LESSON 3

CHANGING SETTINGS AND CUSTOMIZING THE DESKTOP

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Understand the settings on the Control Panel.
- Apply a predefined theme to the desktop.
- Change the Windows desktop background.
- Customize the icons on the desktop.
- Clean up your desktop.
- Explain what a shortcut is and how it is used.
- Create and delete shortcuts.
- Assign a shortcut key to a shortcut.
- Add a program to the Quick Launch bar.

Estimated Time: 1 hour

VOCABULARY

Background
Control Panel
Desktop shortcuts
Desktop theme
Internet Explorer
My Computer
My Documents
My Network Places
Shortcut
Wizard

Windows programs run on the desktop, and objects are placed on the desktop. When you install Windows XP, the original desktop you see may not be the exact desktop you want, but you can customize it to suit your personal tastes. You can also customize the taskbar and Start menu. In addition, you will learn how to use the Control Panel to adjust settings for hardware, find system information, schedule routine maintenance, and change user account information. Another way to customize your desktop environment is to add shortcuts. If you use particular programs or documents frequently, you will learn how to create shortcuts for them so you can access them quickly and easily.

The Control Panel

1-3.3.1
1-3.3.2
1-3.3.4
1-3.3.5

You can open the ***Control Panel***, which you will use to change settings on your computer and customize the display, by selecting it on the Start menu. Notice that the Control Panel window, shown in Figure 3-1, has two panes like the Help Viewer and other windows we have seen. The left pane includes a list of tasks you can choose quickly, and other places you can look for information about the Control Panel and Windows. The right pane has nine categories you can

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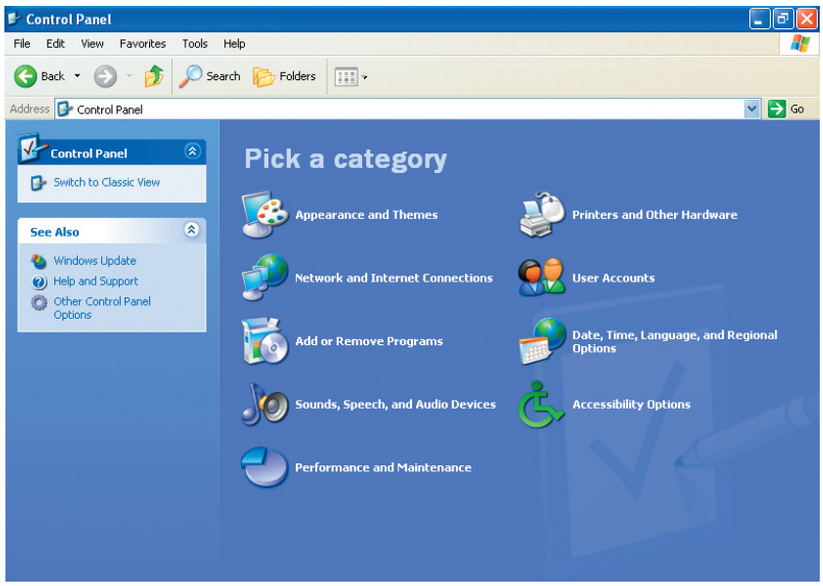
pick to change settings and display options. Following are the categories and what you can do with each of them:

- ***Appearance and Themes:*** Change the background, screen saver, or desktop items; customize the Start menu and taskbar; apply a theme to your display; change the screen display resolution or colors.
- ***Network and Internet Connections:*** Create a small office or home network; change network, Internet, and phone settings.
- ***Add or Remove Programs:*** Install, change, or remove software and Windows components; see a list of installed software; control access to certain programs.
- ***Sounds, Speech, and Audio Devices:*** Change speaker volume and other settings for audio and speech devices; change the sound scheme or individual sounds made by the computer.
- ***Performance and Maintenance:*** Enable energy-saving features; compress the data on your hard disk drive; schedule routine maintenance tasks, such as disk cleanup and antivirus checking; find system information.
- ***Printers and Other Hardware:*** Change settings for printers, keyboard, mouse, game controllers, modems, scanners, and cameras; identify the hardware devices on your computer and if they are running properly.
- ***User Accounts:*** Change user accounts and passwords; change a user's e-mail profile.
- ***Date, Time, Language, and Regional Options:*** Change the language your system uses or the date, time, or time zone; change the way numbers, currency, dates, and times are formatted and displayed.
- ***Accessibility Options:*** Adjust hardware and operating system settings for users with vision, hearing, and mobility disabilities.

FIGURE 3-1
The Control Panel in the default Windows XP Category view



If you are working on a networked computer, you may not be allowed to change all the Control Panel settings. The network administrator can restrict access to some settings to prevent

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unauthorized users from making changes that can affect other users in a network, such as creating a new user account or altering regional or language settings. Some hardware settings that control how peripherals (printers, modems, and so on) are allocated in a network may also be protected so that changes made by one user will not affect the entire network.

