If you somehow keep grabbing graphics you don’t want (ads, etc.), just leave an ending letter or character off, and type that one character after you paste.

In Windows:  
`Ctrl-U` starts/stops underlining (or underlines what’s highlighted).  
`Ctrl-B` starts/stops Bold the same way.  
`Ctrl-I` starts/stops Italics.  
`Ctrl-Z` undoes your last action; continue the key combo to undo several of your last actions (there is a limit, but I’ve forgotten what it is).

`Ctrl-Print Screen` copies your entire screen.  
`Alt-Print Screen` copies only the active window.

Like in Word, Edit (or that page key with the arrow), Paste Special will allow selective pasting of just formats, just values, just comments, etc. in Excel. You can also do combinations of these, by hitting Edit/Paste Special a second (and third) time, then selecting the next piece you want.

Also in Excel, you can move from tab to tab (worksheet) by using `Ctrl-Page Up` (move left) and `Ctrl-Page Down` (move right).

Someone complained about MS redesigning the menus for Office 2007 and not being able to find things in the in “ribbons” (that’s the reason I’m now a Mac convert). Those shortcuts are still operable - you just have to remember them, or find a handy reference.

Easy address-bar access: in Windows - `Ctrl-D`; on a Mac - `Cmd-L`.

Keep ‘em coming - we need that book (1 version containing both MS & Apple)!

– Posted by Kathy

---

401. October  
3rd,  
2008  
9:59 am

Something is really odd about the trash bin tip. Windows’ default setup is to allocate a % of hard drive space to the trash bin. After the “trash” exceeds it’s allocated % Windows should delete the oldest files sequentially. I don’t understand how someone could use up their entire hard drive with files in the trash bin.  
– Posted by Jim

---

402. October  
3rd,  
2008  
10:05 am

A previous poster said “I can’t seem to find a way to delete an unwanted site in my browser unless I delete History, wherein lies sites I have searched for ages it seems and wish to preserve.”  
That’s what bookmarks (firefox) or Favorites (Explorer) or for. When you find a site you want to preserve choose “add to favorites” from the Favorites menu (or right-click anywhere on the page to bring up a menu). Then when you want to find the site again you click on the Favorites menu to get a list of all the sites you add to your favorites list.

“I want to eliminate just one, sticking out like a sore thumb, on the list. How do I do it?”

In windows just right click on the item and choose delete. Away it goes!

– Posted by John

---

403. October  
3rd,  
2008  
10:08 am

`Ctrl-F4` closes the active open document in most Windows programs.  
`Ctrl-F6` toggles between open documents in most Windows programs—e.g., if you have 3 spreadsheets open in Excel, `Ctrl-F6` navigates among them.  
Pressing “ALT” activates the menus in most Windows programs. You can then navigate the menus from the keyboard by pressing the underlined letter in menu items. Good for frequently used menu

selections.

Ctrl-N creates a new document in Word, Excel, and many other Windows programs (but certainly not all).

Ctrl-O brings up the open file dialog box in most Windows programs. You can then tab to the file list and press the first letter of a file’s name to quickly get through a long list. Typing that same letter again gets the next file that starts with that letter, etc.

The Windows key has already been mentioned, but if you follow that with “P” it will bring up the “All Programs” menu (unless there is a program that starts with “P” on your recently used list, then you might have to hit “P” a second time. Once the All Programs list is up, you can navigate to any sub-menu by pressing the first letter of that menu, etc.

– Posted by Bruce White

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404. October  
3rd,  
2008  
10:09 am

When you using a drop down menu for entering your state, just press the key of the letter your state’s name starts with until you see it. Then click on it to accept it. For example: To get to Texas, press the “T” key twice, then click on the word “Texas” or “TX” when it appears.

– Posted by Shannon Phillips

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405. October  
3rd,  
2008  
10:19 am

In any browser, hitting backspace takes you to the previously viewed page, just like the back button on the toolbar. Does anyone know the keyboard shortcut for the forward button?

Yes, click “Alt + the right arrow key. (Alt + the left arrow key goes back.)

– Posted by Shannon Phillips

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406. October  
3rd,  
2008  
10:23 am

(Windows) You can you Ctrl-click to select multiple windows on the Windows Task bar. Now right click on one of the selected windows and you’ll get a menu that lets you tile vertically/horizontally, minimize close etc.

This is great when you have lots of windows open but want to have two windows side-by-side.

– Posted by Chris

---

407. October  
3rd,  
2008  
10:29 am

Change case on a Mac by defining letter, word or sentence and hitting option/command/C.

Use Format Painter (the little brush icon) in Word to apply a text style several times in a document. For example, italicize the first item the usual way, then define it and double-click format painter. Then define each of the other items you want italed and they’ll automatically change to ital. When done, hit escape.

You can use this for ital, bold, text size, etc, and it’s really useful if you’re making a lot of changes.

Thanks, David and everyone else, for your tips. David’s Missing Manual series for Macs is a must-have—it’s been a lifesaver for me.

– Posted by Jeanette

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408. October  
3rd,  
2008  
10:30 am

My most useful hotkey combination is CTL-Z for “undo” (I told my wife the Z stands for “My brain was asleep when I did that”)

Please do the book. Or a “tip of the day” calendar!

– Posted by glenn

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409. October  
3rd,  
2008  
10:40 am

I’ll send a couple more:

- In Safari and Explorer you can write the name of the website you want to go to and hit CTRL+Enter. This adds the “http://” and “.com” extensions to the word and go to the website.

- If you use Google Desktop, you can configure not to show anywhere in you desktop and call it by clicking the CTRL key twice. Then write the phrase and hit Enter to search it online. You do not have to use the mouse. This is ADDICTIVE!!!

– Posted by Jorge Supelano

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410. October  
3rd,  
2008  
10:41 am

Hi. This isn’t exactly a tip, but a request for help. I manipulate large Excel files, and frequently have to filter, then copy and paste the “filtrate” to another worksheet in the same file. Sometimes, this results in huge file sizes, without a comparable increase in the actual

number of data elements, and I can’t figure out how to fix it. For example, if my original worksheet has 100 lines of data, and my filtering exercise results in 4 worksheets with 25 lines of data each, the final file may be many times the size of the original (eg, 30 kb goes to 16 mb) Can anyone tell me what I’m doing wrong?

– Posted by Rita

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411. October  
3rd,  
2008  
[10:51 am](#)

In Mac Safari you can tab through the various urls on the bookmarks bar by hitting Command (Apple) and then any of the ten number keys. This will take you to your first ten bookmarked websites.

– Posted by tony

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412. October  
3rd,  
2008  
[11:19 am](#)

Here are keyboard shortcuts for Windows - which I use very frequently:

Select (word/s), then press Control and “c” for Copy

Select (word/s), then press Control and “x” for Cut

Position cursor, then press Control and “v” to Paste

– Posted by Bob

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413. October  
3rd,  
2008  
[11:21 am](#)

The mute button on the top of your Blackberry is multifunctional:

1. Press it to mute a call you are on.

2. Press it while the phone is ringing to stop the ringing. You can still answer it or click Ignore on the screen.

3. Press and hold it to put the phone in “Standby” mode. Press and hold again to get it out of Standby mode. You can still take calls while it is in Standby mode. This saves the battery and is easier to undo than unlocking the keys—which takes two hands. This locks all the keys, except, oddly enough, the power key.

I did have a problem with the mute key once. I was giving a speech and in the middle of the speech remembered I’d left my phone on. So, I pressed and held the Mute key to put it in standby mode.

Instead, my phone started playing my ringtone—Don’t Call Us, We’ll Call You by Sugarloaf. That got a good laugh. I am still not sure what went wrong. All thumbs, I guess. Or a call came in at just that moment, which I doubt.

– Posted by Shannon Phillips

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414. October  
3rd,  
2008  
[11:23 am](#)

read article and comments.  
amazing stuff!  
good shabbos

– Posted by rachel frankel-garb

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415. October  
3rd,  
2008  
[11:29 am](#)

” You generally can’t send someone more than a couple of full-size digital photos as an e-mail attachment; those files are too big, and they’ll bounce back to you. (Instead, use iPhoto or Picasa—photo-organizing programs that can automatically scale down photos in the process of e-mailing them.)”

IrfanViewer is the easiest program I have found to resize or resample a picture for e-mail.

Usually either a simple resize and converting to compressed jpeg helps, but in these days of cloud computing and free online storage, the better choice would be to upload it to flickr or some other photo site and then email the link (that is if they need to see a full unedited version of the picture, otherwise the shrink/send option works).

– Posted by Ben

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416. October  
3rd,  
2008  
[11:31 am](#)

Thanks so much! So many of these hints are extremely useful to me. Thanks again.

– Posted by marilyn

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417. October  
3rd,  
2008  
[11:51 am](#)

Moving a file from one location to another:

(1) Open Windows Explorer twice (by clicking Windows + E);

(2) in one of the Explorer Windows, navigate to the place where the file is you want to move;

(3) in the other Explorer Window navigate to where you want to move the file;

(4) Now here is the trick: Right click on an open area of the toolbar



at the bottom of the screen to open a menu—then click on “Tile Windows Horizontally.”

Now, each Explorer Window takes up half the screen and you can drag and drop the file from one to the other. (I recommend that you right click and hold it down to drag and drop the file because then you can choose whether to move the file there or just copy it.)

— Posted by Shannon Phillips

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418. October  
3rd,  
2008  
11:57 am

Very Basic. The stand-by button on your modem, turns it on and off. If the stand-by light is the only one that is lit; it means you can not connect to the internet. This applies whether you’ve hit it intentionally or not. Although the people who could use this information are probably not reading this column. Internet service techs will appreciate this one.

— Posted by dx

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419. October  
3rd,  
2008  
12:14 pm

Alt-Tab is probably my most used hot key. It makes it easy to toggle between two applications.

If you want to switch between your open application, just keep pressing it until the window you needs opens.

(This use to be called the “boss” key for those who lived in cubicles.

Also, the spell checker in Firefox is a lifesaver.

— Posted by Lynn Jordan--Authors Tools

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420. October  
3rd,  
2008  
12:19 pm

No need to buy a book. Just go to help in most applications and search for keyboard shortcuts to get a full list of what is available.

— Posted by Susan

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421. October  
3rd,  
2008  
12:29 pm

I love that you are doing Microsoft’s and Apple’s work for them. Couldn’t you just post a link to their resources? I’d be surprised if they didn’t have a list of these shortcuts somewhere on their respective websites.

— Posted by TheBrogue

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422. October  
3rd,  
2008  
12:32 pm

You can downsize your digital pics for the web quickly and easily by adding Microsoft’s simple Image Resizer to XP (don’t know about Vista). It is beyond me why this was not added as an update. Allows you to R click your big pic and resize it as a copy with a few clicks.

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/Downloads/powertoys/Xppowertoys.mspx>

Scroll down; it is on the right. Just takes a couple of minutes. MUCH easier than opening pics in an editing program.

— Posted by Ned

---

423. October  
3rd,  
2008  
12:38 pm

To get a “snapshot” of a Web page (I use it for PowerPoint), hit FN,alt,prt sc. Now just do a paste in your Powerpoint presentation.

— Posted by Ken

---

424. October  
3rd,  
2008  
12:43 pm

I can’t get out of this on my iMac; everything moves with the cursor. You gave no way to undo or go back, Dave. Help.

\* You can also enlarge the entire Web page or document by pressing the Control key as you turn the wheel on top of your mouse.

On the Mac, this enlarges the entire screen image.

— Posted by Gerald Cooper

---

425. October  
3rd,  
2008  
12:46 pm

windows+m = minimizes all applications and takes you to the start screen.

Very useful to unclutter

— Posted by surya

---

426. October  
3rd,  
2008  
12:53 pm

In Windows Explorer or Firefox - just enter the website name in the address bar -nytimes and hit CTL-ENTER. The http//...and the .com will be added automatically

— Posted by Victor

- 
427. October 3rd, 2008 12:58 pm
- Windows Key + 1, Windows Key + 2....
- This opens the corresponding item in the quick launch toolbar. Say you have Outlook as the first item and mozilla as the second item in the quicklaunch bar. Windows + 1 will open Outlook, Windows + 2 will open Mozilla. Works all the way to 9.
- Just discovered it on accident.
- Posted by Pete
- 
428. October 3rd, 2008 1:00 pm
- As an author about to write a new biography, I am looking for a miracle. Is there any product that will go from interview to text file? I know a digital recorder will create an audio file. But I need something that changes that audio file to a text file so I don’t have to hire expensive transcribers. Any ideas?
- Posted by sheila isenberg
- 
429. October 3rd, 2008 1:03 pm
- In Windows Excel, copy text or numbers, right-click the mouse, and use the “Paste Special” command to save calculations as values, copy formatting, or “magically” transpose numbers - changing columns of data to rows, and rows to columns. There are lots of useful time-saving features here.
- Posted by Joan
- 
430. October 3rd, 2008 1:03 pm
- \*\*\*To learn many of these shortcuts, simply select the command you want to learn from the menu bar of the program, the shortcuts are almost always listed to the right side of what you select.
- Also most programs have a list you can open and print out to study these from under the Help Tab in the menu bar at the tip of the program window (if not do a search for “keyboard shortcuts” in search in the help menu)\*\*\*
- The symbols for keys are:  
Upside down small v is Control  
Curly pound sign is Command (or apple on a Mac)  
Left to right down slash with small dash on right side is Option  
Up arrow is Shift
- Posted by LAeditor
- 
431. October 3rd, 2008 1:05 pm
- I thought one of the basics everyone knew is creating and using folders to organize one’s work.
- Not so.
- I once had the mispleasure of working with an elementary teacher who used a computer but had never heard of creating folders. She saved all her documents in My Documents and was hysterical when I created folders on her computer.
- Posted by Charles
- 
432. October 3rd, 2008 1:05 pm
- For Windows:  
Alt+Space is a bit obscure, but it opens up a menu to minimize/maximize rapidly.
- Alt+Space, X => to maximize  
Alt+Space, R => to restore
- Posted by Calvin
- 
433. October 3rd, 2008 1:06 pm
- Not quite basics, but folks who aren’t comfortable on computers should learn how to (1) empty the recycle bin and clear cookies, temporary internet files, and history before calling Helpdesk at work, and (2) power cycle (up and down) the computer/router/modem power before calling one’s ISP.
- Posted by Noel
- 
434. October 3rd, 2008 1:08 pm
- ctrl+L to lock the windows computer
- Posted by santu
- 
435. October 3rd, 2008 1:08 pm
- \* You can double-click a word to highlight it in any document, e-mail or Web page.
- >> However, not on the NYTimes.com website — since that will open

- 
- up the dictionary. One of the most annoying things ever.  
– Posted by Cary
- 
436. October 3rd, 2008 1:08 pm  
for the first six months I had a computer, I didn’t know about right-click. how could I? betcha some people are still trying to do everything with left-click.  
also, I didn’t understand about windows opening on top of one another. I kept thinking I “lost” my program, or it crashed or something.  
this stuff is not as intuitive as we all now think.  
– Posted by heather
- 
437. October 3rd, 2008 1:12 pm  
Thought of some more,  
Ctrl+Home = Jump to the top  
Ctrl+End = Jump to the bottom  
For browsers:  
Ctrl+# jumps to that tab immediately, i.e. Ctrl+1,2,3,4  
Ctrl+Shift+T reopens a previously closed tab in Firefox, Chrome (not supported in IE7)  
– Posted by Calvin
- 
438. October 3rd, 2008 1:15 pm  
Images  
Drag image onto desktop.  
If you need a copy of whatever is on the screen, on MACs use press Apple, shift, 4 at the same time. Then use the cursor with new symbol to highlight image. It will show up on your desktop as ‘Picture 1’, ‘Picture 2’ etc. Open it and ‘save as’ jpeg, giff, or whatever you need.  
– Posted by jah
- 
439. October 3rd, 2008 1:15 pm  
Around 1996 I tried to show my father (69 at the time) how to use a Mac. I told him to press the Tab key. He threw up his hands and said, “Tab key? What is a tab key? How am I expected to know where to find that?”  
I walked him over to his typewriter, a device that he had used daily since at least 1940. I showed him the Tab key. I said, “All typewriters and computer keyboards have always had a Tab key, for a hundred years.  
He was incredulous. He had never noticed the Tab key on a typewriter, and had never used it.  
– Posted by Wheat Williams
- 
440. October 3rd, 2008 1:16 pm  
In Microsoft Outlook, you can send an email using Ctrl+Enter. Don’t have to drag your mouse to the Send button.  
– Posted by Chee L
- 
441. October 3rd, 2008 1:22 pm  
Spend \$100 (or less). Buy an external hard drive. They work on PCs or Macs easily and efficiently. CDs and DVDs will NOT last indefinitely.  
– Posted by John Olson
- 
442. October 3rd, 2008 1:24 pm  
On Windows: Windows Key + “E” allows you to browse files on your desktop/server  
– Posted by Alex
- 
443. October 3rd, 2008 1:26 pm  
To see the words of a song, type in: lyrics and the name of the song in google search box.  
– Posted by TB
- 
444. October 3rd, 2008 1:33 pm  
Instead of waiting for a book, you can google keyboard shortcuts:  
<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/126449>  
Also, you can take a screen shot by hitting PrintScreen and then ctrl+V to paste into word, email, power point, etc. I do this if I get a strange error message I want to send to the Help desk.  
– Posted by TAG
-

445. October 3rd, 2008 1:36 pm

I once met a teenager who was a computer whiz. He told me that he was self-taught.

How?

Just type your question into Google and get a list of sites with the answers.

A great way to learn as I can attest.

– Posted by Harold

---

446. October 3rd, 2008 1:40 pm

You can also highlight an entire paragraph with a \*triple\* quick left-click.

– Posted by Jose

---

447. October 3rd, 2008 1:42 pm

alt-space x, alt-space r and alt-space n will, respectively, maximize, restore to its previous size, and minimize the active window in Windows. alt-f4 and ctl-f4 will, respectively, close an application or close the application’s current window, also in Windows. For me, it beats using the mouse.

– Posted by -bwg

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448. October 3rd, 2008 1:42 pm

Good stuff - but unwieldy in volume now. If this does get web published, I like how the eLearning Guild did it, organizing tips by software product (this one could have a category for general operating-system-level hints, and various ones for cameras, PDAs, and computer hardware). See <http://www.elearningguild.com/content.cfm?selection=doc.953>. So people who want Excel tips can browse those, and so on.

– Posted by Andrea

---

449. October 3rd, 2008 1:49 pm

The F11 (function key) in Windows toggles between full screen and your regular screen which can waste up to 25% of your vertical real estate. Very useful when reading NYT articles and such...

–

Stu Denenberg

– Posted by Stu Denenberg

---

450. October 3rd, 2008 1:50 pm

using insert file instead of copy and paste will prevent loss of quality when moving pictures and such into word/powerpoint documents.

– Posted by Jim

---

451. October 3rd, 2008 1:53 pm

inside a word file: F8 lets you type any sequence or character to go to the desired end of the selection after you’re positioned at the beginning. You can even use a Ctrl F to go get the end if it is out of the screen. ctrl F3 dumps it in the memory. You can repeat it many times before you retrieve all with Ctrl Shift F3

– Posted by Francine Ouellette

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452. October 3rd, 2008 1:55 pm

A tip recently learned that has saved no end of aggravation: When you are trying to copy/paste information from a webpage, email, etc. into a Word text page, use the “edit/paste special/unformatted text” option to get rid of formatting.

– Posted by Lee Kirk

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453. October 3rd, 2008 1:58 pm

Thanks for the tips. I knew some of them. You don’t have to type the .com of an address either. Just hit Control+Enter.

– Posted by Brian

---

454. October 3rd, 2008 2:00 pm

All the suggestions in your blog and the comments I read are great. Going back to the beginning of the blog and your “double-click a word in Word” example, some of my staff at a previous job were so unsophisticated about Microsoft Word—after years of using it—that I asked them to take a training course. Two examples:

1. Pressing “Enter” repeatedly to start a new page instead of Ctrl+”Enter”—for 60 pages of varying length that had to be edited repeatedly—and repaginated repeatedly.
2. Re-typing 30 one-page bios submitted by presenters at a conference into one Word document, instead of copying-and-pasting each bio into one document and then applying the format painter to

standardize the formatting across bios. Alternatively, “pasting special” could have served to eliminate the format painter. Let’s not even go into creating a macro to combine the bios into one document in the first place....]

P.S. BTW, the training requests were turned down as “unnecessary.” After all, I was told, they simply needed to make a list of what they needed to learn how to do and another staff person would show them how. When I pointed out that they didn’t know what they didn’t know, but a one-day, \$100/person training course could expose them to all sorts of shortcuts, I was greeted with a blank stare.

– Posted by Bruce

---

455. October  
3rd,  
2008  
2:03 pm

Neither F11 nor command-F3 hides all windows on my Intel iMac using OS 10.4.11. Maybe those are OS 10.5 commands? The closest thing I’ve found is pressing command-option and clicking on the desktop. I think some third-party software can create a hide-all-windows key.

– Posted by MR

---

456. October  
3rd,  
2008  
2:18 pm

Control F2 switches to the Print Preview view in Word (confession: I only learned this by hitting Control F2 when I meant to hit Control 2 to test double-spacing). It does NOT work in Excel.

– Posted by Dick Estel

---

457. October  
3rd,  
2008  
2:18 pm

In a word or adobe document if you want to change the size of the text use control [ to make it one font size smaller and control ] to make it one font size bigger. This helps when you are trying to fit text inside a box or maximize the spacing on a page.

– Posted by Laura

---

458. October  
3rd,  
2008  
2:28 pm

Great post! I travel the country teaching retired folks in RV parks and rallies how to use their computers. Some of them are using a computer for the very first time. Can we even conceive what it’s like to use a computer for the first time today?! It’s way beyond/below the things you mentioned. It’s having to learn that the backspace key erases to the left and the Delete key erases to the right. It’s understanding the concept of Save. I make tutorial videos to help.

Chris  
[www.geeksonatour.com](http://www.geeksonatour.com)

– Posted by Chris Guld

---

459. October  
3rd,  
2008  
2:30 pm

In Excel - To total any group of numbers - left click on the top item, scroll to the bottom item, hold the shift key and left click. This will highlight the entire column. Left click on the add sum button on the task bar at the top of the screen. The total will appear at the bottom of the list.

– Posted by STANLEY B DICKES

---

460. October  
3rd,  
2008  
2:31 pm

I have a Macbook, which has only a Delete Left key. Is there a keyboard shortcut for Delete (deletes the word the cursor is on)?

– Posted by kathy rawle

---

461. October  
3rd,  
2008  
2:39 pm

“Takes too long?” There are lots of things (e.g. backing up to an external disk, virus scan) that take a while. For God’s sake, run these at lunch or during a meeting.

Do you sit and watch the dryer spin?

– Posted by Will

---

462. October  
3rd,  
2008  
2:46 pm

To #460 (Kathy)

FN + Delete forward deletes on a MacBook. I think that is what you are asking about (as opposed to Delete Left (backspace)).

Or click on the word to highlight it and then Delete to delete the entire word.

-Graz

– Posted by ghopper

---

463. October

Wow, David—you really struck a nerve here. I suspect that many of

3rd,  
2008  
3:06 pm

the tips here are undocumented features of many programs. In some cases I have found great shortcuts by systematically using each modifier key with every letter key in turn.

But I never knew until today about shift-space on the browser. That definitely paid the admission price!

Now my comment:

Stanley wrote

“In Excel - To total any group of numbers - left click on the top item, scroll to the bottom item, hold the shift key and left click. This will highlight the entire column. Left click on the add sum button on the task bar at the top of the screen. The total will appear at the bottom of the list.”

Just to elaborate on this great tip, Excel will total contents of every selected cell. Noncontiguous cells may be selected using the Ctrl key. Noncontiguous ranges may be selected by holding down ctrl while dragging the mouse.

— Posted by A. Ralston

---

464. October  
3rd,  
2008  
3:07 pm

Dave,

Why don’t you please have a little chat with the idiots at the Times who have co-opted double click on words in articles to bring up some damn useless popup window, thus not only making double click useless on the Times website, but interfering with the ingrained reflex to use it elsewhere?

I have complained about this to no avail. It’s worse than their habit of presumably mechanically making random words in article links.

— Posted by trudy

---

465. October  
3rd,  
2008  
3:15 pm

Spend \$100 (or less). Buy an external hard drive. They work on PCs or Macs easily and efficiently. CDs and DVDs will NOT last indefinitely.

— Posted by John Olson

However, if you drop the hard drive, it’s toast except for maybe being salvageable by an expensive recovery guy. Not usually the case with CDs or DVDs.

— Posted by trudy

---

466. October  
3rd,  
2008  
3:17 pm

You can look up the definition of any word in most articles of the NY Times by holding Ctrl and doubling clicking on the word.

It doesn’t work all the time but it’s a great shortcut when it does. To whomever came up with that one, great idea!

— Posted by Bolonpc

---

467. October  
3rd,  
2008  
3:27 pm

Love these tips!

But I tried this one on the Mac — “\* You can also enlarge the entire Web page or document by pressing the Control key as you turn the wheel on top of your mouse. On the Mac, this enlarges the entire screen image.”

It did enlarge the whole screen image, and then I couldn’t get rid of it without rebooting. It didn’t work to turn the scroll ball backwards. Is there an easier way to get it back to normal?

One thing I’m embarrassed to say I didn’t learn till a year ago (after 19 years of using a mac and browsers) is that I can have more than one window open in the same browser at the same time. In Safari, go to File and then New Window. Duh! What a miracle!

Pat

— Posted by Pat

---

468. October  
3rd,  
2008  
3:27 pm

God, I’ve been using computers since the mid-1980s and I feel so stupid for not having known the “double-click a word to highlight it” tip.

— Posted by Brian113

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469. October  
3rd,  
2008  
3:34 pm

You can navigate a document quickly by pressing the control key and pressing one of the direction keys. This makes the cursor jump from beginning of one word to the next in the direction you indicate when you use the left and right arrows. Pressing up and down jumps the cursor from paragraph to paragraph. It’s much faster than moving space by space to where you want to go. Once you get the hang of it,

it is the fastest way to navigate your document.

– Posted by Alec

---

470. October  
3rd,  
2008  
3:35 pm

a very useful instructional video on customizing the right-click menu can be found here:

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=7379266908761299419&ei=WXLmSICAA5KYrQLU4pmhCw&q=customize+right+click+menus&vt=lf>

– Posted by cwppros

---

471. October  
3rd,  
2008  
3:45 pm

It should be noted that dragging shortcuts for frequently used programs down to the Quick Launch menu at the bottom of the screen will only work if you have that quick launch bar unlocked.

(Most people have that quick launch locked.)

To unlock the quick launch menu bar, right click the blue bar at the bottom of your screen, and using the drop-down menu, under toolbars, click on quick launch to unlock it.

By the way, quick launch means you click once to open the program, instead of

the usual double click. I’ve seen people double click the quick launch and that only serves to open up the same program twice.

Responding to #228: I am not a fan of tinyurl.

I hesitate to click on a tiny url that is posted (Unless I trust the person who posted it) because you have no idea where that url is going—you

can try to right click it (or any other url) to see if the real url is listed in the properties

section of the drop down menu, but if it is not, it could be a NSFW site.

Also, I don’t know if anyone else has experienced this but the TINYURL site somehow copied the wrong url and that mistake revealed a

security breach in Yahoo that I was unable to correct or get Yahoo to correct. So If you must use tinyurl to reduce a webpage address, be sure to have only one browser window open or one tab open within that browser when you create the tiny url. (I’d been tabbing back and forth between sites and apparently the windows clipboard contained multiple urls.)

Also, here are a few FREE must have programs for your PC which you can safely download by going to CNET’S “Download dot com” site to search for them:

Belarc Advisor — gives you a printout of all the programs installed on your computer along with their serial keys and most importantly, reveals which Windows updates are needed.

CC cleaner cleans the cache and registry.

Defragglr defrags your pc in seconds unlike Windows built-in defragglr which can take hours.

Oh and before you forward a email to your friends, please, I beg of you, follow these two steps:

1) Use BCC (Blind carbon Copy)

2) make sure the last few lines do not contain the words “Forward this email” or “forward this within a set number of days.” If it does, remove those words before you forward it.

Also, if you managed to eliminate any reference to IE and need to restore it, go to start, set program access and defaults, custom, then click enable access or unclick enable access. Access will be restored or denied to various web browsers on your pc.

I mention this because I hate Internet Explorer and only use safari and chrome. However NetFlix instant viewing only works in IE and I needed to restore it for that one program but forgot how to do it and could not find this solution in a Google search.

And finally, can someone recommend a free application to edit flash videos ? I want to post something to youtube but only a few seconds of an interview.

– Posted by I am not a tekkie

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472. October  
3rd,  
2008  
3:45 pm

In addition to #400, after you’ve copied text from your browser into Microsoft Word, it’s often double-spaced along with various other fonts and formats that can get annoying. Hit CTRL-A to select all,

3:45 pm

then go to Edit, then Clear, then Formats. Tada, plain text.

I do this for recipes I find on blogs all the time, and then edit in my own changes after I cook.

– Posted by SL

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473. October  
3rd,  
2008  
3:46 pm

For the love of god, please scream from the rooftops about copying and pasting, and that you can click ctrl-C/ctrl-X and ctrl-V. It’s shocking how many people don’t know this most basic skill. (Are you reading this Dad? 😬)

– Posted by Mike

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474. October  
3rd,  
2008  
3:48 pm

I intened to bookmark this to send to various people, thinking that I already knew everything. Turns out that I knew all but one: “Add the Shift key to scroll back up.” As a person who never uses the mouse whenever possible, that’s incredibly useful.

– Posted by samwyse

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475. October  
3rd,  
2008  
3:48 pm

In Safari, hitting the Tab key moves you through each of the typable fields on the browser and within the webpage: the URL field and Google search field at the top, the search space inside a Wikipedia page or newspaper article page, etc. The text in each field is highlighted, so you can instantly type in your new text. I had long known this Tab function for proceeding through a personal data form (except the darn “state” selector which is always manual), but only recently realized I don’t have to manually move the cursor to get going toward a new page. (Apologies if this was previously noted, I haven’t gotten to all 480 of you yet)

– Posted by S Mishra Suloway

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476. October  
3rd,  
2008  
3:49 pm

When filling out those onerous forms, you can use the tab button to jump and shift+tab between the form spaces.

Also, when your selection(from tabbing) jumps onto one of those check box areas, you can hit the space button and it will check/uncheck the box.

– Posted by Jeffrey

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477. October  
3rd,  
2008  
3:53 pm

press ctrl F and you can search documents for a certain words

– Posted by Ames

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478. October  
3rd,  
2008  
3:59 pm

I love all these tips, but I by the time I read just a tenth of the comments here I’ve forgotten the earlier ones (and gotten confused by repeats)! I hope you (or one of your readers) can compile all the great shortcuts here into some sort of logical guide - with one column for Windows, and another for Macs!

– Posted by Ida

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479. October  
3rd,  
2008  
4:03 pm

I am so confused with Vista. Can’t find anything. Not compatible with documents from previous windows release. Had to install firefox to open up mail from corporate server. How do I convert and save existing files into Vista without recreating? Most open or transfer as gobledygook...Help!

– Posted by Not as techy as I thought

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480. October  
3rd,  
2008  
4:03 pm

To #334 Arlene

I am doing the same thing, cutting and pasting the original article and all the comments into a Word document. I plan to organize them by software so that I have handy references for the future. I am paring it down to just the actual tip. When I’m finished, I would be happy to email my final list to the author to do with as he wishes.

– Posted by Vicki in Seattle

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481. October  
3rd,  
2008  
4:16 pm

To #358 Scott Roth

You can also turn the cell with the asterisks into a “text” cell by using the “Format Cells” function.

Does anyone know how to add a customized date style? Something that’s not listed there already?



– Posted by Vicki in Seattle

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482. October  
3rd,  
2008  
4:16 pm

My favorite is the F2 key in Excel or when editing forms. If you tab or arrow to a cell or form field, generally its contents will be highlighted. Press F2 to get a cursor at the end to edit. This has saved me no end of aggravation while going down a list modifying data in a spreadsheet.

My favorite “advanced” Excel tip: copy and paste only visible cells by selecting the area you want, go to Edit -> Go To -> Special -> Visible Cells Only, then copy and paste as usual. In Excel 2007, Go To Special is under Find and Replace on the Home tab. Makes working with filtered results and subtotals much, much easier. You usually get all of the hidden junk if you try to copy and past a table of filtered data, or you have to copy the sheet/section, paste the values, then delete what you don’t want (which often involves resorting multiple times). Why this feature isn’t an option in the “Paste Special” menu I’ll never know.

– Posted by cv

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483. October  
3rd,  
2008  
4:19 pm

Apropos of David Pogue’s example at the top of this blog: Way back when, before word processors (and MS Word in particular) and html became ubiquitous - remember typewriters? - the convention was that you put one space after a word, and two spaces after a sentence. The programmers at Microsoft and the originators of html apparently didn’t know that, so now we’re stuck with web pages that always put just one space after a sentence. You can’t even create text in html with two spaces after a sentence - html won’t allow it. The programmers at WordPerfect knew about this, however - and in their software (once upon a time, WordPerfect 5.1 reigned supreme), clicking once in a document just placed the cursor where the pointer was, clicking twice selected the word, clicking three times selected the sentence, and clicking four times selected the paragraph. Unfortunately, selecting a sentence in that way is not possible anymore.

– Posted by Larry

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484. October  
3rd,  
2008  
4:25 pm

For those of you who are trying to copy all the nifty tricks—you may get a list by going to “Help” at the top of the screen and looking for keyboard shortcuts. This, in my experience with MS software, will produce a detailed and printable list. I’m running the browser Opera, and which also offers a list of shortcuts under “Help.”

– Posted by Kacey

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485. October  
3rd,  
2008  
4:26 pm

When using Outlook or Lotus Notes, you can easily set up rules for your email based on senders. Simply right-click on the sender’s name and click “Create Rule.” This can save hours of sorting through email.

– Posted by Jim

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486. October  
3rd,  
2008  
4:26 pm

RE: #73:

You can print a blog by selecting it, copying to the clipboard, opening a word-processing program and pasting into it.

At least I can do this on the Mac. Don’t know about windows.

Write two books, David: one for Mac and one for Windows.

– Posted by Don Roberts

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487. October  
3rd,  
2008  
4:27 pm

BCC!!!

– Posted by charlie

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488. October  
3rd,  
2008  
4:28 pm

It’s OK to remove the stupid little marketing stickers that come plastered all over a new computer. The computer will continue to work without them.

– Posted by Bill Schmidt

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489. October  
3rd,  
2008  
4:29 pm

To text Google you don’t need the final “3”: 46645 will do it. Thanks for the tips: To make my life easier I’ll be distilling some of them into cheat sheets for a few people.

– Posted by Donna

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490. October 3rd, 2008 4:29 pm

Microsoft Word:  
Shift + F3 will change a word from upper case to lower case, and vice versa, of a highlighted word, sentence, or letter: example: hello Hello HELLO hello etc.  
– Posted by Diane C.

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491. October 3rd, 2008 4:35 pm

Use Firefox instead of the Internet Explorer! (There are still some people out there who do not know that.)  
Extra tip for Firefox: Type “about:config” in the address bar, change the value of “keyword.URL” to “http://yubnub.org/parser/parse?command=”. Your address bar will provide you with a whole new internet experience (the step to using yubnub was just as big for me as the step to tabbed-browsing), see [www.yubnub.org](http://www.yubnub.org) for more details. (Also works with other browsers such as the Konqueror.)  
As someone noted before, leaving away the “www.” does not always work. Technically [www.somedomain.com](http://www.somedomain.com) and just [somedomain.com](http://somedomain.com) are different internet addresses, in most cases they point to the same webpage, but they don’t have to.  
– Posted by Anton

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492. October 3rd, 2008 4:36 pm

The best tip is when in doubt, reboot. It often works when nothing else will.  
In Windows, control-c copies highlighted material and control-v pastes it.  
– Posted by Malcolm Barnett

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493. October 3rd, 2008 4:43 pm

Another thing it took me almost a decade of using Windows to figure out:  
- You can attach a document or other computer file to an e-mail message simply by dragging it from Windows Explorer (or any other open directory window) into the e-mail message window. You can even drag multiple files simultaneously.  
This only works with standalone e-mail programs like Eudora, Thunderbird or Outlook. It doesn’t work with webmail apps like Gmail or Hotmail.  
– Posted by Mark

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494. October 3rd, 2008 4:47 pm

To #479 Not as techy as I thought  
What many people do not know: Windows is not the same as Word. Windows Vista is an operating system. You normally do not create, open, edit, or save your documents with the operating system alone, but by an application, like Microsoft Word (part of Microsoft Office). Probably you also installed a new version of Microsoft Office when upgrading your system, or you have not installed any Office software at all. The new version might be incompatible with the old files. If you have not installed the right application you cannot open the documents at all, just an operating system is not enough.  
You might also want to try to install Open Office. Alternatively install Linux, different from Microsoft Windows Linux systems normally have all the applications one need included.  
– Posted by Anton

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495. October 3rd, 2008 4:48 pm

Windows tip: Another way to bring up the Right-Click menu (someone above said you can tap twice on the trackpad, if you’re on a laptop) is shift-F10  
– Posted by Anna Haynes

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496. October 3rd, 2008 4:54 pm

I love using Control + H to see the history of websites I’ve viewed in the past day, week and month.  
– Posted by Nanct

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497. October 3rd, 2008 4:59 pm

It’s not what I think everyone knows, but what I don’t know—keyboard entries that replace clicking in a menu—they often include odd symbols like ski slopes and a variety of arrows, etc. How do I find out what key they represent?  
– Posted by chris

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498. October 3rd, 2008 5:15 pm

If your computer doesn’t start up, check to see that it is plugged in or charged.

I was halfway out the door to the Apple Store, laptop in tow, heart in my throat, when I’ve realized that I just had run the battery down on the thing. Stupid, but I bet I’m not the only one.

