

# easy

# Computer Basics

Windows Vista® Edition

See it done. Do it yourself.

Covers  
Windows  
**Vista SP1**



# EASY COMPUTER BASICS, WINDOWS VISTA® EDITION

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# INTRODUCTION TO EASY COMPUTER BASICS, WINDOWS VISTA EDITION

1

Computers don't have to be scary or difficult. Computers can be easy—if you know what to do.

That's where this book comes in. *Easy Computer Basics, Windows Vista Edition* is an illustrated, step-by-step guide to setting up and using your new computer. You'll learn how computers work, how to connect all the pieces and parts together, and how to start using them. All you have to do is look at the pictures and follow the instructions. Pretty easy.

After you learn the basics, I'll show you how to do lots of useful stuff with your new PC. You'll learn how to use Windows Vista to copy and delete files, use Microsoft Word to write letters and memos, use Windows Mail to send and receive email messages, and use Internet Explorer to search for information on the Internet. We'll even cover some fun stuff, including listening to music and working with digital photographs.

If you're worried about how to keep your PC up and running, we'll cover some basic system maintenance, too. And, just to be safe, I'll show you how to protect your computer when you're online—against viruses, spam, spyware, and computer attacks. It's not hard to do.

To help you find the information you need, I've organized *Easy Computer Basics, Windows Vista Edition* into 13 parts.

Part 1, "Understanding How Your Computer Works," describes all the pieces and parts of a typical computer system. Read this section to find out all about hard drives, keyboards, sound cards, and the like.

Part 2, "Setting Up and Using a Desktop PC," shows you how to connect together all the pieces and parts of a typical desktop PC and get your new computer system up and running.

Part 3, "Setting Up and Using a Notebook PC," covers the basics of using a notebook PC—which, as you might suspect, are somewhat different from using a desktop model.

Part 4, "Using Microsoft Windows Vista," introduces the backbone of your entire system—the Microsoft Windows Vista operating system—including how it works and how to use it.

Part 5, "Working with Files and Folders," shows you how to manage all the computer files you create—by moving, copying, renaming, and deleting them.

Part 6, "Using Microsoft Word," shows you how to use Microsoft's popular word processor to create letters and other documents.

Part 7, "Connecting to the Internet," is all about getting online and doing stuff when you get there. You'll learn how to set up a new Internet connection, connect to public Wi-Fi hotspots, surf the Web, send and receive emails, and use instant messaging programs. You'll even learn how to search for information on the Internet, view YouTube videos, shop online, and bid on eBay auctions!

Part 8, "Setting Up a Wireless Home Network," helps you connect all the computers in your house into a wireless network and share a broadband Internet connection.

Part 9, "Playing Music and Movies," shows you how to download and play digital music files, how to listen to CDs on your PC, how to burn your own audio CDs, how to copy songs from your PC to your Apple iPod, and how to watch DVDs on your computer screen.

Part 10, "Working with Digital Photos," helps you connect a digital camera to your PC and edit your digital photos using Vista's Windows Photo Gallery.

Part 11, "Adding New Devices to Your System," shows you how to upgrade your computer system with new internal and external peripherals.

Part 12, "Protecting Your Computer," is all about stopping spam, viruses, spyware, and the like.

Part 13, "Taking Care of Your Computer," shows you how to keep your PC running smoothly, how to back up your important data, and how to recover from serious crashes. And that's not all. At the back of the book you'll find a glossary of common computer terms—so you can understand what all the techie types are talking about.

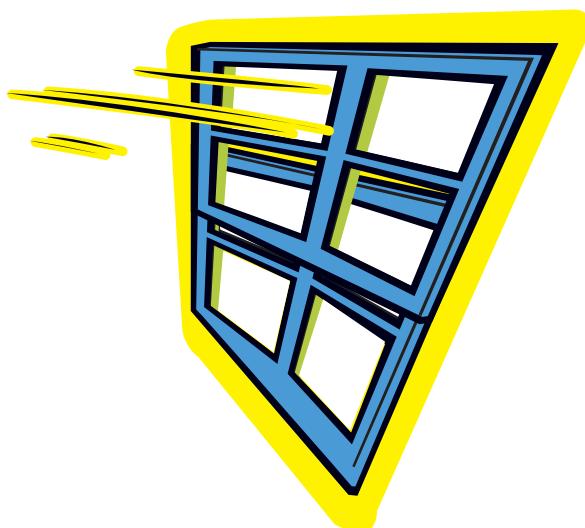
So, is using a computer really this easy? You bet—just follow the simple step-by-step instructions, and you'll be computing like a pro!