STEP-BY-STEP 3.1

1. Click the **Start** button, and then click **Control Panel** in the Start menu.

2. Select the **Performance and Maintenance** category in the Pick a category area (the window's right pane).
3. In the Performance and Maintenance window, find the Pick a task section and click the **See basic information about your computer** link.
4. The System Properties dialog box opens. If the General tab is not open, click on it to open it. You will see information about the version of Windows you are using under the System heading.
5. Click **OK** to close the dialog box.
6. Leave the Control Panel window open for the next Step-by-Step.

Note

If your Control Panel window is set to Classic view instead of the default Category view, double-click the **System** icon to open the System Properties dialog box.

Technology Timeline

FORMATTING FOR EUROS

Imagine driving from Michigan to Georgia and needing five different currencies for your trip. To purchase items during your journey, you must convert your Michigan dollars to Ohio marks, Kentucky pounds, Tennessee lira, and Georgia francs. It would be inconvenient, and also expensive, because every time you converted the money, the money changers would charge you a fee. This is what tourists traditionally experienced when they traveled in Europe. They had to convert their money to another currency every time they crossed a border. Imagine how difficult it would be to keep track of transactions in financial reports with so many different currencies to convert and different symbols to represent them.

In 1999, 11 European countries embraced one currency unit—the euro. The euro was first introduced in electronic trading—business transactions completed without cash. In January 2002, euro notes and coins started circulating. The changeover to a single currency affects banks, businesses, and consumers. The euro symbol now appears in banks, on financial statements, and on retail price tags. Technology has kept up with the new era. Windows XP allows users to change the default currency format to euros and many applications provide full support for entering, displaying, and printing the euro symbol and for working with values in euro currency.

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Changing Control Panel Settings

1-3.3.3
1-3.3.5

You now know many of the settings that can be configured using the Control Panel. Let's look more closely at when you would want to change settings and how to do it.

The computer uses its internal clock to display the correct time, even correcting for Daylight Savings Time, but you may need to change the clock for some reason. For example, if you have a notebook computer and you travel from the west coast to the east coast for an extended stay, you would want to change the time zone setting to correct the time displayed. You can even configure your system to automatically synchronize the time with an Internet time server. Files and folders are date- and time-stamped when you create them and modify them, so having the computer's clock set accurately can be important. Think about any change you make and consider the consequences of the change before you alter a setting. For example, you want files to be date-stamped correctly; therefore, if you set the wrong date or time, you will have inaccurate and misleading information associated with files.

Other settings that you may want to change include the speaker volume control or how the mouse or keyboard works. Sometimes small adjustments can make a computer much easier and more efficient to use. If you are one of several users of one computer, remember to check with a supervisor or other users before making changes. Only make changes if they are needed. It's a good idea to make a note of the original settings so that changes can be modified or reversed if necessary.

STEP-BY-STEP 3.2

1. Click the **Back** button in the toolbar to return to the Pick a category window. Select the **Printers and Other Hardware** category in the Pick a category area.
2. In the Printers and Other Hardware window, click **Mouse** in the *or pick a Control Panel icon* area of the window.
3. The Mouse Properties dialog box opens. You will see several tabs with information about the mouse, including how the buttons are configured, how the pointer appears, and how the "Fast Wheel" scrolls through a document. Click each tab to view the information.

> **Note**
>
> In Classic view, simply double-click the **Mouse** icon to open the Mouse dialog box, and click the **Printers and Faxes** icon to open the associated dialog box.

4. Click **OK** or **Cancel** to close the dialog box without changing any settings.
5. You will be back in the Printers and Other Hardware window again. Click **View installed printers or fax printers** in the Pick a task section to open the Printers and Faxes window. The available printers and faxes appear in the right pane, and the left pane lists tasks under one or more heading.
6. Click **Add a printer** in the Printer Task pane. The Add Printer Wizard will open.
7. In the Add Printer Wizard, you can read information about installing a printer. Read the text and then click the **Next** button.
8. Click the **Next** button in the new dialog box to have the Wizard search for a newly installed printer. Since no printer has been installed, you will see a message that says no new printer was found. Click the **Cancel** button to close the Add Printer Wizard.
9. Close the Printers and Faxes window and then close the Control Panel window.

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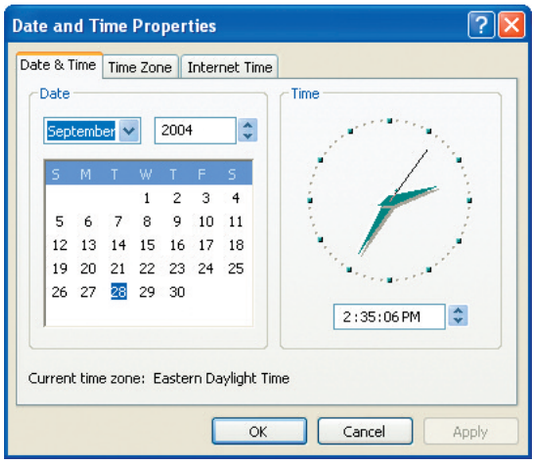
You can also change some settings by double-clicking the appropriate icon on the right side of the taskbar. Different icons may appear on your taskbar depending on the way your taskbar has been customized. For example, click the time display to open the Date and Time Properties dialog box, and if you see an icon that looks like a bullhorn, you can click it to open the Volume Control dialog box and then adjust the speaker volume. Other icons may open control network connections, printers, and other hardware, depending on what is installed on your computer.