Unplugging and replugging also does wonders for the cable TV channel. It’s my new, all-purpose fix for everything now.

tporter  
— Posted by tporter

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499. October 3rd, 2008 5:35 pm

When submitting a comment to this column it would be nice at the beginning to say whether it applies to a PC or a Mac.

— Posted by Herb

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500. October 3rd, 2008 5:43 pm

A basic Google Search tip from my friend Alex L.: To tell the Google search engine that you want alternate search terms to be interchangeable (i.e. to make a boolean OR search), insert OR (in all caps) in between the terms. If you want to be even more clear about which terms are interchangeable, put parentheses around those terms.

E.g., if you want to look for pages describing how to make a to do list using gmail, you could use a search string like this: (“how do i” OR “how to” OR advice OR tips OR faq) “to do” (list OR lists) gmail.

Google relatively recently updated its advanced search tips page to reflect these and other useful pointers:  
<http://www.google.com/support/bin/static.py?page=searchguides.html&ctx=advanced&hl=en>

— Posted by Ben in Brooklyn

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501. October 3rd, 2008 5:48 pm

Someone who teaches Windows computer skills to older folks once told me that he recommended the type of mouse that has a large trackball. It seems to reduce the confusion of having to physically move the whole device, while simultaneously having to learn about the right and left clicks.

— Posted by Kathy

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502. October 3rd, 2008 5:50 pm

In Microsoft Word, press Ctrl [up arrow] to skip up a paragraph;  
Ctrl [down arrow] to skip down a paragraph;  
Ctrl [left arrow] to skip one full word back;  
Ctrl [right arrow] to skip one full word forward.

Press Delete to erase whatever character is one space in front of your placeholder (i.e. that flashing vertical line that tells you where you’re typing).

Press Ctrl Backspace to delete one full word (provided your placeholder is positioned at the end of that word). NOTE: This will not work with Ctrl Delete! Ctrl Delete does not delete the entire word in front of your placeholder.

Press Ctrl Shift [up arrow] to highlight up from the placeholder to the beginning of the paragraph on which you’re working. You can do the same thing with Ctrl Shift [down arrow] to highlight from the placeholder down to the end of your paragraph.

Press Ctrl Shift to increase the font size of a highlighted word. This will also work for changing font size while typing. For example, if I wanted to make this sentence a larger font than the previous sentences, I could have pressed Ctrl Shift > before starting to type it.

Press Ctrl D to go to an advanced font menu for your document.

Press Alt I, then T, to be taken to the “Insert Date and Time” option of Microsoft Word.

Press Ctrl = to enter subscript mode. Press Ctrl + (i.e. Ctrl Shift =) to enter superscript mode.

Press Ctrl E to align center. Press Ctrl R to align Right.

If you press enter (creating a “full return”) after having aligned text center, your next paragraph will also begin by being aligned center. If you no longer want to be aligned center, just press backspace. You’ll be aligned left, and the full return you made will still be there.

Press Ctrl Z to undo an action you have performed in word (or in most other programs, especially Microsoft programs).

Press Ctrl Y to redo an action you have undone.

Press Ctrl A to highlight all text in a document.

Press Ctrl S to save a document.

– Posted by Ben in New York

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503. October  
3rd,  
2008  
6:16 pm

On a BBerry type IL then space for I’ll.

On Google put ~ before a word to include all synonyms. To google search within a website put site:(website). for example “Tax codes site:irs.gov”

Ctrl F to find specific text in most any text program or website.

– Posted by luke

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504. October  
3rd,  
2008  
6:32 pm

What is the “WINDOWS” key. referred below?

You can hide all windows, revealing only what’s on the computer desktop, with one keystroke: hit the Windows key and “D” simultaneously in Windows

– Posted by Dbis

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505. October  
3rd,  
2008  
6:36 pm

In Windows, rebooting solves 99.9% of all problems!

Also, in Windows, make sure that you do Windows Updates (<http://www.windowsupdate.microsoft.com>) weekly. And of course, in Windows, you MUST have an anti-virus program running at all times.

To prevent accidentally bringing up evil web sites, like evil-porn-site.com, use [www.k9webprotection.com](http://www.k9webprotection.com), which is a free program for personal use.

Will be trying out Linux Ubuntu soon on a dual-boot Windows XP/Ubuntu PC.

– Posted by Brother Bill

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506. October  
3rd,  
2008  
6:38 pm

Can you tell us more about creating an automated backup system for our computers? I have now idea how. Many thanks.

– Posted by Louise Lander

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507. October  
3rd,  
2008  
6:41 pm

When Pinky, Blinky, Inky, and Sue are getting too close to you, head toward and eat one of the flashing dots (a.k.a. power pellets). The ghosts will turn blue and you can eat them! Just make sure to eat them before they turn back to their original colors.

– Posted by Mark

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508. October  
3rd,  
2008  
6:49 pm

The first hint I learned when I bought my first computer (Hewlett Packard from the advanced calculator factory in Corvallis, Oregon - when an apple was a red fruit you got at the grocery store and a window was a piece of glass in the wall):

RTFM,S.

Of course, they quit printing the manuals because nobody read them ....

– Posted by jk-II

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509. October  
3rd,  
2008  
6:50 pm

#434 should be:

Win+L not Ctrl+L

Press Windows Key and “L” to lock your computer.

– Posted by David Thompson

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510. October  
3rd,  
2008  
6:52 pm

It’s a minor point, but I’ve long wondered what it means when a word is enclosed in asterisks, e.g., “All of these are things that certain friends, family or coworkers, over the years, did \*not\* know.”

– Posted by BobF

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511. October  
3rd,  
2008  
6:56 pm

You can toggle in and out of subscript and superscript fonts in most Microsoft Office programs (not Excel, unfortunately) with Ctrl-”+” (subscript) and Ctrl-Shift-”+” (superscript). I can’t imagine taking a chemistry class without those.

Also, in both IE and Firefox, you can open a link in a new tab by clicking on the link with both left- and right-clicks simultaneously.

You can also close an open tab by clicking in the tab bar with both buttons.

– Posted by Kit

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512. October  
3rd,  
2008  
7:09 pm

“Dave,  
Why don’t you please have a little chat with the idiots at the Times who have co-opted double click on words in articles to bring up some damn useless popup window, thus not only making double click useless on the Times website, but interfering with the ingrained reflex to use it elsewhere?

I have complained about this to no avail. It’s worse than their habit of presumably mechanically making random words in article links.”

– Posted by trudy (3:07 pm, Oct 3)

The first point doesn’t seem to be universally applicable on the NYTimes website ... but here’s a funny anecdote about the second re: nytimes.com mechanically inserting links in articles. There was an op-ed piece about some decision by the US Supreme Court in which they were referred to as as “the Supremes”. This phrase was highlighted with a link, and if you clicked on it, you were connected to ... a webpage about Diana Ross and the Supremes! Who knows how many more irrelevant links are created in all those online articles that are published on the web every day.

– Posted by Larry

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513. October  
3rd,  
2008  
7:11 pm

One of my favorite shortcut keys not mentioned here is plain old F4. F4 repeats the last thing you did. Only works on pc’s though.

– Posted by bill

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514. October  
3rd,  
2008  
7:28 pm

@181 Thanks for suggesting ALT commands

I would like to emphasize that if you hold down the ALT key while typing o151 ( ALT o151 ) you will create what is known as an em-dash.

Some people cringe when they see a double- dash instead of an em-dash.

Try it—it’s so cool!

You can find more ALT commands at this link

<http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/international/accent/s/codealt.html#accent>

I’d like to also thank David Pogue and the NY Times for keeping this comment thread open. I’ll keep coming back to copy any new additions.

– Posted by em-dash queen

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515. October  
3rd,  
2008  
7:41 pm

Lots of repetition in these comments - the list gets too long, and people can’t be bothered to check it. Dave, as #255 says a book isn’t the right format - a help screen is; it should exist, and the lack of it reveals a cultural crudity. It would be a service to humanity to add an organized synopsis of the reader contributions as an appendix to your post. Then put a link to it on your column’s masthead.

Ellen Richards, #73: you can print anything, using Copy and Paste.

– Posted by overloaded

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516. October  
3rd,  
2008  
7:55 pm

Press the backspace key and you cursor will move back one space and erase the character occupying that position. Wonderful.

– Posted by Backspacer

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517. October  
3rd,  
2008  
8:10 pm

To run automated backups you need an external storage medium, typically an external hard drive connected to your computer with either ethernet, USB, FireWire, or eSATA connector. Many external hard drives come from the manufacturer with automated backup software on an accompanying DVD. These have everything needed to get you started on the path to “living cleanly” - i.e. to keeping a recent back-up copy of all your data. If you have several computers, an external hard drive connected to via ethernet (i.e. a “network hard drive” or “network file server”) is a very nice solution. All machines can have automated back-ups without having to change any hardware connections.

A second kind of “back-up” that can also be helpful is to have a

complete image of your computer’s disk, in compressed format, stored on an external hard drive. It can be quite labor intensive to do a complete re-install of an OS, followed by all upgrades, followed by all favorite applications, and then finally all personal media and data. If you lose your computer and are forced to replace it, if you have a hard disk failure in your computer, if you somehow completely damage the file system or OS installation, a back-up disk image can be a real life-saver. Terabyte makes Image for Windows, and Image for PC, which are inexpensive tools for making and restoring complete disk images.

– Posted by fzdybel

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518. October  
3rd,  
2008  
8:10 pm

Haven’t seen this one yet–

On a Mac, Command H hides the current window.

Very helpful, and I use it all the time. To bring it back, just click the app’s icon in the dock.

– Posted by Marilou Vander Griend

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519. October  
3rd,  
2008  
8:13 pm

If/when your web browser starts acting up, Delete Temporary Internet Files.

You can Print-Screen, Paste into program like Microsoft Paint, and create a \*.JPG of the screen. I have used this to e-mail error message screens to technical support.

Assume that your employer is monitoring every e-mail you send, and every web site you visit, when using your work computer.

In Windows, you can Print to Microsoft XPS Document Printer, to create a \*.xps file.

– Posted by JohnJ

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520. October  
3rd,  
2008  
8:19 pm

Great tips, though these two don’t actually work at my office computer (which is in a very large law firm):

\* You can hide all windows, revealing only what’s on the computer desktop, with one keystroke: hit the Windows key and “D” simultaneously in Windows, or press F11 on Macs (on recent Mac laptops, Command+F3; Command is the key with the cloverleaf logo). That’s great when you want examine or delete something you’ve just downloaded to the desktop, for example. Press the keystroke again to return to what you were doing.

\* You can enlarge the text on any Web page. In Windows, press Ctrl and the plus or minus keys (for bigger or smaller fonts); on the Mac, it’s the Command key and plus or minus.

– Posted by Marie

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521. October  
3rd,  
2008  
9:00 pm

alt+D on Microsoft computers will highlight the web address bar. Command L in Apple’s OSX.

Oh, and by the way, most people don’t know what an OS is, what MS stands for or any other tech acronyms for that matter (trying to explain what a web address bar to people who don’t know the basics is really tough for me!)

– Posted by Michel

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522. October  
3rd,  
2008  
9:00 pm

Watch out for virus warnings that assert that they have already been confirmed by Snopes!

– Posted by William Thomas

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523. October  
3rd,  
2008  
9:01 pm

Although I’m a huge fan of keyboard shortcuts, and was delighted to learn a few useful new ones in these 500-and-counting follow-up comments, I have discovered lately to my surprise, after years of net surfing (with a fast-response setting on my laptop touchpad), that moving a cursor can often be just as fast as reaching across a keyboard. Heretical notion, I know, but true for some very common actions. I swear I can now “throw” my cursor from the lower right corner of my screen to the upper left star icon for my Favorites and come within half an inch of the star 62% of the time, barely looking. Touch-cursoring instead of touch typing, as it were. Related point: even with the best of intentions, you’ll never memorize 20 new keyboard shortcuts for actions you’ve done with a mouse or touchpad for twenty years. Not if your brain is as stuck in its rut as mine.

– Posted by Chuck

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524. October  
3rd,  
2008  
9:02 pm

Morris S: re backup program - I have used SystemGuardian (www.duocor.com) for years now and can recommend it. No affiliation BTW.

– Posted by Ross

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525. October  
3rd,  
2008  
9:14 pm

Look when you pull the menu. The keystroke shortcut is usually documented in the menu itself. In Windows, you usually see letters underlined which are shortcuts to use with the Alt key.

In general, only IE insists on searching when you type in the address bar and requiring you to use the control-enter trick others have documented. MOST browsers add the [www.](#) and [.com.](#)

Use a browser other than IE. All are now free and many are better for many people.

When someone sends you some shocking e-mail and suggests that you pass it on, AND THEY INCLUDE A LINK TO SNOPE TO VALIDATE IT, don't pass it on without actually reading the Snopes page! A favorite trick has become to include a link to a Snopes page which contradicts the content, on the assumption that most people will not actually read it.

Someone just asked about \*asterisks\* around words. Usually it's just a method of emphasis, since in a plain text environment (such as this one), without boldface or italics, the methods of emphasis are limited. ALL CAPS IS often too strong and the \*asterisks\* provide a milder alternative.

– Posted by Edward Reid

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526. October  
3rd,  
2008  
9:15 pm

Scott said:

“The Activity Monitor (for the Mac)...

It's the real dashboard of my computer providing real time information about:

- my Internet data transfer rates (am I getting nothing when I am expecting something or has some application decided to do a massive upgrade without asking),
- memory available (maxed out? maybe the reason for the system slowdown)”

The reason for the slowdown is because you're using system resources unnecessarily, similar to when people wait for a page to load and fidget with the mouse — the CPU is redrawing the cursor for every move, hogging resources that could be used for the download, or the program opening. Duh!

– Posted by Brooklyn Robb

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527. October  
3rd,  
2008  
9:17 pm

basics: in Mac, you can change the icon of a folder or file by

- 1.selecting that file or folder
- 2.getting info (⌘-i)
- 3.select a file/folder that has an icon you like (it can be a jpeg of an image you created)
- 4.getting info.
- 5.select the wanted icon in the info window
- 6.copy it (⌘-c)
- 7.select the icon you want to change in the info window
- 8.paste the icon (⌘-v)

it sounds complicated but it's not.

By the way, the “apple” sign, when there is one, is usually alt-shift-apostrophe

– Posted by elena

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528. October  
3rd,  
2008  
9:46 pm

Pretty cavalier for Pogue to just recommend using Picasa to send pictures without saying that you are then ALSO putting your pictures on Google's server.

– Posted by Bill Turetsky

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529. October  
3rd,  
2008  
10:02 pm

On a Mac, in any browser, the delete key takes you back a page; shift-delete goes forward. On a PC, it's backspace and shift-backspace. (Same spot on the keyboard, just labeled differently.)

Never forget UNDO, command-z (Mac) or control-z (PC). This will reverse whatever the very last thing you did was, in nearly every program on any computer. For example, accidentally deleting a word,

paragraph, or even the entire contents of a document or email—undo will bring it back. If you paste something in the wrong place, undo will un-paste it. Etc.

Shift-tab tabs backward. Adding shift often reverses the direction of a command (forward, back, and so on).

I’ve also been tutoring people in the use of computers for more than 20 years, but I never knew about zooming the screen on a Mac. My aging eyes are thanking you!

— Posted by Miss P.

530. October  
3rd,  
2008  
10:06 pm

Thumbdrives

For starters, then get the book out you need a second edition already, it looks like

— Posted by Mike Cahill

531. October  
3rd,  
2008  
10:11 pm

From HELP>Windows Basics:

Windows keyboard shortcuts overview Use shortcut keys as an alternative to the mouse when working in Windows. You can open, close, and navigate the Start menu, desktop, menus, dialog boxes, and Web pages using keyboard shortcuts. Keyboard shortcuts may also make it easier for you to interact with your computer. Click a heading, or press TAB to highlight a heading, and then press ENTER.

General keyboard shortcuts

Press To

CTRL+C Copy.

CTRL+X Cut.

CTRL+V Paste.

CTRL+Z Undo.

DELETE Delete.

SHIFT+DELETE Delete selected item permanently without placing the item in the Recycle Bin.

CTRL while dragging an item Copy selected item.

CTRL+SHIFT while dragging an item Create shortcut to selected item.

F2 Rename selected item.

CTRL+RIGHT ARROW Move the insertion point to the beginning of the next word.

CTRL+LEFT ARROW Move the insertion point to the beginning of the previous word.

CTRL+DOWN ARROW Move the insertion point to the beginning of the next paragraph.

CTRL+UP ARROW Move the insertion point to the beginning of the previous paragraph.

CTRL+SHIFT with any of the arrow keys Highlight a block of text.

SHIFT with any of the arrow keys Select more than one item in a window or on the desktop, or select text within a document.

CTRL+A Select all.

F3 Search for a file or folder.

ALT+ENTER View properties for the selected item.

ALT+F4 Close the active item, or quit the active program.

ALT+Enter Displays the properties of the selected object.

ALT+SPACEBAR Opens the shortcut menu for the active window.

CTRL+F4 Close the active document in programs that allow you to have multiple documents open simultaneously.

ALT+TAB Switch between open items.

ALT+ESC Cycle through items in the order they were opened.

F6 Cycle through screen elements in a window or on the desktop.

F4 Display the Address bar list in My Computer or Windows Explorer.

SHIFT+F10 Display the shortcut menu for the selected item.

ALT+SPACEBAR Display the System menu for the active window.

CTRL+ESC Display the Start menu.

ALT+Underlined letter in a menu name Display the corresponding menu.

Underlined letter in a command name on an open menu Carry out the corresponding command.

F10 Activate the menu bar in the active program.

RIGHT ARROW Open the next menu to the right, or open a submenu.

LEFT ARROW Open the next menu to the left, or close a submenu.

F5 Refresh the active window.

BACKSPACE View the folder one level up in My Computer or Windows Explorer.

ESC Cancel the current task.

SHIFT when you insert a CD into the CD-ROM drive Prevent the CD



from automatically playing.

Dialog box keyboard shortcuts

Press To

CTRL+TAB Move forward through tabs.

CTRL+SHIFT+TAB Move backward through tabs.

TAB Move forward through options.

SHIFT+TAB Move backward through options.

ALT+Underlined letter Carry out the corresponding command or select the corresponding option.

ENTER Carry out the command for the active option or button.

SPACEBAR Select or clear the check box if the active option is a check box.

Arrow keys Select a button if the active option is a group of option buttons.

F1 Display Help.

F4 Display the items in the active list.

BACKSPACE Open a folder one level up if a folder is selected in the Save As or Open dialog box.

Natural keyboard shortcuts

You can use the following keyboard shortcuts with a Microsoft Natural Keyboard or any other compatible keyboard that includes the Windows logo key (◊) and the Application key (⌵).

Press To

Display or hide the Start menu.

+BREAK Display the System Properties dialog box.

+D Show the desktop.

+M Minimize all windows.

+Shift+M Restores minimized windows.

+E Open My Computer.

+F Search for a file or folder.

CTRL+ +F Search for computers.

+F1 Display Windows Help.

+ L Lock your computer if you are connected to a network domain, or switch users if you are not connected to a network domain.

+R Open the Run dialog box.

Display the shortcut menu for the selected item.

+U Open Utility Manager.

Accessibility keyboard shortcuts

Press To

Right SHIFT for eight seconds Switch FilterKeys on and off.

Left ALT +left SHIFT +PRINT SCREEN Switch High Contrast on and off.

Left ALT +left SHIFT +NUM LOCK Switch MouseKeys on and off.

SHIFT five times Switch StickyKeys on and off.

NUM LOCK for five seconds Switch ToggleKeys on and off.

+U Open Utility Manager.

Windows Explorer keyboard shortcuts

Press To

END Display the bottom of the active window.

HOME Display the top of the active window.

NUM LOCK+ASTERISK on numeric keypad (\*) Display all subfolders under the selected folder.

NUM LOCK+PLUS SIGN on numeric keypad (+) Display the contents of the selected folder.

NUM LOCK+MINUS SIGN on numeric keypad (-) Collapse the selected folder.

LEFT ARROW Collapse current selection if it’s expanded, or select parent folder.

RIGHT ARROW Display current selection if it’s collapsed, or select first subfolder.

Notes

You must associate a password with your user account to secure it from unauthorized access. If you do not have a password associated with your user account, pressing the +L will not prevent other users from accessing your account information.

Some keyboard shortcuts may not work if StickyKeys is turned on in Accessibility Options.

If you are connected to Windows through Microsoft Terminal Services Client, some shortcuts have changed. For more information, see the online documentation for Terminal Services Client.

— Posted by Al

10:12 pm

<http://support.apple.com/kb/HT1343>

– Posted by macshaz

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533. October 3rd, 2008 10:17 pm

You can run more than one program at a time.

OK, saying it is the easy part. Those of us who have been doing it for over 40 years, like me, find it obvious. Four-year-olds do it without even knowing they are doing it. Explaining to our moms is the hard part:

Why? Faster, don’t lose what you are doing, don’t lose your place.

What? Um ... really this IS the hardest part to explain. The users who need to know this don’t know enough about computer internals to understand it. They shouldn’t have to — Palm and the like have the better idea, never start or stop anything, just go to it. Windows and MacOS make it a lot harder than it should be.

How? Minimize, use Start menu, launch from a document in Finder/WE/whatever, open an attachment or download (as usual there are too many ways to do things in Windows, which is also confusing).

– Posted by Edward Reid

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534. October 3rd, 2008 10:18 pm

I love your columns, and the speech you gave in July to the AALL was FANTASTIC! But this column is the absolute best thing I’ve seen about computers in a very long time. Just what we all needed - especially me. Thanks!

– Posted by Barbara

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535. October 3rd, 2008 10:24 pm

@BobF,

Asterisks are often used around words online and in emails where either the writer or the recipient does not have the ability to display emphasis with italics, bold, or underlined text. It’s considered more polite than using capitals for emphasis.

Asterisks are not necessarily used this way in Word docs or PDFs, etc., because such documents have devices for emphasis at one’s disposal in the apps used to create those documents.

– Posted by MacSmiley

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536. October 3rd, 2008 10:29 pm

You don’t have to type “nytimes.com” to get to the page. As long as the website is a .com site, typing “nytimes” and hitting Ctrl+Enter is all you need.

I also like to use Alt+Left Arrow if I want to go back to the previous web page in the browser window I’m in (and, should I then decide to continue from where I was, Alt+Right Arrow move me to where I came from).

– Posted by MVL

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537. October 3rd, 2008 10:34 pm

good article that helped me....thought you might like it.

Lorie

– Posted by jan and dale

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538. October 3rd, 2008 10:34 pm

In most cars, there is a lever on the steering wheel that you can use to SIGNAL that you intend to turn right or left. It has been there for quite a while and a lot of people don’t know that.

– Posted by P.Letourneau

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539. October 3rd, 2008 11:15 pm

Re: comment 34 by LarryAt27N, thank you SO much for the dandy tip on notepad! I use it often to document phone calls and follow ups when conducting business and to be able to date/time stamp with one function key is wonderful. Thanks so much!!

– Posted by wldangl2

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540. October 3rd, 2008 11:32 pm

you can see every open window on the mac by squeezing and releasing the two little semicircles on the sides of the mouse, which minimizes them and arranges them in rows on the screen. roll the cursor over them to see what they are. a click restores them to original size. click on the one you want back on the top.

– Posted by cybercita

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- 
541. October 3rd, 2008 11:58 pm
- \*How to disable the control panel through the use of gpedit.msc
  - \*How to delete virus through the use of regedit
- It’s easy  
– Posted by buboy
- 
542. October 4th, 2008 12:00 am
- Tips from the CRASHED COMPUTER KING:
- 1)When backing up very important files - always make at least 2 copies. After backing up - check the disks to make sure that they have all of the information you need and that they aren’t duds. Label the disks clearly - print a list of the disk contents if necessary - and date them. Keep the copies in different locations.
  - 2)If using Windows Live Docs or Google Docs as a backup - check how the document prints or downloads to your computer. I have lost formatting on both and have had major print issues. Still - it is better than nothing when your computer crashes.
  - 3)For photo nuts: I have tried everything and Picasa is the best. If you have a crash, your photos, if uploaded to Web Albums, are safe and you can download them back to your computer. Also, the program has 2 easy to use backup options - Gift CD’s (edited photos) and Tools/Backup (unedited photos and easy restore to your computer in the case of a crash). Important note: Videos uploaded to your Web Albums cannot be downloaded back to your computer so make sure to always back up videos on a disk.
  - 4)iTunes Users: Backup your purchases. If your computer crashes you have lost the music that you have bought. You cannot re-download it.
  - 5)If you don’t have one, get a battery backup/surge protector for your computer and components. My APC has saved me more times than I can count. It buys you time to backup, e-mail, and properly close down your system in the event of power problems or outages.
  - 6)Something that I have resorted to during very bad weather (power outages) when in the midst of crazy & important work projects. I email the documents in both PDF and Word/Excel/Powerpoint to a relative out of state as extra insurance. If my customer has power back before me I can get the documents (complete or not)e-mailed to them with a phone call thereby keep the projects moving.
- I realize that these aren’t keystroke shortcuts, but they are tips that will save you hours and hours - not to mention blood, sweat and tears if your system crashes and burns. It can happen to you - although the odds are that it will continue to happen to me!  
– Posted by ack
- 
543. October 4th, 2008 12:09 am
- #505 “In Windows, rebooting solves 99.9% of all problems!” Works in MVS too.  
– Posted by -bwg
- 
544. October 4th, 2008 12:14 am
- When browsing folders or files in windows explorer click on the first folder or file and then type the first letter of the folder or file your looking for. Explorer will jump to the first folder or file that starts with that letter.
- This trick works on folders first and then files... so if you are looking for a file be sure to skip past the folders and click on one of the filenames rather than a folder name.  
– Posted by scg8172
- 
545. October 4th, 2008 12:41 am
- On the iPhone, tapping on the time at the top of the screen gets you to the top of the page. I find this very handy, for example, when I’m at the bottom of a long SMS conversation and I wanted to call that person. Tapping on the time gets me to the top where the Call button is. Extremely useful for when you’re at the bottom of a very long webpage and you wanted to get to the address bar to go to another website.  
– Posted by Sonny
- 
546. October 4th, 2008 12:57 am
- When they “fixed” Word (which wasn’t broken!)the revisers made up a whole new set of keyboard “shortcut” strokes; they can be found in the various books that deal with the new Word. However, the old keyboard strokes still work; that was a stroke of genius on the part of

the revisers. If you’re a creature of habit, just keep using the old keystrokes.

– Posted by Yendis

547. October  
4th,  
2008  
1:04 am

Put your most visited pages as bookmarks in the LINKS folder of your favorites. Right-click on your menu bar, and “check” the Links option, so that it will be displayed below your menu bar. It will create icons you can click on to go straight to your most commonly visited website (all in one click). You can rename the displays to save space, I fit about 20 links on one bar.

Also, in Excel, if you commonly analyze data and use mathematical formulas, you can choose to perform a mathematical operation on a constant which is assigned to a cell by using the \$ sign. For example, B2 can be =A2-\$A\$1. You can then “drag” the formula all the way down a column, and the \$ sign keeps the number subtracted in the formula as the constant displayed in cell A1 (A2 will become A3 as you drag down, but it will always be subtracted by \$A\$1). For even faster application, you can just type A1, and hit F4. That will put the \$ sign for you automatically, \$A\$1. If you hit F4 one more time, it will remove the \$ before the number (A\$1, keeping the row constant, but column variable), and hitting F4 another time will put the \$ in front of the letter (\$A1, keeping the column constant, but the row variable). Sounds cryptic, but if you use excel for data analysis, super useful.

Also, for lists and big data files on excel, you can keep your column headings as you scroll down by selecting freeze panes under the view tab. When sorting data, highlight the entire document, not just the row you are sorting. Also, to all your data into organized pages, use the page break view, to drag where you want your page breaks to be. Simple stuff everyone should know.

– Posted by Melissa

548. October  
4th,  
2008  
1:09 am

For Office 2007, which I enjoy, the shortcuts are much faster. Hit Alt, and letters will be displayed underneath the menu bar. Hit the corresponding letters, and that will display more shortcut keys, which you will use. It is much faster. For example, to change fonts into subscript in previous word versions, the keyboard shortcut was Alt+o enter, Alt+b enter. In Office 2007, it is Alt, H, 5. You don’t even need to hold down the buttons! No memorization either for the less oft used functions. The shortcuts are displayed! Old habits die hard, but if the new one makes you more efficient, suck it up and try it. You’ll like it.

– Posted by Melissa

549. October  
4th,  
2008  
1:14 am

Dear Mr. Pogue: I can’t believe I’ve just discovered you. You may have save yet another member of the Computer Illiterates of USA from a complete meltdown. Thank you!

– Posted by Robin

550. October  
4th,  
2008  
1:25 am

on macs, if a program hangs up executing a command I can stop the process by hitting command and the period at the same time. Have yet to find a comparable act for PCs. I always try this first before the scorched earth act of command-option-escape (Mac-speak for control-alt-delete).

GREAT ARTICLE!!!

– Posted by rmgreen

551. October  
4th,  
2008  
1:31 am

My favorite work enhancing function is Control/CC which lists the last 24 items that were copied.

– Posted by kate f

552. October  
4th,  
2008  
1:36 am

I use the computer as a radio. Is there a way to get the computer shutdown automatically like “the sleep” switch on a clock radio?

– Posted by Sherman

553. October  
4th,  
2008  
1:56 am

Using the included earphones (microphone enabled) with the iPhone, you can control the call and music by squeezing the rectangular tab on the earphones. One click to accept call, hang up, start music, stop music; two clicks to move to next track, and three clicks to return to previous track

– Posted by Alex

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554. October 4th, 2008 2:05 am

In Ubuntu Linux Alt+F2 will bring up a launcher where you can type the name of the program you want to launch—no mouse/menu needed!

– Posted by Ryan

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555. October 4th, 2008 2:19 am

Just a comment on some of the obvious. You have probably seen all the flashes going off at sporting events. All that you will end up with is a well exposed picture of the fans in front of you.

You will need a pretty strong flash to light up a ball field.

Best thing is to shut off the flash and set it for a night shot. On manual, a slow shutter speed and hold the camera steady.

– Posted by Glenn

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556. October 4th, 2008 2:41 am

The biggest computer tip is ALWAYS backup! BACK UP! You thought EVERYBODY knew that, right?!

– Posted by TMA

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557. October 4th, 2008 2:45 am

The Winders keyboard shortcuts have been pretty well beat to death here, so thought I would add a couple features (fairly new I think) that are in Firefox. Clicking on site symbol just to the left of the address bar brings up another little box that tells you if the website supplies identity information, and tells you if your connection to that site is encrypted or not. There is also another button to click there, “More Information”

Clicking that button brings up another window with all sorts of fun stuff. It tells you if you have visited the site before, if the site is storing cookies on your computers, (and a button to push to look at them), and tells you if you have saved any passwords for that site, and a button to push to view those passwords. Very handy if you use lots of different passwords for different sites and don’t want to write down a list of them. (You will have to supply your master password to view the saved list it keeps.)

– Posted by Doug D

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558. October 4th, 2008 3:10 am

A lot of awesome tips, a few more that i’ve found useful, in my two most-used programs...

Firefox:

- \*you can type in “wp” and something you’re searching for, and it will bring you to the wikipedia page.
- \*ctrl+t for a new tab, ctrl+n for new window
- \*if you click on a link while holding down control (or command on a mac), it will open the link in a new tab

Microsoft Word:

- \*General functions: ctrl+n is new document, ctrl+o is open, ctrl+s is save, ctrl+p is print, F12 on PCs is “save as” (I like saving copies of things as I edit, so this is useful)
- \*Fonts: control-D brings you to fonts menu. control+b is bold, ctrl+i is italics, ctrl+u is underline, ctrl+shift+k is small caps, ctrl+shift+p lets you change font size, ctrl+shift+”+” = superscript, ctrl+”+” = subscript
- \*Editing: ctrl+z is undo, ctrl+y is redo
- \*copy pasting: ctrl+c to copy, ctrl+v to paste, ctrl+x to cut
- \*Aligning: ctrl+l for left aligned, ctrl+r for right aligned, ctrl+e for center (never figured out justified)

(these all should work on macs by replacing control with the command button instead...except for some reason the font size command does not work anymore 😞 oh well)

as a general tip, an external harddrive is a great investment—I lost everything that was on my laptop twice (the first time I had a fairly recent backup, though I lost a 13-page final paper that was due soon...yikes, the second time, I actually lost everything), and my family recently lost everything on our desktop. I’m a recent convert to Mac—they have a program called “time machine” that automatically backs up every hour, day, and month, i think—also have a nifty external called the time capsule, which updates wirelessly. I definitely sleep better at night knowing that my files are safe.

I hear that on Windows XP and later, you can change your settings to update as frequently as you would like it to, to get the same idea—this would require it to be plugged in at all times, which shouldn’t be too much of a problem for a desktop.

– Posted by Jenn

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559. October 4th, 2008 3:15 am

Just type “cheat sheet” in google search bar. Or. [http://www.scribd.com/doc/399148/Windows-Shortcut-Cheat sheet](http://www.scribd.com/doc/399148/Windows-Shortcut-Cheat-sheet)

If you are using firefox. <http://lesliefranke.com/files/reference/firefox-cheatsheet.html>

If you are in love with google then use: <http://www.google.com/help/cheatsheet.html>

These short cuts and tips really need long memory.

– Posted by Anoop

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560. October 4th, 2008 3:16 am

a note on alt-tabbing:  
let’s pretend you have two word windows up, and firefox.

\*on a PC, if you alt+tab, you will be able to choose from 3 windows, the first word file, the second word file, and firefox

\*on Mac, if you alt+tab, you pick between word and firefox. If you want to choose a different word file, you can alt+”`” instead (its right below the escape key). This will cycle through all the windows that are being run by the same program.

– Posted by Jenn

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561. October 4th, 2008 3:26 am

For the Mac: Analogous to using the “command + tab” for switching between applications is the “command + `” (command with the key just above the tab key) combination for switching between windows within the current application. Also, it should be mentioned that your “Missing Manual for Mac OS X” contains an excellent compendium of the keyboard shortcuts.

– Posted by Mike T.

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562. October 4th, 2008 3:42 am

If your browser will not let you type just “site.com” and instead directs to a search page with ads it is the fault of your service provider who wants to get extra revenue by wasting your time. You can change your DNS server (google DNS server) which decides where to go based on what you tpe. Treewalk is a free simple program I use but there are many others. DSL.com reports is a fine source of info on problems and solutions to broadband.

– Posted by steven

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563. October 4th, 2008 3:45 am

My favorite, on new mac laptops: Hold two fingers on the track pad lets you scroll by moving your fingers (together) and right click by tapping the mouse button.

– Posted by Eric

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564. October 4th, 2008 3:48 am

If you forget your windows password and do not know how to access your administrator password- that is good news. You probably don’t have one, since by default if is blank.

Boot into safe mode (google it- its easy), log in as administrator, go to control panel->User accounts and change your local user password. **TO SOMETHING YOU CAN REMEMBER!**

The other day I was helping a friend of mine update her computer and when I rebooted it she had a fit because she had no idea what her password was.

You can also set your home computer (don’t do this on a laptop you may loose) to auto login w/o a password. Google “auto login settings XP” Vista.

Just so you know, someone who knows a bit about PC’s can boot your computer from a Linux disc and crack most passwords in a few minutes. The encryption used is archaic and near useless.

Surprised?

– Posted by steven

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565. October 4th, 2008 3:51 am

Mac Leopard has a program in Applications under Utilities called Grab. I suggest putting it in your dock because it will allow you to “grab” (copy) just a portion of an email or text and print it out without printing the entire thing, which I had thought was a great failure of the Mac. Click on Grab, go to Capture across the top, choose Selection. Then drag your cursor across the part you want to copy and print. When you stop dragging, you will hear a camera click. I suggest that you go to File and choose Page Setup because I have

found 100% is too large. Choose 50 - 70%. Then click Print under File and you will have printed just what you wanted.

– Posted by Deborah

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566. October  
4th,  
2008  
5:26 am

Um... which one is the ‘Windows’ key?

I have a Thinkpad (and a brain!) and already use a lot of the other tips. Now I feel like a fool.

– Posted by Polly

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567. October  
4th,  
2008  
5:32 am

Your tips remind of similar blind spots with the English language: everyone, even if very well educated, has a couple of words they grossly mispronounce (probably because they’ve only seen them in print).

Having said that, your first tip amazed me. I’ve been using PCs since 1980 and never realized that double-clicking a word would highlight it — have never seen anyone else do that either!

As for CTRL-SHIFT-etc combinations, I deliberately avoid learning any but the ones I need almost every day, even though there are massive numbers of them. And for the same reason I never adopted EMACS as an editor!

– Posted by Bubba Bob

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568. October  
4th,  
2008  
5:44 am

Just scrolled through all of these using the space bar 😊 — had no idea; thanks!

Now, you could do us all a favor if you or someone on the NYT staff could organize all these tips: separate out by machine and by program (computer, camera; Word, Excel) and eliminate the duplication!

When you write the book, perhaps you can have an online link to video or other images so that those of us who learn better via seeing someone actually do these things can see what ‘right’ and ‘left’ mean (I still don’t know), what the Windows button looks like (and btw, can someone tell me why one would WANT to lock windows?), etc. Or just do an online book!

I’m delighted to know about all these stroke options. One reason I stuck with Wordperfect is bec an earlier version was stroke-based, and in later versions you could emulate that earlier one — but now they’re so close to Word that all that seems lost; at least, I can no longer configure it to imitate that earlier version (and any help with this appreciated).

– Posted by Dvora

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569. October  
4th,  
2008  
5:45 am

just type the main address desired, e.g., nytimes; then press ctrl+enter at the same time. That simultaneous action will fill in the prefix and suffix (”.com”) together.

– Posted by Robert Arnow

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570. October  
4th,  
2008  
6:04 am

On a Mac, holding down the command key (on some macs it’s the control key) and scrolling allows you to zoom in on a part of the screen. I don’t think it was a feature of earlier Macs, though (I have OSX 10.5.4) but this is very helpful for those annoyingly small video windows imbedded in webpages.

