

PC Basics Workshop – Windows, Desktop & Tools



I. Introduction to Windows Desktop

A. What is the Windows Desktop?

The **Windows desktop** is the tool that is used to perform all the tasks on your PC. It is the screen you see with the boot process is complete, and it remains in the background as you use other software programs.

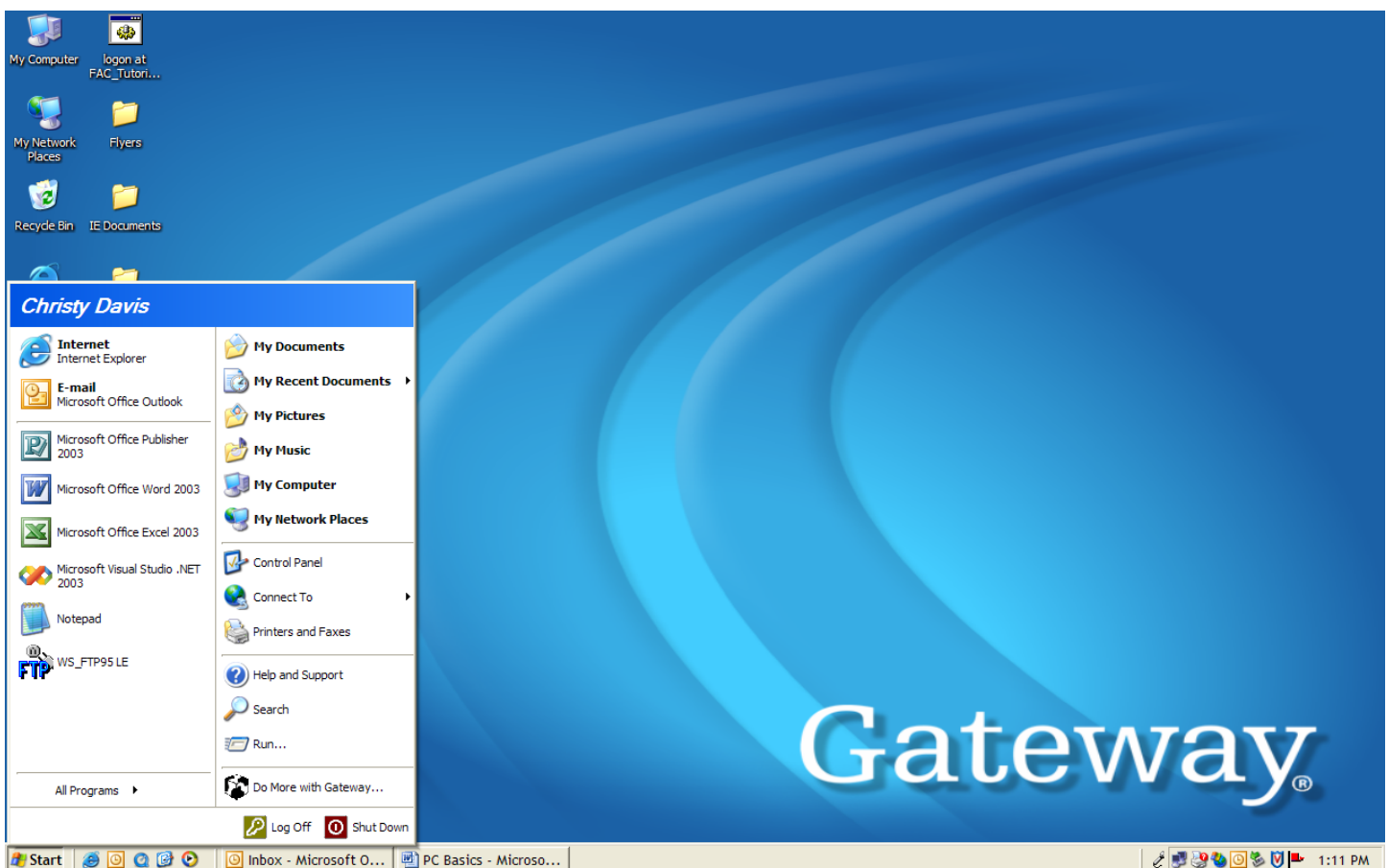


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The Windows desktop is displayed by your PC's operating system. The desktop contains small graphics called **icons** that represent programs, hardware and documents. The **task bar** at the bottom of the screen displays buttons and icons that help you keep track of the status of your computer system, such as the program that you are currently using, commonly used applications and the current time.