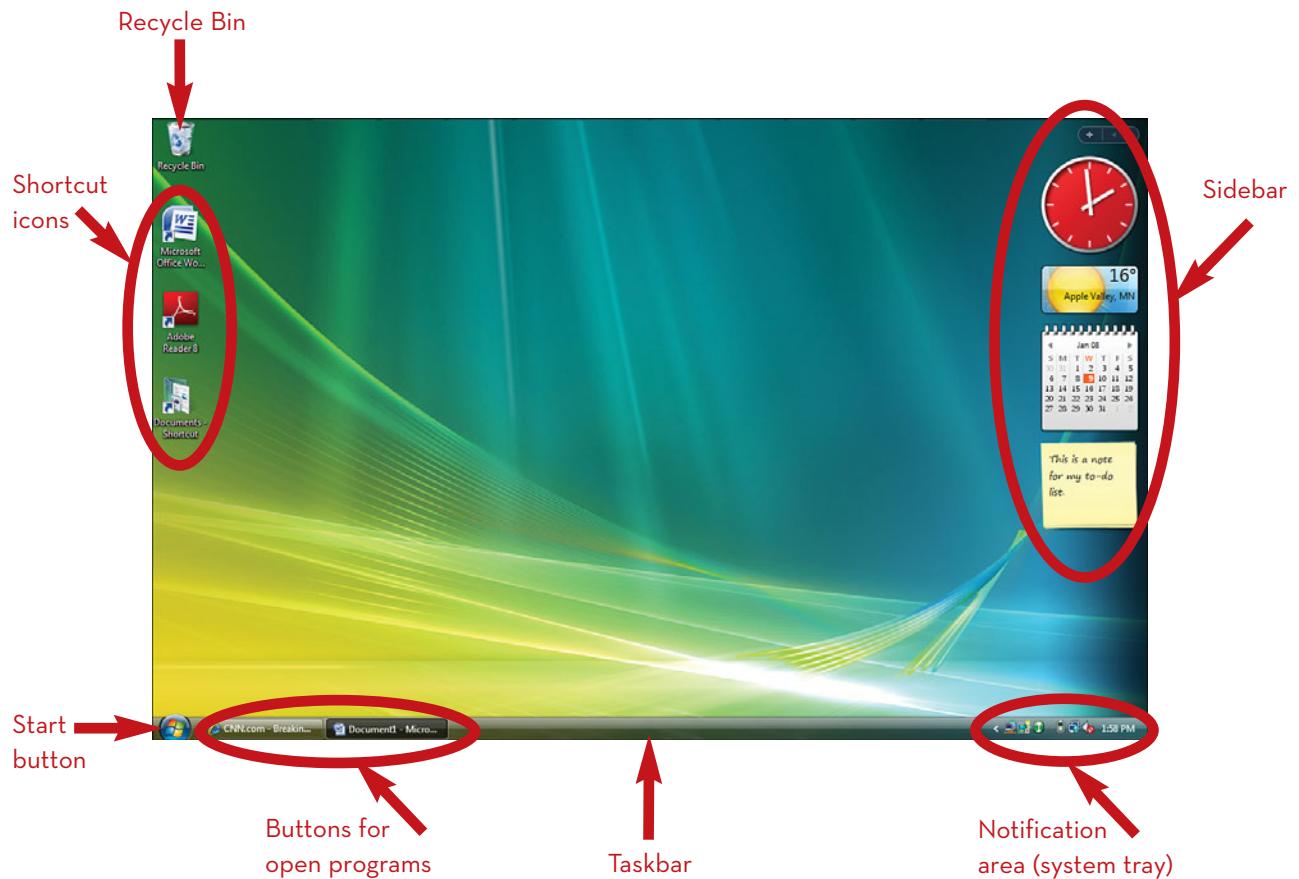
## USING MICROSOFT WINDOWS VISTA

Microsoft Windows Vista is a piece of software called an *operating system*. An operating system does what its name implies—it operates your computer system, working in the background every time you turn on your PC.

Equally important, Windows is what you see when you first turn on your computer, after everything turns on and boots up. The desktop that fills your screen is part of Windows, as is the Taskbar at the bottom of the screen and the big menu that pops up when you click the Start button.



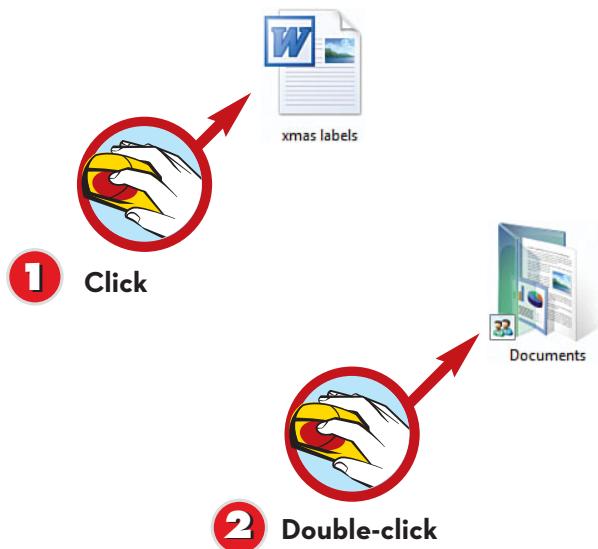
# EXPLORING THE WINDOWS VISTA DESKTOP



## USING THE MOUSE

To use Windows efficiently, you must master a few simple operations, all of which you perform with your mouse. Most mouse operations include pointing and clicking. Normal clicking uses the left mouse button; however, some operations require that you click the right mouse button, instead.

*Start*



- 1 To single-click, position the cursor over the onscreen item and click the left mouse button.
- 2 To double-click, position the cursor over the onscreen item and click the left mouse button twice in rapid succession.