– Posted by Sam Carlson

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571. October  
4th,  
2008  
6:04 am

\* Just putting something into the Trash or the Recycle Bin doesn’t actually delete it. You then have to \*empty\* the Trash or Recycle Bin. (Once a year, I hear about somebody whose hard drive is full, despite having practically no files. It’s because over the years, they’ve put 79 gigabytes’ worth of stuff in the Recycle Bin and never emptied it.)

note that there are other trash bins which can accumulate substantial bytes and are not automatically cleared when you empty the one which comes with the operating program: e.g. iPhoto has one which can build up quickly for active photographers; so does the thunderbird email program, which has 2 bins: ‘junk’ and ‘trash’

– Posted by henry bewer

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572. October  
4th,  
2008  
6:04 am

iPhone: Sometimes, after you hit the send mail button, it can take awhile until you hear that satisfying “swish” sent mail sound. You don’t have to keep the phone turned on while it’s sending mail. Hit

7:05 am

send, then turn off the phone. The iphone will send in the background.

Conversely, a piece of mail with large attachments can take a long time to download through the cell network. Just open that mail to start the download process and turn off the phone with the mail program running. The mail will load in the background.

– Posted by bruceb

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573. October 4th, 2008 7:39 am

This is wonderful! Write the book!

– Posted by Peggy Nicholson

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574. October 4th, 2008 7:54 am

“\* You can double-click a word to highlight it in any document, e-mail or Web page.”

How ironic that you can’t do that with the word “double-click” because of the internal punctuation.

– Posted by Johnny Smoke

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575. October 4th, 2008 8:26 am

If you have an Apple store in your area, you can sign up for individual tutoring - 50 lessons for the year - at \$100. Wow - bargain! JLA

– Posted by Jean Aceto

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576. October 4th, 2008 8:28 am

In Windows, double clicking the top bar of a window will maximize the window. Double clicking it again will shrink it to its original size.

– Posted by Rob

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577. October 4th, 2008 8:29 am

Start key + e opens Windows Explorer.

– Posted by J.O.

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578. October 4th, 2008 8:33 am

It was very useful. I can add a couple though:

Ctrl F4 (closes a tab)

Alt F4 (closes a window)

In Microsoft Word:

Ctrl Z (undo)

Ctrl Home (go the beginning of the document)

Ctrl End (go to the end of the document)

Pressing Shift and an arrow key will highlight what’s next to the course in the direction of the arrow pressed.

I use these all the time.

– Posted by Maria from NYC

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579. October 4th, 2008 8:34 am

In Blackberry: holding down any letter will capitalize it, hitting space bar scrolls down a page, pressing the mute button (on top edge) locks the keyboard so you can carry it in your pocket or purse without making inadvertent calls – press again to unlock. (You can answer calls while the screen is locked.) I’ve installed desktop icons for my fave sites (NYT, WSJ, CNBC, WP, Zगत) so one click takes me there – big time saver.

– Posted by MarjD

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580. October 4th, 2008 8:37 am

Thanks. this is great stuff. but my eyes have glazed over and my brain has shut down. If you write that book you’re going to have to organize it in such a way that its accessible with a minimum of burnout. How about some kind of on line reference, a section for cameras, phones, macs etc. Better yet have little videos of some of the stuff. Some of us are visual learners. You could have a weekly tv show. I’ve watched some of your nyt videos, they’re a riot.

– Posted by Nicki

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581. October 4th, 2008 8:49 am

In Windows, double-left-clicking the blue title bar on any Window will maximize it to full screen size. Doing the same action a second time will reduce the size of the window and allow you to adjust it.

A good time-saver.

– Posted by Jason



582. October  
4th,  
2008  
9:03 am

Quote: When you get an e-mail message from eBay or your bank, claiming that you have an account problem or a question from a buyer, it’s probably a “phishing scam”

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And why oh why do Bank of America, Paypal, utilities and credit card companies continue to do this? They must come up with a better way that involves action once the user is logged into his account. Users must bookmark the financial important sites and never access accounts via links of dubious origin.

– Posted by asjk239

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583. October  
4th,  
2008  
9:22 am

#471 posted:  
Oh and before you forward a email to your friends, please, I beg of you, follow these two steps:

1) Use BCC (Blind carbon Copy)

\*\*\*\*\*

To piggyback onto #471, I suggest that recipients’ email addies be listed in the “bcc:” field for mass mailers so email addies are kept private from unwanted eyes (i.e., other recipients in the list). Not everyone in the list may want his/her addy divulged to the others. Though addies are often coded (and theoretically anonymous), some senders tend to enter the contact’s real name to email addies in their address books.

Or better yet, limit the sending of mass mailers. I don’t like even the inspirational or supposed funny mailings (which no doubt have been circulating the cyber block many times over) clogging my inbox.

– Posted by bopeep

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584. October  
4th,  
2008  
9:27 am

Depending on your version Windows, you can, with a simple keystroke, signal your computer to type letters with accent marks. Just type Control + shift simultaneously. You can then type á, è ü, ñ, ç, ô, and so on, simply by typing the diachronic mark first (‘, “, ~, followed by the letter). If you want the mark alone (for quotes, for example), just hit the relevant key twice. To turn this feature off, hit Control + shift again.

– Posted by Todd Garth

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585. October  
4th,  
2008  
9:28 am

It was years before I started right clicking the mouse. I love shutting down e-mails in a stack and Explorers in a stack instead of one by one. I right click first now. I’ll buy that book. When’s it coming out.

How about a book on the Kindle or a chapter in the book! When’s a newer edition of the Kindle coming out?

Thanks for being Pogue. I love the videos. I’m the one who watches them over and over along with the MAC guy and the PC guy. Just plain Thanks.

– Posted by Lynne

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586. October  
4th,  
2008  
9:35 am

Not that anyone will read this far, but:

My FAVORITE and now essential shortcut I use all the time since I switched to a Mac last year: command+space to open Spotlight. Then just start typing the name of a program, then enter to open it (slightly easier in Leopard). E.g. command+space fire enter => firefox. You don’t need the Dock anymore or a list of applications.

Works for files as well, of course - I actually often don’t know what folder my stuff is in, but it doesn’t matter! (going back to Windows is like losing an arm.)

– Posted by elliot

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587. October  
4th,  
2008  
9:37 am

“Shift F7” gets you the thesaurus in a Microsoft word document.

Alt + Tab may let you toggle through different programs that you have open, but Ctrl + Tab let’s you toggle through different tabs in a web browser, such as Firefox.

Ctrl + Home brings you to the top of any document/web page. Similarly, Ctrl + End brings you to the bottom.

– Posted by Kim

---

588. October  
4th,  
2008

Word (pre-2007) has a gem of a search tool at the lower right-hand corner of the window. It looks like a little ball positioned between the up and down arrows. Clicking on it brings up 12 different kinds of

9:39 am

searches that can be selected. Once selected, the up and down arrows will take you to the next or previous instance of whatever you’re looking for.

Word also has 4 “toggles” at the bottom center of the window - REC, TRK, OVR, and EXT. They turn on/off recording macros, tracked changes, insert/overlay, and extended highlighting (you don’t need to drag the mouse).

On Verizon Samsung phones, when texting, press “1” once for a period, twice for a smiley emoticon. It probably works on other phones as well.

– Posted by TheBFM

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589. October 4th, 2008 9:40 am

You can take a “picture” of your desktop or the open application window. You can use this feature to take a picture of your royal flush when playing online poker, a confusing error message, or a website that may change before you get back to it, such as nytimes.com

On windows press Alt PrtSc to capture the open application window, or Shift PrtSc to capture the entire desktop.

The picture will be temporarily stored on the clipboard, so before copying anything else, open any image editing program such as Photoshop, create a new document and paste the clipboard contents.

– Posted by shivas

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590. October 4th, 2008 9:44 am

The main shortcut everyone needs to learn is to right-click with the mouse. If you have a Mac with a single button mouse, throw the mouse away and get a two-button mouse! Huge time saver.

I have to disagree with Andy B. who advises to get the smallest possible hard drive. Just the opposite, get the biggest one you can afford. Hard drive space isn’t just about storage; the amount of free hard drive space also has a big impact on performance. In fact I recommend at least two HDs.

Keep the OS and programs on the primary drive and files on the secondary drive.

Hard drives are the cheapest form of storage, get an external drive or use an old HD in an enclosure to back up files. (Turn it off and disconnect external drive and move to another location after backup).

– Posted by Jay R

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591. October 4th, 2008 9:50 am

Haven’t read all comments - but on a Mac if you type the name of a bigger organization or company in the URL space the browser will take you to their website. EG: nytimes, xerox, nikon, barackobama - just no spaces and no need for www, com, and such.

It’s a lot faster than the google search.

– Posted by zozie

---

592. October 4th, 2008 10:01 am

save

– Posted by Marilyn

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593. October 4th, 2008 10:05 am

ZOMG this thread is classic. The blind leading the blind. Many of these “tips” are standard conventions over 20 years old.

At least 10 people have shared the original tip that your browser’s address bar will attempt to autocomplete URLs missing a protocol to <http://>. So here’s a tip for those people:

Your browser has a “find” function, you can use it to search on the page for words or phrases.

Finally one I swear came up in a real-life tech support scenario less than 5 years ago:

To use the mouse, you do not pick it up and point it at the screen. You push it around on the desk.

– Posted by urdoinitwrong

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594. October 4th, 2008 10:08 am

Some users (friends of mine) know so little of computer basics (forget about keyboard shortcuts) that I wonder how they manage to get anything done.

If it’s not too basic for your book - how about an explanation of files and folders, desktop files (which actually belong in a folder), where

‘saved’ files go, and the difference between files on one’s machine and ones on a floppy (or other removable media); yes, I have friends writing directly on those- without quite knowing whether the file really ended up on the floppy, the desktop or the current Word default directory. It’s possible that this can be particularly confusing on the MacOS, where ease of use can also mean not having to understand the underlying structure.

– Posted by terri

---

595. October 4th, 2008 10:09 am

I did not know some of these, and I’m a college professor who teaches kids how to use their computers when writing and researching. Good lord!

– Posted by Pat

---

596. October 4th, 2008 10:17 am

Collected shortcuts and Tips in an Excel file

=====

I have been a power Excel user and geek for 15 years. I had collected my general computer tips and shortcuts to a file for sharing with friends. It is now mostly accurate for XP since that is what i use at home and at work. This article inspired me to post it.

You can download it at

<http://home.earthlink.net/~garygeo/ComputerHelpForXP-081004a.xls>

It could take a few minutes to download even though it is only 113 kb. It should ask if you want to open the file with Macros. Open it without the macros since you do not know me. You may never need to use the macros but advanced users may find them useful. [If you are not asked this question, you probably have your security in Excel under Tools, Security set to “high”, which I think is the default.] You should never work with Excel in a browser, so do File, Save As, “ShortcutsEtc.xls” to a folder in My Documents where you can find it. When you find it, open it in Excel. (in Excel: File, Open. In Windows Explorer: double click it.)

The shortcuts were pasted from help screens.

There are instructions visible on the Tips sheet.

Gary Geo

– Posted by Gary Geo

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597. October 4th, 2008 10:18 am

If you’re using Internet Explorer and come across a website with ads so annoying that they distract you from the content, click Tools>Internet Options>Security>Restricted Sites>Sites then add the offending website to the Restricted box (often the address field is already populated with the offender) and those blinking ads are gone. You’re free to read – unmolested! 😊

– Posted by Ann R

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598. October 4th, 2008 10:20 am

keep it in your file

– Posted by jinhsuk

---

599. October 4th, 2008 10:29 am

All Windows programs have their keyboard shortcuts underlined and the key sequences to the left of the command name in the drop down menus.

PS Why write a book? Wouldn’t a webpage or site be better?

– Posted by Kris

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600. October 4th, 2008 10:35 am

Del.icio.us is an excellent way to note a Web page you may want to visit in the future. This is much more powerful than Web browser “bookmarks.” You can access this Web search tool from anywhere on the Web. Create search tags that work best for you. It’s so valuable and it’s free. These are then shared with others in the Del.icio.us community - or you can keep each or all “finds” private. N.B. Creating an anonymous user name even better ensures your privacy.

– Posted by Morgan’s Dad

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601. October 4th, 2008 10:37 am

omg. I have been cutting and pasting for 15 years by dragging? click click. kewl. doh.

omg.

i’m on my mac maybe 7 hours a day.

write the book and divide it into sections.

make one of them for people who have no interest in keystrokes. we are the embarrassed legions. we don’t like memorizing too much stuff. we are happy, slow, lousy typists. i have checked around. we are many. we like mice. mouses. the mousenpuschen contingent. F commands is as key-doodly as we are gonna get. but we know to empty the trash. most of us.

– Posted by confetti

---

602. October  
4th,  
2008  
10:44 am

Clicking and double clicking on most pc laptops with a touch pad just requires tapping the pad, not using the buttons below it. Right-click by tapping the upper right corner of the touch pad.

– Posted by Kris

---

603. October  
4th,  
2008  
10:50 am

Re #34 & #539 - Time/date stamp in Notepad:

To create a Notepad file that automatically inserts a time/date stamp when you open or re-open it, type “.LOG” (no quotes, but in caps) in the first line of the note, then save it (i.e., “Support Log.txt”). Create a shortcut to the file, and every time you open it, your entry is automatically date/time stamped.

– Posted by Mensch

---

604. October  
4th,  
2008  
10:53 am

Print a document/file without opening the application:

In System Preferences on Mac and Control Panel on PC you can see your printer(s) and make a desktop shortcut to it. Now you can drag the icon of whatever file you want to print over the printer shortcut icon. When you from the correct application and close the application automatically and very quickly.

For example: you’re looking in your Documents folder for the Word Document that you need to print. You see it. You drag the file icon onto the printer shortcut icon. Word is automatically started, the file prints, and Word shuts down automatically and very quickly.

– Posted by Brian

---

605. October  
4th,  
2008  
11:02 am

I didn’t see my favorite, maybe it was there, but apple N gives you a new window on Macs

– Posted by Deborah

---

606. October  
4th,  
2008  
11:09 am

Great help. Does anyone have a list of shortcuts for iphone?

– Posted by ChrisT

---

607. October  
4th,  
2008  
11:13 am

Here is a good, fairly complete list

<http://www.keyxl.com/aaa367b/5/Microsoft-Word-keyboard-shortcuts.htm>

– Posted by Chris

---

608. October  
4th,  
2008  
11:16 am

To forward only the \*important\* part of an email, just highlight that part and hit forward. This works on a Mac with Entourage.

– Posted by louise Dibble

---

609. October  
4th,  
2008  
11:22 am

is everyone sending this to their parents?

– Posted by todd

---

610. October  
4th,  
2008  
11:25 am

The F4 key in MS office, repeats the last action performed regardless of what it was: delete, make bold, insert row/column, paste etc. Use this almost as office Ctrl X/C/V

– Posted by Sumit

---

611. October  
4th,  
2008  
11:28 am

Never spill coffee into your keyboard.

– Posted by Davy

---

612. October

“You don’t have to type “http://www” into your Web browser. Just

4th,  
2008  
11:30 am

type the remainder: “nytimes.com” or “dilbert.com,” for example. (In the Safari browser, you can even leave off the “.com” part.)”

This does not work in every case; some sites (not very many) require the www in order to load; it’s a parameter that is enabled/disabled on the web server, nothing to do with your PC.

– Posted by J Simmons

---

613. October  
4th,  
2008  
11:39 am

When something goes wrong, or starts acting weird, RESTART! It almost always fixes any problem.

– Posted by Jon

---

614. October  
4th,  
2008  
11:47 am

35.October 2nd,  
2008  
2:00 pm In Microsoft Word - Shift+F3 makes a word change from all uppercase to all lowercase to just the first letter upper case and so on.  
\*\*\*\*\*

Jason, great tip - thanks.  
all the others are awesome as well - this is as far as i got before i posted !!!  
Thanks, a

– Posted by anuradha shastry

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615. October  
4th,  
2008  
11:55 am

98.October 2nd,  
2008  
3:01 pm I am surprised by how few people, even practiced writers, are unaware of the split-screen function in MICROSOFT Word. Clicking on the little blue button in the upper-right hand corner (above the scroll bar) of a Word screen will divide the screen in half; each will now have its own scroll bar....  
\*\*\*\*\*

I did not find this one-what is different for word 2007??  
thanks, a

– Posted by anuradha shastry

---

616. October  
4th,  
2008  
12:11 pm

Long time computer programmer... one day had end user show me one of the most useful keyboard short cuts.

Shift + Tab ... takes you back to the previous field in a form.

– Posted by tibeau

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617. October  
4th,  
2008  
12:18 pm

“If in doubt, go into your browser and type “www.ebay.com” (or whatever) manually.”

“You don’t have to type “http://www” into your Web browser. Just type the remainder: “nytimes.com” or “dilbert.com,” for example. (In the Safari browser, you can even leave off the “.com” part.)”

Or just type “ebay” and press CTRL+ENTER (PC) or CMD+ENTER (Mac). That will add the www. and the .com automatically in IE, Firefox and Safari.

– Posted by shortcuts

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618. October  
4th,  
2008  
12:21 pm

To send your pictures by email without reducing their size but not clogging your friends inbox you can use ZOOMORAMA. They make the pictures zoomable, so your friends can enjoy the full view when they receive the pictures.

Very easy, practical, and free.

That’s my trick.

– Posted by Franklin

---

619. October  
4th,  
2008  
12:25 pm

You can also click your mouse wheel in xp to switch between different windows.

– Posted by Randeeee

---

620. October  
4th,  
2008  
12:41 pm

in Microsoft word:  
after highlighting a selection:  
ctrl-1 single spaces the selection  
ctrl-2 double spaces the selection  
ctrl-5 adds 1.5 spacing

– Posted by Dan

- 
621. October 4th, 2008 12:44 pm
- The ultimate savior: Ctrl-Z (or Command-Z on a Mac)
- It undoes the last thing you did in almost every program. I have saved a number of deleted paragraphs this way....
- Posted by JG
- 
622. October 4th, 2008 12:45 pm
- Don’t know if this was covered, but pressing command and the up or down arrow will take you to the top or bottom of a web page.
- F10 will show all the different open pages of the current application you’re using, and F9 shows everything you have open.
- These are all on Macs, obviously.
- Also, it’s not really a shortcut, but holding down shift, then clicking on the minimize button makes the browser minimize slowly and, well, it’s fun.
- Posted by Karen
- 
623. October 4th, 2008 12:48 pm
- I work with a guy who didn’t know that if you keep typing at the end of a line in Word or an Outlook email, it will automatically return down to the next line. He would type until the end of the line, then hit “enter” to go down to the next line and keep typing - like an old-fashioned typewriter! And gosh he gets paid like 4 times as much as I do! Engineers....
- Posted by Stacy
- 
624. October 4th, 2008 12:49 pm
- I have found these tips highly practical and helpful. Thank you for sharing your article.
- Posted by Burt Harding
- 
625. October 4th, 2008 12:50 pm
- Fabulous article... please do more...my problem is someone send me a picture..I put the e mail with the pic into the HD. When I retrieve it all I have is text, no picture???? How do I save the picture too?
- Posted by Norman Wain
- 
626. October 4th, 2008 12:55 pm
- On a Mac laptop, use two fingers on the trackpad to scroll (up-down, and side to side).
- You can also use this feature to right-click: go to system preferences, keyboard and mouse, trackpad. Then check the “For secondary clicks...” box. You can then click with two fingers on the trackpad to right-click.
- Posted by Michael
- 
627. October 4th, 2008 12:56 pm
- On a mac: selecting ‘private browsing’ in your Safari window will result in no cookies being left behind and no history. Not a cure if anyone from the FBI wants to know what you’re doing but it will save you from being embarrassed about what you do online in case you share a computer.
- Also: ‘command’ and ‘H’ will hide whatever window you have open. This is great when you dont want to actually close an application, but would like it out of the way.
- “Home” and “end” will also take you to the top and bottom of your open pages or documents. Seems basic but people often waste time scrolling up/down needlessly.
- Posted by Richard C
- 
628. October 4th, 2008 12:58 pm
- Turning off the monitor doesn’t actually turn off the computer.
- Posted by Jess
- 
629. October 4th, 2008 12:58 pm
- CTRL+Option+CMD+8 on a Mac. It brings a whole new life to your screen.
- Also, I never use Apple mouses. I really hate the design and feel of them. I buy the classic two button, scroll wheel design. You get right click and all.
- (But I will admit, being able to scroll left and right with the Apple Mouse scroll wheel comes in handy for a photographer like myself.)
- I put spaces in one of my bottom corners and only run one

application per space. It organizes my Apple a lot cleaner than using that damn “All Windows” thing. Of course you can change that in the exposé preferences.

– Posted by Alex

---

630. October  
4th,  
2008  
1:06 pm

Is it possible to put automatically diacritics on a manuscript, or I have to write the text again on a computer with diacritics ?

– Posted by Eva

---

631. October  
4th,  
2008  
1:07 pm

Sorry if someone else has also pointed these out, I just couldn’t go over 600 message:  
- In the address box of your browser, when you want to type a new address, you don’t have to run your cursor over the existing address end to end to select and delete it; just click once on the logo at the beginning (sitting next to http) and simply type your new address.  
- Similarly, as David has pointed out, double clicking a word selects it in all programs. If you want to replace the word with a different one, you don’t need to delete it first; just type the new word.  
- (Works for Mac, I’m not sure about PCs): If you cannot see the folder or document you are looking for on your cluttered desktop, type the first letter of the item (L for letters, for example) and that will select the item starting with the alphabetically topmost L. If you keep hitting the tab key, that will take you through all L-items, than Ms, Ns, etc. If you want to go through all your items on your desktop in an alphabetical order, just keep hitting the tab key (start with nothing selected).

**AGAINST REPETITIVE STRAIN INJURY:**

If your index finger is aching towards arthritis due to clicking for thousands of times per day, try this: get yourself a programmable mouse and assign double-clicks to the right (middle finger) button. This will take a very big load off your index finger and a single-click by your middle finger will count as a double-click. You will get used to this in just a few days.

– Posted by SF

---

632. October  
4th,  
2008  
1:09 pm

@547: Thank you for suggesting the links bar in a browser for shortcuts to our favorite websites, but let me add that when using the links bar (or bookmarks in a browser) you need only click once to open your favorite webpage. Those who are used to double-clicking will be opening up multiple windows if they continue to double-click in the links toolbar or the quick launch toolbar at the bottom of windows.

BTW, another reason to use the quick launch toolbar is the “Show Desktop” button (white button with a pencil) which serves to hide all open windows and take you to your desktop.

– Posted by Web Surfer

---

633. October  
4th,  
2008  
1:10 pm

Some of my timesavers:

1) Use the bookmark toolbar across the top for your most common links (eg. the links in front of me are yahoo, google, NTTimes, WashPost, CraigslistDC, CNN, and a couple others..)

Don’t see it? In Firefox, get it from the toolbar (View, Toolbars, etc.) To add to it, simply drag the tiny icon in front the address (in the address bar) right onto the bookmark toolbar....and there it is ready for use!

2) Slow computer? Add more RAM

3) Instead of messing around with the backspace bar or tabs, sometimes I right-click on a link and “Open in new window”. Easier to delete it, and also to go directly to other open windows without clicking “backspace” 10 times, etc.)

4) Are you one of those folks who occasionally has to physically pull the plug on your computer to get it turned off (eg. when it’s “hanging” and not responding) Easy way to shut down is to press and hold the on/off button on the front of your computer for 5 seconds.

– Posted by Mark Czar

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634. October  
4th,  
2008  
1:16 pm

Sometimes operating your mouse wheel is too “jump” for reading. Instead, press the wheel (while over the text area). The cursor will change to an up/down arrow. Now moving the mouse up or down will affect the speed of scrolling more smoothly. To end this feature, press the mouse wheel again.

– Posted by Mark Czar

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635. October 4th, 2008 1:17 pm @541 Thank you for mentioning Regedit. To the uninitiated, regedit should be used with caution. If you are going to use regedit, invest in a program called Registry Mechanic by PC Tools Software. That program will go much further than the free CCleaner in cleaning up your registry. With that said, I often use regedit to remove entries left behind by deleted programs. AOL for one, leaves behind quite a number of things “just in case you ever want to reinstall it again.” Um, thanks, but no thanks, software developers. We prefer that you remove all traces of your program when we decide to delete it.

– Posted by Web Surfer

---

636. October 4th, 2008 1:19 pm likewise, you can simultaneously hold windows key + m to get to the desktop.  
Why didn’t writer know this?

– Posted by doug

---

637. October 4th, 2008 1:20 pm Tip of tips:  
On the Mac, when you pull down a menu in the finder or in any program, the keyboard shortcut of each command on the list is shown in front of it (example, Edit Menu > Paste Com-V). It is probably the same for PCs.

– Posted by SF

---

638. October 4th, 2008 1:24 pm In Word  
Hard space Ctrl + Shift + space bar  
Hard dash Ctrl + Shift + dash(-)  
Both keep whatever comes before and after the space or dash on the same line. For example, using a hard dash with “8-feet” would force the text to always stay together. With a normal dash if the text doesn’t all fit at the end of a line word wrap would break off “feet” and put it on the next line.

– Posted by joe w

---

639. October 4th, 2008 1:27 pm 1) CTRL-F (Find function) even works in web pages and pdf’s. (In Firefox the function opens toward the bottom of the page.)  
Why would you use it? Lets’ say you just Googled a particular name/word, thing whatever and one of the links is a huge amount of minutia or even a large list. Use FRTL-F to find that word/name, whatever without scanning the the whole thing or the fine print yourself.  
2) Trying to find an old email (that you haven’t deleted) with a certain word or name or address in the body? Try using that search email function they have. Works very well.

– Posted by Mark Czar

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640. October 4th, 2008 1:29 pm David, This is a wonderful idea to publish a book like that. A computer professional would be reluctant to show his friend all these “trivial” things. Please organize well, so that user can find the information when needed.

– Posted by James

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641. October 4th, 2008 1:32 pm Triple-click on text and you will select the entire paragraph. (Add this to your tip of double-clicking to select a word.)  
In Windows (not sure in Mac), Alt-F4 will close the active window. When the desktop is the last window open, Alt-F4 is the equivalent of clicking on “Shut Down” in the Start menu.

– Posted by Greg Banks

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642. October 4th, 2008 1:34 pm Look at your mouse or trackball.  
There’s almost always a little ring you can remove to take out the ball (look for a ring with a tiny hole in it –put the tip of a ball pen in the hole and push clockwise, or counterclockwise, usually it will turn part of a turn and come out).  
Take the ball out. Clean it (damp cloth is enough, usually) and let it dry.



Look inside. Usually there are three little points of contact, often little tiny ball bearings. If you don’t see them, look for three fuzzballs. Wipe gently at those with a soft cloth. Get a lot of gunk off? Consider taking a Q-tip dampened slightly with rubbing alcohol (not soaking wet) and rub them again.

Let it all dry and put it back together.

Feel the difference? See the pointer moving more smoothly?

Do it again next month.

[\_ [rn:y] \_]

– Posted by Hank Roberts

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643. October  
4th,  
2008  
1:35 pm

How do you double-click on a macbook? (I’m assuming it doesn’t require ruby slippers)?

– Posted by renee

---

644. October  
4th,  
2008  
1:39 pm

Hi,  
I have tried to undo the McAfee security on my pc and I can’t get it to work. Every time I log on all the security warnings pop up and I have to delete them. But about every 15-30 seconds it comes back. Can you help me with this?  
Thanks,  
Joe

– Posted by Joe

---

645. October  
4th,  
2008  
1:40 pm

Also are you sure these commands work on a mac?  
3 shortcuts I use hourly!  
Ctrl X (cut)  
Ctrl c (copy)  
Ctrl v (paste)

– Posted by renee

---

646. October  
4th,  
2008  
1:45 pm

HI:  
Only one secret short cut.  
Control+5 (on number pad)  
will select entire MS Word document.  
Since I can’t at the moment afford two liquid crystal displays for my computer I’m always selecting “Tile Vertically”. Anyone have a fast and easy short cut? Right clicking on Task Bar is a pain when you have several apps running.

– Posted by Fred Zimnoch

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647. October  
4th,  
2008  
1:48 pm

I keep reminding my elders that one should never ever send an email or post a comment in ALL CAPS. All caps indicates that you are shouting. If you are a Hunt and Peck typist (aka two-fingered typing, in which the typist must find and press each key individually), and for whatever reason you prefer to type in all caps, consider pasting your text into Microsoft Word followed by Shift+F3 Alternatively, you can click on format, change case, sentence case. Now you are ready to cut this text and paste it back into your email program or into the comments section of a website.

If you would like to share a web article with a friend, rather than copy the entire page, (which will also copy the ads) look for a “printable version” or a “print” button (on the Web page). A new window should open with a text version of the article; use CTRL A to select all, CTRL C to copy and CTRL V to paste it into your email. When sending articles please consider including the URL (web address) in case your friend wants to access the original article on the web.

And lastly, (the style editors at the Times will cringe on this suggestion) when suggesting a keystroke command, please leave out the punctuation if it is not part of the command. (unless of course, you are willing to explain that you leave out the quotes, dash and period– which will just serve to confuse people.

For example: If you suggest someone use ALT 0151 it should not read “alt-0151” unless the quotes and dash are part of the command.

– Posted by Hope this helps

- 
648. October 4th, 2008 1:50 pm  
More keyboard shortcuts for web browsers (IE and Firefox, anyway - YMMV in others):  
ESC = “stop” (stop loading current page)  
BACKSPACE = “Back” (previous page)  
Use cursor and page keys to scroll around. Cursor and page up/down behave as expected. HOME and END are “page left” and “page right”. If they don’t work, try clicking once somewhere in the page that isn’t a link and then they should work.  
— Posted by Mike
- 
649. October 4th, 2008 1:53 pm  
Let’s not forget that your first tip re: double clicking to highlight IS BROKEN ON NYTIMES.COM because of the STUPID dictionary that pops up that is of no use to anyone. Worst thing about coming to nytimes.com.  
— Posted by another eric
- 
650. October 4th, 2008 2:00 pm  
I’m sorely disappointed that you didn’t use your column for beginners (which will surely be e-mailed to many newbies) to write about the importance of backing up precious photos, papers, and other data regularly and securely.  
Hard drives DO fail. Computers get stolen. Don’t let the convenience of a “digital lifestyle” seduce you into keeping all of your eggs in one basket!  
— Posted by Doug B
- 
651. October 4th, 2008 2:02 pm  
I love shift/command/4 on the Mac  
It lets you select any area of a page on your screen and make a photo of it. The picture will go to the desktop as Picture 1, Picture 2 etc.  
— Posted by Penny
- 
652. October 4th, 2008 2:06 pm  
@603 Thank you for posting the NOTEPAD Time/Date Stamp tip. But to be clear, it is a two-step process:  
Step one: type .LOG at the very first line of the Windows Notepad;  
Step Two: Type the name of your file in the save file as dialog box, followed by .LOG.txt (apparently, if you try one without the other, it will not include the time/date stamp). BTW, the time/date stamp is a fantastic feature when updating a file. I will now use that every time I use notepad.  
In case you’re wondering why use Notepad at all, I like the fact that it automatically removes all formatting – which is great when you want to remove links for embedded ads and the like. Alas, it seems some web sites include embedded ads even in their “printable View” format. And NOTEPAD is less of a drain on system resources compared to WORD. While on the topic of stamps, whatever happened to the file location stamp on printed documents? You rarely ever see them anymore. If you tend to forget where you save your files, consider typing the location as a footer (at the bottom of the document). For example: C:MyDocuments/Pogue Blog Comments/WORD Doc  
— Posted by Dave
- 
653. October 4th, 2008 2:09 pm  
>You don’t even have to type .com  
>just type nytimes and hit cntr/enter  
Actually you just type ‘nyt’ and press enter and it works. 😊  
— Posted by terry
- 
654. October 4th, 2008 2:18 pm  
I cannot thank you enough for this column. I teach Retrieving and Evaluating Electronic Information to undergraduates entering our program in Informatics. You have just help me create one (if not more) of their quizzes, as well as assisting me in becoming more savvy!  
— Posted by Lydia Harris
- 
655. October 4th, 2008 2:18 pm  
Yesss! The Keyboard Revolution is coming...however, one tip everyone needs to know:  
Third party programs are OFTEN lazy. For instance, most people know if they do the “Alt + (underlined letter) that menu will open. Unfortunately many Third party software vendors forget to acually

make that function work...also, they don't handle exceptions well...so I've seen a lot of techs baffled by an error that keyboard users get, but mouse users do not. Just take it a hair slower, and you'll be fine.

Want more windows keyboard tips? Just go to help on the start menu. type in keyboard and select shortcuts, and you'll get regular list and internet explorer list of shortcuts.

Keep using those shortcuts! The mouse was for people who didn't type...and if you can't type now, Mavis Beacon or some cheezy app you find on the internet should be able to teach you. I'm a firm believer that if we eliminate the mouse or reduce it even to a trackball on the keyboard, it will improve the mental faculties of the user ever so slightly.

– Posted by Kill the Mouse!

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656. October  
4th,  
2008  
2:22 pm

Let's not leave out the tech geeks. Here are some helpful tips about \*humans\* that you just assume everyone knows, but amazingly you're wrong.

- People are capable of learning, especially in context-specific situations. Simply tell them WHAT they need to know WHEN they need to know it.

- To get people to read a manual (or any other type of written instruction), it really helps if you write it reasonably well.

- People are capable of knowing one thing even if they don't know something else. Similarly, they can understand something even if their terminology is a little off.

- There are more than two types of computer users in the world (tech gods and tech neophytes). Hard as it may be to accept, you just can't reduce people to binary.

- Respect people's intelligence and wonderful things can happen. When you don't, negative consequences can arise, like people not knowing the keyboard shortcuts for copy and paste.

– Posted by HF-Greg

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657. October  
4th,  
2008  
2:26 pm

this may be elementary to most of you, but I would love to have a site or hints on email preferences. I recently had a corrupted hard drive replaced and lost most of my good setting in email, i.e. addresses that come up when you have typed in first 3-4 letters of the address, how do you 'junk' junk mail so many times that it is on the blocked list?? many other questions that would make the email easier and friendlier to the user and not the 'senders' of all the 'junk'. Is there a site I am missing (msn,qwest,windows internet explorer) that would help me change anything? PS love all the hints.

– Posted by hollybolly

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658. October  
4th,  
2008  
2:29 pm

as was already mentioned, on a mac, command + h hides the currently active program. but this doesn't work with all program (ie photoshop). alternatively, you can hold down the ALT key and click anywhere on the desktop to hide the currently active program. also for mac, you can open a file that is highlighted on the desktop or in a finder window using command + down arrow. you can do this with multiple files highlighted as well, rather than dragging to the dock or double clicking.

when browsing the internet, hold down the shift key when clicking on a link to open the link in a new window.

using command + d (control + d on a pc) will prompt you to add the current page to your bookmarks.

for mac and pc, please don't spend money on a book containing information that is all available entirely for free on the internet and also in the help sections of the programs you are using.

to reiterate an important point that someone already mentioned, if you have a question, type the question into google. it is very likely that you are not the first person to have had this same question.

– Posted by anchor

---

659. October  
4th,  
2008  
2:30 pm

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU.....  
AS A RELATIVELY NEW PC USER I FEEL I JUST "CUT"  
AND MOVED TO THE HEAD OF THE LINE.  
WRITE THAT BOOK  
R. BLUM

– Posted by R. Blum

660. October  
4th,  
2008  
2:47 pm

It’s embarrassing that you would have to write an article like this. I guess the rest of the world enjoys wasting time and being inefficient. Whenever you’re considering the purchase of a new product, simply read the manual (and watch the instructional videos) ahead of the purchase and again on the day of purchase—and then you’ll be ready to go. It’s really your own fault if you are servant (vs. master) to your computer, digital camera or cell phone.

— Posted by Allan

---

661. October  
4th,  
2008  
2:59 pm

Hints for efficiency

1. Winkey + E (simultaneously) opens Windows Explorer
2. Avoid Vistawful and MS Office 2007 Efficiency Limitation Software. Don’t buy a new computer, get a mac, use openoffice, whatever.
3. After having latest version of software for 6 months, I have to say that I have been able to find only one action of thousands that is more efficient, intuitive, or easy. Everything else is harder/not there anymore/can’t find it. But if you are amongst the sad band of folks with Vista and Excel 2007, and you need to format something on a chart, on the Layout Ribbon up in the upper left hand corner, you can select the specific item (series, plot area, etc.) and then select “Format this selection”. This sometimes (and only sometimes) easier than trying to pick out a specific series from 40 of them.
4. Other then that, my efficiency tip would be to buy the XP disk from your mfr, or ebay, and upgrade to XP from Vistawful. I have yet to find anything (save the above) that is easier or more intuitive in MS new software than in the old. Has Microsoft lost all it’s good programmers and product managers?

These tips are great, as what was discovered easily by one person can remain obscure to others. I remember showing my friend that his expensive Canon G5 camera had an LCD screen and that he didn’t need to use the optical viewfinder!

The Wiz

— Posted by Wizard of Boz

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662. October  
4th,  
2008  
3:02 pm

Okay, after going through over 300 messages, I don’t have time to read them all, but I hadn’t seen these two, so hopefully they are not repeats:

In PowerPoint, type the slide number and return to jump to that slide (either forward or back of where you are in your presentation). Great for at the end of a presentation when someone asks you a question about a particular slide from earlier (assuming you have a list of your slides printed out by number...).

In Mac (probably PC too, but I don’t know the keys), if you want to select only certain files from a folder, hold down the command/apple key while you click on them (or click and use the shift key if you want a bunch that are in a row—you just need to click on the first and last). Once they are highlighted, you can click and drag the whole bunch onto the program icon of the app you want to use to open the files. Or you can then click one one of the highlighted items while holding down control and the “open with” function from the menu that pops up (this also obviously works with individual files). I find this especially useful for image files, while browsing through the thumbnails in the finder window.