The **Start button**, which is located on the far left of the taskbar, is the main control on the Windows desktop. When you click this button, Windows displays the **Start Menu**. You can use this menu, to start programs, change your hardware settings, get help, and install software.



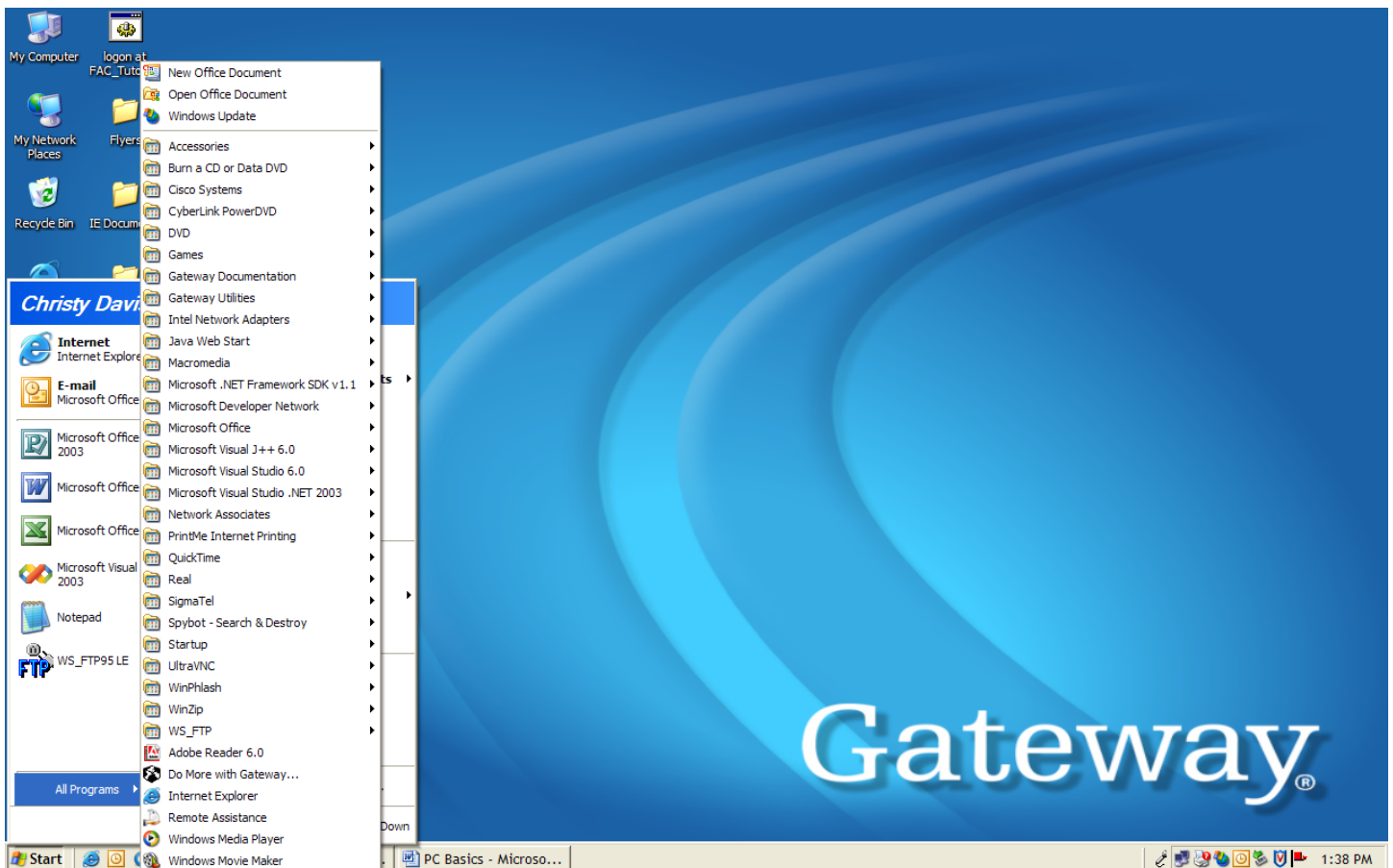


B. How do I start an application program??

An application program helps you accomplish real-world tasks, such as writing a paper, balancing your checkbook, or learning to speak another language.