*Continued*



**TIP**

**Click to Select**

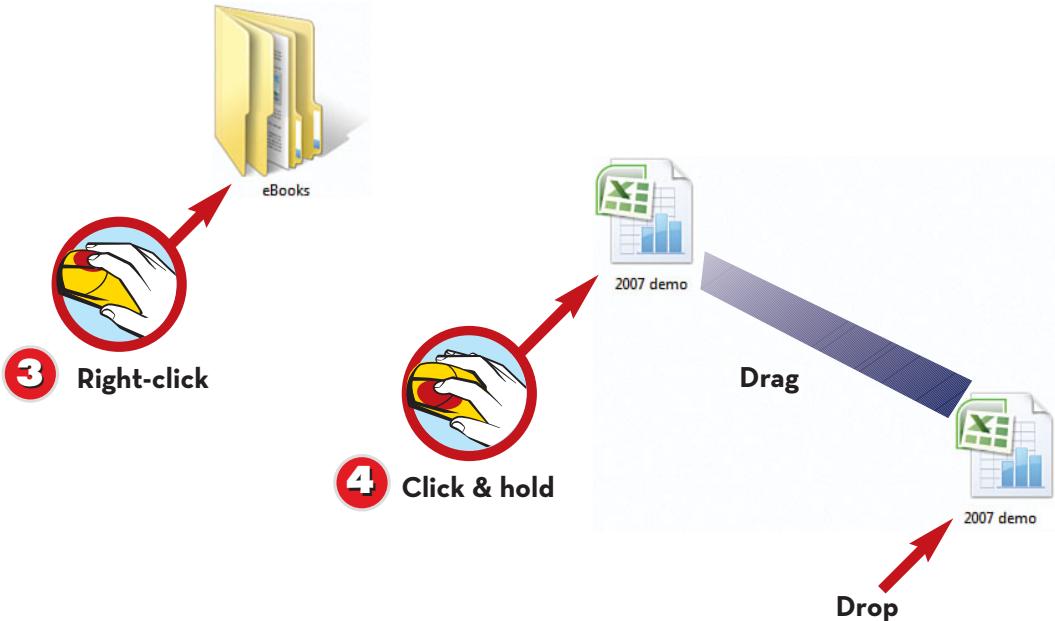
Pointing and clicking is an effective way to select icons, menu items, directories, and files.



**TIP**

**Hovering**

Another common mouse operation is *hovering*, where you hold the cursor over an onscreen item without pressing either of the mouse buttons. For example, when you hover your cursor over an icon or menu item, Windows displays a *ToolTip* that tells you a little about the selected item.



- 3** To right-click, position the cursor over the onscreen item and then click the *right* mouse button.
- 4** To drag and drop an item from one location to another, position the cursor over the item, click and hold the left mouse button, drag the item to a new position, and then release the mouse button.

*End*



#### TIP

##### Pop-Up Menus

Many items in Windows feature a context-sensitive pop-up menu. You access this menu by right-clicking the item. (When in doubt, right-click the item and see what pops up!)



#### TIP

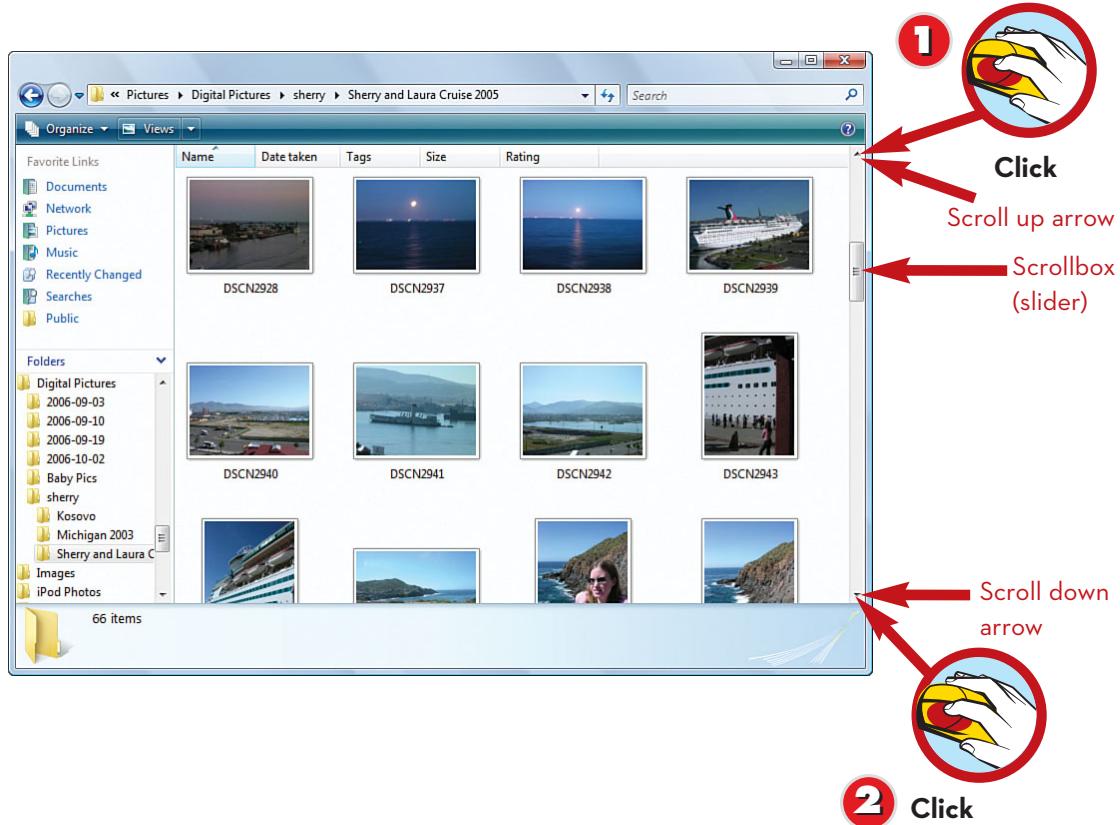
##### Moving Files

You can use dragging and dropping to move files from one folder to another or to delete files by dragging them onto the Recycle Bin icon.