Mac also (although again, probably a PC version): you can print directly from a file name without opening the file (great for World and Excel does that you know don’t need to be edited, but you just need a print-out). Just highlight the file in the finder, and go to file “print” or control click on it and scroll to “print” in the pop-up menu. Saves a lot of time, especially if you don’t already have the program open.

Also—why does this list of tips need to be a book??? It seems to me it would be more useful as a website with all the superior searching capabilities. Just make it so that there’s a good “print” function that perhaps links to a nice pdf version for those who want to self-publish it as a stand-alone reference. You can always put a donation link to paypal or some other for those that want to pay you for putting it together. I’m sure you’d make more than enough money that way!

— Posted by Anna

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663. October  
4th,  
2008

For automated backups, there’s Mozy.com. 2 gigs of automatically backed up data, and it’s free. Works for both both Macs and PCs, too. A friend set it up for his mom and they both seemed very happy with

3:06 pm

...there get up for the morning and they both seemed very happy that it.

— Posted by Henry B.

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664. October 4th, 2008 3:11 pm

Thank you and all the other helpful commenters so much!

— Posted by Judy

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665. October 4th, 2008 3:12 pm

the windows key, followed by u and another u will close open programs and turn off the computer.

— Posted by jt

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666. October 4th, 2008 3:18 pm

This is basic, but I’ve found it’s helpful for those who use lots of bookmarks in their browser:  
You can add folders to your bookmark toolbar. This is helpful if you visit many Web sites/pages frequently and have too many bookmarks to fit in one visible row on your bookmark toolbar. This allows you to group similar or similarly used sites in one folder accessed from your browser.

Firefox users go to: Bookmarks>Organize bookmarks>Organize>New Folder

It’s really simple and basic, but I find it useful at work.

— Posted by Jacki

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667. October 4th, 2008 3:30 pm

To piggyback even further to what # 583 posted:

Allow me to spell out the steps for proper forwarding of inspirational or supposed funny mailings or even articles such as this amazingly informative article/blog from David Pogue! (who, IMHO, should get the best-columnist award. I also suggest an honorary mention (or a shout-out) to Frank Rich, Dick Cavett, Maureen Dowd and A.O. Scott!) But, I digress:

Step one:

Hit REPLY

(older versions of AOL and some other programs often attach the original email along with any personal messages included which is why you want to use reply instead of forward so you can edit that email)

Step Two:

Delete the sender’s email address in the “Send To” field.

Step Three:

Enter your own email address in the “Send To” field.

Step Four:

Use the BCC field to enter the recipients’ email addresses.

Step Five:

Scroll down through the body of the message and delete the entire list of email addresses which only serves to show how many times this email has traveled around the world.

Step Six:

Continue scrolling to the bottom of the message to find and delete any references that would identify the original email as a “chain-letter.” For example: If it contains the words “please send to 21 firends within one week and good luck will come your way...” or even subtler messages such as “forward to all your friends” just delete those lines.

You are now ready to send this message. Your friends and family will appreciate your efforts in cleaning up the email and more importantly, will thank you for NOT inadvertently sending them a “curse.” By using reply and BCC it will also appear as though you are sending it to them exclusively.

— Posted by If I could only afford a MAC

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668. October 4th, 2008 3:34 pm

Excellent list, both Pogue’s and the users. I admit I didn’t look through the whole list of suggestions, so these might be repeats:

My favorite of all time: Control-z, which in many programs will undo your last change. You can usually repeat it a few times to get back several steps.

In Excel: Control-1 brings up the cell formatting menu, which most folks use a lot.

– Posted by Vaughn

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669. October 4th, 2008 3:42 pm

Haven’t seen this posted yet...I have little icons (you can drag them from their address line) in my Vista bottom tray (on left next to Start button) for my fave websites (NYT, WSJ, CNBC, etc). These are always visible and will launch those sites in a new tab in IE7. Very handy. No more typing most web addresses.

– Posted by MarjD

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670. October 4th, 2008 3:43 pm

Under Windows, if you want to copy an entire table of numbers from a web page into a spreadsheet, OpenOffice Calc will do it straight away, but Excel isn’t smart enough. If you’re stuck with Excel, first paste your copied data into a new Wordpad document, then highlight everything in Wordpad and copy again, then paste into Excel.

Wordpad is remarkable in this way, it can straighten out many format-copying problems, and every copy of Windows has it under Programs/Accessories.

Hope this helps....love your column, David...

– Posted by Jim

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671. October 4th, 2008 3:47 pm

Almost every application for OS X supports emacs-style keyboard shortcuts for text editing. Try it: type in a textfield. Press ctrl-e, ctrl-a, ctrl-k, ctrl-y, ctrl-b, ctrl-f, ... (note: press control, not command)

In particular, anything built with Apple developer tools will have these shortcuts. Other apps, like Firefox, have to be configured to include this functionality (\*grumble\*).

– Posted by Brandon

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672. October 4th, 2008 3:47 pm

Nice list, but hunting through these comments can be tiresome. I hope people see this one:

YOU CAN LOOK UP A LIST OF KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS on Google or elsewhere. On the Mac, I highly recommend opening Help (at the menu bar on top) and searching for “Keyboard shortcuts.” There are extremely useful shortcuts for when you experience a freeze, for example, and you can print these out for your convenience, rather than having to read them here.

– Posted by DrSchmoe

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673. October 4th, 2008 3:48 pm

Gee, thanks a bunch! I wanted to print your tips (just your tips) so I highlighted just the tips (held the control key down while dragging my mouse...) and then right clicking to get the menu to come up so I could choose print. Guess what? Not only did it not print (after going through the steps to select my printer, etc.), but my computer froze up and I had to reboot (not once, but twice) before I got my computer back! Then, I got the bright idea of emailing your article to myself and printing that way. Guess what? Same thing happened. FINALLY, I again highlighted the text (control, drag....) and COPIED it to my WordPerfect application and THEN was able to print it. Thanks for the tips, I think!

– Posted by Gail Van Derworp, Stockton California

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674. October 4th, 2008 4:03 pm

\*You can TRIPLE-click a word to highlight the entire sentence or paragraph.

\*Website links only need ONE click not two. Really.

\*Use CMD+enter (mac) or CTRL+enter (pc) to any basic url (e.g. “nytimes”) and the “http://www.” and “.com” are automagically added. Add SHIFT for “.org” sites.

\*Google will convert distance, too. Try “18 miles in km.”

\*On the Mac, preview any file without opening the program (acrobat, excel, photos, word, etc.) by hitting the space bar when the item is selected. Use arrow keys to browse through your list of files.

\*On the Mac, turn anything into a ‘template’ by clicking CMD+I (for “info”), and checking the box that says “Stationery Pad”

COOL APPLE TIPS for everyone here:  
<http://www.apple.com/business/theater/>

– Posted by Hani Hong

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675. October Please write that book, but do it in the form of structured lessons

4th,  
2008  
4:04 pm

that build upon each other and constantly re-use initial tips so that I can remember them. Your article itself has more tips than I can memorize, and only about half are completely new to me. But to go through over 600 tips so far in the comments section (if they are all tips and not repetitive), is far more than I’ll absorb much less read.

That said, my favorite is Ctrl-ALT-Print Scr, which then allows you to paste a copy of a screen shot in a photo editor program. Useful for website design if you have a links page and want to show what the linked page looks like.

– Posted by Lee Dittmann

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676. October  
4th,  
2008  
4:07 pm

IN WIN, TO SCROL/USE PG UP/ PG DN TO SCL QUICK. USE ARROW UP /DN TO SCL MORE SLOWLY

– Posted by MIKE

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677. October  
4th,  
2008  
4:17 pm

A couple more:

\*Define any word in google by writing “define: word”

\*Find any business in any neighborhood in Google by typing in the business type and zip/city: “pizza in 10014” or “coffee in Seattle”

By the way, may I write this book with you? I have to stop myself from showing too many shortcuts to the list of people for whom I am a personal “help desk” so as not to confuse them with too much information.

– Posted by Hani

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678. October  
4th,  
2008  
4:18 pm

To preserve privacy when sending an e-mail to a group of people who might not want everyone else on the list to get their e-mail addresses, put your own address as the “TO” and blind-copy everyone else.

– Posted by Neil

---

679. October  
4th,  
2008  
4:20 pm

when hunting through large text pages, CTL-F brings a find function. This is quite superior to scrolling through and hunting for an item. (pneumonic ctl-f ctl-(F)ind

– Posted by Drduck

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680. October  
4th,  
2008  
4:22 pm

Lol, noobs! It’s adorable, really.

– Posted by Dominique

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681. October  
4th,  
2008  
4:32 pm

Ctrl-S is your best friend.

and

Alt-F4 is your worst nightmare.

– Posted by Hojei

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682. October  
4th,  
2008  
4:48 pm

To Gerald #424 and Pat #467. On the Mac, if you use control-scroll wheel to enlarge the screen (actually it just changes the screen resolution) you must scroll back to the starting point before things will function normally. It’s a great feature for looking at a blowup of something TEMPORARILY. Remember, just scroll back to resume where you left off.

– Posted by HarryR

---

683. October  
4th,  
2008  
5:11 pm

You don’t even have to type “1620 Newfield Avenue Stamford, CT 06905”

just enter the name and simultaneously press control and enter

– Posted by Scott A. Wallace

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684. October  
4th,  
2008  
5:11 pm

Google actually does have a little-known wildcard feature.

It only works to replace whole words. It’s very useful when you are searching for people and are unsure if a middle name is used or if a couple’s names are both listed. (It is also useful for finding forgotten words in the middle of a phrase or title, or for allowing for a variety of incidental words linking your search terms)

It uses the standard wildcard symbol: \* which must have spaces around it.

For example, try searching for: “Sarah \* Palin”.

It will return results for:

“Sarah Louise Heath Palin”,

“Sarah and Todd Palin”,

“Sarah “Barracuda” Palin”,

“Sarah “Evita” Palin”,

“Sarah “Pitbull” Palin”...

(“Joe \* Biden” has some interesting results too.)

One note: if you use the wildcard, it will only return results where the wildcard DOES represent at least one word. So for completeness, also repeat your search without using the wildcard symbol.

– Posted by Marti

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685. October  
4th,  
2008  
5:12 pm

In Microsoft Word, select text, hold Shift and tap the F3 key to cycle between lower case, upper case, and title case.

– Posted by Glenn W

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686. October  
4th,  
2008  
5:13 pm

You don’t have to type a web site address all over again every time you want to go there. You can BOOKMARK the web page currently displayed in your browser (on a Mac - use command-D). The address of the web page will be stored in your Bookmarks menu and you can go back to the same page instantly using the Bookmarks menu.

(I write this in anguish from having watched my boyfriend type w-w-w-.g-o-o-g-l-e.-c-o-m dozens of times. sigh.)

– Posted by Rob

---

687. October  
4th,  
2008  
5:22 pm

Google also does metric conversions, such as acres to hectares, inches to centimeters, Celsius to Fahrenheit, etc., etc.

– Posted by Charlene

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688. October  
4th,  
2008  
5:28 pm

For the person who complained she couldn’t print because it was in a blog format, I did a few experiments and found a work-around...

1) You’re right, when I tried to print, I only got the original blog entry, not all the informative comments.

2) I did a Command-A on my Mac (likely Control-A in Windows) to select All and then a Command-C (Control-C) to copy everything; opened Word, tried to paste (both menu and Command-P) and nothing.

3) BUT, then opened Mail, created a new message, and THEN the Command-P copied everything into an email format. From that, I can print.

Not ideal, but it works — anyone else with a better idea?

– Posted by Sharon R

---

689. October  
4th,  
2008  
5:28 pm

Here’s a clever trick:

Before adding to this list of fine suggestions, use the finder in your browser to search for what you want to add - to see if it’s already been said.

For example, search for F10 if you’re making a comment involving F10, or search “two fingers” if you’re wanting to comment (again) on the newer mac mousepad feature.

– Posted by Richard

---

690. October  
4th,  
2008  
5:31 pm

I have a macbook pro and neither of mac keystrokes listed to show the desktop works on my laptop, (and yes, I am using the correct key for command - the one with the apple).

– Posted by Alissa

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691. October  
4th,  
2008  
5:37 pm

On most cell phones, inside the contacts/address book menu, you can get access to names of a certain letter by typing that letter. Sure beats scrolling!

– Posted by Peter

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692. October  
4th,  
2008  
5:37 pm

Thank you Louise #608

To forward only the \*important\* part of an email, just highlight that part and hit forward.>



My first computer was a LISA and I didn’t know that. It also works with “REPLY” not only FORWARD. Thanks again.

– Posted by HarryR

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693. October 4th, 2008 5:39 pm

When a screen, or program freezes, press Alt, Ctrl Delete at the same time. Your Windows Task Manager will pop up. Highlight the program in question & click on the End Task button to close it out.

– Posted by Suzanne

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694. October 4th, 2008 5:53 pm

Mac:  
apple H - hides the window you have before you.  
option apple H- hides all windows behind that window (very convenient if you want to drag a document to the desktop)  
Itunes- Holding down option while you click on itunes allows you to select your music library. (This is very convenient if you have a laptop with part of your music on your hard drive and part on your laptop. You can add files from one library to the other without duplicating the file by clicking on the do not copy to folder box in the preferences)

Word will have a back up copy of a document if your computer crashes, even if you haven’t saved it yet, text edit will not.

In word you can create your own keyboard shortcuts in the tools section. allows you to adjust so as to highlight, add comment, or simply zoom to page width with out so much as pulling your hand away from the keyboard.

now who can tell us about ergonomics and laptops?

– Posted by mike le chev

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695. October 4th, 2008 5:55 pm

Windows lists (like the right side Explorer window showing file names and sizes, etc.) will resize all column widths with the keyboard combination CTRL+SHIFT+’+’ (that is, the numeric keypad plus sign). Quick, undocumented remedy when some content is truncated.

– Posted by rusty

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696. October 4th, 2008 6:02 pm

What? Can you repeat everything, please?

– Posted by Naomi

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697. October 4th, 2008 6:03 pm

In Windows, to close a window that is minimized, right-click the program’s button on the taskbar and click close. I THINK this works when you Option+click on macs.

– Posted by ND

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698. October 4th, 2008 6:12 pm

In MS Word (Mac and PC) you can move a block of text by selecting it, dragging to somewhere else on the page, and releasing the mouse button. Holding the option key while doing this, inserts a copy of the original selected text rather than moving it. This works in most apps on the Mac and many on Windows. Simple.

– Posted by Jim

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699. October 4th, 2008 6:17 pm

To find a specific word on a page while using Safari or Firefox hit ⌘ + F , (command + F) this works with Macs , you’ll have to test it on a Windows computer . This way you can jump to where your name is mentioned in a 10,000 word webstory.

– Posted by Kobia

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700. October 4th, 2008 6:26 pm

Help make life tough for spammers.

When emailing a “mass mailout” (sports clubs, school newsletters, season greetings, whatever) list ALL recipients as BCC (blind carbon copy), not “To”, or “CC”.

Each recipient will see the message addressed from your email addressed to ‘undisclosed-recipient’. They will thank you for helping to prevent the spread of their email address to every other name on the list, including potential spammers, unsecured computers and who knows what other nastiness.

Ask your kids’ school admin, sports groups and others if they would publish your phone number indiscriminately. Point out that not protecting your email address is tantamount to the same treatment of

your private information. Pass this technique on to those email generators.

spam thrives through inconsiderate dispersal of personal details.

– Posted by rusty

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701. October  
4th,  
2008  
6:26 pm

Dear Mr. Pogue: Thanks for the great computer’s tips. Please write that book.  
Flor

– Posted by Flor de Maria Viteri

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702. October  
4th,  
2008  
6:27 pm

Firefox allows you to create custom keyword searches that turn the address bar into a search query bar. Great productivity booster!

Example using Google:

1. Go to the google website
2. Right click the search box
3. From the popup menu select “Add a keyword for this search”
4. In this example I’ll use “Google” for name and “g” for the keyword
5. Click “add” and you’re done

Now, whenever you wish to search google:

1. Type ctrl + D to highlight the address bar
2. Enter g + space + search term (example: g space aliens)

You can create custom keyword searches for any website that provides search (amazon, wikipedia, etc).

– Posted by PG

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703. October  
4th,  
2008  
6:30 pm

Oops, small error in my last post.

It’s ALT + D to highlight the address bar NOT CTRL + D.

– Posted by PG

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704. October  
4th,  
2008  
6:33 pm

Control V to paste is from the 1984 or so version of Wordstar where the mnemonics were:

ctrl Copy  
ctrl moVe

– Posted by allen t

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705. October  
4th,  
2008  
6:39 pm

One of my favorite computer accessories is a mouse with side buttons that function as “back” and “forward” in web browsers. So much easier to click the mouse button than to drag the cursor back up to the left top corner over and over again! Ours works in both IE and Firefox.

Also, Ctrl+T opens a new tab in Firefox as well as IE.

– Posted by Linda L.

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706. October  
4th,  
2008  
6:43 pm

To save color ink when printing a web page, just highlight the text you want to print (by holding down the left mouse and dragging the arrow [which appears at the left margin when your cursor is over the text], then in the Print menu, select print “selection”. That way you’re not printing ads, photos, banners, etc. If your attention wanders and something you don’t want gets highlighted, just drag the arrow back to the text. This tip only applies if there is no “printable version” icon for the text.

Also Cntrl + Y will repeat whatever you just typed.

– Posted by Liz

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707. October  
4th,  
2008  
6:44 pm

Really basic: some people don’t know they can use the Center command to center a line of text in Word. Instead they use the spacebar to “eye” it!

More advanced: In Word I like using Ctrl+Shift+> to increase all text by one font size (or Ctrl+Shift+<

– Posted by Pam R

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708. October  
4th,  
2008  
6:48 pm

Ctrl F6 - switches between documents in Word, very handy

Hit F8 in Word - then arrow keys or page up or page down will highlight text or ctrl end or ctrl home, more control and faster than wild mouse - in other words, with cursor at beginning of 1000 page document hit F8 then ctrl end and the whole document will be highlighted for cutting pasting or formatting font or paragraph

In Word Tools Menu go to customize Keyboard All Commands and create the keystrokes you want - I have set up my keyboard with the old Wordstar keystroke commands I was used to using the alt key - my hands fly - I never have to use the mouse - of course the keyboard must be for you and you only, others will be driven crazy by it  
– Posted by SS

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709. October 4th, 2008 6:49 pm

Read through the first few hundred of these and found one tip that was new to me, so I’ll probably take the time to read the rest. But I’m constantly surprised by how many repeat comments a post like this gets... do people just not bother to read the thread before posting their own advice to not enter “.com” when typing a url? I have to take a break now, so I can reduce my frustration level some, because I do suspect there will be more shortcuts I didn’t already know about hidden in the numerous repeat tips.

For that reason, I think a compilation of these tips would be great. Like many of the techies who have responded, I know at least a dozen people who would benefit from such a list. Any chance you’ll really write ‘The Basics’ for that large target audience?

– Posted by Christina Jeskey

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710. October 4th, 2008 6:52 pm

1. to type in the address of a web site, I just type the name, such as google.com and press enter to find the site.

I really like a program called snagit to copy anything on the screen and save it or send it or whatever. It’s a really inexpensive program that has tremendous applications. I have not financial interest in snagit.

– Posted by Don Arsenault

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711. October 4th, 2008 6:52 pm

Waow,thank you very much for this very helpful tips.I did not know any of this shortcuts,and i am on the computer constantly.

– Posted by juan A.

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712. October 4th, 2008 6:54 pm

I remember the old days when you bought a computer, or a piece of software, and it would actually come with a thick manual which you could read in order to learn the details of how it worked - if you were so inclined. It seems pointless that they include all these features without a systematic way to learn them anymore. The “help menus” are not conducive to being read thoroughly while curling up in a comfortable chair, and I find that they often contain incorrect, presumably outdated information.

– Posted by Michael

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713. October 4th, 2008 6:57 pm

This trick will only work for Mac users.

If you spill coffee or something, do like you’re press command-Z on the table. The spilt drink will instantly return to the cup. Amazing.

– Posted by bruceb

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714. October 4th, 2008 7:01 pm

In Google you can also add the domain(type of site you want). Search “tax forms .gov” or “solar power .edu” to eliminate all the commercial sites.

In Excel, under “Edit”, there is the magic “Fill” command. It will fill in the data for you. If you click in the field where you want to start and drag your mouse throught the following rows or columns, you can repeat the original field in all of the rows you’ve highlighted by using “Down.” The magic part is if you select “Series.” It will number your rows by ones or threes or fives, as you like. If you select “Series” and then “AutoFill” it will fill in months or dates or years, etc. Just be sure your first cell has the information to begin the list you want.

– Posted by Sharon

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715. October 4th, 2008 7:08 pm

I just sent it to my daughter. Thanks, P.

– Posted by amans

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716. October 4th, 2008 7:00 pm

Uh, I just got a Mac after years and years of using only PCs, so the advice here is unbelievably timely and helpful. I particularly enjoyed the “right click” help. But what, pray tell, is “control click”?

717. October 4th, 2008 7:27 pm

— Posted by Etaoin

717. October 4th, 2008 7:27 pm

Over 620 comments, and everyone keeps repeating the same dozen tips or so.

— Posted by Kate

718. October 4th, 2008 7:32 pm

On Windows, when you drag a file to a new location:  
- Hold down CTRL to copy the file  
- Hold down ALT to create a shortcut to the file  
- Hold down SHIFT to move the file (useful in situations where Windows defaults to copying, like when you’re moving a file from one hard drive to another)

Also, in Firefox, you can drag selected text into the search box or address bar to automatically search for that text or go to that web address. Or, if you drag the text into the tab bar, it will open that address in a new tab.

— Posted by Matt

719. October 4th, 2008 7:32 pm

Besides the invaluable Ctrl-Z that un-does everything and ends up making you feel like having one of those for your everyday life as well, Ctr-Y re-does the command you’ve just Ctrl-Z’ed.

That’s particularly useful when using a word processor and you want to jump back and forth between particularly long text insertions.

— Posted by Pedro

720. October 4th, 2008 7:34 pm

Top 10 Adobe Creative Suite Keyboard Shortcuts  
From my Blog: <http://adobettraining.blogspot.com/>

10: Copying a graphic or object: select the graphic/object, hold down the alt key (option key on a Mac) and drag;

9: Zooming Out with the Zoom Tool (Magnifying Glass Tool): hold down the alt key (option key on Mac) and click with the Zoom Tool selected.

8: Displaying a page or document at 100%: A: Hold down the Control Key and the “1” key; or, my favorite, double click on the Zoom Tool (Magnifying Glass) in the Tool box.

7: Displaying a document within the existing monitor screen (Fit in Window): Hold down the Control Key and the “o” (zero) key on the keyboard or double click on the Hand Tool in the Tool box.

6. Temporarily displaying the hand tool to scroll around the page: hold down the spacebar and click and drag the mouse; let go of the spacebar to return to the previous tool you were using.

5. Hide all panels and toolbars: hold down the Tab key.

4: Hide only the panels on the right hand side of the screen: hold down the Tab and Shift keys.

3: Cycle through the screen modes (Photoshop and Illustrator only) : hold down the F key on the keyboard. (Note: this single-key keyboard short cut is also a “gotcha” one that you can very easily accidentally implement in the normal course of working in Photoshop and Illustrator.) The various screen modes in Photoshop and Illustrator are also accessible by clicking and holding down the mouse on the icon at the bottom of Tool Box. (Gotcha Alert: all the tools in the Tool Box in both Photoshop and Illustrator have single-letter keyboard shortcuts, so if you’re not careful you can easily and accidentally trigger one of these shortcuts.)

2: Draw a perfect circle or square (depending on what tool you use) hold down the Shift key and keep it held down while drawing.

And the number one Creative Suite Keyboard Shortcut:

1: To draw a shape or selection from the center out (instead of the default upper left corner): select the desired drawing tool (rectangle, ellipse, etc, or rectangular or elliptical selection tools) hold down the alt key and click and drag the mouse.

Bonus Keyboard Shortcut: Control - Z (Windows; Command -Z on the Macintosh) is Un-Do.

Photoshop has only one level of Un-Do, that is you hit Control Z you go back on step. Illustrator has multiple levels of Un-Do, every time you hit Control Z you go back another step, same with InDesign. However Photoshop has another feature: Step Backward, keyboard shortcut is Alt-Control-Z. Every time you use it you go back another step. This feature ties in with the History Panel in Photoshop (which is sort of a super Un-Do).

– Posted by Ken

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721. October 4th, 2008 7:35 pm

If you write that book, I will buy a copy. I will buy additional copies for my wife, mom, sister, brother and kid, also.

I promise. =]

– Posted by Phat Pat

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722. October 4th, 2008 7:37 pm

Ctrl-up or down leaps from paragraph to paragraph in a word document as opposed from line-by-line.

Add Shift to do the same while selecting that paragraph.

– Posted by Pedro

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723. October 4th, 2008 7:50 pm

THANK YOU!!!!!! also there’s a good anti-spyware program that’s free! It won’t interfere with security already on your computer. go to [www.safernetworking.org](http://www.safernetworking.org) to download SPYBOT SEARCH and DESTROY.

– Posted by Cathy

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724. October 4th, 2008 7:50 pm

I know someone hinted at this, but I wanted to make it clearer.

If you’re going through a body of text, be it in a Word, WordPerfect, TextEdit document, an email, a comment on a blog... you can ALWAYS skip through it word-by-word and paragraph-by-paragraph using Option + arrow (Mac) or Ctrl + arrow (PC). Up and down skip by paragraph, while left and right skip by word or grouping of characters.

Using the same logic, you can also hold Shift while doing this to select a single word, a group of words, or even a whole paragraph (or six). This is especially useful when used in conjunction with other text-editing keystrokes – cut (ctr/cmd + x), paste (+ v), copy (+ c), undo (+ z), redo (+ y), print (+ p), save (+ s), etc.

I try never to use the mouse/trackpad unless I’m forced to do so, and resent the move away from keyboard commands in many programs.

– Posted by Eva

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725. October 4th, 2008 7:55 pm

Oh this article and replies to it have me mesmerised - I never knew 98% of this stuff. Write the book and include replies as well. Just great.

– Posted by susan

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726. October 4th, 2008 8:10 pm

Interesting that so many of these keyboard “shortcuts” are all we had to work with when DOS was all we had for PCs. The pendulum swings both ways–back to the future!

– Posted by Gordon

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727. October 4th, 2008 8:17 pm

Google does some higher math too - for instance, the query 3.95 usd/gal in gbp/l

Results:

3.95 (U.S. dollars / gal) = 0.587544824 British pounds / l

FYI: Current avg petrol in the UK is 109.17 p/l according to [whatprice.co.uk](http://whatprice.co.uk) for unleaded.

Or for instance, if you markup your foreign goods, you could query 1500/.7 eur in usd to get a retail price for goods that you purchase for 1500 euros in us dollars (at the current rate, of course).

– Posted by David M

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728. October 4th, 2008 8:20 pm

A couple of people asked what the Windows key is. Not all keyboards have it. If you have it, it’s usually in the bottom row and is marked with the four little wavy boxes of the Windows logo. You can always buy a new keyboard with more features for less than \$20 or so.

Here’s another idea: use a regular keyboard connected to your laptop to have larger keys and a 10-key number pad. You can put the regular keyboard down lower in a more ergonomic position and it’s better for your hands and wrists. I sent both my kids off to college with an extra keyboard just for this purpose. Laptop on the desk, keyboard on the keyboard tray.

– Posted by Linda L.

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729. October 4th, 2008 8:21 pm

While reading the above excellent tips, my windows START button capriciously went from the bottom left of the screen to the top right. I cannot get it to go back to the bottom left of the screen. Does anyone have a suggestion?

– Posted by steve

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730. October 4th, 2008 8:22 pm

In Google, if you are getting search results of stuff you do not want, you can add a “-” before the unwanted thing. For example, if you are searching for “apple” and keep getting Macintosh products, search for “apple -Macintosh”

– Posted by Ben

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731. October 4th, 2008 8:22 pm

RE: alt+d = takes you to the address bar of most modern web browsers and Windows (file) explorer (some people think of it as My Computer window). This way you can easily type in the next address or drive letter you want to jump to instead of using the mouse to highlight it.

– Posted by mark s

F6 works for both of these too and it’s only one key

– Posted by Anne

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732. October 4th, 2008 8:23 pm

In Firefox, hit the escape key to stop flash elements from flashing.

– Posted by Lenore

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733. October 4th, 2008 8:25 pm

While reading a web page, use the key to go to the previous page.

– Posted by Betsy

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734. October 4th, 2008 8:31 pm

The best TIP for efficient Internet browsing:  
<http://www.widexplorer.com>

– Posted by Dwight

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735. October 4th, 2008 8:42 pm

RE: I am surprised by how few people, even practiced writers, are unaware of the split-screen function in MICROSOFT Word. Clicking on the little blue button in the upper-right hand corner (above the scroll bar) of a Word screen will divide the screen in half; each will now have its own scroll bar. It’s possible, then, to keep one section of your document in front of you while scrolling down or up in the other portion of your screen. A great way, for example, to compare an opening and closing paragraph of a longer document. (The “Window” tab from the top menu will also activate and de-activate this function.)

– Posted by RL

I like this feature too and note that you can also double-click on the divider between the two halves of the document to remove the divider.

– Posted by Anne

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736. October 4th, 2008 8:48 pm

One finger on a Mac mousepad moves the cursor, but two fingers on the pad scrolls up and down the page.

– Posted by osisbs

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737. October 4th, 2008 8:51 pm

Someone said: “The key that is between the right Windows key and right CTRL opens a context menu just like clicking with the right mouse button.” Then use the arrows to highlight the command you want and hit enter. If you want the menu to go away, hit ALT. Now you don’t need to use your carpal tunnel inducing mouse.

– Posted by many k

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738. October 4th, 2008 8:54 pm

Most people do not know about Freelanthropy, which donates an (small, but still valuable!) amount of money to a charitable cause every time you make an internet search.

If you have any organization or cause that you’d like to support daily, go to [freelanthropy.com](http://freelanthropy.com) and search for it. Download the toolbar (free and quick) and it will be added to the top of your web browser. If you

work for a non-profit organization, look into this and create one for yourself!

You should know that Freelanthy only runs their searches through Yahoo! I personally prefer Google, but maintain my search box for both Google! and my non-profit of choice’s toolbar next to each other and use them both.

The toolbar also has Shop-and-Give links to most services (everything from amazon and ebay amongst nordstroms and united airlines) so you that when you navigate to the retailer site through this button, your cause gets a donation from the sales!

Nothing has changed in my internet use, except that anytime I use it I’m actually donating a bit of money. Imagine if everyone had it on their computer...

freelanthy.com

– Posted by Rebecca

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739. October 4th, 2008 8:54 pm

As I work as a translator, I sometimes need to use more than one language in the same text in Office Word. You can customize your keyboard to switch easily between languages, including those right-to-left languages like Arabic. I use left Alt+Shift to move between English and Arabic and back in the same document. Don’t forget to add your new language input to Windows from the Control Panel (under Date, Time, Language and regional Options.) You can also use the bilingual configuration in your Internet browsing. Google, for example, can do search in languages other than English. While in New York, I regularly read all Arabic-language newspapers in the Middle East.

– Posted by Sami ELRAZAZ

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740. October 4th, 2008 8:57 pm

I’ve only read 400 comments, but so far, no one has mentioned these 3 –

Press Ctrl C twice to open a “sidebar”. Everything you copy or cut will be listed there (you can delete any entries), and you can paste any of them at any time.

In my version of Word, hitting the Return key twice after the first line will cause it to be formatted as a header. If you don’t want this, press undo (Ctrl z). The text will remain but the formatting disappears. This undoes many auto-functions, such bulleted lists, auto-corrects, etc.

Use auto-correct! You can automatically capitalize sentences or fix inappropriate capitalization. Also — Choose “replace text as you type”. Then, when you misspell a word, rt-click it(turn on ). Select AutoCorrect and choose the correct spelling. Then words you commonly misspell will be corrected automatically as you type. If you don’t want the correction, press Undo and the original spelling reappears.

– Posted by Susan

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741. October 4th, 2008 9:04 pm

Love this post! So many things I thought everyone knew, and so many more I should have known. Here’s one I didn’t see:

On a laptop (or at least on a MacBook) use two fingers on the mousepad to scroll up or down, left or right.

– Posted by keikosan

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742. October 4th, 2008 9:13 pm

To immediately silence a cell phone ring without having to answer it and hang up which I see people do all the time - press the volume key on the side.

– Posted by richard

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743. October 4th, 2008 9:18 pm

For PCs:

Press ALT + F4 to close programs and/or shortcut to the “Shut down, Restart, Sleep” menu.

– Posted by Nina

---

744. October 4th, 2008 9:21 pm

Bookmark current page:

Drag and drop the IE icon found in extreme upper left-hand corner of browser into Favorites or onto Desktop.

Access bookmark:

Drag and drop bookmark from Favorites into Address bar or

anywhere in browser window.

Delete file without having to empty Recycle bin later:  
Drag and drop file into Recycle bin while pressing Shift key.

Execute Menu bar commands (File, Edit, View, etc.) ALT - underlined letter. Then press letter of sub-menu command (Save As, Print, etc).

– Posted by TQ

---

745. October 4th, 2008 9:29 pm

This still amazes me... I have a friend that didnt realize you could hold down shift and then any letter to capitalize it in a word processor. Bless her, she would highlight the first letter and select uppercase from the drop down menu!

– Posted by Jimmy D

---

746. October 4th, 2008 9:33 pm

Especially useful for chemist/scientist-types

In word:  
ctrl-plus = subscript  
ctrl-shift-plus = superscript

First highlight the numbers/letters of choice with shift and arrow keys. The use the ctrl-shift-plus command. Great for many chemical formulas like H<sub>2</sub>O, CO<sub>2</sub>, or e=mc<sup>2</sup>. I use this constantly when writing technical text.

– Posted by Mak

---

747. October 4th, 2008 9:34 pm

Control + A will highlight the whole document. Saves lots of time.

– Posted by Cindy M

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748. October 4th, 2008 9:48 pm

Thank you for this article - it is very helpful, even if I don't know what a lot of you are even talking about! My kids can't believe my husband & I actually graduated from college and law school without computers. We had to research everything in books and files in the library and type papers on typewriters. How could we possible know anything?!

– Posted by Sarah

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749. October 4th, 2008 9:54 pm

While scrolling on a Synaptics touchpad, if you keep making the motion you'll scroll faster.

Works on my Inspiron e1505.

– Posted by Ted Sawchuck

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750. October 4th, 2008 9:58 pm

2 I didn't see above:

-you can use ctrl+tab to switch tabs in firefox/safari/chrome (i'm guessing IE as well)  
-to select multiple items, use ctrl (PC) or command (Mac) and click the second item. Or, you can press shift and select all items between the first and second item. You can then go back and ctrl/deselect ones you dont want. Oh and ctrl (or command)+ A selects all the items available (all text in a document or all files in a folder). Very handy.

– Posted by David

---

751. October 4th, 2008 10:04 pm

There isn't an "any" key on the keyboard.

You can't crash the Internet.

If you open more than one copy of the same document on the same computer and work on then both at the same time, you may overwrite information you think you saved from one or the other document.

Opening and working on files attached to email messages while still in the email program may prevent you from saving your work for later retrieval. Save the attached files to disk before you work on them.

If your computer won't turn on, check the power cable. It has to be plugged in. Low tech failures are more common than high tech failures.

If your porch collapses and kills more than seven computers, you might be a geek.

– Posted by Dan H



- 
752. October 4th, 2008 10:28 pm
- Save yourself from Trojans that wreck your registry. Download Spybot. Install it and turn on Tea-Timer.
- Tea-Timer will alert you whenever a program tries to update the registry - I ALWAYS deny updates to the registry.
- Also download Avast - FREE ( and damn good ) Virus protection.
- Posted by charles
- 
753. October 4th, 2008 10:36 pm
- Question to All of you.
- Can I make WORD File of the Article and all (more than 700+) comments?
- Please tell us, how? (10.35PM, 10-4-08)
- I would like to try some of the tricks, on my time.
- Posted by MRK
- 
754. October 4th, 2008 10:36 pm
- I disagree with the suggestion to not type “www” before web addresses. Quite often “www.domain.com” and “domain.com” actually are two different things, or there can be subdomains such as “images.google.com” for example that don’t even use “www”.
- Posted by Ryan
- 
755. October 4th, 2008 10:38 pm
- What a fabulous resource we all are, even having to wade through all the duplicate tips. Here are the ones I didn’t see listed:
- Firefox on Mac:
- \* “Escape” stops flash elements from flashing on the current page.
  - \* Command-D opens the bookmark dialogue.
  - \* “/” opens quick-search window; click on page and window disappears.
  - \* Command-W closes the current tab
  - \* From suggestions above I found that, like text snippets, I can drag images from web pages into Appleworks or other word processing documents. Which is groovy.
- Mac:
- \* F12 opens DVD drive
  - \* When hung up, click on Apple icon on menu bar to force-quit the application.
- Posted by Lenore
- 
756. October 4th, 2008 10:51 pm
- In Windows alt-f4 brings up Bill Gates’ SSN. In Macs you get Jobs’ mother’s maiden name by hitting apple -f4.
- Keep the tricks coming!
- Posted by Sean
- 
757. October 4th, 2008 11:20 pm
- Why don’t the Times blogs have a “print” button?
- Posted by Eugene Falik
- 
758. October 4th, 2008 11:27 pm
- On a Mac, holding the Option key while moving the file on the desktop or in a window will copy the file. This “Option dragging” works in all the Adobe graphic programs also, as a way of copying things.
- I’m not sure if Alt dragging will work on a PC desktop, but in Adobe programs (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, etc.) it works the same as a Mac.
- Also, on a Mac, you can take a screen shot by pressing Command, Shift 3. A png file will appear on your desktop, named Picture1.png. If you use the number 4 instead of 3, your cursor will turn in to a crosshair, and you can drag it to select which part of your desktop to take a screen shot of.
- Posted by susan
- 
759. October 4th, 2008 11:32 pm
- WOW! This is a lot of posts!
- Here is a good tip I had to teach everyone at work:
- When I send you a file, say an excel sheet, it may just say “Excel” without any extension. Before you come to me and complain that macs are not compatible with Windows, try placing the extension on the end of the file name. My Mac knows exactly what that file is, your Windows does not.