STEP-BY-STEP 3.3

1. Double-click the time display at the right on the taskbar to open the Date and Time Properties dialog box, as shown in Figure 3-2.

FIGURE 3-2
Date and Time Properties dialog box



2. Click on each of the three tabs, **Date & Time**, **Time Zone**, and **Internet Time**, to view the different settings you can adjust.

3. Click the **Date & Time** tab and you will see the current month and year displayed in drop-down list boxes, and the current date shaded or highlighted in a calendar grid on the left and a clock with a second hand, and the current time displayed below it on the right.

4. Click on any other day in the calendar grid to select it. Notice the highlight has changed to the new date.

5. Click on the up arrow next to the time displayed in the text box on the right. Notice that the hours number is highlighted, and it increases by an hour every time you click the arrow.

6. Click the **Cancel** button to close the dialog box without changing the settings.

7. Double-click the icon that looks like a bullhorn on the right side of the taskbar to open the Volume Control dialog box. If this icon does not appear on your taskbar, skip steps 7 to 9.

8. In the Volume Control panel, use the slide control to make the volume just a little louder. You may hear a sound when you adjust the setting.

9. Click the **Close** button to close the dialog box and save the change you made to the volume setting.

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The Desktop

1-3.2.5

The first thing many people want to do when they start using Windows is to customize the desktop to better suit how they work. For example, when Windows is first installed, the ***background*** that covers your desktop is usually a picture of a green hill beneath a blue sky with white clouds. (The name of this background is Bliss.) You can change the background to another picture or pattern included with Windows, or you can add your own photograph or artwork. You can also select a theme, which is a coordinated design that carries through all the elements of your desktop and window, changing the colors of windows elements and highlighting and the way icons appear. A screen saver may be included in a theme, or you can choose a different screen saver from Windows' selection, or install a new screen saver program.

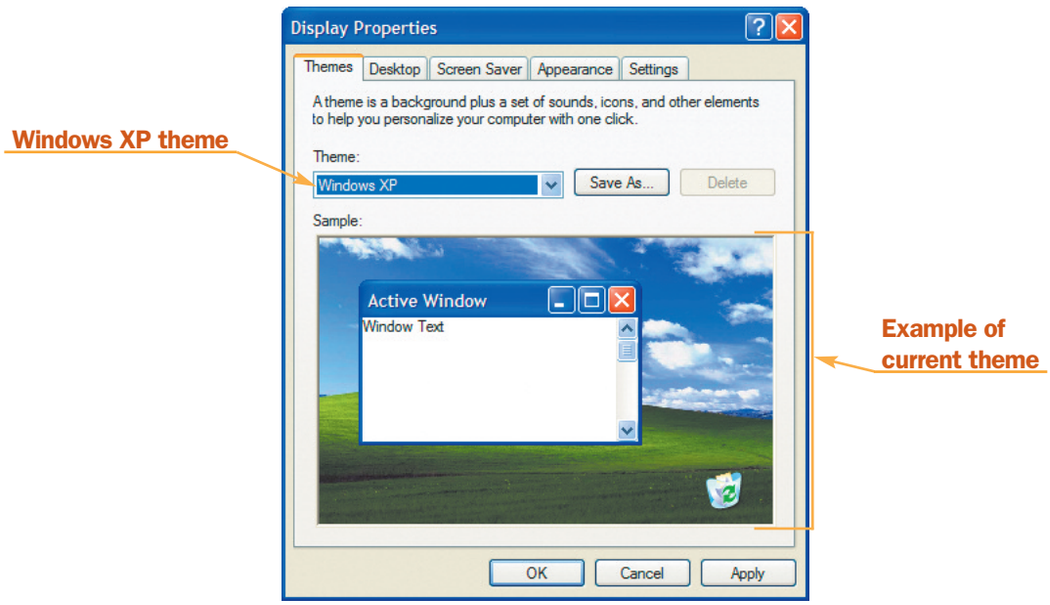
The desktop is your work area, and it's easy to customize it just like you would a "real" desk, by adding pictures, rearranging the items you use, making it easy to reach items you use frequently, and even cleaning it up occasionally!

Customizing the Desktop

1-3.2.5

To change the way the desktop looks, you select the Appearance and Themes category in the Control Panel and then click the Display icon to open the Display Properties dialog box.

FIGURE 3-3
Display Properties dialog box



As you see in Figure 3-3, the Display Properties dialog box has several tabs you can use to change the appearance and the behavior of your desktop.

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- The Themes tab assigns a predefined set of icons, fonts, colors, sounds, and other window elements to your desktop. Collectively these elements are called a ***desktop theme*** and give the desktop a unified and distinctive look.
- The Desktop tab offers you a selection of pictures and graphics to use as a background on your desktop. You can use one of the backgrounds that come with Windows or create one of your own.
- The Screen Saver tab permits you to display static or moving graphics or a blank screen when your system is idle.
- The Appearance tab controls the colors, fonts, and sizes of various screen elements. You can change the appearance of these elements by selecting from a set of predefined schemes or by creating your own scheme.
- The Settings tab allows you to change the resolution and the number of colors used by the display, change the display type, and change other display characteristics.