## SCROLLING A WINDOW

Many windows contain more information than can be displayed in the window at once. When you have a long document or web page, only the first part of the document or page is displayed in the window. To view the rest of the document or page, you have to scroll down through the window, using the various parts of the scrollbar.

*Start*



- 1 Click the **up arrow** on the window's scrollbar to scroll up one line at a time.
- 2 Click the **down arrow** on the window's scrollbar to scroll down one line at a time.

*End*



### TIP

#### Other Ways to Scroll

To move to a specific place in a long document, use your mouse to grab the scrollbox (also called a slider) and drag it to a new position. You can also click the scrollbar between the scrollbox and the end arrow, which scrolls you one screen at a time.



## MAXIMIZING, MINIMIZING, AND CLOSING A WINDOW

After you've opened a window, you can maximize it to display full-screen. You can also minimize it so that it disappears from the desktop and resides as a button on the Windows Taskbar, and you can close it completely.



- 1** To maximize the window, click the **Maximize** button.
- 2** To minimize the window, click the **Minimize** button.
- 3** To close the window completely, click the **Close** button.

*End*



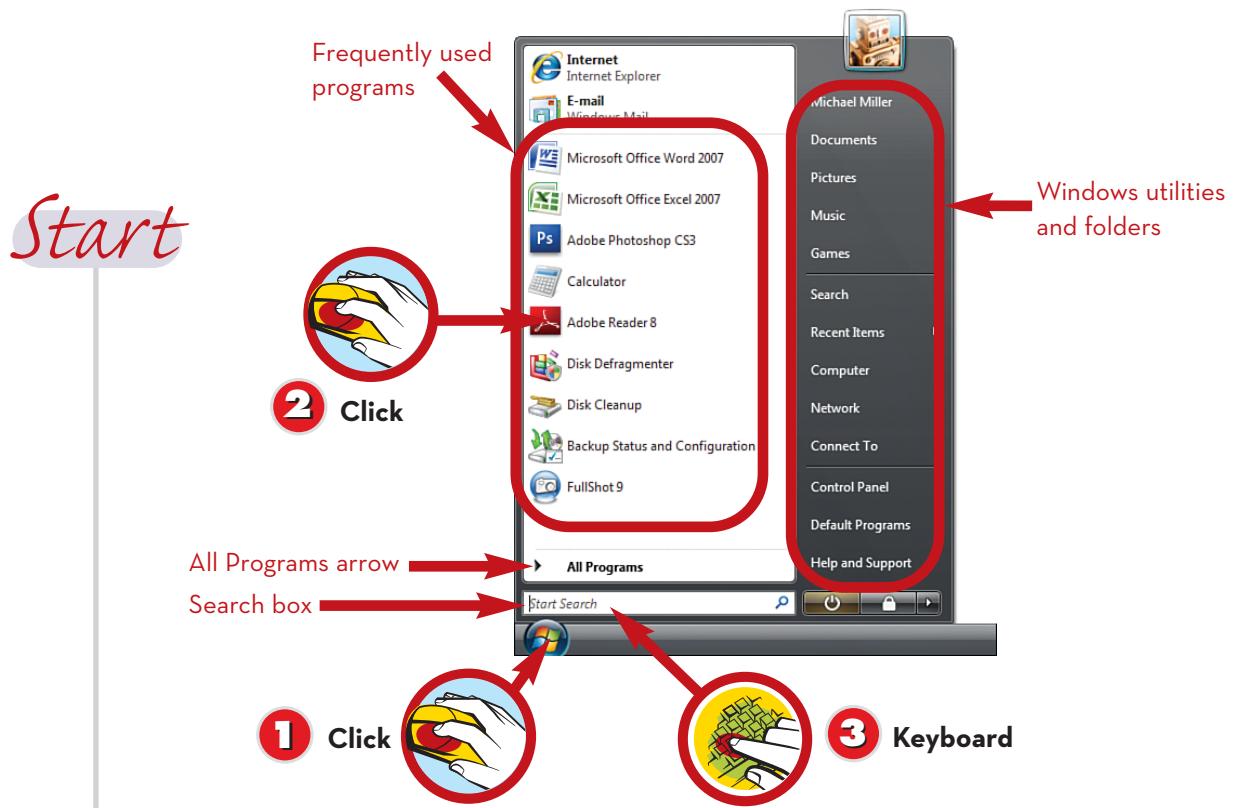
### TIP

#### Restoring a Window

If a window is already maximized, the Maximize button changes to a Restore Down button. When you click the Restore Down button, the window resumes its previous (premaximized) dimensions.