An email along those lines got me in a little trouble, so I responded with common extensions: .jpeg,.gif,.png for images and .doc (word) .xls (excel) .ppt (powerpoint), .mov (quicktime movie) and most important (!!!!) a .docx is the NEW OFFICE EXTENSION!!!

I am slowly working macs into our office.

– Posted by Jeremy Browning

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760. October 4th, 2008 11:45 pm

when you’re filling in a form and the word that’s already in the box is highlighted, you don’t need to hit “delete”. Just start typing your replacement. It’ll replace what’s already there.

– Posted by pv

---

761. October 4th, 2008 11:55 pm

Triple-click in the left margin to select the entire MS WORD document.

– Posted by Bill

---

762. October 5th, 2008 12:00 am

This is awesome—keep it coming. Now, if all newspapers and the media could engage in such work—education and real information—this world would be much better.

– Posted by Mwendah

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763. October 5th, 2008 12:00 am

\* Come up with an automated backup system for your computer. So, please make some suggestions as to how best to back up documents

– Posted by sarah

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764. October 5th, 2008 12:23 am

We need 20 tips or so on basic security that anyone can do — re phishing of course, Web browsing and malware, SSL certificates, spyware, reducing spam, and thinking through how to guard your interests when giving out personal information. Laptop can be lost or stolen — so one needs real deletion, protecting the swap file, and encrypted areas, or whole-disk encryption if necessary (certainly with a backup policy, just in case). Also, apparently some cell phones can be hacked electronically even if turned off; travelers to the recent Olympics were advised to take the battery out, to block this spying for sure. Would it be effective (and easier) to turn the phone off, then wrap it in aluminum foil, instead of bothering with the battery?

– Posted by John S James

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765. October 5th, 2008 12:26 am

Linda! Help with the computer!

– Posted by artie

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766. October 5th, 2008 12:26 am

If you are still getting “register this product” windows when using valid and registered Photoshop or Illustrator CS2 programs on Vista, right click on the shortcut or start menu link and select “run as administrator”. You will still receive a register prompt, but after that they will disappear.

– Posted by PJ

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767. October 5th, 2008 12:36 am

David- change this so that blogs can be printed. This, and many other blogs, are too valuable not to be printed for future use.

– Posted by lawrence

---

768. October 5th, 2008 12:48 am

I wanna go back to DOS...

– Posted by woozie

---

769. October 5th, 2008 12:52 am

This is perfect for my parents.

– Posted by Courtney

---

770. October 5th, 2008 1:01 am

Three cheers for your enthusiasm. But let us note that there are many duplications. Many more tips fail to communicate their utility because a key descriptive is missing or the context is insufficiently set. Communication has to happen in this business if people are to be

productive and happy. They need to be left with not what you said and what you meant but what it is they need to undertake an action and be successful. Now, start again. Let’s give the man the book he deserves.

– Posted by BILLOFTHEDESERT

771. October 5th, 2008 1:02 am

If you owned a Mac, you would automatically know all of these shortcuts, intuitively—and computer time would be fun time, all the time.

– Posted by Al

772. October 5th, 2008 1:19 am

RE 735: HOW DOES ONE REMOVE THE SPLIT SCREEN? MAC OSX DBL CLICK ON THE DIVIDING LINE DOESN’T CLOSE IT.....

– Posted by JEANETTE

773. October 5th, 2008 1:22 am

In most browsers I know, you can hit the up-arrow and down-arrow keys to move up or down a line in a page while reading an article. It surprises me to find even “experienced” users reaching for the mouse just to scroll down a few lines.

If someone can quantify the wrist injuries that can be avoided by substituting shortcuts for just 80% of the most used commands, and translate it in terms of health care cost and productivity lost it may be an eye opener.

– Posted by krish

774. October 5th, 2008 1:25 am

I knew most of your tips but a couple were new to me and useful; same for the posted comments. Here are two I haven’t seen: 1) Suspicious of a link in an e-mail message supposedly from your bank, or in a web page? Hover the cursor over the link (without clicking). The real address for the link will appear in the lower left margin of the window. The link might say “http://yourbank.com/security” but the address that appears in the lower left might say something like “http://scammer.atyourbank.com”. 2) When several programs are open in Windows Vista, holding down Alt-Tab will bring up a list of program icons for programs that are open, just like in Windows XP; however, unlike XP, in Vista you can click on a program icon to jump to that program. (I always wanted this in XP and now it’s available in Vista.)

– Posted by Harold Melnick

775. October 5th, 2008 1:35 am

After nearly 20 years of using computers (starting with the PC-XT generation) and two hours of wading through this article and 700-odd comments, it seems to me that one thing has remained unchanged over all those years — user manuals, which ought to anticipate and answer most of these questions — are written either by morons (for the ordinary user) or by geeks (for other geeks).

– Posted by Vivek Khadpekar

776. October 5th, 2008 1:40 am

yeah, except your tip doesn’t always work. try typing in just columbia.edu 😊

– Posted by student

777. October 5th, 2008 1:51 am

’uow əpɪsdn ɪ rɪ mək ɪ lɪl ɪ rɪ sɪr ɪ t rɪ t ɪ r ɪ t ɪ r ɪ t ɪ r ɪ t ɪ r ɪ t  
<http://www.sevenwires.com/play/UpsideDownLetters.html>

– Posted by michelleeeee

778. October 5th, 2008 2:17 am

Yes, you can print the entire blog in several ways. To make it a Word document just press Control-a and then Control-c. This will place the entire blog in the clipboard. Now, in a new blank Word document, you can save it in two ways. The simplest way is to press Control-v to paste it in the new document in HTML format. For this blog the document will be fairly large and may exceed your computer’s memory or even freeze up Word if the computer is older. No problem. Restart Word and in a new document go to Paste Special and paste the clipboard into the document as a text-only format. There you have it! Now you’ll have to edit it to get rid of unwanted lines, but it is all there.

– Posted by Phil

- 
779. October 5th, 2008 2:29 am @ steve, #729 ... my windows START button capriciously went from the bottom left of the screen to the top right.  
The taskbar was unlocked and somehow you happened to click near it. It though you wanted to reposition it. Right-click on the taskbar, make sure “Lock the Taskbar” is not checked (click it if it is), then just click-hold-and drag it back to the bottom of your screen.  
– Posted by AGraham
- 
780. October 5th, 2008 2:30 am On the mac you can press Delete on the keyboard instead of mousing up to the “back” button when you want to return to previous web page(s).  
– Posted by TML
- 
781. October 5th, 2008 2:32 am To see smaller versions of all open windows on a Mac, hit F9. Then you can click on whatever open window you want to go to.  
– Posted by CINDY LOWE
- 
782. October 5th, 2008 2:47 am You can turn off your computer and have a life.  
– Posted by ron
- 
783. October 5th, 2008 2:52 am function+arrows on many laptops adjusts screen light/darkness  
ctrl+tab often jumps between tabs in many programs  
alt+shift often changes languages on computers that have more than one keyboard input language (which can lead to some justification left/right issues that people can have trouble with)  
– Posted by Nabeel
- 
784. October 5th, 2008 3:02 am HELP!! I accidentally emptied my Recycle Bin. Is there any way I can retrieve those deleted files that were in the Recycle Bin?  
Kevin  
– Posted by Kevin Franken
- 
785. October 5th, 2008 3:13 am All the keyboard shortcuts are great, but if you really want to speed things up, turn off the NumLock key on a standard PC keyboard. If you do that, you suddenly have tons of functionality under the right hand: page up, page down, left, right, up and down arrows, Home, End, delete, Enter, etc. Practice using these keys with the shift, alt and control keys in the left hand and see how much faster you can navigate through text!  
– Posted by SE
- 
786. October 5th, 2008 3:32 am 1. Press “alt enter” to wrap within an excel cell  
2. Use a minus number to round numbers to the left of the decimal point of a number in excel (eg =round(123456.78,-3) = 123000)  
– Posted by Jack
- 
787. October 5th, 2008 4:16 am googleflight.com compares the number of results returned from google for 2 search terms and displays them in a bar chart. For example, when badabing fights fo shizzle, badabing returns a measly 216,000 compared to 446,000 for fo shizzle. Does Palin beat Biden? You betcha. Palin’s 83,800,000 is over 7 times Biden’s results. But then insider slaughters maverick, 182,000,000 to 29,400,000.  
– Posted by Dundee
- 
788. October 5th, 2008 4:52 am how about a tip for organizing these tips and saving them for future reference that does not involve printing out several hundred pages (after selecting all text and pasting into word)? popularity of this post demonstrates the failure of computing to solve basic problems that directly address the fact that despite technological advances productivity has not increased in parallel to the same extent. where is the increase in our leisure time?  
– Posted by Ted
- 
789. October for safari, a list of shortcuts is available at

5th,  
2008  
5:01 am

[file:///Applications/Safari.app/Contents/Resources/Shor tips.html](file:///Applications/Safari.app/Contents/Resources/Shor%20tips.html)  
– Posted by thorm

790. October  
5th,  
2008  
5:07 am

You can save time entering new web addresses in Internet Explorer by pressing Ctrl-Enter. For example, typing tripcart and pressing Ctrl-Enter would automatically add a [www.](http://www.tripcart.com) prefix and a .com suffix and will load the <http://www.tripcart.com> page. Unfortunately, this only works with .com domains.  
– Posted by yot

791. October  
5th,  
2008  
5:39 am

Wonderful tips and you should write the book. But isn’t all this a condemnation of the PC industry (ah, and Mr. Bill Gates). The fact that you need all these tricks to get the most out of an appliance? Shame on the industry... I suggest we all press CTRL+ALT+DEL on this industry...then SWITCH TO...a new unheard of mode called “consumer friendly”  
– Posted by Bob Snyder

792. October  
5th,  
2008  
5:59 am

A very useful one I only recently learned: Instead of using the Format painter to copy styles in Microsoft Word,  
1. select the relevant word/sentence/paragraph with the style you want to copy, then press Ctrl+Shift+C  
2. select the word/sentence/paragraph to be formatted, and press Ctrl+Shift+V  
– Posted by Adrian

793. October  
5th,  
2008  
6:06 am

you never need to “double click” on links in web pages to open anything  
e-mail addresses are not CAse SeNsitive  
command-L on a Mac will automatically select the URL address window so you can type in a new URL without clicking into it nor deleting the previous address first  
– Posted by Eric

794. October  
5th,  
2008  
6:08 am

Great tips - thanks everybody! Proof that multiple heads are better than 1. Something I don’t think I’ve seen mentioned yet, though I read the first half of the comments and scrolled through the second half:  
clicking on a link with the scroll button in the middle of a mouse opens it in a new tab. This works for Firefox and the new IE with tabs. [ctrl+left click on a link will do the same - I usually use this with the trackpad on my laptop or when using a mouse w/o scroll key.]  
– Posted by H3

795. October  
5th,  
2008  
6:17 am

Hey Carl, I thought you would like this article and all the shortcuts discussed here. Talk to you soon.  
Mahendra  
– Posted by Carl Newell

796. October  
5th,  
2008  
6:22 am

Turning the “off” button on any of the devices will allow you to spend quality time with your family, friends or pets. It will also diminish the amount of noise droning inside your head.  
– Posted by medogbstfrnd

797. October  
5th,  
2008  
6:56 am

how do you delete items from your contacts list in skype on a mac?  
– Posted by david

798. October  
5th,  
2008  
6:58 am

For all those who want to save the info from this blog including all the replies, save the article to your Times Save file. It will include the article plus the replies. IF you don’t have a Times Save File, sign up for one. It’s free.  
JM  
– Posted by JM

799. October  
5th

You mentioned a camera so I decided to segue:

5111,  
2008  
7:07 am

If you are alone (i.e. no-one to hold umbrella over you) HOW do you take pictures in pouring rain?  
Please don’t suggest waterproof camera - DSLR’s don’t come that way - or, more accurately put: I am NOT going to buy a new camera.  
– Posted by Liz Read

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800.October  
5th,  
2008  
7:07 am

I’ve been distributing PC techie tips to teachers for years. Losing documents and web sites are two frequent frustrations.  
Use F12 to Save As in office documents  
This is especially useful when an attached Word document is opened in Outlook. If you make modifications, do not simply Save; rather click F12 to force a Save As which allows you to specify where you want the document saved. Otherwise it is saved in a temporary internet space.  
For saving web sites, the New York Times has a Save feature in addition to Email and Print. As long as you have an account, you have save your favorite articles there.  
To save other sites, store them to Furl, which unlike Del.icio.us, saves a complete copy of the page so web pages can never be lost.  
– Posted by Karolyne

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801. October  
5th,  
2008  
7:08 am

When you are have something like a blog or other website thing that does not seem to print correctly, do a select all of it. Then paste that into Word and then click on the little icon at the end of the text and a menu will appear on which you should choose match destination formatting. This will pop it in between your default margins (using an inch).  
– Posted by Charles Wankel

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802.October  
5th,  
2008  
7:28 am

Ctrl J justifies the paragraph in Wordstar 4.  
– Posted by GeneWAHI

---

803.October  
5th,  
2008  
7:37 am

HI  
Here is a great one for copy and paste. In Win-XP and MS Word. In MS-Word just hit Control+C+C to open the clip board. All subsequent copies go into the clip board. Then in MS Word you can individually or selectively copy them into another document.  
Anyone know why a company that makes gazillion dollars can’t provide half decent documentation for it’s software?  
FRED  
– Posted by Fred Zimnoch

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804.October  
5th,  
2008  
7:40 am

Some people might find these resources helpful:  
1) an Amazon book search that gives 2 existing books on keyboard shortcuts: <http://tinyurl.com/4w8jwq>;  
2) the Wikipedia page on keyboard shortcuts: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keyboard\\_shortcuts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keyboard_shortcuts);  
3) the Wikipedia table of keyboard shortcuts: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table\\_of\\_keyboard\\_shortcut\\_s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table_of_keyboard_shortcut_s);  
4) a site the Wikipedia page references: <http://www.keyxl.com>.  
These resources will help you learn about many more if you are curious.  
One Windows shortcut I have not seen in the 700+ previous replies in this thread: “Alt + minus sign” gives you a menu for minimize/maximize/restore/move/resize/close of the PANE of application you have current. A pane is a window within a window; not all applications use panes, and some use them incorrectly. Best example: if you open multiple spreadsheets in Excel, each one is in a pane. You can use the Window menu item of Excel to tile or cascade the panes, letting you see all of the worksheets at once, in their own pane within the overall Excel window. And then the “Alt + minus sign” shortcut lets you manipulate the current pane.  
– Posted by Tim

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805.October  
5th,  
2008  
7:59 am

to me the command prompt is the most useful tool within the Windows environment. Particularly the ping, msconfig and ipconfig are the 3 I use the most.  
– Posted by Chris

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806. October 5th, 2008 8:10 am

To copy all of this into word, first open a blank word document, then in your browser click on Edit in the menu bar, then choose 'select all' - then hit the Ctrl key and the letter c to copy what you have selected. Go to your blank word document and hit the Ctrl key and the letter v, to paste into your word document. There will be some extraneous stuff at the top and bottom which you can delete if desired.

– Posted by Cheryl

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807. October 5th, 2008 8:36 am

In answer to #529: try the free program EverNote. Selected the entire story (CTRL+A), dragged it into a new note and it prints. All links are live.

– Posted by Karolyne

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808. October 5th, 2008 8:37 am

Ctrl + (right arrow) = move one word at a time  
Ctrl + backspace = delete one word at a time

– Posted by Rich

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809. October 5th, 2008 8:47 am

It’s sometimes handy to may have more than one homepage in browsers. In IE, Tools > Internet Options. It’s easiest to go to your second choice homepage and just hit the Current button.

Tty iGoogle. Since switching my primary homepage to iGoogle, I have had an enormous increase in productivity.

In Firefox, have the pages you want as Homepages open, then Tools > Options > click button for Use Current pages.

For the homepage in Firefox, click Alt +Home, in IE click Alt + M.

– Posted by Karolyne

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810. October 5th, 2008 8:57 am

“You generally can’t send someone more than a couple of full-size digital photos as an e-mail attachment; those files are too big, and they’ll bounce back to you. (Instead, use iPhoto or Picasa—photo-organizing programs that can automatically scale down photos in the process of e-mailing them.)”

Apple Mail can do this for you:

“Adjust the image size using the pop-up menu at the bottom right of the window.

Mail inserts the picture in its actual size. This could cause the message to exceed limits set by your email provider. If the message size at the bottom left of the window appears in red, choose a smaller size from the pop-up menu.”

– Posted by Tony

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811. October 5th, 2008 9:03 am

I want to join Woozie but signing up to blogs such as the several there are which tell you about keyboard shortcuts makes life a bit better and keeps your hand on the keyboard where they belong. And I am still using DataEase for DOS and WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS for those applications that do not require the more up to date applications.

– Posted by Hazel Edmunds

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812. October 5th, 2008 9:07 am

Not simple, but critical tips.

If you’re able to set up the operating system yourself, put the operating system in its own partition. This does take a bit of registry fiddling; not for the novice.

I put my data on a separate partition.

The reason why I do this is so that before I make any changes to the operating system (installing new programs or drivers), I use Ghost 2003 to save the operating system partition to another hard disk. This only takes about 5 minutes.

The other reason is that in case something messes up your operating system, you can always go back in time. I save each backup with the date as a file name.

There are countless posts on forums where people have spent days or weeks attempting to resolve some problems related to malware, viruses, driver problems etc.

– Posted by ed

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813. October 5th, 2008 9:12 am

Don’t like the default a keyboard shortcut, or want to customize your own keyboard shortcuts?

For Mac system shortcuts, go to system preferences> keyboard mouse> keyboard shortcuts. There you can customize or assign your own.

Same thing for customizing mouse + trackpad functions.

Many applications, such as Photoshop, allow you to customize application specific keyboard shortcuts. Rather than getting specific, I’d suggest doing a search on an application’s help page for keyboard shortcuts. I’ve got mine setup to perform frequently used actions in a single keystroke.

Thanks, David!

– Posted by misterphelps

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814. October 5th, 2008 9:27 am

<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/126449>

– Posted by this should be saved by all those wanting a book

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815. October 5th, 2008 9:32 am

“Use Google to find it.”

Here’s another basic tip. There’s more then one search engine.

I scratch my head every time I see that and wonder why so many people give away free advertising to Google.

A better way to say it is look it up on the internet or use your favorite search engine.

– Posted by David G.

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816. October 5th, 2008 9:36 am

Triple click anywhere in a sentence to select the entire sentence. Use the HOME and END keys to jump to the top or bottom of documents or webpages.

On a Windows machine, if you keep overwriting text you might have hit the INSERT key by accident. Press INSERT again to go back to regular typing.

Its much easier to use the number pad on the right side of the keyboard.

Keyboard shortcut CONTROL/COMMAND P is the print command not the PASTE. To paste it’s CONTROL/COMMAND V. Think, V for velcro.

SAVE every time you stop to breathe. SAVE SAVE SAVE.

– Posted by Donna Lewis

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817. October 5th, 2008 9:38 am

You can print only the portion of a web page or document you want, without printing the entire page. Just highlight that portion then bring up your print dialog box (CTRL-P). Instead of print all, change it to “selection”. It will then only print that portion. Save lots of ink.

– Posted by Joan

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818. October 5th, 2008 9:39 am

<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/126449>

for all those that need a manual.

You can print or btter yet just add to fav then access as needed after awhile you will have it down.

– Posted by Kevin

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819. October 5th, 2008 9:44 am

Loved the article... about the Recycle Bin and all the deleted stuff ie emails etc, every computer has in the Accessories the Clean the Hard Drive Selection... Use it!. I do it once a month to get more room on my Hard Drive. It is a must in today’s Digital Photos and emailing capacities of computers.

PS Answer to Sara Get an External Hard Drive at least 250 GB of space for your photos, music, personal data etc,

– Posted by linda johnson

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820. October 5th, 2008 9:47 am

What is an automated backup system? Where do I get one? liz

– Posted by elizabeth barron

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821. October 5th, 2008

When Mac Mail underlines a word as misspelled, simply control click for the correct spelling. If it’s not misspelled, it will let you look it up in the dictionary (and other options).



9:48 am

in the secondary (and other) options.

Actually, I think this works everywhere... It just did here.

– Posted by John

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822. October 5th, 2008 9:55 am

Not impressed there Mr. Pogue.

For some reason the “control plus or minus sign” trick worked just once on my computer and I shrunk the size of the text. Not just on the NYTimes page but on all of them. It won’t work again to restore to normal size. Any suggestions?

– Posted by SamBrown

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823. October 5th, 2008 10:05 am

Don’t believe that you should buy a laptop for your COLLEGE BOUND freshman thinking it will last all 4 years. Better than spending more than \$1200 on one laptop thinking it will last 48 months, is to buy a lower cost Vista Home Premium capable laptop, say \$500-\$600, or a entry level MacBook and assume they’ll want or need something new by the time they are a junior. By then, you can recover half the cost of the first PC on Craigslist or ebay, and they will have a new laptop with a 1/2 a terabyte or more of hard drive for probably about \$450-\$500 by then.

Also, buy a mini 160gb or greater USB external drive for every laptop you own. Don’t bother to share drives, at \$75-\$100 each, it is cheap insurance and far less than an extended warranty.

Don’t buy an extended warranty for equipment that is stationary, it’s not needed.

– Posted by David Kwan

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824. October 5th, 2008 10:16 am

Two Google tips:

You can track UPS, Fedex, and US Postal Service packages by simply typing the tracking # in Google’s search field and hitting the [Enter] key.

The same principle works for tracking airline flights: just type in “Delta 145” or whatever and hit [Enter].

– Posted by Carl

---

825. October 5th, 2008 10:16 am

dont forget:

Home => goes to beginning of line

End => goes to end of line

Control + Home => goes to top of page/document

Control + End => goes to bottom of page/document

general rule:

Shift + “whatever” => reverse or undoes “whatever”

Shift as you insert CD/DVD will prevent the automatic open/run box

Shift + Delete => permanent delete bypassing recycle bin.

for most Windows keyboard shortcuts, you can just google it.

Microsoft has a cheat sheet for their universal, windows, IE. I assume Apple has the same for Mac somewhere on their site.

David: Do we get a cut of the royalties of this “Basics: what everyone assumes you already know about computers and other electronic stuff”?

– Posted by susan

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826. October 5th, 2008 10:23 am

I made it through 769 posts (so far) and haven’t seen this tip yet. (Although I wonder if anyone else will read them all to the end - it took me 2 days.)

This tip is for the format painter in Microsoft Word & Excel 2000/2003 - it is a button on the tool bar which looks like a paint brush. Normally clicking it once it copies the formatting of the section where your cursor is located and will paste it to the next area you highlight. After the section is formatted the format painter will turn off. The tip is if you double-click on the format painter button when you start it will stay on allowing you to paint multiple selections without having to go back and forth to re-click the format painter for each new selection. This saves lots of needless repetition.

I teach new computer users and this was one tip that a student taught me!

P.S. Thanks to #720 for the Adobe tips. I spend a lot of time Googling for solutions for the Adobe creative suite because I find their help to be somewhat opaque. Loved tips #6 and #1.

– Posted by Rebecca

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827. October 5th, 2008 10:24 am

If you use photoshop or photoshop elements on a Mac...Command-o (that’s a zero, not the letter O) resizes the picture to fit the window. If you adjust image size or crop or have zoomed in to look at a detail, just command-o to get back to seeing the whole picture, full size. On windows I bet control-o does the same thing.

– Posted by Chill

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828. October 5th, 2008 10:30 am

I was going to save and print the article . . and then I thought I’d add a few of the tips in the comments . . . but the volume is overwhelming.

– Posted by Janna

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829. October 5th, 2008 10:35 am

COMPREHENSIVE LIST of XP Keystroke Shortcuts  
<http://rselby.net/xpshort.htm>

– Posted by Kane

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830. October 5th, 2008 10:38 am

If you want to remove a phrase or word from a document then highlight it and press CTRL and the letter x; it deletes the item there and still keeps it in memory to be pasted elsewhere with CTRL and the letter V

– Posted by Carole

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831. October 5th, 2008 10:51 am

To put his article and all the posts into a Word document, pres Ctrl+A ... right click anywhere on the highlighted text and click on Copy ... Open a word document and right click anywhere on the page and click on Paste ... then save your 261 page document to your external hard drive!

– Posted by Dana

---

832. October 5th, 2008 10:54 am

on a mac, pressing “command” and ” ` ” (no quotes) will allow you toggle between all open windows in a particular application (like web browser windows, or all open word documents, etc).

– Posted by peri

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833. October 5th, 2008 10:54 am

Oh, I forgot one the other day. This is for all you newbs & old people (the two demographics that are guilty of this behavior, thus driving me nuts)

You don’t have to hit the delete key multiple times to delete several characters. Just keep the delete key pressed down. It won’t ... I repeat, WON’T, ruin the keyboard.

– Posted by Akshay

---

834. October 5th, 2008 10:55 am

I can’t go thru them all, did anyone mention shift with up or down arrow for selecting several objects at once? Mac

– Posted by Nancy Carson

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835. October 5th, 2008 10:56 am

Very very helpful post. I have printed it out and will keep it near my computers. Now how about a new book on this subject ? I already have Mac OS X Leopard-the missing manual and IPhoto o8 the missing manual (for my Mac). We also have a PC at home---

– Posted by jmendelsbeg

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836. October 5th, 2008 11:05 am

Mac tip:  
The delete key takes you back to the previous browser window. No need to keep going up to the back arrow.  
option(alt) + v will make a check mark ✓  
Changing a file name: If you double click slowly on a file name, it will highlight itself. No need to push delete, just type in the new name. and hit enter.

If you find yourself repeating a command over and over, check to see in the pull down menu if there’s a shortcut key sequence listed to it’s right.

Thanks all, lots of good stuff.

– Posted by MSlikker

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837. October 5th, 2008 11:10 am

Our children already know all of this and more, but are usually too impatient with us to tutor us. Hire someone else’s kid (\$15/hr is enough) to tutor you. They’ll be patient, and you’ll learn megabites.

– Posted by susan

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838. October 5th, 2008 11:10 am

I would just like to note that one of your suggestions... the double click a word to highlight it does not work on the nytimes.com site. Instead double click opens up a dictionary search in addition to highlighting the word which is incredibly annoying for those of us who are used to using double click to highlight something as now we get a pop-up window that is both unwanted and almost always useless.

– Posted by Ben

---

839. October 5th, 2008 11:14 am

My husband (aka my in-house IT help desk) taught me that if I’m trying to figure something out in Office or Photoshop or even on my iPod or Tivo, it’s far faster to Google the issue, rather than search the official Help page. Google gives you access to the more popular, multiple, phrasings of your problem, whereas the manufacturer might not be of much help if you don’t even know the right term for that Tivo button with the arrow and the line, for example. You can also find ‘secret’ tricks and codes from unofficial sites. This was a God-send when even the cable guy couldn’t figure out our HD Tivo cable card.

– Posted by Claire

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840. October 5th, 2008 11:15 am

Looking to see a movie? Go to:  
[www.google.com/movies](http://www.google.com/movies)  
Super useful!

– Posted by Val

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841. October 5th, 2008 11:24 am

Shift + F3 will change caps to small letters and vice versa.

– Posted by Jennifer

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842. October 5th, 2008 11:27 am

For a mac you can right click. You can go to preferences, mouse and keyboard, trackpad, and there’s an option to make clicking with two fingers right click. You can also just get a mouse which if you are used to desktop computers can be a lot easier and more comfortable.

– Posted by Zoe

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843. October 5th, 2008 11:29 am

Search for “windows keyboard shortcuts” in google and learn them all!!!

If you have a newer dell and windows won’t boot up, don’t pay tech support to tell you the secret, just hit “Ctrl + F11” while it is booting and restore it to the state it was the day you bought it, you will lose all your data though.

– Posted by Luke

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844. October 5th, 2008 11:30 am

In response to #504 question for PC users: The Windows key refers to the Microsoft Windows (flag- or banner-like) logo often on the top row of the keyboard toward the right end.

– Posted by Veronica

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845. October 5th, 2008 11:41 am

I’ve seen several questions about automatic backups and only one reference to this service. One option is you can back up files to an online storage system called Mozy.com. I’ve been using it for a year and have already recovered data after a hard drive crashed, as has the friend who referred me. (I don’t work for Mozy but I’m a huge fan!). 2 GB FREE, which is plenty to cover basic files for most home users. I use various online photo programs to back up all my picture files, but for high-volume users Mozy also has a low-pay service that would cover unlimited GB.

You set what you want backed up and how often. Mine is set to back up daily whenever my computer is idle for 30 minutes. I can’t speak highly enough of this service!

– Posted by Pam

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846. October  
5th,  
2008  
11:43 am

Mr.Pogue;  
I stumbled across one of your video comments, about a year ago. I watched it, then came to the NYT website and found more archived shows, and I have been hooked since!  
In my opinion you are THE best technology reviewers in the biz! Please keep your unique blend of humor and information coming, and I like others like me will be sure to keep watching/reading.  
– Posted by Gary Korzelius

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847. October  
5th,  
2008  
11:51 am

For web browsing using a multi-tabbed explorer, pressing CTRL+number will map you to the tab in order of that number. For example, CTRL+1 will bring the very first tab to focus, CTRL+2 will bring the second.. etc.  
Great article.  
– Posted by Mona.

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848. October  
5th,  
2008  
11:55 am

Re last tip:  
“Come up with an automated backup system for your computer.”  
Are you kidding, Mr. Pogue? How does a basic computer user “come up with” that?  
– Posted by Robert

---

849. October  
5th,  
2008  
12:00 pm

This is great! I cut and pasted the comments that I needed onto my own Word doc—after FINALLY learning how to copy segments of online info!  
Now can someone tell me how to paste a hyperlink into a blog comment?  
Thanks!  
– Posted by Carolina

---

850. October  
5th,  
2008  
12:03 pm

To Jeannette #772  
To remove the double line in Mac apps (like Mail — put the cursor between the lines. The cursor will change to an arrow. Then click and hold and you’ll be able to move the separator up and down. Pull it to the bottom and it is removed. There’s a dot in the middle of the separator to help you find its location.  
The same technique also works on “drawers” or sidebars, and also to change the width of columns (You have to click in the column title area, at the edges of the column heading. Try it in Finder.  
Good Mac advice (you can ask any Mac-related question there) can be found at the forums at <http://www.macosg.com/group/>  
– Posted by HarryR

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851. October  
5th,  
2008  
12:07 pm

Wow, it just keeps going. I love how people keep posting the same dozen or so tips over and over — even after several commentors have made fun of this in the thread!  
I can only assume it’s because the people adding to the thread are way to computer illiterate/incurious to do a find on the page and check if one or fifty people have already submitted their tip. How deliciously self-perpetuating!  
Look, people posting that you don’t need to type “www.” in your browser’s address bar, please stop! Every time you say something so ignorant, a kitten dies and Sarah Palin laughs.  
It depends entirely on whether the hostname of the site you’re trying to reach is “www.example.com” or “example.com,” which are two discrete, different hosts. They can be the same thing or they can be totally different machines with or without web sites. DNS maps hostnames to IP addresses. “www.example.com” and “example.com” can map to the same IP address (the same computer), different IP addresses, or “www.example.com” might not exist at all, there’s nothing special about it. In the early days of the web “www” was a convention for what to name your web server to distinguish it from, say, “mail.example.com” for your mail server. Nowadays pretty much everybody has both their naked domain name and the “www.” version point to a machine running a web server, because we have pretty much accepted the fact that people are too stupid to understand anything.

Here’s my tip: Do not trust the tips on this thread without checking them out first! Many of them are just wrong (think about it and it will make sense; they are being contributed by people like you). For instance, do not use the BCC field to send mass e-mail, it’ll be flagged as spam.

– Posted by urdoinitwrong

852. October 5th, 2008 12:16 pm

THANK YOU! Put me on your email list to buy your book.

– Posted by Christie O’Neil

853. October 5th, 2008 12:19 pm

1. Alias: I meet many other MAC users who don’t know how to use ‘alias’ files and folders. It’s like a ghost-link to the original file or folder, with almost no actual memory used. To make one, click on the file/folder, then hit Command-L. Now drag it where you want.

Your machine will run a lot faster if you don;t keep ‘hard’ object on desktop - put up alias instead, from wherever you have been storing your sorted stuff.

You can use this to run lovely cross-reference systems between your folders. On a current task, you can slap the aliases to desktop for easy navigation, then trash them when done. AND you can rename the alias as you like, when you are running numeric or alphabetical file/folder sequences to organize stuff.

2. Finding shortcuts: sometimes people do not know that clicking into any menu key will exhibit a shortcut code next to almost any option. (BTW did not see here yet - ? - Command-N on MAC, to open a new web page while in your current browser.)

Carpal/RSI: noone’s mentioned that using key commands which exploit the buttons closest to your wrists, rather than moving a mouse or a cursor, saves wear and tear on arms, hands, shoulders. (I’ve got ‘frozen shoulder’, myself.) Teach yourself to make a shortcut for something that you habitually do into a reflex, once a week at least. And now I’ve got a bunch of new toys to try! Thank you tons, Dave, and nos. 1-840.

– Posted by Ann

854. October 5th, 2008 12:23 pm

Use the TAB key to move through the objects on a page or the spaces on a form. For every TAB click, you move to the next link, field, or button. You can then hit Enter to navigate to the link or just start typing to enter data in a field.

– Posted by MIke Golden

855. October 5th, 2008 12:24 pm

Someone asked way up there about shortcuts for diacriticals. These are blockpasted from Help for MAC Word (which calls the things an ‘international character’)

à, è, ì, ò, ù  
OPTION+` (ACCENT GRAVE), the letter

á, é, í, ó  
OPTION+e, the letter

â, ê, î, ô, û  
OPTION+i, the letter

ç OPTION+c or OPTION+SHIFT+c

ã, ñ, õ  
OPTION+n, the letter

ä, ë, ï, ö, ü, ÿ  
OPTION+u, the letter

å, OPTION+a or OPTION+SHIFT+a

æ, OPTION+’ (single quotation mark) or  
OPTION+SHIFT+’ (single quotation mark)

œ, OPTION+q or OPTION+SHIFT+q

ø, Ø OPTION+o or OPTION+SHIFT+o

¿ OPTION+SHIFT+?

¡ OPTION+1

ß OPTION+s

– Posted by Ann

- 
856. October 5th, 2008 12:26 pm I use control-F all the time. If you are searching for a specific word or words in an article, just hit control F, type in what you need into the search box and it will go through the entire document looking for that word or phrase. Saves huge amounts of time! For example in an Excel sheet if you type in a specific number, it will find every place in that document with that number. I don’t think this works on pdf documents though.  
– Posted by JR
- 
857. October 5th, 2008 12:27 pm PLEASE WRITE THAT BOOK MR. POGUE! I learned so much from this article!  
– Posted by JR
- 
858. October 5th, 2008 12:31 pm Hey Val post 840,  
Nice “tip”. I’m sure Google thanks you for promoting their web site.  
– Posted by David G.
- 
859. October 5th, 2008 12:46 pm All these tips about Google, but I think you’ve left out the most important – that you can text Google when you are not at your computer, and get a pretty quick reply with great information. You can text for the weather, Cubs scores (ok, that info isn’t so great this weekend), definitions, and so much more!  
– Posted by Sue
- 
860. October 5th, 2008 12:48 pm Can someone help me with saving this blog? I do see anything saying save at the top of the nytimes page. I already have an account.  
– Posted by cheryl
- 
861. October 5th, 2008 12:53 pm oh David...”nyt.com” not “nytimes.com” that’s minutes of my life.  
– Posted by sl
- 
862. October 5th, 2008 12:53 pm The “Spaces” application on macs (at least on the new laptops, not sure about the others...) is the most amazing thing. I created 4 “spaces” with it - separate screens that you can scroll through by hitting command + arrow keys. You can set each window to open a different application, so that you don’t need to juggle your internet, word documents and music browsers in a single screen. You can drag documents back and forth between screens, to. It takes a bit of playing around with it to set up and get used to, but it saves me so much time and increases the visual space you have on your computer tremendously...especially good for those like me with a small screen and no extra monitors.  
– Posted by aw
- 
863. October 5th, 2008 1:08 pm Open Apple “Q” – use it all the time. I guess that is command Q. Learned from David Pogue’s first book.  
– Posted by Julie Wallsh
- 
864. October 5th, 2008 1:14 pm For the Firefox Browser, Ctrl+Tab and Ctrl+Shift+Tab are the same thing as Alt+Tab and Alt+Shift+Tab for Windows except it scrolls through your current tabs.  
– Posted by Joe
- 
865. October 5th, 2008 1:15 pm In response to MRK’s question #753, if it hasn’t already been posted:  
Step 1: Hit Ctrl + home key;  
Step 2: HitShift + Ctrl + end key;  
Step 3: Hit Ctrl + C  
Step 4: Open new file in Word;  
Step 5: Hit Ctrl + V  
You will have the entire contents of this article plus blog comments in the new Word file.  
– Posted by Garrett
- 
866. October 5th, 2008 1:15 pm Haven’t seen this yet: If you are in Excel and want today’s date in a cell, Ctrl+; will automatically fill that in for you.  
When printing a wide Excel document, you can maximize the print

- 
- size by going to File/Page Setup and change the Scaling values to 1 page wide and leave the “tall” field blank. Saves printing one orphan column on a second set of pages.
- Posted by Pat Kelly
- 
867. October 5th, 2008 1:24 pm
- When reading the New York Times if you come across a word you don’t know a meaning of, you can double click on it, and the dictionary window pops up. Only works for words which are not common.
- Posted by Nitin
- 
868. October 5th, 2008 1:25 pm
- I haven’t a clue if someone has already suggested this one (I only scanned about 100 of the 850+ comments here so far), but it’s a keystroke I created. When writing/editing, it can be helpful to see what you wrote before and edited out. (Sometimes what you wrote first is better than subsequent versions.) So instead of deleting a whole sentence/para in the editing process, I use a strikethrough keystroke in MS Word. Ctrl-9. It works in reverse too. If you want to un-strikethrough the sentence, use Ctrl-9 again.
- But you have to set it up first (or use any combo of keys you prefer). In Word, it’s Tools-Customize-click on Keyboard box-select Format in left list, then select Strikethrough on right, then input your preferred keystroke and save it. That part is a huge hassle to set up, but I use the shortcut quite often. (mimics the process of writing on a page, where you can still see what you crossed out earlier)
- And I’m sure someone else has already mentioned this above, but if you don’t use a keystroke very often, you’re not going to remember it. So focus on the ones that make the most sense in your day to day use.
- Note to 851: Apologies for the kitten. And all because we didn’t want to spend all day reading these posts! David doesn’t have to write a book. It’s already written right here... (much editing required).
- Posted by susan
- 
869. October 5th, 2008 1:30 pm
- Windows will run faster if you occasionally defragment your hard drive. Defragmentation moves all the files and data scattered about your hard drive close to one another in the physical address space, which increases overall performance. To defragment a disk in Windows, go to “My Computer,” right click on the disk you want to defragment (say, C:\), and go to “Properties.” Under “Tools,” click “Defragment Now.”
- Note: Vista defragments automatically, once a week, so you don’t need to do this. Both Mac OS and Linux store files more efficiently than Windows and don’t really need to be defragmented.
- Posted by gsk
- 
870. October 5th, 2008 1:34 pm
- Write that book, Mr. Pogue, I’ll buy it.
- I never realized that double clicking on a word selects it. I always thought it was irritating when I was using the mouse to select a word that if I inadvertently double clicked the word highlighted and I had to click again to clear and manually select the word. Duh!
- About six months ago I discovered the “undo” tool on the edit tab. Do you know how many disappeared documents were irretrievably lost before that? And all that rich, lush hair I once had-gone. Torn out by the roots.
- Real name withheld due to extreme embarrassment.
- Posted by Dan Leik
- 
871. October 5th, 2008 2:05 pm
- There are a whole bunch of shortcuts for Firefox:  
<http://knol.google.com/k/-/-/2jmw8t63dippd/3>
- Posted by ff
- 
872. October 5th, 2008 2:07 pm
- Cherie (#860). Save this in Favorites or Bookmarks.
- Now, I ask for help. I have saved this entire blog. How can I edit it. Delete etc?
- Posted by Hal Mullen
- 
873. October “1:57 pm

5th,  
2008  
2:07 pm

I google washingtonpost.com from the New York Times search box. If an ad comes up, I click it and make the Post give the Times a nickle.