Note

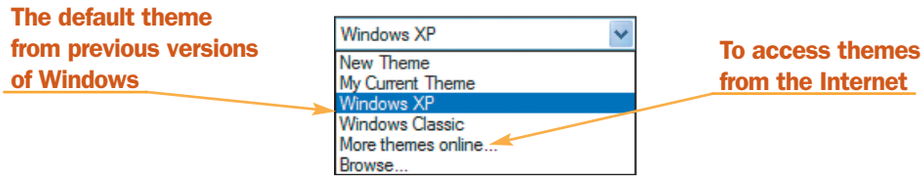
Right-clicking an empty area on your desktop (a place where there is no folder or icon) and clicking Properties on the shortcut menu will also open the Display Properties dialog box.

Selecting a Desktop Theme

Using the Themes tab, you can quickly modify your desktop background by selecting from a set of predefined themes. If your computer has other users with their own user accounts, each person can have a different theme.

To apply a new desktop theme, simply use the drop-down menu (beneath the word Theme) to select one of the preconfigured themes (see Figure 3-4). The themes that are listed in your Theme drop-down list may differ from the ones in Figure 3-4, but there will probably be several choices in the list. When you click a theme, the new background will appear in the sample window in the center of the Display Properties dialog box. Click the Apply button; after a short wait, the new theme will be set on the desktop.

FIGURE 3-4
Theme drop-down list



Note

If your computer has an Internet connection, you can access a number of themes from the Microsoft Web site by clicking the More themes online option on the drop-down list.

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STEP-BY-STEP 3.4

1. Open the Control Panel and click the **Appearance and Themes** link.
2. Click the **Display** icon to open the Display Properties dialog box.
3. Select the **Themes** tab if it is not already selected.
4. On a sheet of paper, write the name of the desktop theme that is currently displayed in the Theme list box.
5. Click the **Theme** drop-down list arrow, and then select **Windows Classic** if it is not already selected. If it is already selected, select one of the other themes in the list.
6. Click the **Apply** button. Your theme will take effect after a short wait. The new desktop background will appear in the Sample window in the Display Properties dialog box and you may see a change in the Active Window displayed there also.
7. Click the **Theme** drop-down arrow, select the desktop theme that you wrote on your paper in Step 4, and then click **Apply**. After a short wait, your desktop background will return to its former appearance. Leave the Display Properties dialog box open for the next Step-by-Step.

Note

In Classic view, double-click the **Display** icon to open the Display Properties dialog box.

Setting a Background Design

You can change a theme's settings by making modifications to the other tabs available on the Display Properties dialog box. For example, to change the background design, click the Desktop tab and select one of the backgrounds. You can select from Windows' preexisting backgrounds, which are listed on the Background list box, or you can use other graphic files (for instance, from a digital camera) as your background. By default, the background is set up to stretch across your screen so it takes up the entire desktop area. You can center the background on the desktop or tile it to fill the entire desktop. You select the option from the Position drop-down list box.

STEP-BY-STEP 3.5

1. Click the **Desktop** tab.
2. Select the Windows XP background:
   - **a.** Click the scroll down arrow in the **Background** list box until the **Windows XP** option appears, and then select it.
   - **b.** Notice that a preview of your selection is displayed in the monitor graphic in the upper portion of the Desktop tab.
   - **c.** Verify that the **Stretch** option is displayed in the Position drop-down list box. The Windows XP background is a picture file, and by default, all picture files are stretched to cover the entire desktop.

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STEP-BY-STEP 3.5 Continued

3. Tile the background on the desktop:
   a. Click the **Tile** option from the Position drop-down list.
   b. Click the **Apply** button to reset the background. Notice that the background now fills the desktop by repeating the graphic.

4. Click the **Stretch** option from the Position drop-down list, and then click the **Apply** button to reset the background. Do not click the OK button. Leave the Display Properties dialog box open for the next Step-by-Step.

Windows XP can display any picture or graphic file (usually files with a GIF, JPG, or BMP extension) as a background. If you have picture files already stored on your computer, you can simply browse and select the desired picture. You can also create your own graphic in the Windows Paint program or some other graphics program and use it as a background.

STEP-BY-STEP 3.6

1. Use the **Flowers** file in the Lesson 3 folder of the data files as a background:
   a. Click the **Browse** button on the Desktop tab to open the Browse dialog box.
   b. Select the drive and folder that contain your data files.
   c. Double-click the **Lesson 3** folder, and then double-click the **Flowers.jpg** file. The Browse dialog box closes, and the Display Properties dialog box reappears.
   d. Verify that the **Stretch** option is selected from the Position drop-down list.
   e. Click the **Apply** button to set the background.

2. Reset the background to **Windows XP**:
   a. Scroll the Background list box, locate the **Windows XP** option, and click it.
   b. Click the **Apply** button to set the background to **Windows XP**. Leave the Display Properties dialog box (Desktop tab) open for the next Step-by-Step.