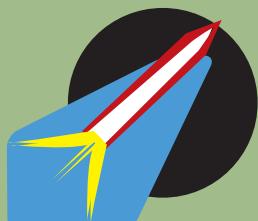
## USING THE WINDOWS START MENU

All the software programs and utilities on your computer are accessed via the Windows Start menu, which consists of two columns of icons. Your most frequently used programs are listed in the left column; basic Windows utilities and folders are listed in the right column. To open a specific program or folder, just click the menu icon.



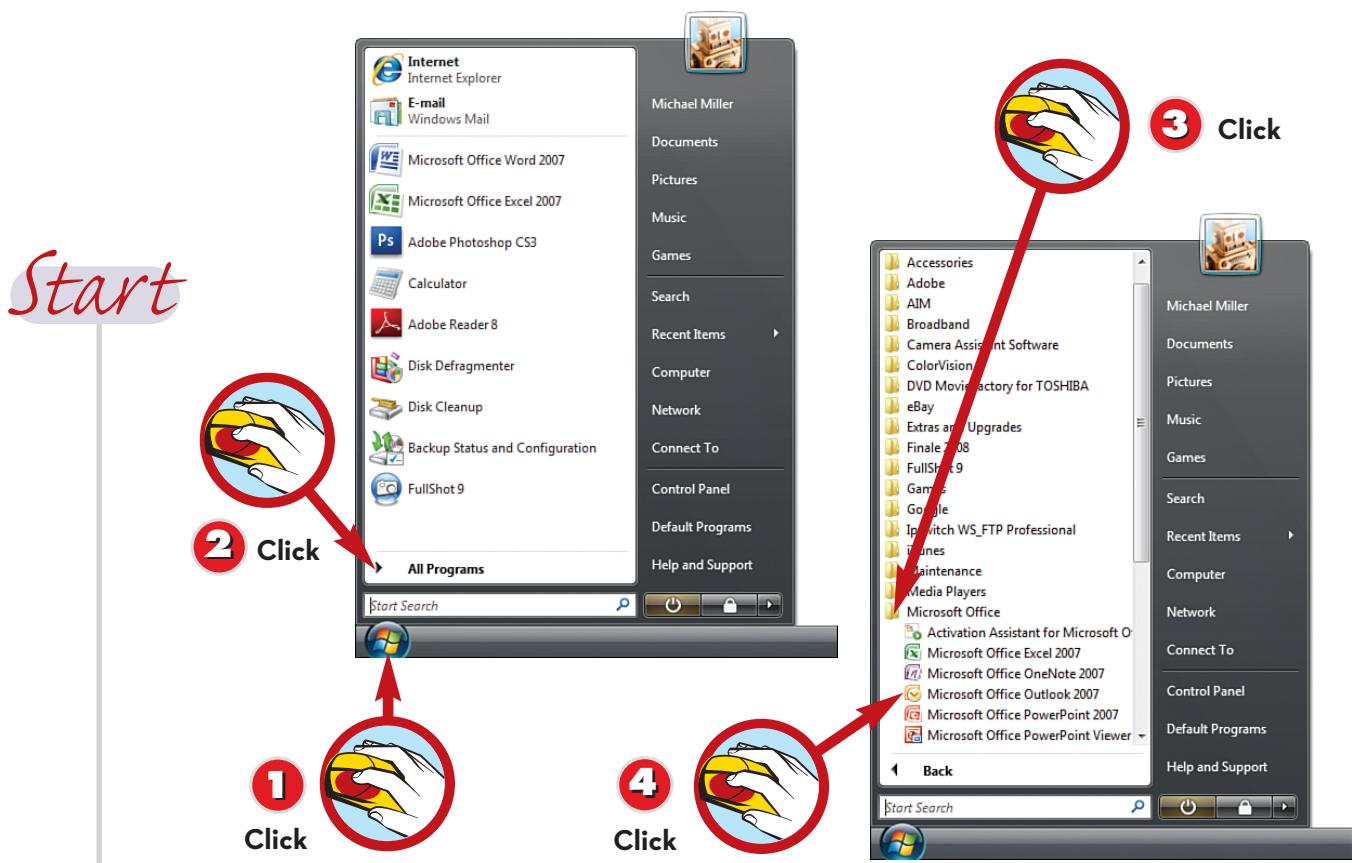
- 1 Click the round **Start** button to open the Start menu.
- 2 Click any menu item to launch a program or open a folder.
- 3 Alternately, you can enter a program name into the **Search** box to search for that program.

*End*



# OPENING A PROGRAM

To view all the programs installed on your PC, open the Start menu and click the All Programs arrow. This displays a new menu called the Programs menu. From here, you can access various programs, organized by type and title or manufacturer.



- 1 Click the **Start** button to display the Start menu.
- 2 Click the **All Programs** icon to display the Programs menu.
- 3 Click any folder to expand that item and show its contents.
- 4 Click the icon for the program you want to launch.

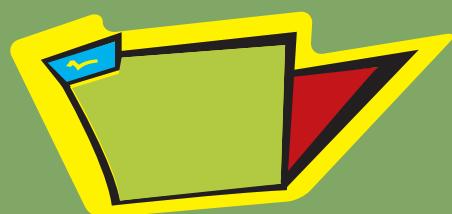
*End*



## TIP

### More Programs in the Folder

Most programs on the Programs menu are stored in folders. Click any folder to expand it and see the programs stored within.



