

Start Menu

This chapter covers how and why you would want to change items on your start menu.

Stuff is too crowded. - Everyone seems to want a piece of the Start button's menu real estate. Microsoft's Office 2000 reigns as the supreme hog. Each installed application claims an equal portion. It would be nice if it followed suit of most other applications and only placed a single line on the Programs menu to indicate where the parts of MS Office 2000 could be found. We will soon learn how to contain them in a single location. (See the chapter Screen2 about the Taskbar.)

Protecting access. Most Windows users are unable to access applications which are not readily available from the start menu. Often, the executable application is buried in a subfolder. It is very time consuming for someone to search your computer to find a hidden application's executable file. If you have been reading this book in chapter order, you probably have figured out that the savvy user could use the Find command if they took a guess at the application's name. Luckily, most users won't think of that. (See the Find chapter.)

Moving for convenience. Suppose that there was a file, like Windows Explorer, which you access often. It is a time-consuming nuisance to have to click on Start | Programs | Windows Explorer each time you want file access. Perhaps it could be moved to a more convenient spot.

Stop stuff from 'just happening'. Do things just seem to happen each time you start your computer? For example Microsoft's Fast open bar. (Corel has a version they call Dad.) There is a folder C:\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Start Up which is read when Windows boots. Several programs hide things here during their install process. Emptying shortcuts from this folder can prevent non-essential applications from starting some applications. This won't cure all rogue programs, but it is an easy place to access and make changes.

The [Boot] section of the WIN.INI file may have something loaded on the run= or load= lines. Back this file up before making any edits. (If you think you are ready to make changes here, you will be able to locate the file.)

Cleaning up. Sometimes uninstalled programs don't remove shortcuts from the Start Menu.

Look for the signals

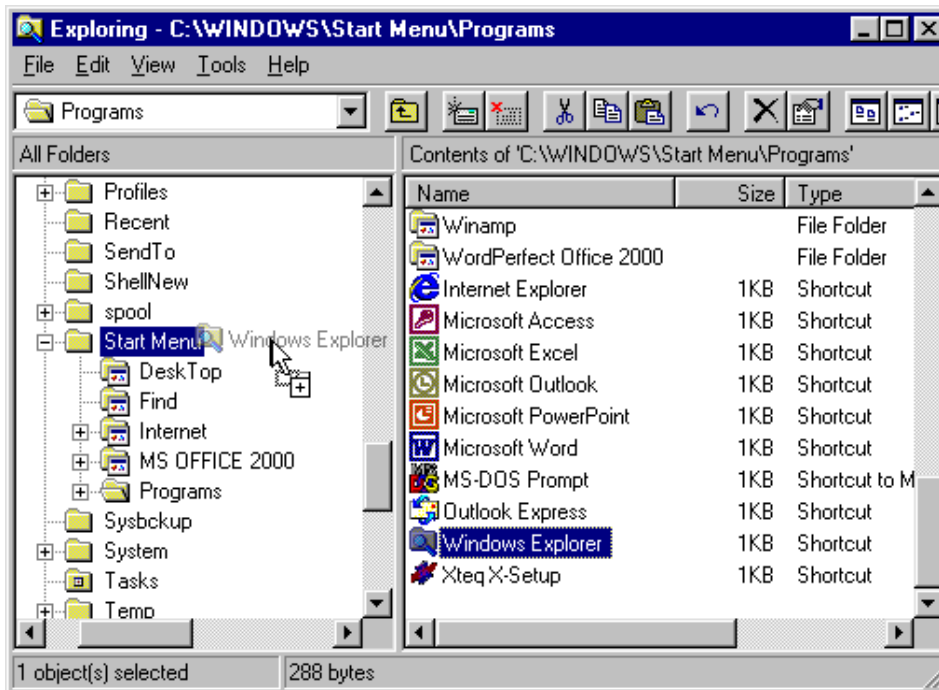
All the shortcuts on the Start Button are located in the folder C:\Windows\Start Menu
All folders are indicated by a * alongside the menu item.
Start menu items which have 3 periods like Run... indicate that they open a dialog box.

All other menu items will start an application by clicking on the menu item.

How to move stuff

By now the following practice should be a simple exercise, but if you are having trouble with drag & drop - play a little more Solitaire or reread the Screens chapters. Need a review of the Copy/Move/Shortcut signs? (See the chapter Org 7.)

If you are not sure why you are reading this section, by all means go on to a different chapter. By the way, the next chapter references back to this chapter.



Open Windows Explorer and locate c:\Windows\Start Menu

Giving Windows Explorer easier access. Make sure this is a copy. (By default, dragging shortcuts is a move.) Since many Users expect to find the following option under "Programs", we will use a copy command to prevent losing the original shortcut.

Drag the Windows Explorer shortcut from the Programs folder and place it over the Start Menu icon in the left panel. Press CTRL before letting go of the mouse to make a copy of the shortcut. The Windows Explorer shortcut should now be accessible from the first start Menu or from the Programs folder.