Customizing the Icons on Your Desktop

The Customize Desktop button toward the bottom of the Desktop tab provides a convenient way for you to select which Windows program icons are to appear on your desktop and to determine which icons are used to represent those programs. Click this button, and the Desktop Items dialog box opens (see Figure 3-5). This dialog box contains a General and a Web tab.

Note

You can download a picture or an image from the Web and use it as a background. Simply right-click the picture or image you want to use as a background and click Set As Background.

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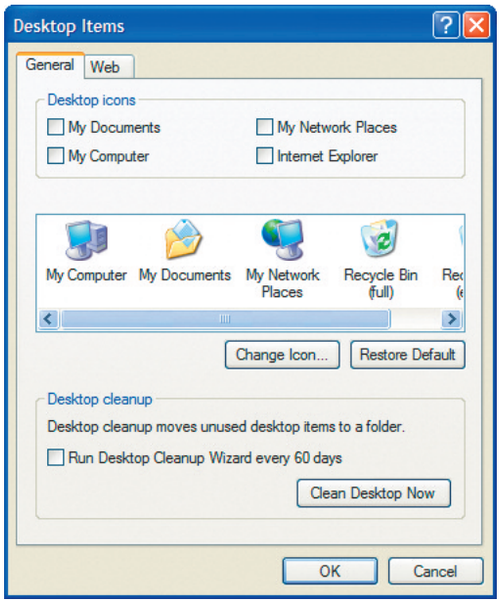
FIGURE 3-5
The Desktop Items dialog box



On the General tab (see Figure 3-5), you can select the desktop icons you want to appear by checking one or more of the check boxes: My Documents, My Computer, My Network Places, and Internet Explorer. These icons are discussed in detail below.

- ***My Documents*** is your personal folder where you can save the files you create and use. By default, the My Documents folder contains two additional personal folders: My Pictures and My Music.
- ***My Computer*** displays the contents of your computer. You can see the hardware devices, resources, programs, and files that are stored on your computer. My Computer also provides information about different system resources, such as the size of the hard disk and how much space is available on it. You can also use My Computer to format disks and to run applications. (You may recall that My Computer is also accessible from the Start menu.)
- ***My Network Places*** lists all of the computers on your network, if you are connected to a network. It permits you to browse through files on a networked computer.
- With ***Internet Explorer***, you get a fast, personalized Web browser with communication capabilities including sending and receiving e-mail, connecting to the Internet, designing your own Web site, and teleconferencing.

Just below the Desktop icons, you will see a window showing the default icons that are used for each of these items, as well as the Recycle Bin icon that is placed on your desktop by default. If you want to use a different icon for any of these items, click the item you wish to change, click the Change Icon button, and select a different icon from the choices provided. If you change your mind or don't like your choice, just click the Restore Default button to return to the Windows XP default icon settings.

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STEP-BY-STEP 3.7

1. Click the **Customize Desktop** button. The Desktop Items dialog box (Figure 3-5) is displayed.
2. Click the **General** tab to verify that it is in the foreground.
3. Display the My Documents and My Computer icons on your desktop:
   - **a.** Click the **My Documents** check box in the Desktop icons area. (This will place a check mark in the check box.)
   - **b.** Click the **My Computer** check box.
   - **c.** Click the **OK** button. The Desktop Items dialog box will close.
4. Click the **Apply** button on the Display Properties dialog box to place the selected icons on your desktop. Do not click the OK button on the Display Properties dialog box.
5. Change the My Documents desktop icon:
   - **a.** Click the **Customize Desktop** button to display the Desktop Items dialog box.
   - **b.** Click the **My Documents** icon in the display window, and then click the **Change Icon** button.
   - **c.** Click the folder icon shown in Figure 3-6, and then click the **OK** button. Notice that the icon changes in the display window.

FIGURE 3-6
Folder icon

   - **d.** Click the **OK** button on the Desktop Items dialog box, and then click the **Apply** button on the Display Properties dialog box. Notice that the icon on your desktop has changed to your selection.
6. Remove the My Computer icon from your desktop:
   - **a.** Click the **Customize Desktop** button to display the Desktop Items dialog box.
   - **b.** Click the **My Computer** check box to deselect (uncheck) it, leave the My Documents check box checked, and then click the **OK** button.
   - **c.** Click the **Apply** button on the Display Properties dialog box. Notice that the My Computer icon is no longer displayed on the desktop.
   - **d.** Close the Display Properties dialog box and then close the Control Panel or the Appearance and Themes window if necessary.