## SWITCHING BETWEEN PROGRAMS

After you've launched a few programs, you can easily switch between one open program and another by using one of two different keyboard shortcuts. The Windows Flip method (**Alt + Tab**) displays icons of all open programs; the Flip 3D method (**Windows + Tab**) displays a three-dimensional stack of your open programs.

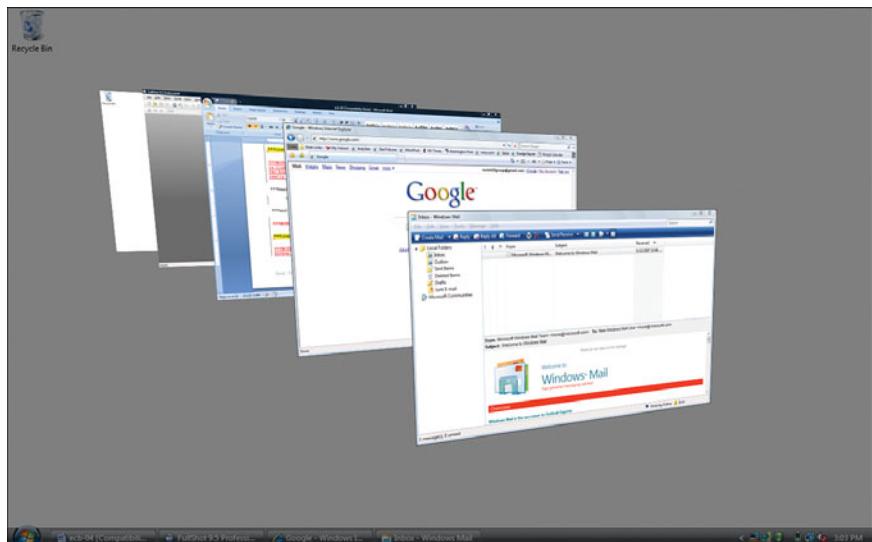
*Start*



**1** **Alt + Tab**



**2** **Windows + Tab**



- 1** To display thumbnails of all open programs, press **Alt + Tab**; repeat to cycle through and select a program.
- 2** To display a 3D stack of all open programs, press **Windows + Tab**; repeat to cycle through and select a program.

*End*



### TIP

#### Button Switching

When a program or document is open, a button for that item appears in the Windows Taskbar. You can quickly switch to any program or document by clicking that item's Taskbar button.



### NOTE

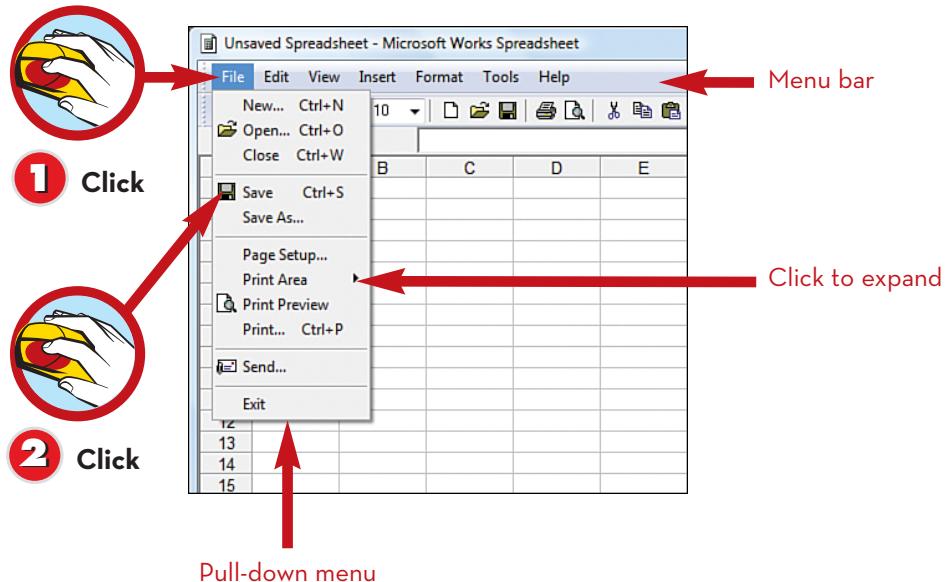
#### Flip 3D

The Flip 3D feature is not available in the Home Basic version of Windows Vista or if your hardware isn't capable of running Vista's Aero interface.

## USING MENUS

Most Windows programs and utilities use a set of pull-down menus to store all the commands and operations you can perform. The menus are aligned across the top of the window, just below the title bar, in what is called a menu bar. You open (or pull down) a menu by clicking the menu's name; you select a menu item by clicking it with your mouse.

*Start*



- 1 Click the menu's name to pull down the menu.
- 2 Click the menu item to select it.