The Windows operating system provides several ways to start an application, but typically you'll use the **Start button**. When you click the **Start button**, the **Start menu** appears. From the **Start menu**, select the All Programs option to display a list of available application programs. Click any one of the programs and it will start.

In the jargon of computing, starting and using an application is referred to as “running” it. You can run more than one program at the same time. Buttons on the taskbar show you which programs are running. To switch between one program and another, click one of the buttons on the taskbar.



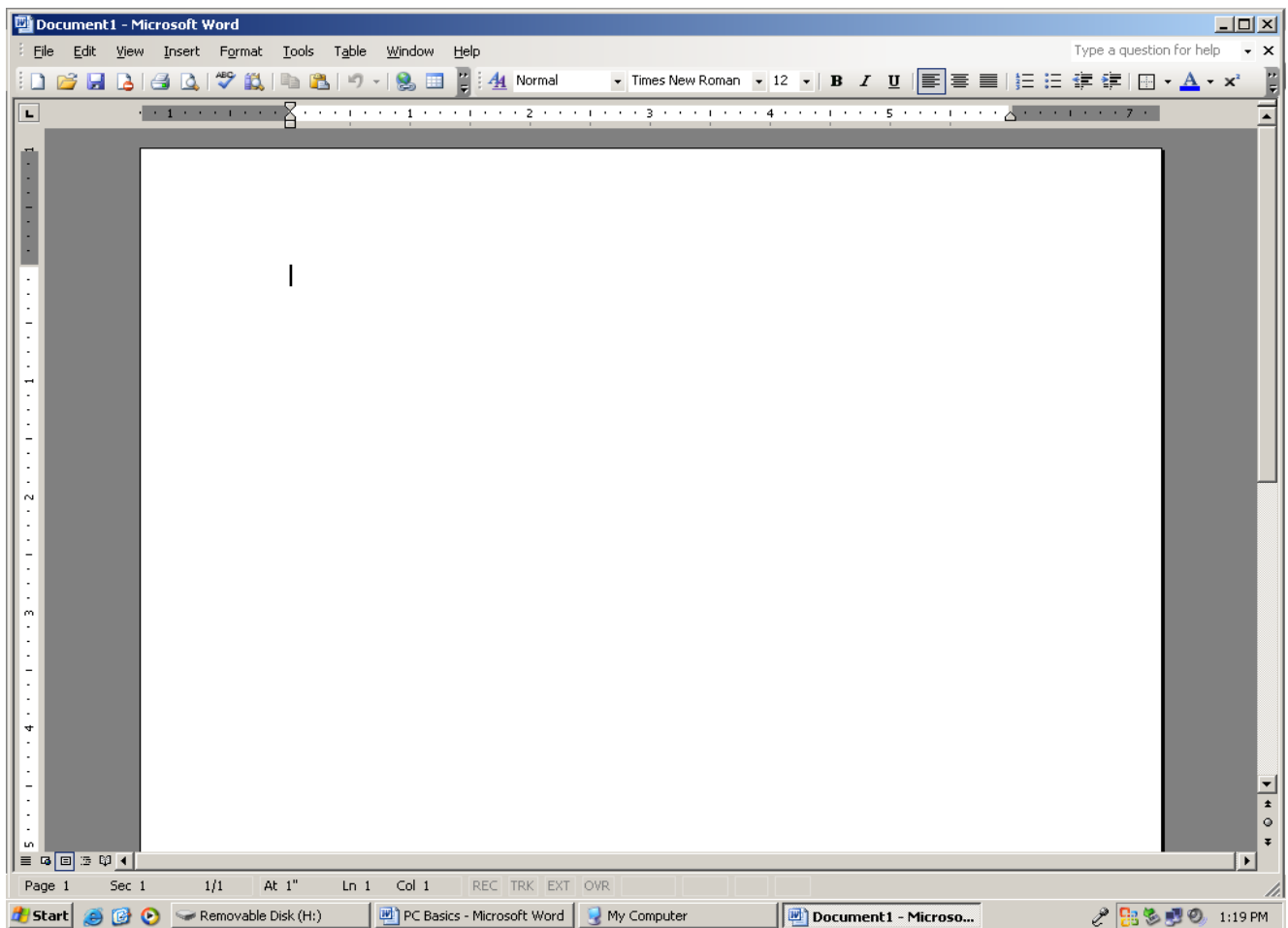


C. What's a window?

The Windows operating system gets its name because everything happens in rectangular viewing areas on the screen called “windows.” The title bar of the window indicates the program name and