Customizing a Toolbar

The standard toolbar is the row of buttons below the menu bar on most windows. Other toolbars appear if you select them in the Toolbars submenu of the View menu. You can easily change the buttons that appear on any toolbar. For example, to change the toolbar in the My Documents window, open My Documents from the desktop. Click on the View menu, and then select the Toolbars option. (The right-pointing arrow tells you a submenu will open.) When you select the Customize option on the Toolbars submenu, the Customize Toolbar dialog box

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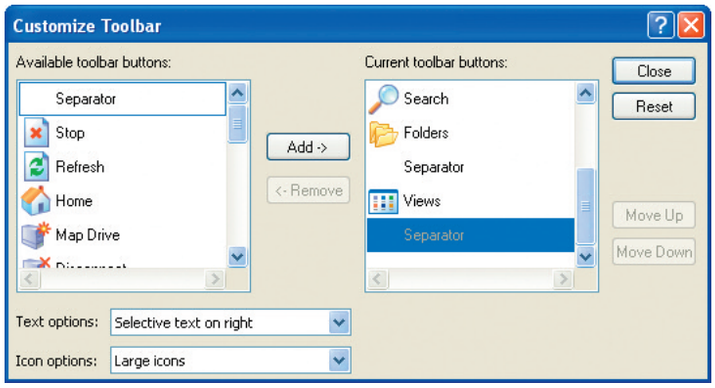
appears. The dialog box has two list boxes: Available toolbar buttons and Current toolbar buttons, as shown in Figure 3-7. The Available toolbar options list box on the left lists the types of buttons available to place on the toolbar. The Current toolbar buttons list box on the right lists the buttons that already exist on the toolbar. To add buttons to the toolbar, select a button from the list box on the left and then click the Add button. To remove buttons from the toolbar, select a button from the right and click the Remove button.

You can change the order in which the buttons appear on the toolbar by selecting a button in the Current toolbar buttons list box and clicking the Move Up button or the Move Down button to change the button's position in the list box.

FIGURE 3-7
The Commands tab of the Customize dialog box



Cleaning Up Your Desktop

Windows XP provides a number of utility programs that help you perform a task quickly and easily. Each of these programs is called a ***Wizard*** and performs a special function, such as the Add Printer Wizard you encountered earlier in this lesson. For example, as you use work, you will place icons on your desktop. Because these icons function as shortcuts to an application or a document, they are often referred to as ***desktop shortcuts***. (You will learn how to create shortcuts in the next section.) Windows XP contains a Desktop Cleanup Wizard that can check your desktop to see which desktop shortcuts you have not used during the previous 60 days; it then lets you decide if you want to remove them. The desktop shortcuts you remove are moved to an Unused Desktop Shortcuts folder from which you can recover them at any time.

Look again at the General tab on the Desktop Items dialog box shown in Figure 3-5. Notice the Desktop cleanup area at the bottom of the sheet. In this area, you can set the Desktop Cleanup Wizard to run automatically every 60 days, or you can run it any time by clicking the Clean Desktop Now button.

Using Shortcuts

1-3.2.4

A ***shortcut*** functions as a pointer to an application or a document file, wherever the file is located. When you double-click the shortcut icon, you're opening the actual item to which the shortcut is pointing. The shortcut is represented by an icon on your desktop. A shortcut icon is

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identified by a small arrow in its lower-left corner (see Figure 3-8). Shortcuts save time because you don't have to open and browse through several folders to find the file you need.

FIGURE 3-8
Shortcut icon

You can create a shortcut by dragging a file to the desktop or by using the Create Shortcut command on the File menu. Shortcut menus also appear when you right-click a file or folder on your desktop, in the right pane of a folder window, or when you right-click an empty space on the taskbar or desktop.

Creating a Shortcut Using Drag and Drop

If you can display an item in the My Computer window, you can create a shortcut for it by dragging and dropping an item to the desktop with the right mouse button:

- Using the right mouse button, right-drag the item (file, program, folder, printer, computer) from its current location to wherever you want the shortcut to appear.
- Drop the item where you want it by releasing the mouse button.
- A shortcut menu appears, giving you several options. Click Create Shortcuts Here.
- The icon appears with the shortcut arrow and a default name.

You may want to change the shortcut's default name to something different. To rename it, right-click the shortcut's icon to display the menu shown in Figure 3-9. Remember that you can often open a task-specific shortcut menu by right-clicking an icon or text; in this case, the shortcut menu options relate to creating shortcuts. Choose Rename, and key the new name in the shortcut icon's text box. You can use this shortcut menu for a number of tasks, such as deleting a shortcut or changing its properties.

FIGURE 3-9
The shortcut menu for creating and managing shortcuts

Note

If you use the left mouse button to drag a file from a folder on the C drive to the desktop, you will move the file and its icon to the desktop.

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STEP-BY-STEP 3.8

1. Open **My Computer** from the Start menu.
2. Locate the Assignments folder where you saved the file called Hobby created in Lesson 5.
3. Make sure that part of your desktop is visible, and using the right mouse button, drag the Hobby document file icon to the desktop. Release the mouse button.
4. Select **Create Shortcuts Here** from the shortcut menu. The Hobby document shortcut appears on your desktop.
5. Rename the shortcut:
   a. Right-click the **Shortcut to Hobby** icon.
   b. Select **Rename** from the shortcut menu. Notice that the icon's name is now highlighted and has a blinking insertion point.
   c. Key **My Shortcut** and press **Enter** to rename the icon.
6. Close the My Computer window.

Creating a Shortcut Using the File Menu

You can also create a shortcut by selecting the item for which you want (a file, program, folder, printer, or computer) to create the shortcut in My Computer. Then from the File menu select Create Shortcut. Resize the window so you can see the desktop. A shortcut icon for the item appears as the last item in the My Computer window. Drag the new shortcut icon to the desktop. Then you can rename it—as you have already learned.