*End*



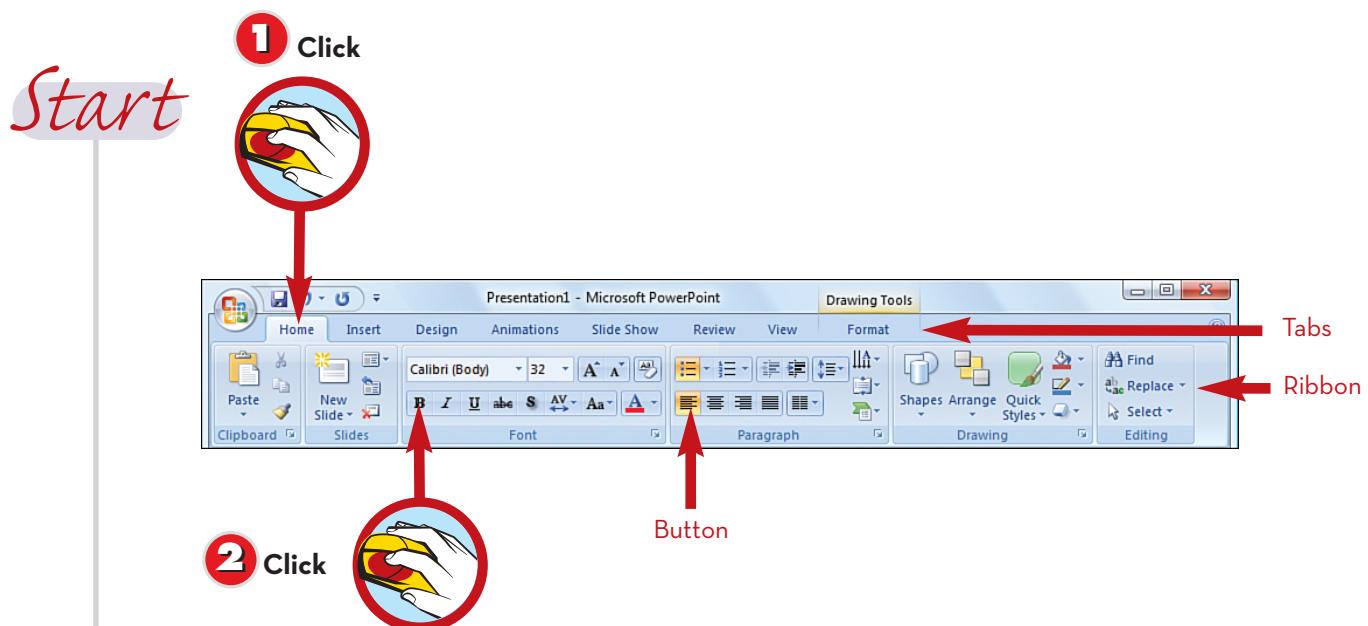
### TIP

#### Not All Items Are Available

If an item in a menu, toolbar, or dialog box is dimmed (or grayed), that means it isn't available for the current task.

## USING TOOLBARS AND RIBBONS

Some Windows programs put the most frequently used operations on one or more *toolbars* or *ribbons*, typically located just below the menu bar. A toolbar looks like a row of buttons, each with a small picture (called an *icon*) and maybe a bit of text. You activate the associated command or operation by clicking the button with your mouse.



- 1 Click a tab to select that particular ribbon.
- 2 Click a ribbon/toolbar button to select that operation.



### TIP

#### Long Toolbars

If the toolbar is too long to display fully on your screen, you'll see a right arrow at the far-right side of the toolbar. Click this arrow to display the buttons that aren't currently visible.