typically contains three control buttons. The **Minimize** button shrinks the window to a button on the taskbar. The **Maximize** button enlarges the window to fill the screen. The **Close** button closes the window and stops the program execution.

Typically, the windows in which your application programs appear include a menu bar that provides access to the commands that control the application.

Below the menu bar, you might see one or more toolbars containing small pictures, such as a folder, disk, printer, scissors, and clipboard. Each picture is a toolbar button that provides you with a shortcut for accomplishing a task. In addition, a **scroll bar** on the side of the window helps you move a document or graphic up or down within the window.



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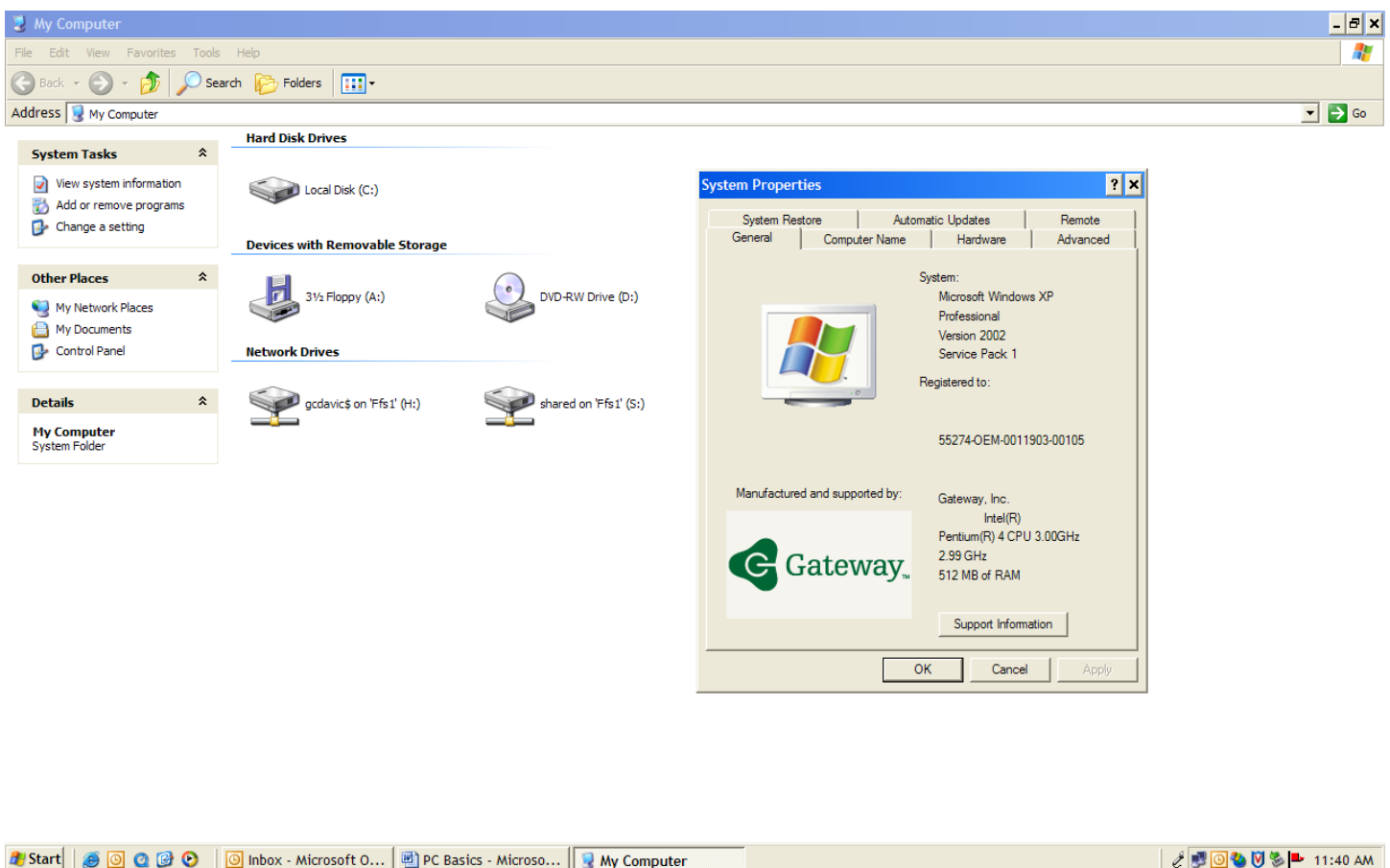
D. Which version of Windows do I have?