Assigning a Shortcut Key to a Shortcut

A shortcut key is a keystroke combination that runs a program or opens the dialog box to which it is linked. For example, if you assign the shortcut key Ctrl + Alt + N to your My Shortcut, your new shortcut key will then open the Hobby document. You assign a shortcut key in the shortcut's Properties dialog box, which is accessible from the shortcut menu. You make the assignment by pressing and holding the Ctrl key and then pressing the key you want to complete the shortcut keystroke combination. When you press the Ctrl key, the combination Ctrl + Alt + appears in the Properties dialog box. It ends with + because it is waiting for you to complete the shortcut. Once you select OK, the shortcut keystroke assignment is made, and anytime you press those keys, you will open the document.

You can activate a shortcut in two ways: Double-click the shortcut icon, or issue the shortcut key combination.

STEP-BY-STEP 3.9

1. Right-click the **My Shortcut** icon.
2. Select **Properties** from the shortcut menu. The My Shortcut Properties dialog box appears.

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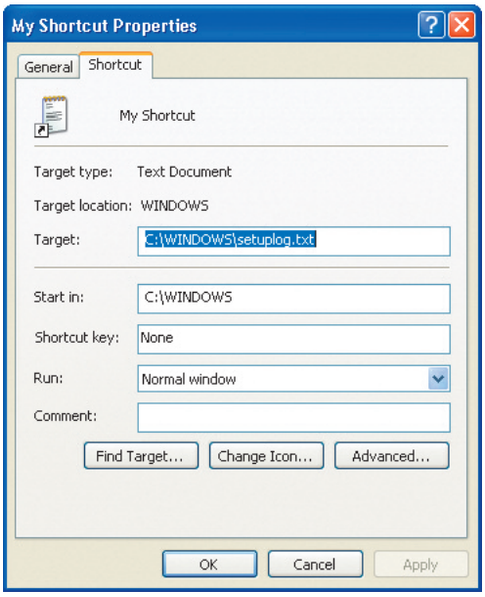
STEP-BY-STEP 3.9 Continued

3. Make sure the Shortcut tab is displayed as shown in Figure 3-10.

FIGURE 3-10
Shortcut tab in the My Shortcut Properties dialog box



4. Click in the **Shortcut key** text box.

5. Press and hold down **Ctrl**, press **n**, and then release **Ctrl**. The shortcut key Ctrl + Alt + N is displayed in the Shortcut key text box.

6. Click the **OK** button to save the shortcut keystroke combination, and close the My Shortcut Properties dialog box.

7. Double-click the **My Shortcut** icon. Did the Hobby document open?

8. Close the Hobby document window.

9. Issue the shortcut keystroke combination Ctrl + Alt + N:
- **a.** Press and hold down **Ctrl**.
- **b.** Press and hold down **Alt**.
- **c.** Press **n**, and release all keys.

10. The Hobby document once again opens. Close the document.

Computer Concepts

If Windows is already using your selected keystroke combination for another shortcut, it will still allow you to make the assignment. When you enter the keystroke combination, however, Windows will run the other shortcut. In this case, just open the shortcut's Properties dialog box and select a different keystroke combination.
The letter name of your hard disk may appear different from that shown in the Target and Start in text boxes shown in Figure 3-10.

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Which method do you prefer—double-clicking the icon or issuing the shortcut key? You probably found the first method simpler, but as you become more familiar with creating shortcuts, you will see that shortcut keys are very useful when the shortcut is not in view or if you prefer to keep your hands on the keyboard.

Deleting a Shortcut

Like most Windows elements, shortcuts can be deleted. There are several ways to delete a shortcut:

- Select the shortcut, then press the Delete key.
- Right-click the shortcut, and then select Delete from the shortcut menu.
- Drag and drop the shortcut in the Recycle Bin.

If you double-click the icon or issue a shortcut, Windows displays a message box asking you to confirm the deletion. Deleting a shortcut deletes only the shortcut, not the file to which the shortcut points. If you drag the shortcut to the Recycle Bin, no confirmation message box appears; the shortcut is simply moved to the Recycle Bin where it will remain until the Recycle Bin is emptied.

Adding a Shortcut to the Quick Launch Bar

With Windows, you have another choice for shortcuts: The Quick Launch bar on the taskbar (see Figure 3-11). Always visible, the Quick Launch bar is great for those items you need to reach fast. If you don't see the Quick Launch bar, right-click in an empty part of the taskbar, point to Toolbars, and then click Quick Launch.

FIGURE 3-11
Quick Launch bar

To add a button to the Quick Launch bar, drag a program, document, or desktop shortcut icon to the Quick Launch bar. To remove a button from the Quick Launch bar, right-click the shortcut and then select Delete from the shortcut menu.

SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned:

- The Control Panel allows you to find information about system settings, change display options, and customize your desktop.
- You can modify your desktop using the Display dialog box tools and options.
- You can select from Windows' existing themes or choose a different background on the Background tab.
- Windows comes with a number of preexisting desktop themes that give your desktop a unified and distinctive look. A picture can be tiled to fill the whole screen, centered on the screen, or stretched across the screen.