Grouping utilities, hardware related shortcuts and similar programs or programs from the same company makes sense because it keeps like items together. It is your filing system. Set it up in a way that is logical and in accord with the way you use your computer. Nothing in the way you set up your menus is permanent. As your needs change or items are added to the Start Menu, you can again change the arrangement. The bottom-line intent is to have a fast, organized access system.

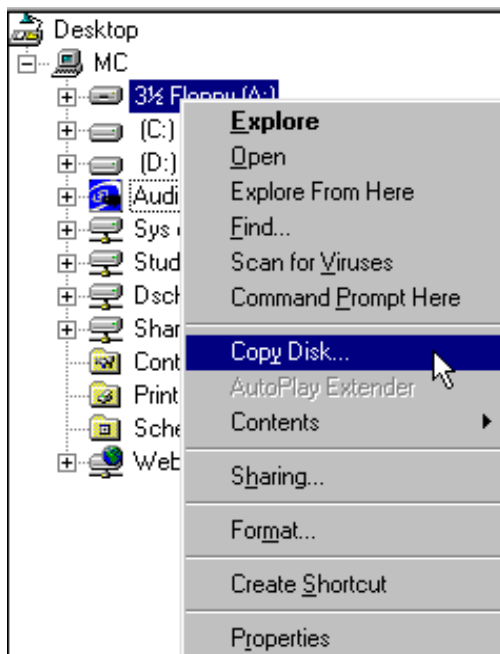
Note: You can drag the whole folders to a new location, not just the files. Ensure that the drag is a move operation.

Security Use Edit | Cut to move sensitive shortcut folders to a floppy (Don't lose the floppy - better yet, make a backup copy with DISKCOPY.) Then make a desktop shortcut to the floppy. (See the chapter Shortcuts)

The best security is gained when sensitive material is not left on the computer, but this is not always possible. Database files, like those generated by checkbook programs, are often too large to fit on floppies. Larger storage is available using Zip or Jazz drives, but this is expensive and can lead to other complications.

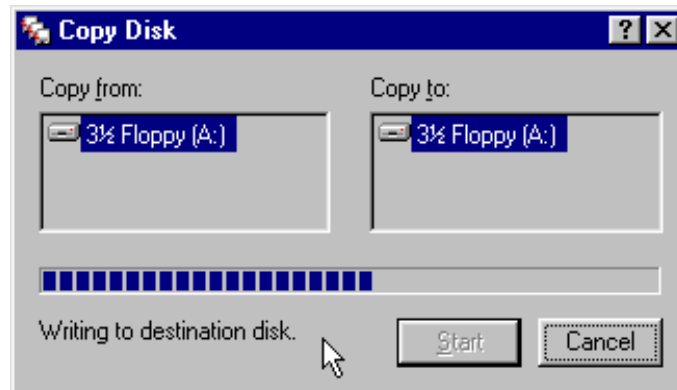
Some programs require passwords for access. These are not the programs I am referring to which might need shortcut access placed on floppies. It is access to personal information, such as letters and memos which are short in nature.

Perhaps you might want to limit Internet access for your children to only times when you are home and can supervise them. There are many places in the computer which allow users to gain access to the phone and will have to be dealt with individually. Be careful with what you remove and remember that removing items from the menu does not remove them from the computer. It only limits easy access.

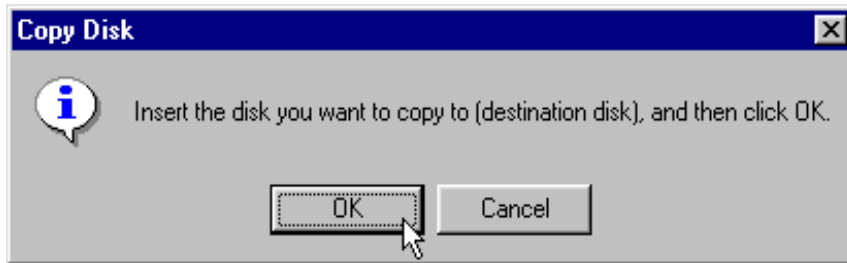


Diskcopy

You can access this utility from My Computer or Windows Explorer by right-clicking on the 3-1/2 Floppy icon and selecting the Copy disk... menu option.



Place the source disk (that is the one your want information copies from) in the floppy drive and click 'Start'. Once all the information is copied from the disk to RAM, you will be prompted to replace the disk with one which you want the information copied to. Click 'OK' after inserting the destination disk to complete the process.



NOTE:

- 1) All information which might have been on the destination disk will be destroyed. This makes sense. The disk copy process makes a mirror image of the source disk.
- 2) Both disks must have the same storage capacity (see the Org 2 chapter)

A couple of final notes:

Remember, these are all 1K shortcuts. Microsoft Office 2000 again claims the title as king of space hogs developing 3K shortcuts. Removing shortcuts will not give you more storage space on your hard drive.

Verify the results after each change by-clicking on the Start button.

By the way, you could also access the start menu from:

Start | Settings | Task bar & Start menu

Select the Start menu tab and Advance option. (Remember screen shot from the Screen 2 chapter?)