– Posted by Kacoo”

Can I do that to Fox News?

– Posted by Larry Oswald

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874. October  
5th,  
2008  
2:16 pm

Instead of typing “http://www.address.com” just type “address” and hit +

– Posted by CKV

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875. October  
5th,  
2008  
2:16 pm

Press windows print screen key to create screen captures, then press ctrl + v which will paste the screenshot in your open document – word processing or graphics editing.

Alt + print screen will take a screenshot of the currently selected window, not the entire screen...allows you to target specific window you have open.

– Posted by Debbie Hemley

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876. October  
5th,  
2008  
2:26 pm

In MS Word, to copy easily from lots of nonadjacent spots or even different files (like lots of bios into one place), use the Spike feature. Here’s how: Select the text or graphic you want, and then press CTRL+F3. Repeat this step for each additional item you want to move to the Spike. Then click in the document where you want to insert the Spike’s contents. Press CTRL+SHIFT+F3 to insert the Spike’s contents. ALL the items you cut will be pasted in.

NOTE: You end up “cutting” the text out of your original documents rather than copying it, but if you close the document you’re cutting from without saving changes, you’re fine. (For more info, go to MS Help menu, enter “spike”)

– Posted by Brenda

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877. October  
5th,  
2008  
2:26 pm

#863.

Julie, Command-O is open (a file from within the application), Command-Q is quit (the open application.) But you knew that.

– Posted by HarryR

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878. October  
5th,  
2008  
2:29 pm

If you don’t want to spend money on some standard piece of software, you usually don’t have to. There are plenty of free, open source programs available for download that do everything that certain commercial programs do, sometimes better. For example:

Openoffice.org has a free software suite that replaces that of Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Equation Editor, and Visio). It can make files in the Windows formats, such as .doc, as well as in its own free formats. See [openoffice.org](http://openoffice.org)

The GIMP (GNU Image Manipulation Project) offers a free alternative to Photoshop. See [www.gimp.org](http://www.gimp.org) and [www.gimp.org/windows](http://www.gimp.org/windows)

Firefox is a free web browser known for good security features, good pop-up blocking, and a nice tab system. If you don’t like Explorer or Safari, or if you just want to try something new, see [www.mozilla.com](http://www.mozilla.com)

If you’re feeling ambitious, you can install Linux, a free operating system that is generally faster, more transparent, and just as functional and easy to use as Windows. See:

[www.whylinuxisbetter.net](http://www.whylinuxisbetter.net)

[fedoraproject.org](http://fedoraproject.org) (my favorite Linux distribution) or [www.ubuntu.com](http://www.ubuntu.com) or [www.opensuse.org](http://www.opensuse.org) (two other popular distributions)

[sysresccd.org](http://sysresccd.org) (A bootable CD-ROM that includes, among other things, a graphical utility (gparted) that allows you to shrink your Windows partition, which you will have to do before you install Linux if you want to keep Windows, too. Read the quick start guide on this website before using the CD.)

– Posted by gsk

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879. October  
5th,  
2008  
2:38 pm

If you’re trying to find a word or phrase in a web-page, type “CTRL + F” and a form will pop up. Type the word you want to find, and your browser will instantaneously bring you to it.

Also, use the PRT SC (print screen) button. It will make a copy of



whatever is on your screen, which you can then paste into a program like Paint in Windows.

– Posted by Nicholas

---

880. October 5th, 2008 2:46 pm

OK. I’m an idiot. I enlarged the size of my web page based on your tips - control and roll the scroll button. now i can’t figure out how to get it back down to normal. Help!

– Posted by Robin

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881. October 5th, 2008 2:48 pm

Great list. I would urge you, though, not to say “hit the Windows key and “D” simultaneously” (or, similarly, any other special key like control, shift, or alt). I know people who actually try to do that, and if they happen to press D just ahead of the Windows key, they wonder why it didn’t work.

Instead, say “hold the Windows key down and press D” or “while holding the Windows key down, press D.”

– Posted by Alan Winson

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882. October 5th, 2008 2:53 pm

As already noted in #154 & #503, but so valuable it wants saying again –

To restrict a Google search to .edu or .org sites, or to a specific site, type search phrases like this:

“wernicke-korsakoff” site:.org

“wernicke-korsakoff” site:.edu

“wernicke-korsakoff” site:.merck.com

Sure can save a lot of time.

– Posted by Pat Welch

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883. October 5th, 2008 2:54 pm

Before you forward ANY email you didn’t create yourself, check it on Snopes.com for veracity. Please!

– Posted by Carolina

---

884. October 5th, 2008 3:01 pm

\* You can double-click a word to highlight it in any document, e-mail or Web page.

Add me to the list of people annoyed by the NYT web site’s non-standard behavior

– Posted by Steve

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885. October 5th, 2008 3:27 pm

One of my favorites, that I’m often surprised other folks are unaware of, is “find,” as in on a browser page, Word document, etc.

ctrl-F or apple-F on an Apple

It helps you find things immediately!

– Posted by Brian

---

886. October 5th, 2008 3:33 pm

“I would urge you, though, not to say “hit the Windows key and “D” simultaneously” (or, similarly, any other special key like control, shift, or alt). I know people who actually try to do that, and if they happen to press D just ahead of the Windows key, they wonder why it didn’t work.”

Must be the same people who call tech support complaining that they can’t find the “Any” key on their keyboards. “It said ‘Press Any Key to finish’ and I don’t have an Any key!” 😊

Good advice, though. Software instruction writers need to remember that they should write for the 10th percentile, not the 90th percentile of users.

David should include a brief section discussing the conventions of what key combinations like ALT-F11 and CONTROL-d mean, i.e., how to execute them on the keyboard. You can’t take for granted that the reader knows something as basic as that.

– Posted by Sideline Viewer

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887. October 5th, 2008 3:40 pm

In microsoft word, if you want a symbol (such as the degree symbol or an accent on a letter) go to insert-symbol, find the symbol you want, go to the box that says keyboard shortcut, and make up your own shortcut if it doesn’t have one already. For instance, I use ctrl+o for the degree sign.

Also, to center your document, ctrl+e, to have a left alignment, ctrl+l  
– Posted by anonymous

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888. October 5th, 2008 3:44 pm

Here are 2...not sure if these have been posted.

1. on the mac, command-shift+4 will allow you to make a screen capture. You can click and drag the box to capture the whole screen or just a small part. It will then save it as a picture and leave it on your desktop. this is great for tutorials or just saving stuff you might need later (like a receipt for an online purchase).
2. on the macbooks, if you put two fingers together on the touchpad, you can use it to scroll up and down.

– Posted by Bob

---

889. October 5th, 2008 4:01 pm

This one has been around since the beginning of time (and now it’s new and improved with the aero interface).  
ALT+TAB jumps to another window  
Vista - WINDOW + TAB gives you the Aero feature- oooh aaaah  
– Posted by P

---

890. October 5th, 2008 4:16 pm

Robin #880  
Control and scroll back down to where you started!  
– Posted by HarryR

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891. October 5th, 2008 4:21 pm

Google search - forget the prefix www and the suffix .com. Just type the word(s) you are looking for. Works all the time.  
– Posted by STANLEY B DICKES

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892. October 5th, 2008 4:24 pm

I think you need to update your knowledge of enlarging text on web pages. It seems that the latest browsers have gotten rid of just enlarging the text (it screws up web page layouts) and default to simply enlarging the entire web page.  
– Posted by chuch0

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893. October 5th, 2008 4:39 pm

This is a great list!! I’ve already learned many useful tips, and just finished erasing the thousands of items in my trash. The comments are a treasure chest of tips as well, I’ll keep this page bookmarked.  
– Posted by Annie M

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894. October 5th, 2008 4:44 pm

Google’s calculator is really smart.  
“6 factorial” gives answer “6 factorial = 720”  
“cube root 6” gives answer “cube root(6) = 1.81712059”  
“pi^2” gives answer “pi^2 = 9.8696044”  
“log 10 \* ln e” gives answer “log(10) \* ln(e) = 1”  
“arctangent 3” gives answer “arctangent(3) = 1.24904577”  
– Posted by sunshine

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895. October 5th, 2008 4:55 pm

In response to David’s suggestion here: “When you get an e-mail message from eBay or your bank, claiming that you have an account problem or a question from a buyer, it’s probably a “phishing scam” intended to trick you into typing your password. Don’t click the link in the message. If in doubt, go into your browser and type “www.ebay.com” (or whatever) manually.”  
... a better way to confirm that the e-mail message is in fact spam is to right mouse click on the link they provide, which brings up a menu, and click on “properties”. You’ll see the web address that that link plans to take you to, and if it’s spam, it will not say ebay.com.  
Hope this helps!  
– Posted by Jennie

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896. October 5th, 2008 5:06 pm

Thank you for all these amazing shortcuts for both the Mac and Windows.  
Question: I recently got a new Macbook and installed Windows XP with Boot Camp. Does anyone know how to make the tiny text on the XP ‘side’ more readable? There are no resolution settings available that make everything bigger without stretching the aspect ratio.  
– Posted by Julie

- 
897. October 5th, 2008 5:16 pm
- SAVE-AS ... is invaluable when you have inadvertently caused some inexplicable formatting disaster in a document ... simply save the DREADFUL, AWFUL, BAD document as trash (or other easy to recognize name) and your original document will exist in some pre-disaster form.
- If you have, as others have suggested, used ALT-S (doing forced manual saves) in the intervals before the DISASTER your “original” file is likely to be fairly current.
- Similarly, if you are re-formatting (or otherwise playing with) a “finished” document for printing, it is a very good idea to leave your “finished” text document alone and use a copy to experiment with in creating page and column breaks, inserting graphics and the rest.
- This helps additionally in discouraging the temptation to “adjust” your text.
- Posted by Susan Sunflower
- 
898. October 5th, 2008 5:21 pm
- Robin #880, HarryR #890:
- To return things to their original size in the browser window, type CTRL-o (that’s zero, not “oh”).
- Posted by Patrick
- 
899. October 5th, 2008 5:59 pm
- My two favorites, both previously mentioned: Control F will find things pretty much everywhere.
- The F4 key- “do it again” can save tremendous time when formatting, adding rows to tables, adding color to cells in Excel, etc. It keeps on ticking: to add 4 rows to a table, add a row the usual way, and then hit F4 three times. To change a font in assorted places, highlight the first spot, make the desired changes, then highlight any other spots and hit F4.
- Posted by Paul
- 
900. October 5th, 2008 6:07 pm
- A single click on the mouse places the cursor; a double-click highlights a word; a triple-click highlights the line or paragraph.
- Posted by David Jewell
- 
901. October 5th, 2008 6:18 pm
- response to post #229:
- Accents and tildes in Windows are achieved with Ctrl+accent, then the vowel or the n. You can do this will all three accents, grave, acute, circumflex, as well as the tilde for ñ and the comma for cedille.
- Umlaut is more complicated and involves Alt+3 digit numbers for each vowel (which also works for the accents and tildes in programs like excel, that don’t accept the Control+ shortcut)
- In Mac you do acute accents with Option+e and then the vowel, and tilde with Option+n and then n. Grave accents are Option+Grave accent then vowel. I forgot how you do circumflex and cedille.
- Posted by JB
- 
902. October 5th, 2008 6:28 pm
- Good Stuff!
- Can’t emphasize enough about emptying the recycle bin...I didn’t do that and last year my Outlook froze up and it took going through a couple of people to figure it out...actually it was Andy from [www.computerhelpsos.com](http://www.computerhelpsos.com) who fixed it virtually...he was awesome with me which was a feat in itself since I was close to hysterical... Also, so glad my son sent this blog! He’s probably hoping I will check this out and not bug him so much!
- Sandy
- Posted by Sandy
- 
903. October 5th, 2008 6:30 pm
- Patrick #898
- That doesn’t work here. 10.5.5, G5 iMac.
- Have to control-scroll back to clear it.
- Posted by HarryR
- 
904. October 5th, 2008 6:33 pm
- General computer tips and shortcuts.
- Posted by chogni

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905. October 5th, 2008 6:36 pm

For Outlook users:  
When you delete an entry (email message, contact, etc), it goes to the Recycle bin and continues to eat up storage space.  
If you want to completely remove something from Outlook AND your hard drive, simply hit Shift + the Delete key. You will be asked if you want to permanently delete the item. Then, either click on “Yes” or simply press the “Y” key on the keyboard. Item is now gone...forever.

– Posted by Garrett

---

906. October 5th, 2008 6:41 pm

Err... David, has it occurred to you that the comments on this article already contain enough good stuff to constitute a Strunk-and-White sized crowd-sourced book. In fact, why don't you start a project called '1001 tips' or something, on [www.webook.com](http://www.webook.com) and invite your readers to contribute tip-chapters? (full disclosure: I have absolutely no relationship with webook).

Just compile and publish. Will make a great little gift book.

My 2c: others have mentioned Ctrl-C and Ctrl-V. Let me add Ctrl-A (select everything on a page, very useful just before Ctrl-C) and Ctrl-Z (undo). Ctrl-X deletes whatever you've selected if you are in an editor.

You probably know that shift-clicking twice selects everything within 'scope' between the two clicks. Ctrl-clicking selects up individual items (especially useful for selecting multiple items in a folder).

Shift-PrintScrn will grab a screenshot that can be pasted into image editing programs.

Pressing down on the mouse wheel will create a weird icon that allows dragging of the mouse to act as scrolling. Click wheel again to release.

If a key on your computer is broken, or gummed up with crud, use Alt-ASCII code (on num keypad) to create that letter. For a few months, I was using alt 104 a lot for h.

You can adjust your folder properties to show extensions of filenames.

– Posted by Venkat

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907. October 5th, 2008 6:54 pm

Triple-click any word in a paragraph to highlight the whole paragraph; hit Ctrl A to highlight the whole document. These are probably obvious but I didn't see them mentioned.

– Posted by hbm

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908. October 5th, 2008 6:56 pm

OK, my favorite Blackberry tip– when you are confronted with dialing a number that is a catchy phrase (like 1-800-BEST BUY) how to do this on a phone with a QWERTY keyboard?

You type in the 800 numerically then hold down the ALT button to type in the letters– try it, it really works!

– Posted by Amy

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909. October 5th, 2008 7:01 pm

David's call for a basics book reminded me of my basics column and a half. It loses a lot in this funky formatting, but here it is. Any user who understands and uses these basics will be more advanced than most folks I know.

Windows Vista Essentials

Assume that if you can think of a feature, Microsoft or Mac has already thought of it. Use “Help” for answers and features. If no answer, try Google.

Put Computer and UserName on Desktop by right-clicking on Start/Globe menu & left-clicking Show On Desktop. UserName is at top right of Start column.

Windows Explorer = key to success  
(Your hard drive IS your computer.)  
Right-click Computer or Start/Globe, then left-click Explore  
Arrange columns by clicking column names  
Identify yourself, e.g. Your Name, Public, others  
Look for your stuff under your/computer name before Exploring Public, other users

Right-click everything (including Desktop)  
Right-click for MENUS, Esp. Properties  
Left-click for ACTIONS  
Hold mouse with whole hand – fingers over

left button, wheel, and right button  
Play Solitaire daily until right-click internalized  
Drag-and-Drop, e.g., Desktop icons to Taskbar,  
bottom left to enable for one-click opening  
Ctrl+A = highlight all  
Ctrl+C = copy to clipboard  
Ctrl+X = delete to clipboard  
Ctrl+V = paste last put on clipboard  
With Explorer or other programs open:  
Views on menu bar at top –  
4 Icon sizes, List, DETAILS, Tiles  
Organize on menu bar top left – options/tasks  
Tools on some menu bars, esp. Outlook  
Also: Explore, Share, E-Mail, Burn, Slide Show  
\_ , □, X at top RIGHT to minimize, change  
shape, close; click-&-grab top bar  
to move; grab corners to re-size  
Documents (right-click to Explore; also Explore  
Pictures, Music, Favorites, Videos, etc.,  
remembering to change to appropriate  
View, e.g. Extra Large Icons for photos)  
Start/Globe/Start Search field immediately above;  
Type in item to find on hard drive  
Use \* as wildcard to narrow search,  
e.g., xyz\*.doc, doggie\*.jpg  
Microsoft Word – turn on ¶ by clicking on toolbar  
(gives you greater control of your page/document)  
Emailing multiple photos:  
Explore folder of desired photos (.jpg’s)  
Set View to Large or Extra Large Icons  
Select desired pics by holding Ctrl key  
and clicking ones to be sent  
Right-click any pic and on menu left-click  
Send To / Mail Recipient  
Choose “Picture size,” noting estimated size  
Restrict total photos sent to under 2 MB  
“Hover” mouse over Taskbar icons to identify  
“blue e” icon for Internet Explorer  
“yellow envelope” icon for Outlook, etc.  
Double-click icons on right by “time” to open;  
Right-click to Exit or control  
– Posted by Butler Crittenden

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910. October  
5th,  
2008  
7:05 pm

Windows “print screen” key really works to capture an image of whatever is on your screen at that moment - and you can then paste it right into an e-mail usually; or paste it into irfanview and then cut out just the image you want.  
– Posted by David Drobner

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911. October  
5th,  
2008  
7:20 pm

ok enlarging text. But that still does not translate to the printer which then prints out in the standard miniscule font. How to change this?  
– Posted by mabel

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912. October  
5th,  
2008  
7:29 pm

On Firefox (or explorer with a google toolbar) you can type your search entry into the address bar to do an “I’m feeling lucky search” on in google. If it’s too vague it takes you to the search but otherwise it is a much quicker way to go to a specific page. For example, if you want to go to the new york times opinion page, you could just type “nytimes opinion” in the address bar and it would automatically take you there.  
– Posted by Jean

---

913. October  
5th,  
2008  
7:31 pm

Pressing the windows key and D toggles all open applications to minimize them. Press windows key and D again to go back to work where you left off.  
Pressing the windows key and E opens windows explorer. Press the windows key and E again for a second explorer window. This is very helpful for moving files and photos around. For photos make sure you turn the thumbnails on (View - thumbnails).  
Do you type a lot of numbers? I noticed that I was constantly letting go of my mouse to type numbers using the number keypad on the

right side of my keyboard. I’m right handed but I wondered how long it would take to learn to use the mouse with my left hand. It was rough for a few days but it got easier pretty quickly after that. The only thing I can’t do lefty is draw in a paint program or Photoshop. Thanks to everyone that shared their tips and tricks.

Mechtron Bob

– Posted by Bob Siegler

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914. October 5th, 2008 7:36 pm

On a Mac Command-Shift-4 and then hitting the spacebar separately will allow you to make a screenshot of any “thing” (open windows and icons!) on your desktop by rolling over it and then clicking on it. As stated previously, it then sits on your desktop as a numbered picture to do with what you will. Of you want to cancel your screenshot foray midshot, the escape key will bring you back to reality.

A list of many, many keyboard commands is on the drop-down contextual menus on the menu bar to peruse at your leisure to make your head explode.

If you have an Apple Cinema Display attached to a Mac, you are able to rotate the screen image upside-down in System Preferences/Displays/Rotation to mess with someone on April Fools day.

– Posted by Peter

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915. October 5th, 2008 7:47 pm

On a Mac you can find THOUSANDS of characters, chinese fonts and TONS of any cool glyphs and symbols you can think of by using the Character Palette. You can even put the Character Palette icon on the menu bar permanently for easy access.

Rather than going into it here, just goto> Finder> Help on the menu bar and search for glyph or character palette and learn away. I did.

No charge.

– Posted by Peter

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916. October 5th, 2008 8:08 pm

There was no way I’d get to the bottom of the list of comments that others have written, but in case there are some who’ve gotten this far and are looking for a condensed list (yes, very condensed) of many important commands, here’s my daily use list.

Things like Ctrl+z, x, c, v, b, u, i, l, e, s, o, f, n, and p will cause you to undo, cut, copy, paste, bold text, underline text, italicize text, left-justify text, center justify text, save, open doc, find text, open new document, and print document. Ctrl+1 makes text single spaced, and Ctrl+5 makes it 1.5 spaced, Ctrl+2 is double spaced. Ctrl+right arrow/left arrow goes one word right/left, Ctrl+down/up arrow goes to the bottom of a paragraph/top. Shift + F7 opens the thesaurus. Ctrl+F4 exits a program, but Alt+F4 exits that screen (like one internet tab), Ctrl+t opens a new tab. Shift+arrow keys highlights one space to the right or left or one line up or down. Shift+Ctrl+arrow keys highlights one word to the right or left (R or L arrows) or the rest of that paragraph going up or down (up and down arrows) All of these I use on a fairly regular basis. Lastly, one of my pet peeves is when people click on a website using two clicks when they only need one. If something is highlighted and the normal arrow cursor turns to a hand, it only needs one click. I know there are many I left off, but good luck, and this stuff definitely saves you time.

– Posted by Ethan

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917. October 5th, 2008 8:10 pm

Can someone help with an iPod question? How do I delete songs I no longer want from my iPod? There is no button on the iPod that lets me do this. And no instruction on how to do it, in my leaflet. And I do not understand the iPod website at all. Thanks.

– Posted by Jess Adams

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918. October 5th, 2008 8:18 pm

Quite a few handy tips here, Jane.  
xo patsy

– Posted by Patsy

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919. October 5th, 2008 8:27 pm

In Firefox, you can find a word in a web-page simply by typing it - but you have to turn on the option in, well, Options. Go to Tools>>Options>>Advanced>>General, and click on “Search for text when I start typing”.

This is instead of using the Control F keyboard shortcut.

As #879 writes, “type the word you want to find, and your browser will instantaneously bring you to it.”

Really helps when you’ve Googled something and can’t seem to find the instance of it in the page you’re on.  
I use it all the time.

– Posted by Kent

920. October 5th, 2008 8:28 pm

My favorites, were the basics on how to use a digital camera picture size and send it, when it comes to digital stuff, I’m the perfect market target if you ever wrote a book about basics on digital stuff.  
oh, also the tip about emptying the recycle bin, I knwe that one, but I know a couple of people that didn’t just the last couple of weeks.  
anyway, thank you for all these basic tips.  
Maura Tierney (not the actress)

– Posted by Maura Tierney

921. October 5th, 2008 8:32 pm

To Robin on F11:  
If you press F11 again, it should toggle back to the original display – sometimes it takes several keypresses. If that fails try moving your mouse slowly up to the space where the bars were and some will come back so you can at least navigate..

Good luck,  
Stu

– Posted by Stewart A. Denenberg

922. October 5th, 2008 8:38 pm

Get blog and great comments.  
\*\*\*HOW TO USE ALT CODES\*\*\*  
On a desktop PC with a number pad:  
Hold down the alt key and use the number pad on the far right of your keyboard to type out the 4-character code.  
When you release the alt key, the character will appear.  
On a laptop:  
Lock the “num lk”(one of the top keys + Fn-key, should show a lock light)  
Hold down the alt key and type the numbers from the keys marked with a number. ex. M="0", J="1", K="2",L="3",U="4",I="5",O="6", 7=7, 8=8, 9=9.  
When you release the alt key, the character will appear.  
~~~~~  
example: for the copyright symbol: ©.  
hold down the ALT-key and type the numbers (from your keypad=desktop PC  
use number key pad; laptop use number lock)  
ALT (hold down), 0169 = ©  
In WORD or WORDPERFECT you can set the size.  
In PHOTOSHOP or PAINTSHOP PRO you can add your © John Doe in color  
for every photo etc.  
~~~~~

ALT codes:  
Starting with ALT 1  
While holding down the ALT-key, type the numbers using the number pad with Num-Lock on, release the ALT-key and the symbol appears.  
[The first 256+ symbols repeat-it will repeat if posting in Groups]  
[Note: numbers underlined, 32 255 0127, have no symbol]  
\_\_\_\_\_0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
1 to 9: ‘0’ © ● ♥ ♦ ♣ ♠ • □ ○  
10 to 19: ☒ ♂ ♀ ♪ ♫ ✨ ▶ ◀ ⚡ !!  
20 to 29: ¶ § — † ‡ ↓ ↵ ← → ↻ ↔  
30 to 39: ▲ ▼ ‘2’ ! ” # \$ % & ‘  
40 to 49: ( ) \* + , - . / 0 1  
50 to 59: 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 : ;  
60 to 69: ? @ A B C D E  
70 to 79: F G H I  
80 to 89:  
90 to 99:  
120 to 129: x y z { | } ~ ∆ Ç ü  
130 to 139: é â ã ä å ç è ë ì  
140 to 149: î ï Ä Å É æ Æ ô ö ò  
.....more  
\_\_\_\_\_0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

0100 to 0109: d e f g h i j k l m  
0110 to 0119: n o p q r s t u v w  
0120 to 0129: x y z { | } ~ ‘7’ € ‘9’  
0130 to 0139: , f „ … † ‡ ^ % ¢ Š ‹  
0140 to 0149: Œ ‘1’ …more  
0170 to 0179 <sup>a</sup> « ¬ ‘3’ ® <sup>–</sup> ° ± ² ³  
0189 ¼ ½  
0190 ¾ …more  
– Posted by Richard

923. October  
5th,  
2008  
8:44 pm

re: “Find while you type” in Firefox, my post just above :  
In addition, to find the next instance of what you’re searching for in a web page, use the keyboard shortcut “Control G” (=find again).  
[ “Find while you type” just replaces “Control F”. ]  
– Posted by Kent

924. October  
5th,  
2008  
8:59 pm

someone already said it. but, to be sure, in a mac you can find all of these keyboard shortcuts in “system preferences”, then “Keyboard & Mouse”, then “Keyboard Shortcuts.”  
And no, i didn’t actually read all the comments to find that someone said that. I used apple + F to search the page. I think it is ctrl + F on a pc. Also, I didn’t even scroll through this whole page to get to the box at the bottom to put my comments up. command + downArrow got me to the bottom. this is on a mac. it is probably ctrl + downArrow on a pc.  
When typing text this also works. Also, try control + left or right arrow and option + left or right arrow for quick moving around text.  
– Posted by karl

925. October  
5th,  
2008  
9:07 pm

With a mac, you can pretty much click on any image you see on the internet and drag it to your desk top and it is automatically saved there.  
Does any one know how to search for a specific word or phrase on a web-page? For use at a site like this that has a huge amount of info and I am looking for something specific?  
– Posted by angdre8

926. October  
5th,  
2008  
9:11 pm

Forgot to mention...using a Mac, you can also just drag the web-address to your desktop and it automatically saves the link there. Just click the left corner of address (that highlights entire address).  
– Posted by angdre8

927. October  
5th,  
2008  
9:30 pm

You think watching your editor trying to highlight is rough... try watching a lab full of 7th graders not using shortcuts. They think it is magic and I am really smart... for now.  
I am the digital immigrant.  
Thanks for all of the new tricks to share with the kids. They should last me until May -  
play2cre8  
– Posted by play2cre8

928. October  
5th,  
2008  
9:32 pm

Firefox users can simply type in ‘nyt’ to get the New York Times.  
– Posted by Ann P.

929. October  
5th,  
2008  
9:38 pm

On Excel, if you want to fill the rows in a column with say a set of numbers or letters or whatever, without having to highlight with your mouse and scroll, just highlight what you want to repeat or continue the order of and then double click on the lower right hand corner of a cell. It will fill the column with what you highlighted or with ordered numbers down to lowest row that has something in its adjacent cells. Try it out and you’ll see what I mean.  
– Posted by Mimi

930. October  
5th,  
2008  
10:02 pm

angdre8–try command-F to find a word or phrase  
– Posted by pat m



931. October 5th, 2008 10:06 pm  
angdre8 ----->> Use control+F and a box will appear. Type in the desired word and it will search up or down, in the document you have open. I use it daily!!!! Saves time, my poor eyes, and great frustration.  
– Posted by Edwin

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932. October 5th, 2008 10:14 pm  
In firefox, middle-click a tab to close it.  
– Posted by Cal

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933. October 5th, 2008 10:22 pm  
I don’t want to repeat any keystroke tasks that have already been mentioned above. I don’t think I’ve seen the following that I use daily:  
Control P = print  
Control Esc + u + u = shut down  
Alt F = File  
Alt E = Edit  
Alt T = Tools  
Control Alt Delete K = lock screen  
Microsoft outlook - when deleting permanently hold shift while deleting. When in delete folder and you want to delete all you can hit “control A” for all or you can choose Alt E and select all or you can hit shift and down arrow to highlight all manually and then hit delete. Cntrl/shift/”V” to move to another folder.  
– Posted by Nancy Karagianis

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934. October 5th, 2008 10:30 pm  
Control A will highlight the whole page.  
In Word 2003 control D will open a menu with a whole lot of choices:superscript, subscript, spacing, strike through, etc. (too many to enumerate).  
– Posted by William Bunge

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935. October 5th, 2008 10:51 pm  
Well, I guess I’m the Mom to whom everyone will be sending these hints. Been using computers since the days of punch cards – and almost everything beyond apple-c apple-x apple-v was new to me.  
And to prove that I don’t get everything...how do I use the Times Save File function?  
Thanks loads!  
– Posted by Drisha

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936. October 5th, 2008 11:04 pm  
David.  
Rather than writing a book, start a basic computing tips wiki.  
– Posted by Chris Foran

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937. October 5th, 2008 11:10 pm  
Clearing cookies and cache/temporary internet files.  
Hardware acceleration for videos- right click on desktop > properties > settings > advanced > troubleshoot. Change to 30-50% if you’re having trouble with green screen/etc.  
Know what browser you are on!  
– Posted by UMD Terp

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938. October 5th, 2008 11:14 pm  
I want a feature that I cannot find here. When I need to fill in forms, again and again, with my name, address, credit card numbers, etc. I would like to assign these values to the “function keys” (or some other keys) and be able to hit the correct key to enter the correct words and numbers into the forms that I am filling out. Is this possible, anyone???  
– Posted by Wil Courter

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939. October 5th, 2008 11:26 pm  
Seen a lot of people promoting alt+F4, that’s great for closing an application like Word or Firefox, but if all you want to do is close one tab or one file inside of Firefox or Word and leave the application running, then you need ctrl+F4.  
– Posted by Cory

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940. October 5th, 2008  
Rename a file by clicking on it and pressing F2. Want to flabbergast an accountant? The same key does the same thing for cell in an Excel

2008  
11:52 pm

spreadsheet. Click on the cell, F2, start typing. No mouse required.  
– Posted by Jay

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941. October  
6th,  
2008  
12:05 am

oh, wonderful all.  
I see a couple of booklets or major sections. Think it would be better as small booklets than the tome with sections. Need to be cheap to free - remember when the NYT used to “give” little primers in exchange for print subscriptions?  
1) The Computer is the Monster Under the Bed - for the truly uninitiated. The Translator of keyboard and mouse speak for the true novice. This shines the light and makes the monster go away (or at least you learn to laugh as with Mike as opposed to cringe in fear as with Sully.)  
(We assume you can at least hunt and peck on the keyboard.)  
2) Basics - what everyone assumes you know about keyboard controls for Windows based programs and its internet browsers (or how to get around the web without losing your mind.)  
3) Basics - what everyone assumes you know about MAC based systems etc etc.  
4) Basics - for cell/smart/phones and other peripheral brains.  
– Posted by susan

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942. October  
6th,  
2008  
12:34 am

Many emacs control commands work in Apple mail. Like  
ctrl-a moves to beginning of line  
ctrl-e move to end of line  
ctrl-k deletes line  
ctrl-y yanks  
etc  
Really nice for those of us who live with emacs.  
– Posted by Robert Fossum

---

943. October  
6th,  
2008  
12:39 am

Lost? Need Help?  
Please, PRESS the F1 Key!  
– Posted by Tommah

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944. October  
6th,  
2008  
12:40 am

If you can get free computer support from a friend or family member that specializes in supporting Apple computers,... buy a Mac. If you don't have a friend or family member that supports Apple computers, ... that's ok, Apple has genius bars at a price you can't refuse. Also,... for the right price, I'll be your friend. Mahalo and aloha.  
– Posted by Brendan Perreault

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945. October  
6th,  
2008  
12:41 am

Vista running slow? Try shutting off the hard drive hogging (though pretty cool) Vista Search function:  
[http://keznews.com/3458\\_Disable\\_and\\_Turn\\_Off\\_Windows\\_Vista\\_Search\\_Indexer\\_and\\_Indexing\\_Service](http://keznews.com/3458_Disable_and_Turn_Off_Windows_Vista_Search_Indexer_and_Indexing_Service)  
– Posted by tommah

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946. October  
6th,  
2008  
12:49 am

Jess Adams...  
Your iPod PLAYS music. Your iTunes MANAGES music. The Delete key will make songs disappear faster than you can say... anything.  
g'luck  
– Posted by Peter

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947. October  
6th,  
2008  
1:36 am

Pogue: You can hide all windows, revealing only what's on the computer desktop, with one keystroke: hit the Windows key and “D” simultaneously in Windows,...  
There was a button in the older Windows 98SE that did that. I figured out the properties of the button and found it's still in later editions of Windows. Here are the properties as they are found in Vista:  
C:\Users\[YOUR USERNAME]\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Quick Launch  
– Posted by Larry Curleanmo

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- 
948. October 6th, 2008 1:36 am
- If you just install Windows XP straight off the CD without knowing how to set it up, you’re probably not secure and can be hacked.
- There’s actually quite a bit you need to know to secure it. This is because (for historical reasons) there’s a trade-off between security and interoperability with other computers on LANs. Microsoft’s default settings make it easier to set up a LAN, but are not secure at all.
- Posted by radianceseeker
- 
949. October 6th, 2008 1:59 am
- PowerPoint: in presentation mode, clicking the letter “b” will put the screen in black (“w” will make the screen white)
- Posted by Eric May
- 
950. October 6th, 2008 2:00 am
- Nice list of shortcuts. Would be nice to separate the PC comments from the Mac’s.
- Big question here is - who tests all these shortcuts for reliability? I sure would hate to type in “ALT ??” and delete something important or modify my settings and not know how to correct them.
- I suggest all new shortcuts be done as a logged on user and not as the administrator.
- Posted by Second guess
- 
951. October 6th, 2008 2:07 am
- To open several websites in Firefox, simply hit Control + T for each site that you want to open. Use Control + Tab to maneuver between opened tabs. Cool!
- Posted by Rick in Atlanta
- 
952. October 6th, 2008 2:31 am
- If you are working remotely, and you have 2 screens back at the office, sometimes your program will be open in the window which you don’t see. To get it, press alt-spacebar which will display the window control menu. Press “m” and then use an arrow key to shift the window into view.
- You can customize your keyboard control via a free tool call XKeymacs which by default provides intuitive Emacs-like controls over your desktop but also allows fine-tuning per key combo on an application-specific basis.
- Posted by Pinner Blinn
- 
953. October 6th, 2008 2:52 am
- Bit of useless history embedded in keyboard shortcuts:
- In Windows use control-Q to quit a program IF it began life as a Mac program — ie any Adobe/Macromedia program, even PowerPoint + others anyone??
- Of course ALL Mac programs use Command-Q to quit ;-]
- Posted by Luther Rotto
- 
954. October 6th, 2008 4:42 am
- If your Mac freezes, will give you a menu to quit the frozen program.
- “Grab” is a great little utility for copying windows, selections and screens. For example, if a mapquest map splits between pages, you can use select in “Grab” to define the part of the map you need in a scale that will fit.
- In some apps the right and left arrows will advance or back up a page, as in PowerPoint.
- Posted by frank logan
- 
955. October 6th, 2008 6:12 am
- In Word:
- Type four keys:  
(c) space bar
- and you will get the copyright symbol © .
- If you want the c in parentheses rather than the copyright symbol, then after it turns into the copyright symbol, click Ctrl-Z (normally that’s for “undo” - it undoes the Windows automation that converts to a copyright symbol).
- Similarly, the characters 😊 spacebar will create a smiling face symbol.
- In the above, depending on the version of word you are using, sometimes the space bar is not necessary.