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- You can use most any picture or graphic file as a background. For example, you might take a photograph on a digital camera or download a graphic from the Web and then use it as a desktop background.
- The Desktop Cleanup Wizard is used to remove any unwanted or unused desktop shortcuts from the desktop.
- A shortcut functions as a pointer to a file—wherever it is located. Double-click the shortcut icon to open the actual item to which the shortcut is pointing.
- You create a shortcut by dragging and dropping or by using the Create Shortcut option on the File menu. When you no longer need a shortcut, it can be deleted without impacting the original instance.
- You can add a shortcut key to a Windows shortcut. A shortcut key is a keystroke combination that runs a program—or in this case, runs the Windows shortcut to which it is linked. Shortcut keys to Windows shortcuts always use Ctrl + Alt + and one additional character.
- You can place a program, document, or desktop shortcut icon that you plan to use often on the Quick Launch bar.

VOCABULARY *Review*

Define the following terms:

Background	Internet Explorer	My Network Places
Control Panel	My Computer	Shortcut
Desktop shortcuts	My Documents	Wizard
Desktop theme		

REVIEW *Questions*

TRUE/FALSE

Circle T if the statement is true or F if the statement is false.

T F 1. The Background tab in the Display Properties dialog box lets you change the colors, fonts, and sizes of various screen elements.

T F 2. By default, your desktop's background is a solid color.

T F 3. Even though other users share your computer, you must all have the same theme for your desktops.

T F 4. Windows XP can display any picture or graphic file with a GIF, JPEG, or BMP extension.

T F 5. Right-clicking a shortcut icon displays the shortcut menu.

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MULTIPLE CHOICE

Circle the best response for each of the following statements.

1. You can create a shortcut by using the Create Shortcut command on the _____ menu in My Computer.
   A. Insert
   B. Help
   C. View
   D. File

2. A(n) _____ is a keystroke combination that runs a program or opens the dialog box to which it is linked.
   A. icon
   B. shortcut key
   C. Ctrl key
   D. Wizard

3. The _____ tab in the Display Properties dialog box that lets you assign a predefined set of icons, fonts colors, sounds, and other window elements to your desktop.
   A. Settings
   B. Themes
   C. Appearance
   D. Desktop

4. A _____ is a utility program provided by Windows that helps you perform a task quickly and easily.
   A. Quick Launch
   B. Control Panel
   C. Shortcut
   D. Wizard

5. A(n) _____ is represented by a small arrow in the lower-left corner of its icon.
   A. dialog box
   B. screen saver
   C. shortcut
   D. desktop

PROJECTS

PROJECT 3-1

Before you begin, ask if your instructor wants to see the background you create in this project.

1. Open the Control Panel and click the **Appearance and Themes** link.

2. Click the **Display** icon to open the Display Properties dialog box. (If your Control Panel appears in Classic view, double-click the **Display** icon to open the Display Properties dialog box.)

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3. Click the **Themes** tab if necessary, and write down the name of the desktop theme that is currently displayed in the Theme list box.

4. Modify the theme:
   A. Click the **Desktop** tab, select the **Ascent Background**, and then click the **Apply** button.
   B. Click the **Themes** tab, click **Save As**, key **Project 3-1 Theme** in the File name textbox, and then click **Save**.

5. Click the arrow in the **Themes** list box and verify that the Project 3-1 Theme is displayed in the list.

6. Delete the Project 3-1 Theme:
   A. Select **Project 3-1 Theme** from the Theme list box.
   B. Click the **Delete** button.

PROJECT 3-2

1. Verify that the Quick Launch bar is displayed. If not:
   A. Right-click a clear area on the taskbar, then select **Toolbars** from the shortcut menu.
   B. Select the **Quick Launch** option.

2. Move the **My Shortcut** icon on your desktop to the beginning of the Quick Launch bar:
   A. Right-drag the **My Shortcut** icon from the desktop to the Quick Launch bar.
   B. Select the **Move Here** option from the menu.

3. Test the shortcut:
   A. Click the **My Shortcut** icon on the Quick Launch bar to open the Hobby document.
   B. Close the Hobby document.

4. Delete the shortcut from the Quick Launch bar:
   A. Right-click the **My Shortcut** icon on the Quick Launch bar, and then click **Delete** on the shortcut menu.
   B. Click **Yes** in the message box to confirm the deletion.

5. Follow your instructor's directions to log off or turn off your computer.

PROJECT 3-3

Shortcuts are handy tools, but too many shortcuts on the desktop can make it look cluttered and confusing. List other advantages and disadvantages of using shortcuts, including the pros and cons of assigning shortcut keys.

TEAMWORK PROJECT

One of your coworkers is collecting informal inventories of all employees' computer systems. She has requested a list of the system resources and hardware devices on your computer. Working with another student, create a table that includes your name, the system information, such as the computer model, operating system, and registration information, and the hardware devices connected to each of your computers. In a paragraph below the table, explain where you found the information.

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CRITICAL *Thinking*

ACTIVITY 3-1

Beyond aesthetics, is there a practical use for applying a desktop background? Include a brief explanation in your answer. If your answer is yes, include an example of a practical application. If your answer is no, cite an example of how a desktop background might impair productivity.