The operating system is the core piece of software on your PC. You work with it directly to start programs and organize the documents and other information stored on your computer. The operating system sets the standard for the on-screen controls used for all your application software.

The most current release of Windows is “Windows Vista.”

To lookup your system setting and parameters:

1. Click on My Computer
2. Click on “View System Information”





II. Introduction to Files

A. What is a file?

A **file** is a collection of data that has a name and is stored on a disk, tape, or CD. Virtually all information that you can access from your PC is stored as files. An **executable file** is a program module containing instructions that tell your PC how to perform specific tasks. A **data file** contains words, numbers, and pictures that you can manipulate.

B. How do I name a file?

As you create documents, graphs, pictures, your PC holds the data in memory. When you are ready for your PC to **save a file** by transferring it to more permanent disk storage, you must give it a unique name.

The maximum length of a file name is 255 characters. Spaces and numbers are allowed. The special characters “/ , < , > , \ , : , | , * and ?” are not allowed. Windows is not case sensitive, so the file name “Report” is the same as “report” or “REPORT”.

C. What is a file extension?

A file extension is a set of characters added to the end of a file name that indicates the file’s type or origin. Some examples are “.doc” for word processing documents, etc. A file extension is separated from the main file name with a period, but no spaces. File extensions have a maximum length of three characters.

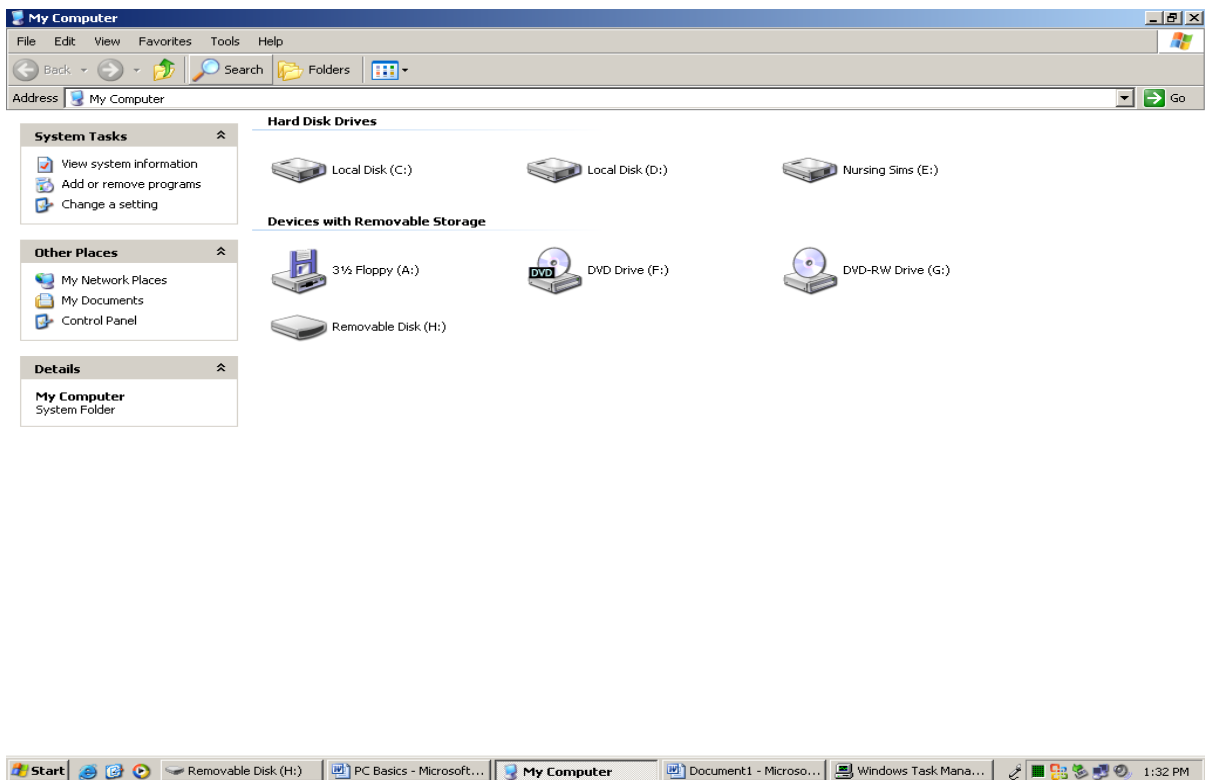
Each software application that you use typically has a **default file extension**. A file extension indicates the **file format** in which it is stored. File extensions are sometimes abbreviated versions of the file format names. Listed below are the more common file formats based on file contents.