..I hope someone got this far down on the list to read my comment..  
– Posted by Ed

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956. October 6th, 2008 7:06 am  
Those of you acting in surprise over all the keyboard shortcuts....you don't deserve a computer. Read your manuals and step away from your IBM Selectrics.  
– Posted by Mark

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957. October 6th, 2008 8:03 am  
When browsing the internet - hitting the backspace key brings you to the previous web page that you were viewing.  
– Posted by Linda

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958. October 6th, 2008 8:24 am  
all that stuff about ctrl+enter and shift+enter to prefix .com and .net and so on are made irrelevant with FF 3's predictive address bar. I wonder how I managed without it!  
– Posted by sumithar

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959. October 6th, 2008 8:27 am  
The greatest feature of Apple's 10.5 Leopard is called "Quick Look." While it's no secret, it isn't well-publicized.  
Here's how it works: click ONCE on any icon and press the space bar. The document will open without having to boot up the application. It's super fast, and worth the entire cost of upgrading to Leopard if you haven't already done so.  
Thank you David! I learned about it from your Missing Manual book.  
– Posted by HarryR

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960. October 6th, 2008 9:13 am  
I was thrilled to find out that the space bar will check or uncheck a box for you in a form. You don't have to grab your mouse and click it!  
space bar = (un)check boxes on forms  
– Posted by Meg

---

961. October 6th, 2008 9:26 am  
There's a lot of comments here, but if someone mentioned this once it bears repeating. PC users: You'll give your car oil changes and tune-ups but often you'll let your computer sit on your desk and gradually get gunked up. Some basic maintenance I so often see neglected:  
1)A computer needs to be rebooted every once and a while. Don't just leave it running for weeks, even if it goes in to power saving mode.  
2)Windows comes with good disk utilities that should be run every few months. Under "accessories" in the start menu, go to "system tools" and run "disk clean up" and "disk defragmenter."  
3)A bit more "advanced" (in Windows Speak): Look next to your clock on the bottom left of the screen. This area is called the task tray. Find out what each of those icons represent and if you need to run those programs. Very often PC's become bogged down with a myriad of trivial processes running in the background.  
4)Another slightly advanced tip: Very often Anti-virus is as obnoxious as what it purports to be protecting you against. You need protection, but try to be aware if it your Anti-virus that is making your computer so excruciatingly slow.  
5)One more basic one: Having a desktop image can slow down your computer if your graphic capabilities are stretched. If you don't know what else to do to make your computer go faster, set your desktop to just a color (and change your windows scheme to a less pretty one). Do this by right-clicking on empty space on the desktop and clicking on "properties."  
-Cheers!  
– Posted by David

---

962. October 6th, 2008 9:27 am  
Even I didn't know about some of these. You might be interested in the one for changing text size on a web page.  
DB  
– Posted by Olivia

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963. October 6th, 2008  
Can I subscribe to an e-mail listing that will remind me when Pogue has a new posting or just send me the blog? Thanks.

2008  
9:35 am

– Posted by Kim

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964. October  
6th,  
2008  
9:41 am

Oh wow does this book need to be written. I’m not a neophyte to computers—I can run Photoshop et al using shortcuts only– but have no idea how Windows really works. Every time I played with my F buttons strange things happened and/or my machine would crash.

Just because someone isn’t a geek does not mean they are stupid.

**riko**

– Posted by riko

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965. October  
6th,  
2008  
9:45 am

± is alt+numeric keypad 0177  
° is alt+numeric keypad 248  
→ is alt+numeric keypad 26  
⊙ is alt+numeric keypad 1  
● is alt+numeric keypad 2

There are lots more!

numeric keypad on laptops are accessed by a variety of different means, some are modal, other are selected with key combinations.

– Posted by elliot

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966. October  
6th,  
2008  
9:56 am

How come you sometimes DO have to type the “www” or you get taken to that Windows Live Search page? One example I can think of is my alma mater’s site, wellesley.edu, and I’ve always been baffled by this...

– Posted by Sue

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967. October  
6th,  
2008  
10:05 am

Before the days of the mouse computer manuals had lists (and explanations) of these keyboard commands.

Yeah, I know, I threw mine out too.

– Posted by Tom Williamson

---

968. October  
6th,  
2008  
10:08 am

Someone may have already gotten this one, but I don’t have time to read through all 950 posts.

To highlight large blocks of text in a word processing document:

Place the cursor at the beginning of the section you want to highlight. Hold the Shift key, and click at the end of the section. The complete section will be highlighted.

– Posted by Elisabeth

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969. October  
6th,  
2008  
10:12 am

Thanks Jay! I just knew there had to be a way to do that!!! And that question had stumped 2 Excel trainers.

– Posted by Sallie

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970. October  
6th,  
2008  
10:18 am

In Excel, to edit a cell, instead of double clicking the selected cell, press F2 key which will open the cell and place the cursor at the end of the current text.

– Posted by Zubair Hameed

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971. October  
6th,  
2008  
10:28 am

An article and a blog with computer tips and shortcuts. Check them out if they seem interesting.

Irena

– Posted by Irena

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972. October  
6th,  
2008  
10:40 am

I utilized the following tip: “You can also enlarge the entire Web page or document by pressing the Control key as you turn the wheel on top of your mouse.”

I did this in IE and now ALL of my screens are being displayed in a very large font. I tried to use CTL and - [minus] key to bring it back down and it does not work. Any suggestions? THX!

– Posted by WSP

---

973. October  
6th,  
2008  
11:00 am

There is no “Windows” key on my computer or any other computer in my office.

I’ve been using a computer for at least 20 years and have never seen a “Windows” key.

Please, how about some real advice!

– Posted by Natasha

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974. October  
6th,  
2008  
11:03 am

Ignore my last question - I utilized a response from one of your readers that I hadn't seen and it worked fine. THX!

– Posted by WSP

---

975. October  
6th,  
2008  
11:07 am

For the iPhone.

Press the home button twice to get to your phone number favorite list.

Press the home button and the button on the top of the phone at the same time to take a screen capture. It puts the photo in your camera roll.

– Posted by goddess

---

976. October  
6th,  
2008  
11:10 am

Many useful tips here, but one comment. Given a choice between a two-finger key combination and a single mouse click to accomplish the same thing, I'll choose a single click every time.

Call me weird, but why take my hand off the mouse and hit Ctrl+D to show the desktop in Windows, when I can single click the "Show Desktop" icon in the Quick Launch toolbar? Seems like a lot of these arcane keystroke combos can be executed with a right click function as well.

But that being said here's a couple of my fave key combo's  
Force quitting a frozen or problematic application on Mac:  
Command(cloverleaf)+ Option+ Esc

Quick shutdown on Windows once you're standing and ready to leave:

Windows key, then u key, then enter key. You're done, go home.

– Posted by Dano

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977. October  
6th,  
2008  
11:54 am

You can view single frames in Quicktime movies by hitting the space bar to pause the movie. Then press the right arrow key to a view single frames going forward or the left arrow key to go backward.

– Posted by Jerry P

---

978. October  
6th,  
2008  
12:13 pm

Natasha — you must be joking, right?

Everybody I know can point out exactly where the Windows button is.

Perhaps you would benefit from taking a class.

On most PC keyboards the Windows button is between the CTRL and the ALT keys, on both sides of the spacebar. The key will usually have a stylized Windows logo on it. If you still can't find it (!), go to your nearest computer shop and have the technicians show you.

– Posted by Mark

---

979. October  
6th,  
2008  
12:27 pm

976 comments!! That's a lot! Guess you better write that book, Pogue.

This is a question. On a Mac, when you press cmd+M the window minimizes. But what key combo do you press to maximize it again? I know you could go to the Dock and press the window, but shouldn't there be a "revert to normal" command.

Tried google, apple and the works... Maybe the Great Pogue or his readers can help here...

. Johan

ps. It's practically the same with the cmd+H (hide command).

– Posted by Johan

---

980. October  
6th,  
2008  
12:28 pm

Phone call in middle of night: I can't find the icon for trash can.

Answer: right click on desk top  
check menu for REFRESH and click on it. Trash can popped up and my blond friend was a happy camper.

Yep, she's used computers for over 12 years.

Kate

– Posted by Kate

---

981. October  
6th,

Read half the posts, and nobody mentioned this (forgive me if it came up later and I am repeating):

2008  
12:28 pm

In Word, the Insert key is (perversely) a toggle switch between “Insert Mode” and “Overstrike Mode.” So, if you accidentally hit the Insert key (which often happens when you try to hit Delete), you suddenly get put into “Overstrike Mode”, which causes you to overwrite text when you are trying to insert text. To get back to regular (“Insert”) mode, hit Insert again.

This gave me about an hour of hair-pulling frustration the first time it happened to me (decades ago). Happily, I was around to save my son’s bacon just last week when it happened to him for the first time.

— Posted by dmm

982. October  
6th,  
2008  
12:32 pm

My favorite: in Windows, you can bulk-edit practically limitless number of file names in one simple step: simply highlight all the files you want renamed (you can use search utility to locate families of files with shared characteristics which need to be given similar names) and then, while highlighted, change the name of the FIRST file only. Windows will then automatically rename ALL the highlighted files: the same name given to the first file will be given to ALL highlighted files BUT with a unique extension (usually -1, -2, -3 etc) assigned to each one. If you need to customize the file names, you can always do so later, by adding a few extra characters or digits or your choice.

— Posted by CHUCK BERIA

983. October  
6th,  
2008  
12:33 pm

I learned Windows+D for returning to the Desktop. That’s helpful. I usually use the “Show Desktop” icon

— Posted by Carl-Anthony

984. October  
6th,  
2008  
12:33 pm

I am a new Blackberry user who actually likes to use appropriate punctuation and entire words (properly spelled) in my email and text messages. I also prefer to proofread messages before sending. HOW DOES ONE EDIT ON A BLACKBERRY WITHOUT ERASING AND RETYPING AN ENTIRE LINE? Is there such a thing as “spellcheck” on a Blackberry? Gosh, this is frustrating.

— Posted by CEL

985. October  
6th,  
2008  
12:37 pm

If you type in the word “google” or “nytimes” or whatever into your browser and press CTRL+ENTER, it will automatically put “www.” in front and “.com” at the end and take you to the webpage.

— Posted by Carl-Anthony

986. October  
6th,  
2008  
12:42 pm

Here’s one I love, it is a time saver for shopping on line and all kinds of other reasons: autofill.

It is on the google bar, if you take a couple of minutes to fill it in, it will save lots of time whenever you are asked for name, email, phone, etc.

— Posted by PD

987. October  
6th,  
2008  
12:43 pm

Per my posting #933 the Microsoft Outlook instructions work on most mailers.

— Posted by Nancy Karagianis

988. October  
6th,  
2008  
12:44 pm

Here’s something that every web designer SHOULD know.

When entering addresses in an online form, the state drop-down menu should be triggered by the state’s initials. For example, “NY” should trigger “New York” to appear. In most cases, this does not work, and either I’m left with “Newfoundland”, or scrolling through all the states to find NY.

I’ve always thought it a west-coast conspiracy. It may seem small, but if you fill out as many on-line forms as I do, it’s truly annoying.

Oh, and while we’re at it. Why isn’t the US always the first country on a drop-down list? I have nothing against Afghanistan, but I doubt if they do much on-line commerce with US-based firms.

— Posted by meech

989. October  
6th,  
2008  
12:50 pm

a) With a Mac, Command-Option-T gets rid of the sidebar of a window. Same command restores the sidebar. I love this trick! Dunno of Windows equivalent

- 
- b) With a Mac, if you want to pass along an email without the quote-level lines or carets, copy and paste into TextEdit first. Then copy the TextEdit item and paste into new email page.  
Dunno of Windows equivalent.  
— Posted by Dave Beenken
- 
990. October 6th, 2008 12:55 pm  
Never use two spaces after a period when using a word processor. Modern fonts and word processors automatically put extra space in after a period.  
— Posted by Derek Bennett
- 
991. October 6th, 2008 1:08 pm  
“Not all anti-virus can delete, heal, prevent viruses” That’s why it’s important for us to know this:  
How to delete virus on a secondary storage unit(USB, diskette etc.)  
Note: When you are trying to open a file/s coming from your USB or diskette do not double click it, or do not choose right click then open.. the safeness way is to right click it and then select explore for u to minimize the spreading of viruses or executing some malicious files... Let’s say you this, automatically the virus/es will appear and if you want to delete it just right click the virus and delete.(SHIFT+DELETE)  
There are cases that the virus/es or any malicious or suspicious files are hidden..ok. for you to make it visible. first go to my computer(don’t forget!)right click then select explore then point your mouse to tool menu, choose folder option then view tab and from the tab dialog box select show hidden files and folder lastly.. unchecked hide extension etc...click ok then apply the reminders that i have mentioned.  
— Posted by buboy
- 
992. October 6th, 2008 1:12 pm  
My favorite it control + shift + 4 to save any screen shot onto your desktop. Just click on all of these simultaneously, an + in a gray circle will appear. Release keys and and press mouse and drag the icon to cover the part of the doc or image you want to save, release mouse and voila, there is is on your desktop. I find this invaluable and use it for everything from Mapquest to Quickbooks.  
Thanks for all your tips!  
— Posted by Ronnie
- 
993. October 6th, 2008 1:27 pm  
Shame on you, David!  
“Google is also a units-of-measurement and currency converter. Type “teaspoons in 1.3 gallons,” for example, or “euros in 17 dollars.” Click Search to see the answer.”  
David, you missed an obvious shortcut in the shortcut. Instead of clicking “Search,” hit the return or enter key. It works to select the obvious button on most Mac and PC pages.  
— Posted by Mac Bigot
- 
994. October 6th, 2008 1:39 pm  
Ellen Richards in post #73: instead of “shame on you NYTimes”, shame on YOU Ellen for not knowing how to highlight text in a web page with your cursor, left click on your mouse and click on Copy, then Paste it into a document and print it out yourself.  
C’mon Ellen! Don’t blame the system, take personal responsibility!  
— Posted by Cynthia
- 
995. October 6th, 2008 1:43 pm  
I’ve sat in class wincing because the presenter did not realize:  
If you want to scroll in a document, you can use the up or down arrows in the scroll bar on the side to go one line at a time. But if you want to scroll more quickly, a whole page at a time, click in the empty space just above or below the “current page” indicator on the scroll bar. (And of course you can drag the indicator to go even faster to another part of the document.)  
— Posted by LDF
- 
996. October 6th, 2008 1:43 pm  
If there is a symbol you use a lot, you can make your own shortcut key for it. On windows, click on “Insert” then “symbol” then “shortcut key” at the bottom of the window.  
For instance, I use the “section” symbol a lot as a law student, so I



have set its short cut as ctrl + shift + s.

– Posted by SK

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997. October 6th, 2008 1:47 pm

To Natasha, post 973: do you see a key with 4 squares all put together in the shape of a flag? That’s the Windows key. It’s on my laptop, my PC and all the Windows-based computers in my office.

If you don’t have those keys on your keyboards, you either have an all Mac office (rare) or someone’s removed all of them. Call 911.

– Posted by Cynthia

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998. October 6th, 2008 1:49 pm

Another very useful shortcut:

Instead of clicking a hyperlink taking you to a downloadable document (Word, PDF, Excel), simply right click on the link and choose “save target as” then choose a save location on your drive.

Many people struggle with clicking, opening, then trying to find the “save” button on these documents.

Guaranteed to save you, on average, five minutes per document!

– Posted by Shaun

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999. October 6th, 2008 2:20 pm

Comments above have mentioned the Paste Special command (one of my favorites), but you don’t have to use the toolbar (i.e., Edit/Paste Special). The shortcut is Alt-Shift-V.

– Posted by ASV

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1000. October 6th, 2008 2:22 pm

Talking about what Google can do for you... my company has customers and employees all over the world and I often need to know what time it is there. So one day I typed “what time is it in tokyo” in Google and there it was!!!

So my tip is to try google out for any question before anyplace else.

– Posted by Nick

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1001. October 6th, 2008 2:26 pm

I would not necessarily recommend Snopes.com as the authority on truth on the Internet... they get it wrong sometimes too, and when they do, they seem oblivious to e-mail from people who try to get bad information cleared up (even when that bad information smears the reputation of someone who is now deceased and cannot defend themselves - scroll about halfway down on the page at <http://www.thebig8.net> and note the paragraphs under the heading “Note regarding ‘The Americans’ by Byron MacGregor” - Snopes has had this bad information on their site for years now, and they have resisted all attempts to contact them to get it corrected). In my opinion, Snopes is no more reliable than Wikipedia - sometimes they get it right and sometimes they get it very wrong, but when they do get it wrong it is very difficult (apparently sometimes impossible) to get untrue or incomplete information corrected or removed.

– Posted by Jack

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1002. October 6th, 2008 2:28 pm

Sorry, but this one isn’t entirely accurate:

\* You can adjust the size and position of any window on your computer. Drag the top strip to move it; drag the lower-right corner (Mac) or any edge (Windows) to resize it.

If it’s been programmed to only display at a certain size, it can’t be resized. And that feature is not as rare as you think.

– Posted by Erin

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1003. October 6th, 2008 2:33 pm

Control/Alt/Delete + K will lock your Desktop if you are password protected. I do not know what will happen if you do not have a sign on screen to access your computer each day.

– Posted by Nancy Karagianis

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1004. October 6th, 2008 2:46 pm

I saw a few people mention Cmd + Shift + 4 to take screenshots, but didn’t see these:

After Pressing Cmd + Shift + 4, hit the spacebar and a camera icon will come up. You can then select any window to take a picture of just that window.

Cmd + Shift + 3 to take a picture of your entire screen—menus, dock and all. (Note: if you want to mess with someone’s head, set this

picture as their desktop and set their dock to hide. 😊

Also, Opt + hyphen gives you an en-dash (should be used to separate numbers or dates). Opt + Shift + Hyphen gives you an em-dash (should be used to set off clauses in sentences).

David also mentioned Cmd + Tab to switch through applications. You can also to use Cmd + ` (the one above tab) to tab through open windows within an application.

I would totally buy this book for my parents.

– Posted by Matthew

---

1005October  
6th,  
2008  
2:52 pm

I have one to add to this one-> “You don’t have to type “http://www” into your Web browser. Just type the remainder: “nytimes.com” or “dilbert.com,” for example. (In the Safari browser, you can even leave off the “.com” part.)”

Type just the name of the site “nytimes” and then hit CTRL + Enter to add the “www.” and “.com” to the beginning and end in the address bar.

– Posted by Jillian Tegtmeier

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1006October  
6th,  
2008  
3:03 pm

To Lee Kirk of post #452: Where do I send you flowers for giving me the best hint EVER?

– Posted by Cynthia

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1007October  
6th,  
2008  
3:14 pm

I hope these aren’t repeats, i couldn’t get them all. the best besides the ctrl-enter to add the [www.com](http://www.com)

is using backspace to browse back a webpage and

Alt+Tab to switch between programs.

– Posted by sarah

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1008October  
6th,  
2008  
3:15 pm

One tip I wish everyone would learn is to highlight the text they want to forward in an email before clicking the forward button. That way only the highlighted text gets forwarded and the garbage is left behind.

– Posted by Bob Chilvers

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1009October  
6th,  
2008  
3:29 pm

Right click on Start and you have immediate access to open, explore, search, properties, etc.

– Posted by Meggie

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1010October  
6th,  
2008  
3:36 pm

Please! Write the book.

– Posted by Martha

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1011.October  
6th,  
2008  
3:42 pm

David, please write the “missing manual”! There are 998 posts as I write — my mind was turning to mush trying to read them all, so I had to give up even though I wanted to absorb as much as I could. Be sure you get a good indexer when you’re ready to publish.

In what I did read, I did not see something someone taught me long ago: if you want to print a portion of something you’re reading, you can highlight that portion and use “copy” in “edit” and then click on the “write” icon, place the cursor at the beginning of the message text box and “paste”. Then print, of course.

– Posted by Patti

---

1012October  
6th,  
2008  
3:53 pm

On a Mac (I suspect it is the same on windows with these two Mac apps) in Quicktime and iTunes, the Spacebar toggles on and off play and pause.

– Posted by Peter

---

1013October  
6th,  
2008  
4:01 pm

I know a lot of these tricks, but there are some that I didn’t know about—thanks for the info!

– Posted by Beth

---

1014October  
6th,  
2008

I will be linking to this article in an upcoming post. Thanks : )

– Posted by Catholic Tech Tips

4:13 pm

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1015 October 6th, 2008 4:13 pm

“A range of text, or cells in excel, or just about anything, can be selected by clicking the beginning point, THEN THE SHIFT KEY, then the end point. No need to drag over the entire range.”

However, if the range of cells spans several screens and you find yourself scrolling down, it is easier to select the beginning point, then SHIFT + CTRL + down/right cursor arrow (depending if the range goes down or right). Similarly, if you are located at the end point of a range in Excel and would like to select the entire range, select the end point, then SHIFT + CTRL + up/left cursor arrow.

To select an array of cells in Excel (an array spans several columns and rows), position the cursor in one corner of the array, let’s say the upper left corner, then click SHIFT + CTRL + down arrow + right arrow (or alternatively right + down arrow, it doesn’t matter). If you’re at the lower right corner, the SHIFT + CTRL + up + left arrow.

– Posted by Lucia

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1016 October 6th, 2008 4:15 pm

To switch between the sheets of an Excel document, use CTRL + page up/page down.

– Posted by Lucia

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1017 October 6th, 2008 4:35 pm

nyt.com resolves to nytimes.com

– Posted by Jeremy

---

1018 October 6th, 2008 4:35 pm

How about simply teaching new users that when they mouse up to the top to use the dropdown menus, most (but not all) of these keyboard shortcuts described here appear to the right of the command in the menu. I’m afraid newbies don’t realize what those strange symbols mean. I’ve met people who’ve been using computers for YEARS who didn’t know that.

– Posted by HarryR

---

1019 October 6th, 2008 4:36 pm

Paste Special shortcut = Alt-E, S, V, Enter

This is typically faster for me than using a button.

– Posted by Tom M

---

1020 October 6th, 2008 4:37 pm

My life was saved when a friend told me that BACKSPACE is equivalent to hitting the Back button in a browser (in all but a few cases).

Also, that clicking on a link while pressing Shift opens the link in a new window. But that was before tabs.

– Posted by Maria

---

1021 October 6th, 2008 4:38 pm

A shortcut for entering website names is to type the base of the name, say, “ebay” then hold down the CTL button (CMD in Mac) while you hit enter and .com and everything else will be added to your website name. Hold CTL (CMD on Mac) and Shift while you hit enter and you will automatically get the name filled in with .org. ALT shift enter take you to the .net version of the name you typed in...

– Posted by JPoorman

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1022 October 6th, 2008 4:50 pm

A lot of people don’t know about defragging.

– Posted by John

---

1023 October 6th, 2008 4:53 pm

Someone already mentioned it, but I thought I’d explain: Control Y is great for repeating the last action you’ve taken in Microsoft programs like Word or Excel. It’s great for quickly formatting or deleting text.

– Posted by Heather

---

1024 October 6th, 2008 5:03 pm

For Windows users:

F4 to bring cursor to address bar.

F5 to refresh the screen.

F12 is “save as” in Word and Excel.

Alt+T to open up a new Tab in Internet Explorer.

Alt+W to close Tab.  
Cntrl+Tab to toggle to next Tab.  
Add Shift to toggle to previous Tab.  
Alt+F4 to close a window, file, and application.  
Alt+Spacebar+X to maximize.  
Alt+Spacebar+N to minimize.  
– Posted by Morgan

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1025October  
6th,  
2008  
5:20 pm

Do you have any idea how many users don’t know the difference between ‘SAVE’ and ‘SAVE AS...’  
– Posted by HarryR

---

1026October  
6th,  
2008  
5:39 pm

Control Z - undo the last editing. This one’s especially helpful when you accidentally hit something and all the text on the screen disappears. Before you panic, calmly hit Control Z and voila, it’s back.  
Control Y - redo the last editing. Let’s say you change something then decide you like it better the way it was. Instead of searching for the redo arrow, hit Control Y.  
Shift F3 - toggle between upper and lower case. If something’s all uppercase, you can change it to all lowercase by highlighting the text then hitting Shift F3. You might have to go back in and correct some letters that should be upper case, but it saves you retyping the whole thing.  
F4 - repeat your last action. Let’s say you did that Shift F3 thing above, and now you need to change some letters back to upper case. You can either highlight each letter and hit Shift F3 on each of them, or you can do that on one letter, and on all subsequent corrections just highlight the letter and hit F4.  
Shift F5 - jump to the last change you made  
Highlighting - in some programs, you can highlight multiple things by holding down either the Shift key or the Control key, depending on what you want to select. If you want to select everything between Point B and Point L, then click on Point B, hold down the Shift key, and click on Point L. Points B through L will be highlighted.  
If you want to select points B, F, G, I, K and L, then click on B, hold down the Control key, and click on the other points. They’re the only ones that will be highlighted.  
– Posted by Jenny

---

1027October  
6th,  
2008  
5:44 pm

My only problem with all these tips is that I will never remember them!  
Quick, David, publish some booklets:  
Things to do with your Windows key  
Quick ways to move around  
The Magic of Alt+ ....  
Things you do everyday that you could do faster  
And so on.  
– Posted by Elisabeth

---

1028October  
6th,  
2008  
5:54 pm

Triple clicking on a word highlights the entire paragraph.  
– Posted by Jonathan Broh

---

1029October  
6th,  
2008  
5:57 pm

Meech:  
You mentioned drop down menus for states. Here is a trick my loving son taught me. If you live in New York, for example, start by typing N, then continue typing the letter n. This will actually scroll you through all the states which begin with the letter n. Just stop when it gets to your state. I have found this method faster the actually opening the drop down menu and scrolling.  
And this works on any drop down menu.  
– Posted by PLD

---

1030October  
6th,  
2008  
6:03 pm

“Come up with an automated backup system for your computer. There’s no misery quite like the sick feeling of having lost chunks of your life because you didn’t have a safety copy.”  
What’s this mean? How do I do it?  
– Posted by Joanie

---

1031 October 6th, 2008 6:12 pm

Some are stupid. I have personal knowledge of that. I assume David Pogue wrote this blog for such a reason. David Pogue included in his last entry, automated backup system, with no instruction for accomplishing it, which we stupidly can do nothing with. Such a technique is just showing off unconstructively. An acceptable showing off technique is the rest of the blog and most of the posts. Thanks for acceptable showing off techniques.

– Posted by Max Spencer

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1032 October 6th, 2008 6:33 pm

For all you Blackberry users out there:  
When in your message inbox, hitting “t” will bring you to the top of your messages, “b” will bring you to the bottom...I’m waiting for Research In Motion to make “m” take you to the middle.

– Posted by greenguy

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1033 October 6th, 2008 6:36 pm

who can remember this stuff? not me...better things to do in life than study computer shortcuts...

– Posted by Jeff

---

1034 October 6th, 2008 6:55 pm

Meech, #998, said: When entering addresses in an online form, the state drop-down menu should be triggered by the state’s initials. For example, “NY” should trigger “New York” to appear. In most cases, this does not work, and either I’m left with “Newfoundland”, or scrolling through all the states to find NY.

Here’s some help: my son taught me that if you keep hitting that first letter, you will be scrolled to the right state. I live in CT, which comes after California and Colorado. When I’m asked for my state on an all-state list, I type “C C C.” This tip changed my form-filling life.

– Posted by rfmezzzy

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1035 October 6th, 2008 6:56 pm

Ctrl + A highlights the whole document  
ctrl + E centers your text  
ctrl + L left justifies it  
ctrl + R right justifies  
Ctrl + V shows ‘page preview’

Tinyurl.com is the best free website for condensing long URLs, i.e. website names

Page down and Page up do just that, rather than removing your hand to scroll on a mouse; ctrl + end goes to end of document while ctrl+home goes to top

In Excel, highlight all (ctrl + a) and then Freeze Panes. You will be able to see the headlines and the lefthand column while negotiating rows and columns deeper into the spreadsheet (Row 382, Column AQ)

It is possible to convert text to table and table to text in Excel and in Word

Sorting in Excel and Word are easy—don’t forget to ‘show headings.’

– Posted by Steffi Aronson Karp

---

1036 October 6th, 2008 8:36 pm

these are all sweet. say your a college student whose laptop mouse pad had chicken noodle soup spilled on it--> Alt + Space in most windows allows a right click feature to help you Minimize, Maximize, Move, Close, or Size the window you’re currently selected on. enjoy!

– Posted by Owen McCusker

---

1037 October 6th, 2008 9:25 pm

If you can tell me how to copy and paste on my iPhone I will gladly send you half of my \$80M estate currently locked in a Nigerian account.\*

\* intricate details to follow...

– Posted by Andre Z

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1038 October 6th, 2008 9:36 pm

If you want to track a parcel with a tracking number, enter it directly into the Google search bar and it will automatically bring you to the correct web site for that number, e.g. FedEx or UPS. Then, just click on the highlighted tracking number and the tracking information will appear.

– Posted by Mike

---

1039 October 6th, 2008 9:41 pm

You’re kidding me... How can I read 1000+ tips to see what is missing!

I’ll take a guess that no one has posted this FIND tip: You can search on a web page to locate any word. Ctrl+F or Command+F brings up the “Find in Page” command box.

– Posted by Rodd Lucier

---

1040 October 6th, 2008 9:48 pm

Biggest web browsing tip of all :  
Don’t use Internet Explorer. Just Don’t.

– Posted by Sam

---

1041 October 6th, 2008 10:16 pm

If you use Google to do your math, you don’t have to type =, that means you only need to type an equation without typing “=”. For example, you only need to type 5\*4, then hit “enter”, the Google will give you the answer.

– Posted by Chelsea

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1042 October 6th, 2008 10:22 pm

Wow. This took me the better part of a day and a half to get through. I have now read all 998 posts and there are many, many repeats within. But even with over half of the information getting replicated, I am still blown away by the collective genius of the people reading the NY times. Thank you to all who’ve shared your knowledge.

– Posted by Salem

---

1043 October 6th, 2008 10:25 pm

Best and neatest trick for Windows users — buy a MAC! (I did last May after using PC’s since 1984....)

– Posted by Paul Shaviv

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1044 October 6th, 2008 11:46 pm

**BETTER BOOKMARKS**  
Within any browser program, you can drag the URL of a website onto the desktop or into a folder and then double-click it to re-open to that exact page. It’s a great way to save bookmarks by topic without actually saving them as a bookmark.

**SAVING EMAIL LOGICALLY**  
You can drag an email onto the desktop or into a folder. It’s a great way to save emails by subject outside of the email program.

**WORD-SPELLING SHORTCUT**  
Control-Click a word that has the red underline and Word will bring up a list of possible choices you can select from to correct the spelling of that word.

– Posted by Jean

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1045 October 7th, 2008 12:04 am

This isn’t really a trick, but it’s a mistake I see people make all the time. Just because Microsoft Word’s spell check says it right, does not make it right!

Hitting CTRL + F will open a window that allows you to search for text on the page.

Helpful keys to remember when working with Word:  
CTRL + S will save  
CTRL + N will open a new document  
CTRL + O will open a document  
CTRL + I will italicize text  
CTRL + B will bold text  
CTRL + U will underline text

The latter three also work on most forums.

In web browsers using tabs, CTRL + T will open a new tab. CTRL + N will open a new window.

– Posted by Autumn

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1046 October 7th, 2008 12:06 am

When selecting text word by word (after double-clicking a word, for example), it’s often difficult to select just the text you want, as the selection may “jump” erratically.

I’ve always found it’s much easier, for some reason, to start at the end of your selection and move back to the beginning.

– Posted by Mark Fajfar

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1047October  
7th,  
2008  
12:20 am

What a fantastic idea! Kill three birds with one stone!  
1) write your required article  
2) increase reader happiness because they provide some pithy knowledge they think everybody should be aware of.  
3) you take the information they provide, compile it, edit it and VOILA, another multi-thousand dollar profit for you for your next book  
4) add some credits to the people who provided information, and you have a larger customer base of people purchasing and recommending the book.  
– Posted by dennis

1048October  
7th,  
2008  
12:41 am

Perhaps you’ve had the frustrating experience of working with a document that has the text formatting defined through the style sheet. When you paste into the document from another document you get unpredictable results. To control this, notice that when you select a sentence, word, or paragraph, the highlighting extends a bit a past the last word. That space contains formatting controls. Backspace to the end of the last visible character and you will be copying and pasting unformatted text.  
– Posted by JulianBrown

1049October  
7th,  
2008  
12:42 am

“You don’t have to type “http://www” into your Web browser. Just type the remainder: “nytimes.com” or “dilbert.com,” for example. (In the Safari browser, you can even leave off the “.com” part.)”  
This feature works because when the website “nytimes” is not found, the browser automagically looks for “www.nytimes.com.” However, some ISPs, like Verizon Online, break this feature by implementing a “smart search” type of function which returns a search page instead of the website you wanted.  
(If it’s not labeled), “Command” on a Macintosh is the key next to the space bar with the “four leaf clover” or Apple logo on it. Many Mac-Windows keystroke shortcuts can be applied to the other system by holding command in place of control, or vice-versa.  
On a Mac, many menu items have keystroke shortcuts. Just look to the right of the menu item for the keys you should hold. An arrow indicates shift, the four leaf clover means command, and a (hard to describe) “diagonal line symbol connecting two out of three horizontal lines” means option. If you see more than one symbol, hold down more than one of these modifier keys at a time. Also, when holding down keys for a “combination keystroke” hold the modifiers first, then press the “letter or number” needed to complete the keystroke.  
– Posted by Richard Tjoa

1050October  
7th,  
2008  
1:16 am

On Mac OS X, Command+Shift+4 will let you grab a rectangular image of any part of the screen you select, and save it to the desktop as a graphic file. Great for troubleshooting, as you can take a picture of the error message box instead of copying down all the text.  
– Posted by Jennifer

1051October  
7th,  
2008  
1:21 am

Some things I’ve had to explain to people who’ve been using computers for years:  
The appearance of a trough with a little button in it on either the right hand side or the bottom of your browser window is an indication that there is more information off the edge of the window. It’s probably a good idea to pull the little button around before phoning tech support. This will show you the extra information.  
Your browser stores copies of the web-pages that you visit so that it can pop them back up quickly if you visit them again. However, if someone then changes that web-page (such as when you hire me to update it) you won’t see the changes (and then accuse me of fraudulently billing you for these changes) unless you press what is called a “refresh button” that is usually found to the left of your address bar.  
Differently coloured links on your web-page are not a mistake made by me whilst updating your web-site. They are supposed to change colour to indicate which links you have already visited in the recent past.  
There is a little button with an underlined triangle on it somewhere on your keyboard. This will eject any CD or DVD disks that you have loaded in your computer. You may have to hold it down for a couple

of seconds for this to work. (BTW - I’ve never personally run across the CD-tray as coffee cup holder trope but have met people who have.)

The existence of cut-and-paste.

How not to overuse cut-and-paste to type in things like “blah blah blah” by cutting and pasting “blah” three times and just using the “keyboard” shortcut of typing in “blah blah blah”. This especially time saving when you also don’t know any keyboard or right-click shortcuts for cut-and-paste. In general, it’s a good thing to be able to type when the machine you sit in front of all day is operated by a keyboard. I typed this entire comment in in 8 minutes and generally get out of the office a couple of hours before everyone else due to this typing speed.

Basically, I find that a lot of people’s desktop computers aren’t boosting their productivity at all since they’ve never received any training w.r.t. to their keyboard, mouse or desktop. In fact, has anyone ever published a study showing that putting computers on everyone’s desk has a measurable, positive effect on productivity?

— Posted by Don Hutton

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1052 October  
7th,  
2008  
1:42 am

Thanks to Peter (back at 946) for making my life instantly happier by telling me how to delete unwanted songs from my iPod. It took him one sentence. I never got that simplicity from Apple! Cheers, Jess.

— Posted by Jess Adams

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1053 October  
7th,  
2008  
2:03 am

Great column. Such a huge number of comments, so I hope what I have to say hasn’t been written about already. I’m a fairly intelligent man and I’ve made many discoveries by trial and error, and a few (to more or less disastrous effect) by main strength and ignorance. I still have no idea what the Notepad is or what to do when I’m told that I’ve placed a large quantity of material on my clipboard and do I want to save it for future use (words to that effect). I think deeply for a second, then click No. So far, no ill effects, though I have never future-used my clipboard. See, I’m getting there with my computerspeak. I have no idea what the keys on my keyboard are for unless they’re not letters or numbers or symbols or arrows, etc. Never knew about that Windows key, for example; thanks. I think most people get their computers and just have to start working with them right away, so they just carry on doing what they already know. Even if there’s a manual, who’s going to read it, or worse yet, print it out(!) and read it.

Okay, a couple of useful word processing tips I’ve learnt somewhere. These are for Windows XP; the horror stories about Vista, despite those “real people, not actors” commercials, have prevented me from updating. Here goes:

- F12 to “Save as”

- To change from ALL CAPS to lower case or Initial Caps and back and forth, highlight the relevant word/s, then press Shift + F3 (you can toggle indefinitely here).

- As a translator, I frequently come across repeated words and phrases, company names, etc. in the source text, and it is a real pain to retype them a zillion times (I’m sure this must happen in regular word processing, too). Well, let’s say the irksome repeat is “telecommunications” (and of course you have cast an eye over the document so you know that it’s going to crop up five times on every page). Highlight the first occurrence, then press Alt + F3. You will be prompted to establish a shortcut, so you make it “tel” or “te” or even “t.” Then every time you come to that word or phrase, etc., you just type the defined shortcut, press F3 and the word/phrase magically appears in full. A good memory for your shortcuts is an asset (or a handwritten list, keeping which is still faster than typing out the word every time)so you don’t forget that you’ve already used, say, “t,” though the shortcut prompt will remind you that you’ve already established that one if you try to use it again for a different “t” word.

