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Study material.

Special keys, Keyboard shortcuts, Function keys
and Hotkeys

Special Keys

Some keys on the keyboard have specific functions which you may not be familiar with.

Tab - move between items or move forward characters (depending on the task).

Shift - when the Shift key is pressed at the same time as a letter key, an upper case version of that letter is produced. For other non-letter keys, this action produces the character that is above the main character on the key.

Alt Gr - used on international keyboards to access special characters on keys where there are more than two characters on the key. Press it down at the same time as the letter/character key to produce the special character shown on the bottom right side of the key.

Ctrl - holding down the Ctrl key while selecting

items allows you to select several items at once. The Ctrl key is also used in many keyboard shortcuts.

Scroll Lock - in the past, when Scroll Lock was selected, pressing the arrow keys resulted in scrolling through a page of text rather than moving the cursor line by line. These days, the functionality has been replaced by the on-screen scroll bar, so the Scroll Lock key is almost never used and most recent applications don't recognize it.

Insert - pressing this key switches between two modes when you are typing. In the first mode, what you type appears before the cursor and pushes any text that comes after it to the right. In the second mode, any text that you type successively replaces any text that is to the right of the cursor.

Num Lock - When the Num Lock key is pressed, the numbers on the number pad of the keyboard are activated. When the Num Lock key is not pressed, it's the arrows and special keys on the number pad which are active. The number pad is a block of

numbers that looks like an upside down telephone keypad. On desktop computer keyboards it is found on the right hand side of the keyboard. On laptops, the number pad is a special feature that is associated with regular keys on the keyboard. The numbers corresponding to the number pad can usually be seen on the bottom edge of other keys (usually ones on the right side of the keyboard).

Caps Lock - when you press the Caps Lock key, you activate a feature that lets you type upper case letters continuously without having to press the Shift key at the same time. To go back to typing lower case letters, press the Caps Lock key again. You should use Caps Lock instead of shift if you want to type more than one or two upper case letters in a row. Numbers and special keys are not affected by the Caps Lock key.

Print Screen - pressing the Print Screen key captures an image of your entire screen. For more on this feature see the section PrintScreen under Other useful things...

Keyboard shortcuts

Keyboard shortcuts are combinations of keys on the keyboard that when pressed down at the same time quickly activate a specific functionality. The same functionality can usually also be activated using the mouse by selecting the functionality in a menu, but using the equivalent keyboard shortcut keys is much faster. The most frequently used shortcuts are listed below.

For a full list of shortcut keys in Windows XP see <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/301583/en-us>.

System level shortcuts

Ctrl-Alt-Del - close an application or turn off your computer (use the shortcut once to select an application or process you want to end, twice to shut down the computer).

Alt-Tab - change between windows that are open on the desktop.

Shift-Del - delete an item permanently (this item does NOT go to the Recycle Bin).

Application shortcuts

These shortcuts are particularly useful in text

processing and file management activities.

Ctrl-S - save

Ctrl-O - open

Ctrl-N - new

Ctrl-C - copy

Ctrl-V - paste

Ctrl-X - cut

Ctrl-Z - undo

Ctrl-A - select all

Ctrl-I - make italic (this is italic)

Ctrl-B - make bold (this is bold)

Ctrl-U - underline (this is underlined)

Ctrl-Right Arrow - move the cursor to the start of the next word

Ctrl-Left Arrow - move the cursor to the start of the previous word

Ctrl-Down Arrow - move the cursor to the start of the next paragraph

Ctrl-Up Arrow - move the cursor to the start of the previous paragraph

Exercise: open any text editor (for example

NotePad) and write a short sentence. Use the Select All shortcut to select all of the text, then the Copy shortcut to copy it. Move to the next line in your text using the keyboard, and then use the Paste shortcut to paste the text that you just copied. You should now see your original sentence twice in the document. Highlight the last word in your sentence using the mouse and then use the Cut shortcut to remove it. Now use the Undo shortcut to put it back. Use the Save shortcut to save your file. You don't have to actually save the file, just make sure that you can activate the option to save the file using the shortcut.

The Function keys

There are certain keys on your keyboard that act as functions - this means that when you press them no character is produced but something happens. Some common ones are:

Changing the position of the cursor

Page Up - moves the cursor up one page length, or to the top of the page if the document is short.

Page Down - moves the cursor down one page length, or to the bottom of the page if the document is short.

Home - places the cursor at the beginning of the line in which the cursor is currently positioned.

End - places the cursor at the end of the line in which the cursor is currently positioned.

Note: for Page Up and Page Down, if your cursor is in the middle of a page, using these keys will move the cursor to the middle of the next/previous page.

Actions (copied from Microsoft guidelines)

F1 - display help

F2 - rename a selected item

F3 - search for a file or folder

F5 - update (refresh) an active window. This function is particularly useful in internet browsers.

Note: the functions associated with function keys can change between applications, and also between operating systems. Therefore, pressing F1 in Windows will not necessarily do the same thing as pressing it on a Mac.

For more details on these keys as well as others

such as SysReq, see the corresponding entries in the Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/>) which you can access searching for keyboard (computing).

Exercise: open an application such as Windows Explorer and press the F1 key.

Hotkeys

Hotkeys are combinations of keys that when pressed at the same time let you quickly access/open menus using only your keyboard. A hotkey consists of the Alt key combined with another key (usually a letter). This second key is specific to each menu and is usually indicated by an underlined letter in the menu name. In the example below, the hotkey for the File menu would be Alt-F, for the Tools menu Alt-T, for the Styles menu Alt-S and for the Help menu Alt-H. When you press the hotkeys, the corresponding menu is opened.