File contents	Typical file extensions
Document	DOC TXT RTF DOCX
Database	MDB DBF ACCD
Spreadsheet	XLS XLSX
Graphics	BMP TIF GIF JPG PNG EPS PCX WMF
Sound	WAV MP3 MID WMA
Video	AVI MPG MOV WMV
Web Page	HTM HTML
Programs	EXE COM BAT
System Files	SYS DLL VBX OCX DAT INI
Compressed Files	ZIP RAR EXE (some .exe are self-extracting files)



D. How do I store a file?

You can store files on your PC's hard disk: of all of your storage devices, it has the highest storage capacity and quickest retrieval time. If you want to transport a file or backup your documents, you might choose to store it on a portable storage device such as a **floppy disk** or a **flash drive**. If you want to share files with others, you could share it on a network drive. Each storage device on your PC is identified by a unique **device letter**. The A: drive is always the first (or only) floppy drive, and the C: drive is always the first (or only) hard drive. You can view your storage device letters by selecting **My Computer**.

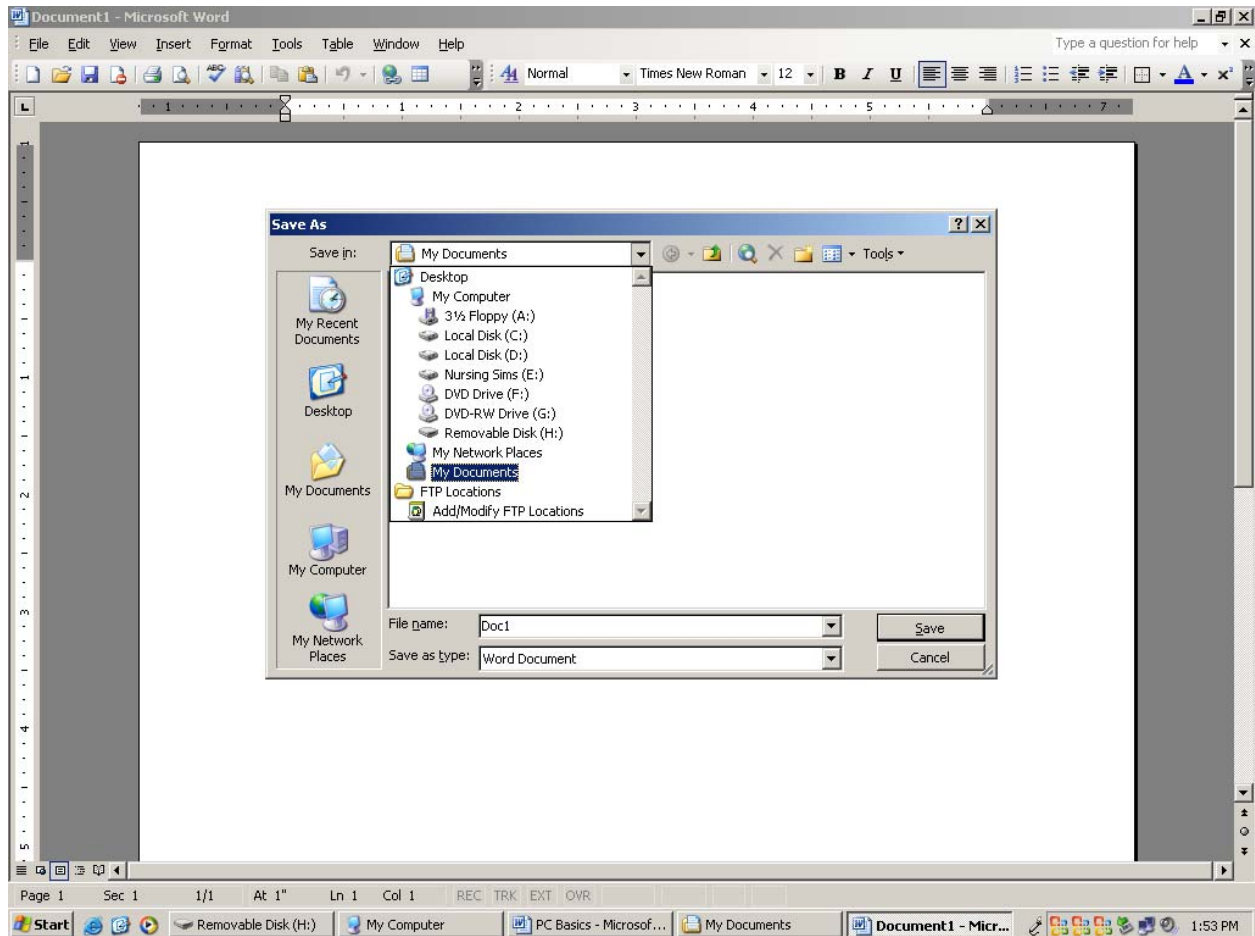


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(D. How do I store a file? continued)

To save or store a file, you select **File, Save** from the **Menu Bar** or click on the disk icon on the tool bar. Click on the pull down menu to display all of your storage locations and select **device** you want to save to, input desired **file name** and click on the **Save** button.





E. Files, shortcuts, and junctions (vista)