I raise my voice with so many others here: Write that book! As far as I’m concerned, you can’t assume too little knowledge — on the part of this reader anyway.

— Posted by John Boylan

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1054 October  
7th,  
2008  
2:16 am

The best-designed, user-friendliest backup program is at Handybackup.com (no affiliation, and PC only). It keeps copies of whatever files and folders you need to preserve, to any medium. The best backup medium is flash drives or cards. Tips: Backup may be automatic or manual, run occasionally as you work. Backup is not



disk images - you can't really save program installations, only data files. Backup may be to a website, but for most users that is too slow. And beware of fake software I encountered at Handybackup.net.

– Posted by Tom

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1055 October  
7th,  
2008  
3:42 am

To Joanie,  
There are a couple of different ways to set up automatic back-up. The easiest is to subscribe to Microsoft OneCare and purchase an external hard drive. OneCare will prompt you to set up a back-up schedule. All you need to do is plug the USB cable into the external hard drive and your PC. If you do not want to purchase OneCare, many external drives include automatic back-up software. The quality of the software and instructions is variable, but one rule generally applies: you get what you pay for. Go cheap and it may not do what you want. Finally, you can dispense with automatic back-up systems and manually select the files you wish to save. I do not recommend this, as you sound like a pretty basic user and may lack the skills necessary. Finally, find a local nerd. We are everywhere and happy to help:-)

– Posted by Frank

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1056 October  
7th,  
2008  
3:51 am

here are my favorite quick keys - i use them daily  
command B (or control B on a pc) = Bolds the highlighted sentence/word  
command U for underline  
command i for italics  
if you're old enough to have bought a mac back in the mid-80s, you probably know a lot of quick-keys. In kind, pc word docs followed the same smart short cuts.

– Posted by Nancy

---

1057 October  
7th,  
2008  
4:29 am

Not only is there a limit how many large pictures you can send to someone, but sending unsolicited attachments is rude. It's like sending something COD in the mail.

Use picasa or flickr.

Sending attachments is so 90's.

– Posted by tlbriley

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1058 October  
7th,  
2008  
5:10 am

Switch Browser Tabs with ctrl + arrow left/right on Safari or ctrl + page up/down on Firefox.

– Posted by Eckart Denecke

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1059 October  
7th,  
2008  
6:10 am

your very last hint is to “come up” with a backup method.....what suggestions do you offer as what some of them are and how to use them?

– Posted by jim doherty

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1060 October  
7th,  
2008  
6:31 am

Superb service. Thanks.

– Posted by Mike Rougas

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1061 October  
7th,  
2008  
6:44 am

computer info for you

– Posted by Joe sixpack

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1062 October  
7th,  
2008  
7:25 am

You can e-mail a document from the document itself by clicking file/send/send as attachment. No need to save it and then attach it. (If you just “send” rather than “send as attachment” the document will dump inside the e-mail so be sure to send as an attachment.)

– Posted by Judith Wencel

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1063 October  
7th,  
2008  
8:23 am

Thank you thank you thank you! On these nifty Macs we keep buying (and others in the household use to their fullest) I've always felt like I'm driving a Lamboghini stuck in first gear in the far left lane of the Information Superhighway. You really DO need to write that book! (Write it on tiny yellow stickies so it will be easily absorbed into my present M.O.!!!!)

– Posted by Perennial Noob

- 
- 1064 October 7th, 2008 8:40 am Computer tips  
— Posted by Pam
- 
- 1065 October 7th, 2008 8:59 am OMG you have changed my life  
— Posted by Joannie
- 
- 1066 October 7th, 2008 9:06 am This article is exactly why I created my site, <http://www.bleepingcomputer.com>. After receiving numerous phone calls from friends and relatives on how to do very basic things on a computer, I decided to create a website that explained things things and other basic computer concepts in an easy to understand manner. Guess it worked as we have over 200K members.
- Here is a tip. To logon to a ftp site via Internet explorer and not have to type your password into the address field enter:
- <ftp://username@ftp.address.com>
- It will then prompt you for your password. This makes it so your FTP password does not get stored in IE’s history.
- Posted by Lawrence Abrams
- 
- 1067 October 7th, 2008 9:08 am Great list, except for the tip about the recycle bin — I’ve seen far too many user use the recyle bin as an archive, and be surprised when there documents were deleted because the system (or another user) cleaned out old deleted items to free up space. Same logic applies to deleted items folders in your e-mail system, cell phone text messages, or voice mail.
- Posted by Marc
- 
- 1068 October 7th, 2008 9:18 am ALL (maybe) the Mac OS shortcuts are here: <http://support.apple.com/kb/HT1343>
- Of course, shortcuts for individual apps are not included.
- Posted by HarryR
- 
- 1069 October 7th, 2008 9:26 am On Dell laptops, Fn+upArrow increases screen brightness, Fn+downArrow decreases screen brightness. Something I only realised after 4 or 5 years of looking at the little ‘sun’ icons on the arrow keys nearly every day.
- Posted by Fintan
- 
- 1070 October 7th, 2008 9:37 am On a qwerty keyboard, the ‘F’ and ‘J’ keys usually have pimples or raised lines on them, so you can place your index fingers to prepare your hands for typing without looking at the keyboard.
- Posted by Holly
- 
- 1071 October 7th, 2008 9:58 am Duh . . . I can’t find a “windows key” on my Dell laptop. Is there a substitute?
- Posted by Margaret Pierce
- 
- 1072 October 7th, 2008 10:00 am Dear all,
- I have compiled many of these hints, and inserted them into my web site, on <http://www.ime.usp.br/~vwsetzer/shortcuts.html>
- Posted by Valdemar W. Setzer (Val)
- 
- 1073 October 7th, 2008 10:01 am I am a keyboard junkie and one that I do think I saw here was for tabbed browsing. Use the CTRL+T to add a new tab and then use the CTRL and what ever the tab is i.e. 1 or 2 or 3... to jump between them.
- Tab moves you forward when filling our forms and shift+tab will move you back to the previous field.
- Posted by Tamara
-

1074 October  
7th,  
2008  
10:03 am

[MAC OS X]: SAVE AS Naming  
When saving a document, clicking on another existing document’s name will put that same name in the name title.  
Good shortcut if you have to conform to a long naming nomenclature.  
– Posted by Mr. Thuan

1075 October  
7th,  
2008  
10:06 am

Alt + Tab has been my favorite for years. Generally, I try to avoid the mouse as much as possible, though, so I use emacs in windows to edit and create files, and it’s full of keyboard strokes I set up to save time.  
I know it’s a huge stretch for most people, but if you want to create nicer looking documents than Word will ever create, you should use LaTeX; of course, this goes beyond the scope of basic computer usage, but for any intrepid folks out there, LaTeX is the best way to create perfect documents (and emacs is a great editor for it).  
– Posted by jonjon

1076 October  
7th,  
2008  
10:32 am

If you want to keep a copy of a webpage (using Windows IE browser... other browsers have similar mechanisms)... click “File > Save as.” You will see a “Save as type” section, where you have several choices in a dropdown menu. If you want the whole webpage (with files and images), then save as, “Webpage complete.” If you are just needing the text, primarily for future copying or reference and you don’t need images, then save as “Webpage, html only.” Or, you can choose to save it as just a text file. Avoid saving as the mht format until you have further training. Later, in your browser, you can click “File > Open” and then find that file where you saved it on your hard disk to launch the page (or, if you did a text file, use your notepad or word processor).  
Sam Redman  
Dallas  
– Posted by Sam Redman

1077 October  
7th,  
2008  
10:32 am

Super Ultimate Windows Shortcut List  
As was posted earlier by Kris, a website would totally be the best solution here, as Microsoft’s little keyboard shortcut page is not even close to comprehensive (i.e. google: windows shortcuts).  
It also seems counter-intuitive to have to search through a book for something you could simply CTRL+F. However, this requires a basic knowledge of web browsing, so perhaps the book should be concise and cover only navigation to the online page, but I digress ..  
In light of my own grievances and in response to Ida’s request, I propose the following DRAFT of the “Super Ultimate Windows Shortcut List” and challenge anyone reading this to find the ones I surely missed.  
Please note that this list is limited to Windows shortcuts (as a separate list is appropriate for Mac) and to only those shortcuts which are somewhat universal in nature (do not include shortcuts specific to applications such as Excel, Access, Word, etc., unless added to a separate list). Perhaps our moderator could manage these lists ..  
Oh, and I certainly hope you people aren’t posting with your REAL names??? BAAAD Internet Karma.

- 
- Left Click on Item (display shortcut menu)
  - Single Click on Text (move insertion point here)
  - Double Click on Text (select this word)
  - Triple Click on Text (select this block of text)
  - SPACEBAR (scroll down webpage or text)
  - TAB (cycle through items)
  - ALT (focus on the menu bar)
  - BACKSPACE (go up a folder/go back a webpage)
  - HOME (move insertion point to beginning of the line/select first item)
  - END (move insertion point to end of the line/select last item)
  - ESC (exit full screen/exit print preview/close dialog box)
  - PRINTSCREEN (copy a screenshot to the clipboard)
  
  - CTRL+F (find text)
  - CTRL+A (select all)
  - CTRL+C (copy)
  - CTRL+X (cut)

CTRL+V (paste)  
CTRL+Z (undo)  
CTRL+Y (redo)  
CTRL+S (save)  
CTRL+O (open)

CTRL+N (open a new window or file)  
CTRL+K (focus on the search bar in web browser)  
CTRL+L (focus on the address bar in web browser)  
CTRL+T (open a new tab in web browser)  
CTRL+I/B/U (toggle italic/bold/underline text)

CTRL+Home/End (move to beginning or end of a document)  
CTRL+Move Mousewheel or +/- keys (increase or decrease text size on web page)  
CTRL+Click Items (select individual items in a group)  
CTRL+Click Weblink (open link in a new tab)  
CTRL+Drag Items (copy the selected items)  
CTRL+SHIFT+Drag Items (create shortcuts to the selected items)  
CTRL+ARROW (move insertion point word by word)  
CTRL+SHIFT+ARROW (select text word by word)  
CTRL+ESC (open start menu)  
CTRL+TAB (cycle through open tabs or documents)  
CTRL+F4 (close the open tab or document)

SHIFT+ARROW (select text line by line)  
SHIFT+TAB (reverse cycle through items)  
SHIFT+SPACEBAR (scroll up webpage or text)  
SHIFT+DELETE (delete the selected item permanently)  
SHIFT+Insert CD/DVD (prevent autorun on CD/DVD)  
SHIFT+F10 (display shortcut menu)

ALT+F4 (close the active program)  
ALT+F6 (cycle through windows in the same program)  
ALT+ENTER (display properties/toggle fullscreen mode in web browser)  
ALT+TAB (switch between open windows)  
ALT+ESC (cycle through windows in the order they were opened)  
ALT+SPACEBAR (display system menu for the active window)  
ALT+LEFT/RIGHT ARROW (navigate forward and backward in web browser)  
ALT+D (focus on the address bar in web browser)  
ALT+T (open a new tab in web browser)  
ALT+W (close tab in web browser)

CTRL+ALT+DELETE (open task manager)  
CTRL+SHIFT+ESC (open task manager)  
CTRL+ALT+ARROW (flip the screen in the specified direction)  
CTRL+ALT+PRINTSCREEN (copy only the active window to the clipboard)

Windows+E (open windows explorer)  
Windows+F (opens file search)  
Windows+R (open run dialogue box)  
Windows+M (minimize open windows)  
Windows+Shift+M (undo minimize open windows)  
Windows+D (show desktop)  
Windows+L (lock windows)  
Windows+Pause/Break (open system properties)  
Windows+Tab (cycle through taskbar items)

F1 key (open help menu)  
F2 key (rename the selected item)  
F3 key (open search screen menu/open find menu for text)  
F4 key (focus on the address bar)  
F5 key (refresh the active window/paste timestamp in text)  
F6 key (cycle through the elements in a window)  
f7 key (spell check)  
F10 key (focus on the menu bar)  
F11 key (toggle maximize or minimize web browser)

– Posted by sevencardz

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1078October  
7th,  
2008  
10:32 am

Alt + tab at the same time will allow you to scroll from screen to screen in Windows without your mouse. Saves me lots of time!  
– Posted by Douglas Gallup

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1079October  
7th,  
2008  
10:40 am

\* Above list should read “Right Click on Item”  
– Posted by sevencardz

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1080October

You can also do keyboard sequences in addition to key combos. Key

7th,  
2008  
10:42 am

sequences are when you don’t hold the buttons at the same time, you press one after releasing the other.

For example, in Windows, win+L will lock the computer, but win,L will LOG OFF.

Any key sequence works. Win,U,H will hibernate if you have it enabled, win,E will load IE if it’s your default browser, etc.

– Posted by Randy R

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1081October  
7th,  
2008  
10:53 am

\* You can also enlarge the entire Web page or document by pressing the Control key as you turn the wheel on top of your mouse. On the Mac, this enlarges the entire screen image.

It dont do that for all pages.

– Posted by TJ

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1082October  
7th,  
2008  
11:05 am

Great article. I already knew all of it except for the SPACE to scroll a page down. I try to avoid using the mouse if at all possible, so have learned lots of keyboard shortcuts. Here’s just a few...and some other stuff.

F4: when working in powerpoint, excel, or word and you want to repeat something you just did (such as underlining text, changing font size, giving a box a shadow), hit f4 on the destination item and it will repeat what you just did.

F5: In Powerpoint, this will get you to the Presentation mode.

F2: In excel, if you hit F2 you enter a cell and be able to start editing it. This allows you to not have to double click into the cell with your mouse.

Doing “Finds” in Firefox: Many don’t know that there’s a setting in Firefox that allows you to start doing a “Find” as soon as you start typing. Avoids you from having to use the shortcut CTRL+F. It’s under Tools/Options/Advanced/General.

Navigating Tabs: This works in Excel and Firefox. I don’t use Windows IE, so not sure if this would work there as well. CTRL+Up Arrow and CTRL+Down arrow allows you to move to the next tab.

Navigating a web page: CTRL+Left and CTRL+Right allow you to page back instead of having to click on the back and forward buttins in your web browser

Google Desktop: This is an awesome tool that you should download if you don’t have. It searches your hard drive, saved searches, anything you’ve viewed so fast if you ever need to find anything. Will even search through your Outlook way faster than Outlook’s own search.

Folder settings: If you have a certain way you like to view your folders in windows explorer, you can save those settings without having to go View all the time. Just go to Tools/Folder Options/View/Apply to All Folders

Enjoy.

– Posted by michelle

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1083October  
7th,  
2008  
11:25 am

this website is wierd and i think that it is a waste of my time and others but some pepople make us look at this kind of stuff and its dumb. i know what i know and i don’t need this website telling me what i already know, but i have to look at it anyways. so whatever.

– Posted by someone

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1084October  
7th,  
2008  
11:43 am

Re: Ellen Richards @73

Jeez, Ellen, “shame” on Pogue or the NYT? Seriously? As I recall, they give us this awesome Web site for free, other than advertisements, and if this had not been in blog format you would never have been able to get it at all.

Maybe they could make it a little more user-friendly, but “shame” seems like an awfully strong word for one feature you don’t like - especially when you compare nytimes.com to the gawd-awful sites of a number of other big papers.

Keep up the good work David and your colleagues!

– Posted by Ted

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1085October  
7th,  
2008  
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When viewing an image in your browser, you can save the file by putting the cursor over it, right clicking and choosing “Save Picture As.” Or, you can click to “Email” or “Print” it. But the choice to

11:44 am

“Copy,” it is often overlooked. Click “Copy” and then just paste that image right into your Word Pad (or any word processor program). Or, if you want to crop or alter it, paste it into Windows Paint or your image program,

But, often a website’s author will have disabled the right click mechanism in a feeble attempt to keep people from having copies of images to enjoy offline. Not a problem. Just re-size that browser window, so that it is just a bit bigger than the image and click Alt PrtSc (hold down the Alt key and tap the PrtSc key). Now, you can paste a copy of the image into Windows Paint (or other image program) and work with it as though you owned it (it will have some of the browser window copied as well, which you will have to trim away). After you have it properly cropped... save it as a bmp for later use or as a jpg (if you want to email it or use it in a document).

– Posted by Sam Redman Dallas

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1086October  
7th,  
2008  
11:48 am

I have a dell laptop win windows and several of these shortcuts did not work including CTRL + Plus sign did not enlarge the text on the page

– Posted by trish

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1087October  
7th,  
2008  
12:10 pm

This was a useful piece, a lot I knew, but there were also some I didn’t!

I’m sure these were posted already, but they definitely make my days easier:

f is “Find” and you can search for any word you want on a page, except for some, if not all, email programs, where it means “forward”.

In Excel, z is “undo”, when you’re in a cell, c is “copy” and v is “paste”.

– Posted by Kifana

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1088October  
7th,  
2008  
12:39 pm

these are all pretty basic..

– Posted by Cassieeeee

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1089October  
7th,  
2008  
12:59 pm

Got a messy desktop with lots of files on it? Can’t see the file you want but know the file’s name. In Windows, you can:

a. Type the first letter of the file and Windows will highlight the first file with that letter. Keep typing that letter to cycle through all the files with that start with that letter.

b. Start typing the filename and Windows will zero in on the first occurrence of that filename. Not the right one? Start typing the filename again and Windows will move to the next occurrence 😊

– Posted by brian

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1090October  
7th,  
2008  
1:02 pm

Here’s one that has stumped a few people I know who did not grow up with computers / tons of electronics: On any device, a single (usually green) triangle means “play.” A square (usually red) means “stop.” Two parallel lines mean “pause.” Two right-facing arrowheads mean “fast forward.” Two left-facing arrowheads mean “rewind.” On cell phones, if you have a green button, it’s generally the send button. A red button is usually the “end” button and also may be the power button.

I swear, a whole lot of people were left behind when we stopped labeling these icons.

– Posted by melon

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1091October  
7th,  
2008  
1:04 pm

Ellen Richards #73

If you email the article to yourself you can then print out everything!

Great tips and I am proud to say I knew quite a few and ashamed to say I didn’t know quite a few.

– Posted by Dee

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1092October  
7th,  
2008  
1:12 pm

While in an open web browser, hitting f6 will highlight the whole address bar allowing you to type in a new address without furiously clicking to try to highlight the whole thing.

Something that I find quite useful.

– Posted by Nick

---

1093 October 7th, 2008 1:27 pm

While typing don’t hit enter (carriage return) at the end of the line. You will be returned to the beginning of the new line automatically.

– Posted by JR

---

1094 October 7th, 2008 1:32 pm

To find a specific word on a webpage (or in a document), use the edit> find command.

– Posted by Ted

---

1095 October 7th, 2008 1:57 pm

ALT-F4 closes the active window. Keep pressing it and it will close all windows sequentially and ask if you want to exit Windows.

Alt-Tab opens up a switching box to move between open windows applications.

– Posted by Jim Enloe

---

1096 October 7th, 2008 2:00 pm

Antialiasing for rendering - Windows does not have this enabled by default, but to enable(at least for XP): right click on your desktop and then select properties. Go to the Appearance tab and then click Effects. Then select “ClearType” from the drop down menu under how to smooth rendering. This should make text clearer.

– Posted by J

---

1097 October 7th, 2008 2:22 pm

In Excel, use CTRL+Left, right, up, down to jump to the last entry in the row or column. (jumps to the next gap in data)

Very useful when navigating through a large worksheet.

Add SHIFT to highlight all data points in that row or column.

– Posted by Dan

---

1098 October 7th, 2008 2:39 pm

And probably good for us all to remember, everyone has their own way of doing things. If someone is comfortable mousing, and not using shortcuts, leave them alone and let them work.

– Posted by Melody

---

1099 October 7th, 2008 2:40 pm

Apparently, there are several ways to lock my computer, but how do I unlock it once I have locked it??!

I wish you had made this printable, as opposed to a blog.

– Posted by clinguist

---

1100 October 7th, 2008 2:57 pm

To Ellen Richards, re printing from a blog: Just copy and paste the hints you want to keep to Notepad (or whatever), save them in a file, and print them out.

– Posted by Luka

---

1101. October 7th, 2008 3:11 pm

Comments 15 and 17 discuss entering the domain name then hitting ctrl+enter to get:

[www.domainname.com](http://www.domainname.com)

But, you can do this with other top level domain suffixes.

shift+enter gets you [www.domainname.net](http://www.domainname.net)

ctrl+shift+enter gets you [www.domainname.org](http://www.domainname.org)

Also, if you want to get to the location bar in your browser, hit ctrl+L (location). If you want to get to the search bar in the top right of your browser, hit ctrl+K.

These are among my favorite keyboard shortcuts.

– Posted by Douglas

---

1102 October 7th, 2008 3:11 pm

My scroll wheel is on fire...

Anyway, a wiki is a more effective tool for capturing and disseminating this information to a wide audience with maximum efficiency. This article should like to one or more Wikipedia pages. The author would not have to write a book or steal all these great ideas.

I would like to acknowledge comments 346, 804, and 936 above for providing similar recommendations.

Oh, and in an effort to provide an original contribution to this thread and minimize duplication, I used Ctrl+F to search for “wiki”.

– Posted by Patrick

---

1103 October  
7th,  
2008  
3:14 pm

If you’re worried about losing an important document, letter, photo etc. just e-mail it to yourself. Leave it unopened when it arrives. I still have things I sent to myself at Gmail two years ago, sitting there safely in cyberspace.

– Posted by Jess Adams

---

1104 October  
7th,  
2008  
3:22 pm

Want to save a back up, but you have no flash drive? Email yourself a copy of your document (either as an attachment or copy and paste right into the body of the email. Retrieve your file later to save on another computer, a flash drive or whatever.

– Posted by Sally Jane

---

1105 October  
7th,  
2008  
3:55 pm

“Just putting something into the Trash or the Recycle Bin doesn’t actually delete it. You then have to \*empty\* the Trash or Recycle Bin.”

Same is true for digital audio recorders, cameras, etc. You have to not just delete files, but empty the trash while your device is connected to the computer.

– Posted by Mike Van Horn

---

1106 October  
7th,  
2008  
4:02 pm

QUESTION.

When you google a word, it it takes you to a web page, how do you then find that word on the website? Seems like the word you’re looking for should be highlighted, but it doesn’t seem to be.

– Posted by Mike Van Horn

---

1107 October  
7th,  
2008  
4:06 pm

In Microsoft Office you highlight text then hold the shift key and hit F3 it changes the case of the letters from lower case to capitals to first letter of words capital. You have to hit F3 again for it to go through the three cases!

– Posted by Samantha

---

1108 October  
7th,  
2008  
4:23 pm

QUESTION

Is there a way to integrate the various folder hierarchies on my Mac?  
For example:

- Docs in folders accessible from desktop
- Folders in the email program (Entourage for me)
- Bookmarks
- Photos or folders of photos in iPhoto.

I would love to have a way to group file, record, or folder names related to a topic in one hierarchy that didn’t take a lot of effort.

mvh

– Posted by mike Van Horn

---

1109 October  
7th,  
2008  
4:56 pm

A separate set of tips just for Excel would be much appreciated. I am self-taught and can do the basics, but there are a lot of keyboard tricks in Excel that are not apparent to novices — and Excel’s help file is so poorly written and incomprehensible that it’s virtually word salad.

Like all the “warning: do not use while sleeping” labels, this comes from experience: in the upper right corner of a browser window, the red X closes the window. The next button to the left is an empty box and it makes the window as large as it can be. The button beside that is a little line and it shrinks the window down. The window does not go away, it just becomes a little line of text alongside your start button. If you want the page to be big again, click on that text and the window pops up big as life. I have seen people click the frame of the window and drag it down to the bottom of the screen to see what’s underneath.

– Posted by Yes, Virginia

---

1110 October  
7th,  
2008  
5:32 pm

This is huge now, and I haven’t got the time to read it all now, though I hope to later. Sorry if this has already been stated many times!

Ctrl+H in Word will bring up Search and Replace which is invaluable



- 
- for fixing consistent errors or anything where you have to make a lot of the same changes. What many people do not realize is that you can also do a search and replace based on styles and formatting, allowing you to very quickly do a replace on anything from paragraph formatting to fonts.
- Posted by Karina
- 
- 1111.October 7th, 2008 5:37 pm
- Use “suspend” instead of turning your computer off. You will save 3-5 minutes per day (sometimes even more if your computer loads a lot of programs). 5 days a week, 50 weeks a year, you do the math... it means a significant amount of time.
- Posted by LuisB
- 
- 1112.October 7th, 2008 6:23 pm
- Avoid embarrassing “Reply to All” messages that you really didn’t want the whole world to see by getting rid of the “Reply to All” icon. Just use the View/Toolbars/Customize (or similar) series of commands on your e-mail program. You can still “Reply to All”; you’ll just make a little harder and that’s a good thing.
- Posted by Brad
- 
- 1113.October 7th, 2008 7:51 pm
- TO OPEN THE MOST RECENTLY CLOSED TAB (FIREFOX):  
CTRL-SHIFT-T
- Useful when you accidentally closed the wrong tab!
- Posted by FFUser
- 
- 1114.October 7th, 2008 9:03 pm
- On the Mac, if the choice you want to select in a dialog box (like a save box) is blue, you press the Return button to select it. (I think just about everyone knows this, but maybe not.)
- But if you want to choose a button that has a blue shadow on the outside - press the space bar to select this choice.
- I forget if Windows is the same or not.
- Posted by KateW
- 
- 1115.October 7th, 2008 9:16 pm
- In Firefox - Cmd-L (CTRL-L for Windows) puts your cursor in the URL address window - ready to type the next page you want to go to. MUCH faster than clicking on the current address or the icon that appears to the left of the address window.
- Posted by KateW
- 
- 1116.October 7th, 2008 10:15 pm
- Can someone elaborate on sensor size (digital cameras) and how it affects picture quality?
- Otherwise, despite the redundancy, I thought many of these tips/advice were very helpful 😊
- Posted by c
- 
- 1117.October 7th, 2008 10:27 pm
- Best reason to search newspapers’ web sites from Google: it’s not just easier/lazier, it also RESPONDS A LOT FASTER, thanks to Google’s big-iron server farms.
- In Google, hyphenating a multi-word search phrase works like quoting it, but is easier to type ... david-pogue works same as “david pogue”
- \*\*BUT\*\*** never leave a space before a hyphen, or you will give it the special meaning of EXCLUDING pages containing the word after the hyphen.
- To select multiple adjacent files in Win Explorer (or dialog boxes) or Mac Finder: you can drag-draw a box around them all. Even in list view!
- ( Start your drag in open space, not directly ON a filename or icon. )
- In Windows, drag a file using the RIGHT mouse button, and then when you let up the button at destination (folder, Desktop, etc) you’ll be prompted for whether you want to Copy (leaves an instance of the file in both places) or Move (wipes the original, leaving just one instance at the new location). Note that when you do an ordinary (left-button) drag, you get a Move if destination is on same drive as the original, a Copy if on different drives. Using right-button drag makes the situation clearer (and not just for beginners!)
- Posted by ElBuki

- 
- 1118.October 7th, 2008 10:41 pm  
In Word, highlight text, then hold the shift key and each time you press f3 text toggles between lowercase, ALL CAPS or First letter of first word.  
– Posted by ChrisK
- 
- 1119.October 7th, 2008 10:44 pm  
I’ve added new hints to the list I referred to in #1072.  
Now I have a question: does anyone know of a shortcut to shift from one part of a text to the other part when both have been created by the Divide window feature of Word and are being displayed? I use Alt+W (Alt+J in the version in Portuguese) and then the number of the desired window which appears at the menu, but it would be handy if a shortcut could automatically shift from one part to the other, that is, shifting just between the two parts that are being displayed.  
– Posted by Valdemar W. Setzer (Val)
- 
- 1120.October 7th, 2008 10:46 pm  
in Windows XP, to drag a file from current application to another, first drag it down to task bar and across to the target application. Easier because both windows don’t need to be visible at the same time. E.g. drag an attachment from the current email to another email even if the second window is not visible.  
– Posted by ChrisK
- 
- 1121.October 7th, 2008 10:47 pm  
Windoze: Ctrl-Enter and Shift-Enter are the respective “legacy” (circa 1993) synonyms for Ctrl-C, Ctrl-V. (May save your bacon if someday you land in an environment that’s configured to trap ^C, ^V for other purposes)  
Note also, from the Edit menu: Alt-E-C and Alt-E-P are yet ANOTHER way to issue Copy and Paste commands.  
– Posted by ElBuki
- 
- 1122.October 7th, 2008 10:53 pm  
For Mike Van Horn: If you fetch Google’s “Cached” copy of a web page listed in your search results, it will come with your search terms highlighted. A very few (tech-aware) web sites always highlight your search terms if they know you clicked through from Google; otherwise, you need to use your browser’s Find function ... slash in Firefox, Ctrl-F in IE, Clover-F in Safari ...  
– Posted by ElBuki
- 
- 1123.October 7th, 2008 11:03 pm  
in many programs, highlight something (text, or an object in a drawing program, or a file in explorer), then hold the Ctrl key and drag the thing - you get a second copy of it.  
To ‘nudge’ things incrementally, hold the Alt key then drag the thing. (like aligning tabs or paragraph markers in Word between the invisible grid lines).  
– Posted by ChrisK
- 
- 1124.October 7th, 2008 11:44 pm  
Ctrl “N” opens a new window online. Can’t wait for this book to come out!  
– Posted by christy
- 
- 1125.October 8th, 2008 12:00 am  
**TEXT TO SPEECH FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED/OLDER USERS**  
You can make your computer read any article or text if you have a Mac (or Windows XP my friend has told me).  
On a Mac, go to your Apple in the upper left corner, System Preferences > System > Speech > Text To Speech.  
From there check the box by “Speak selected text when the \*key\* is pressed.  
Then click the Select Key button (for example I use SHIFT + V but yours can b different).  
From there just highlight your text, hit your \*key\* and the computer will read it aloud for you.  
Discovering this was life changing for me after I had my eye surgery, so i hope you post it.  
– Posted by Maya C.
-

- 
1126. October 8th, 2008 12:07 am  
Pressing ‘shift’ and F3 simultaneously can change the text into lower case from upper case or vice-versa. If its more than a word, first select everything you wish to modify.  
– Posted by rupesh
- 
1127. October 8th, 2008 12:41 am  
on the Blackberry Keeping a key depressed will capitalize the letter(s).  
– Posted by lofie
- 
1128. October 8th, 2008 1:30 am  
Dear David Pogue,  
You are my hero. Thank you for these and please write the book!  
– Posted by Leslie
- 
1129. October 8th, 2008 1:39 am  
In Windows Vista — (For new Vista users like me)  
If you use Alt+F, all of the keyboard shortcuts are highlighted on the ribbon (pretty cool)  
Also, the reading feature lets you view the pages of your document on 1 screen & their are options to allow typing & editing in this view as well.  
– Posted by Regina F
- 
1130. October 8th, 2008 1:51 am  
My favorites, but only on Mac.  
2-finger scroll; I basically cannot remember life before this. Scrolling down with the arrows or the slider seems to take forever, compared to 2-finger scroll.  
Also, 2-finger right click (on Mac). Instead of using [Ctrl, click] just 2 fingers on the touchpad and click.  
Brilliant.  
One more fun one, if you press [shift] F9, F10, F11 or F12 on Mac, it will do the same functions at a moderate speed. It’s completely random, but quite useful when my eyes aren’t focusing well at the end of a long day.  
– Posted by julia
- 
1131. October 8th, 2008 3:29 am  
apparently you are supposed to “defragment” the computer every now and then...do it, it increases speed. This is on a PC.  
– Posted by erika
- 
1132. October 8th, 2008 3:44 am  
Ctrl+Z : undo. Comes in handy if you delete some text by accident.  
– Posted by Sam S
- 
1133. October 8th, 2008 5:20 am  
useful tips  
– Posted by kevin
- 
1134. October 8th, 2008 7:00 am  
great article! suggestion: do the same for word documents. i just discovered lovely things like “versions” and “table of contents,” after years of writing documents, and what a discovery. s.  
– Posted by sarah
- 
1135. October 8th, 2008 7:34 am  
New iMacs use control F3, not F11, to clear the screen.  
– Posted by Lee Ann
- 
1136. October 8th, 2008 8:04 am  
Anyone have the answer to this?  
If you don’t have the password to access a private website, the universal “masterkey” is ... what?  
– Posted by JT
- 
1137. October 8th, 2008 8:21 am  
I use “Microsoft for the demented” and other self help books. I find that sometimes it does not have what I need or what was written does not make sense to me. I find that switching my eyes back and forth from the phrase in the book to the same question/answer on

the “?” area at the top of the software sometimes gives me a hybrid answer that works. Not always but sometimes.

I find that the self help books when they tell you how to do something they are straight forward with the answer. Try reading their answer-paragraph backwards and write down the key words. It sure helps to cut through all the fluff.

– Posted by joeflip

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1138 October 8th, 2008 8:31 am

if you save a gmail document then go to print it, then it turns into a pdf! cheap and easy way to make pdfs.

– Posted by pfdandfrei

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1139 October 8th, 2008 8:43 am

Dear David,

Many thanks. Helpful. Unfortunately, i need help w fat fingers [not literally.] I seem to not have great fine hand-eye coordination; have to correct something pretty much in every line I type. Still my Apple makes life easier.

In this paragraph: You generally can’t send someone more than a couple of full-size digital photos as an e-mail attachment; those files are too big, and they’ll bounce back to you. (Instead, use iPhone or Picasa—photo-organizing programs that can automatically scale down photos in the process of e-mailing them.)

I wonder if you meant i-photo [? rather than iphone.]

Many thanks

Ruth J> Hirsch  
Saugerties, NY

– Posted by Ruth J, Hirsch

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1140 October 8th, 2008 9:24 am

Is there a way of saving this and similar NY Times articles (e.g. commentary, blogs et al) to my New York Times File? I can EMAIL and SHARE them, but the option to SAVE that is offered (along with PRINT and REPRINTS, EMAIL and SHARE to the right of standard news articles) is absent.

– Posted by wendy

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1141 October 8th, 2008 9:45 am

Another really cool and very hidden tip for mac users:

If there’s a menu option that you use frequently but is not assigned a keyboard shortcut (for example, paste special in Word/excell) you can easily assign one to it. In the system preferences, under keyboard and mouse, and then the keyboard shortcuts tab, you can hit the “+” button below the list. Enter the name of the menu item and the application and whatever (not currently in use) you want to use.

Also, if you want to become a keyboard shortcut power user, KeyCue is a great application. If you hold the command key for two seconds, it flashes a list of all the currently active keyboard shortcuts. It works intuitively—as you pause wondering what key you hit next to do y-task, it pops up and promptly reminds you.

– Posted by Andrew

---

1142 October 8th, 2008 9:48 am

Ever type in a post, fill in a form, hit Submit and have a glitch of some kind lose the text you’ve so carefully composed? As you’re writing and before you hit Submit, select all (ctrl-a; command-a on Mac) and copy (ctrl-c; command-c) so if something goes wrong you can just paste the lost text back into a new field.

– Posted by Dave

---

1143 October 8th, 2008 9:58 am

Google is great for quick spell checks. Type the word as you think it is spelled into you Google query box, and Google will immediately say: Did you mean xxxxxxxx?

(WORD does not know how to spell a whole bunch of words.)

– Posted by Bruce Pilgrim

---

1144 October 8th, 2008 10:12 am

Carpal tunnel issues from computer use: I’m right handed and when my right wrist-hand-fingers get stiff from overuse of the mouse or trackball, I switch the device from the right to the left side of the keyboard. I’m sure this will also prevent me from having Alzheimer’s because I have to think about a movement that was normally repetitive, new brain activity to keep me sharp.

There are lots of great tips on this blog, my favorite so far is #151: shortcut to calculator in Windows: Start/run/type “Calc”.

— Posted by Susan W.

---

1145.October  
8th,  
2008  
10:29 am

DUH!

And they said p.c.’s were going to make our lives easier in 1985. .  
.And then they got rid of Secretaries and Administrative Assistants because life was going to be SO much easier for professionals, that they could do THAT work, too.

Both of these statements were LIES.

Thanks for the articles and posts. I don’t know most of the shortcuts and I was tethered to a p.c. from the beginning until I retired in 2002.

Very grateful for this wonderful article and all the posts. Sending it to my Senior buddies.

Kim Setla  
Lodi, NJ

— Posted by Kim Setla

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1146.October  
8th,  
2008  
10:54 am

Hallo all,

I’ve introduced into my web site the Super Ultimate Windows Shortcut List, from post #1077 dated Oct. 7, 2008 by sevencardz. You may find it at

<http://www.ime.usp.br/~vwsetzer/super-shortcut-list.htm>

It complements the compilation I did with the hints from this blog which I found most useful, at

<http://www.ime.usp.br/~vwsetzer/shortcuts.html>

All the best, Val.

— Posted by V.W.Setzer (Val)

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1147.October  
8th,  
2008  
10:58 am

RE: “Just putting something into the Trash or the Recycle Bin doesn’t actually delete it. You then have to \*empty\* the Trash or Recycle Bin.”

“Same is true for digital audio recorders, cameras, etc. You have to not just delete files, but empty the trash while your device is connected to the computer.”

.  
. .  
.

As a photographer, I know that for DIGITAL CAMERAS, it’s important to actually REFORMAT the memory card to clear old photos files.

... Thanks David Pogue, and all, for other useful tips ...wow, SO many to go thru!

— Posted by Shani

---

1148.October  
8th,  
2008  
11:06 am

The Shift and Ctrl keys plus the arrow keys make a great way of hopping around documents in word.

Ctrl+Right Arrow will skip to the next word or previous work.

Ctrl+Shift+RightArrow will highlight the work (like double clicking on it).

Along with the Ctrl C and V (or Insert and Delete as alternatives) hopping around a doc and editing is easier.

Also works on text boxes and usually other text editors.

— Posted by Stephen