You may see icons on the desktop with a small white box containing an arrow in the bottom left corner. These are not really files; they are **shortcuts**. Shortcuts are nothing more than an arrow that points to an actual file. Shortcuts allow a user to organize files in different ways without having to make duplicate copies of the same file. Shortcuts are typically used with applications for quick access to a program. For example, the **Start Menu** program list is entirely composed of shortcuts. A common procedure for active computer users is to create shortcut icons of their favorite or most used programs on the desktop for easy access.

Junctions are a new concept introduced with Windows Vista. Junctions are very similar to shortcuts but are more like intersections of folder-path directories. Junctions allow a user to create common links to the same folder from different destination paths. Junctions are only used for **Backward-Compatibility** of pre-Vista applications; these applications store files in a user based directory system that changed with Microsoft Vista.

III. Introduction to Common Windows Applications

A. Microsoft Office 2007

- a) Microsoft Word 2007 - *Creating papers and documents*
- b) Microsoft Excel 2007 - *Creating spreadsheets and graphs*
- c) Microsoft PowerPoint 2007 - *Creating slideshows and presentations*
- d) Microsoft Access 2007 - *Creating databases*
- e) Microsoft Outlook 2007 - *Advanced email application*

B. Microsoft Internet Explorer

- a) Browsing - *clicking, surfing & security*
- b) Bookmarks - *favorite sites, bookmarking procedures & what not to do*
- c) Printing - *printing websites can be tricky*

C. Microsoft Windows Media Player/Center - used for playing music and video