### NOTE

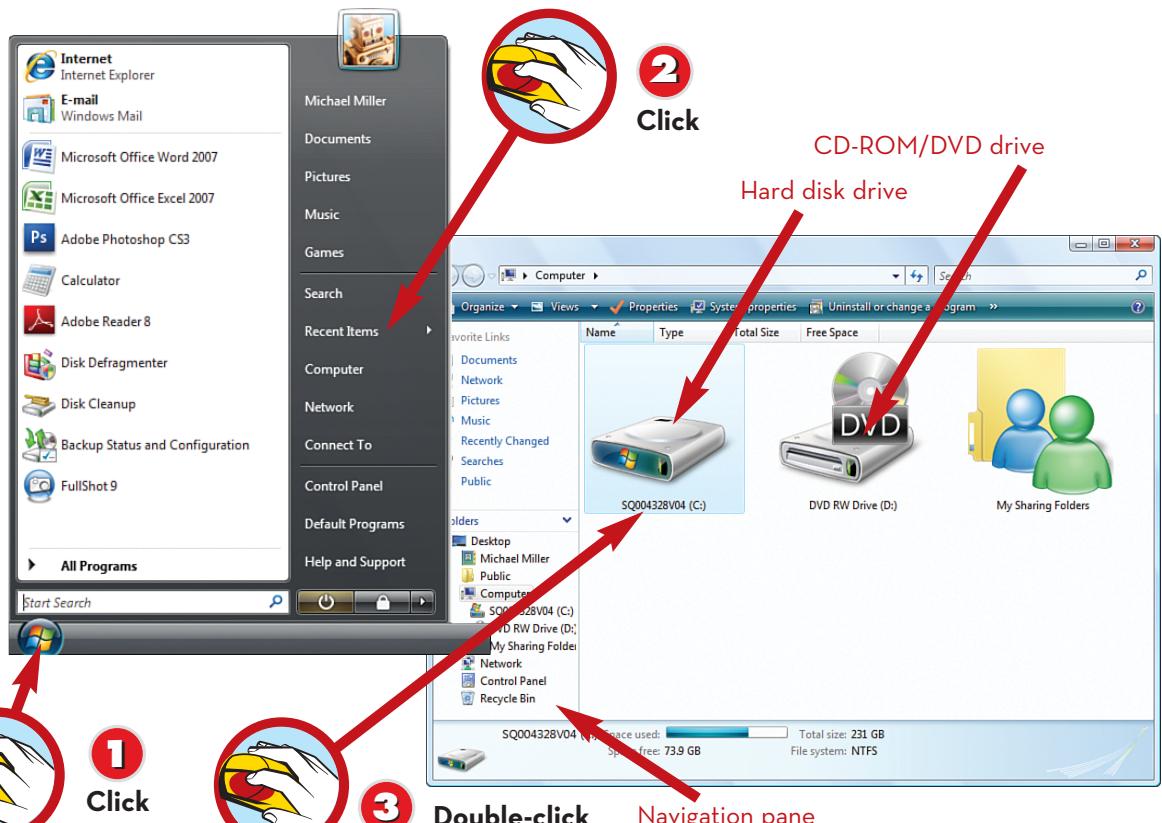
#### Ribbons

The ribbon interface is available only in some newer applications, such as Microsoft Office 2007. Older applications use the traditional toolbar interface.

# MANAGING PC RESOURCES WITH COMPUTER EXPLORER

The Windows Computer Explorer folder lets you access each major component of your system and perform basic maintenance functions. For example, you can use Computer Explorer to “open” the contents of your hard disk and then copy, move, and delete individual files.

*Start*



- 1 Click the **Start** button to display the Start menu.
- 2 Click **Computer**.
- 3 Double-click any icon to view its contents.

*End*



## TIP

### View Drive Contents

To view the contents of a specific drive, double-click the drive’s icon. You’ll see a list of folders and files located on that drive; to view the contents of any folder, double-click the icon for that folder.



## TIP

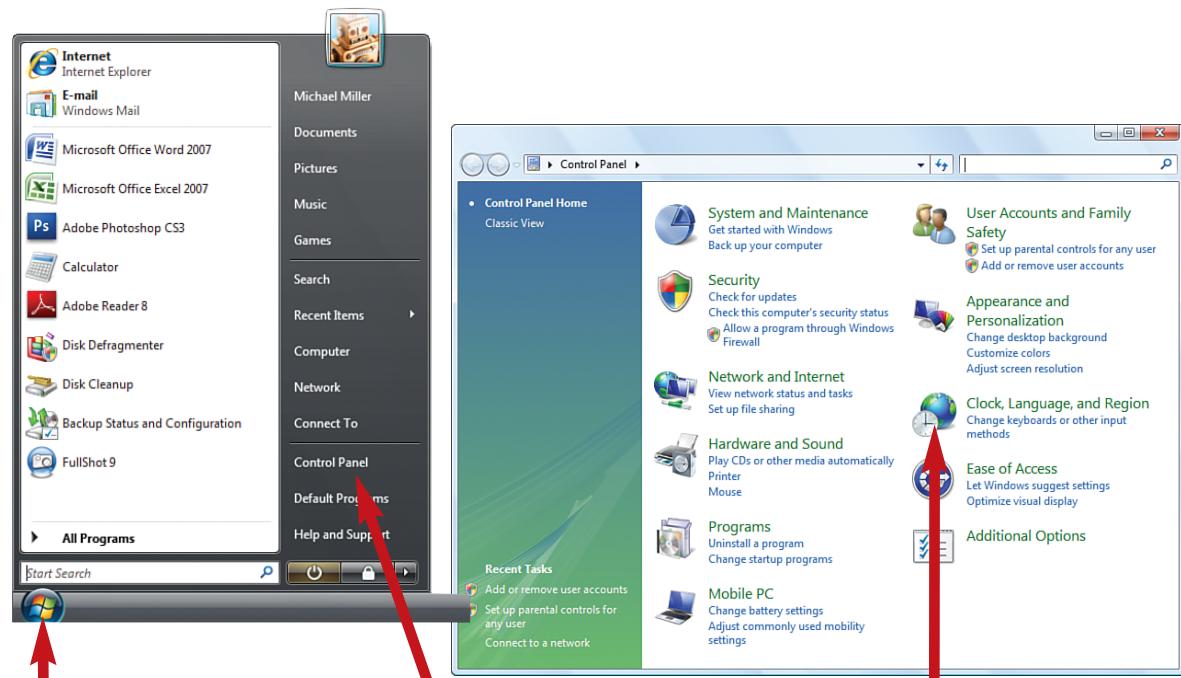
### Explore the Navigation Pane

Every folder in Windows Vista features a Navigation pane on the left side of the window that contains a list of Favorite Links and a “tree” view of all the drives, folders, and subfolders on your computer. Click any item to view its contents in the main folder window.

## MANAGING WINDOWS WITH THE CONTROL PANEL

The Windows Control Panel is used to manage most (but not all) of the Windows configuration settings. The Control Panel contains links to individual utilities that let you adjust and configure various system properties.

*Start*



- 1 Click the **Start** button to display the Start menu.
- 2 Click **Control Panel** to open the Control Panel.
- 3 Click the link for the category you want to configure.

*Continued*

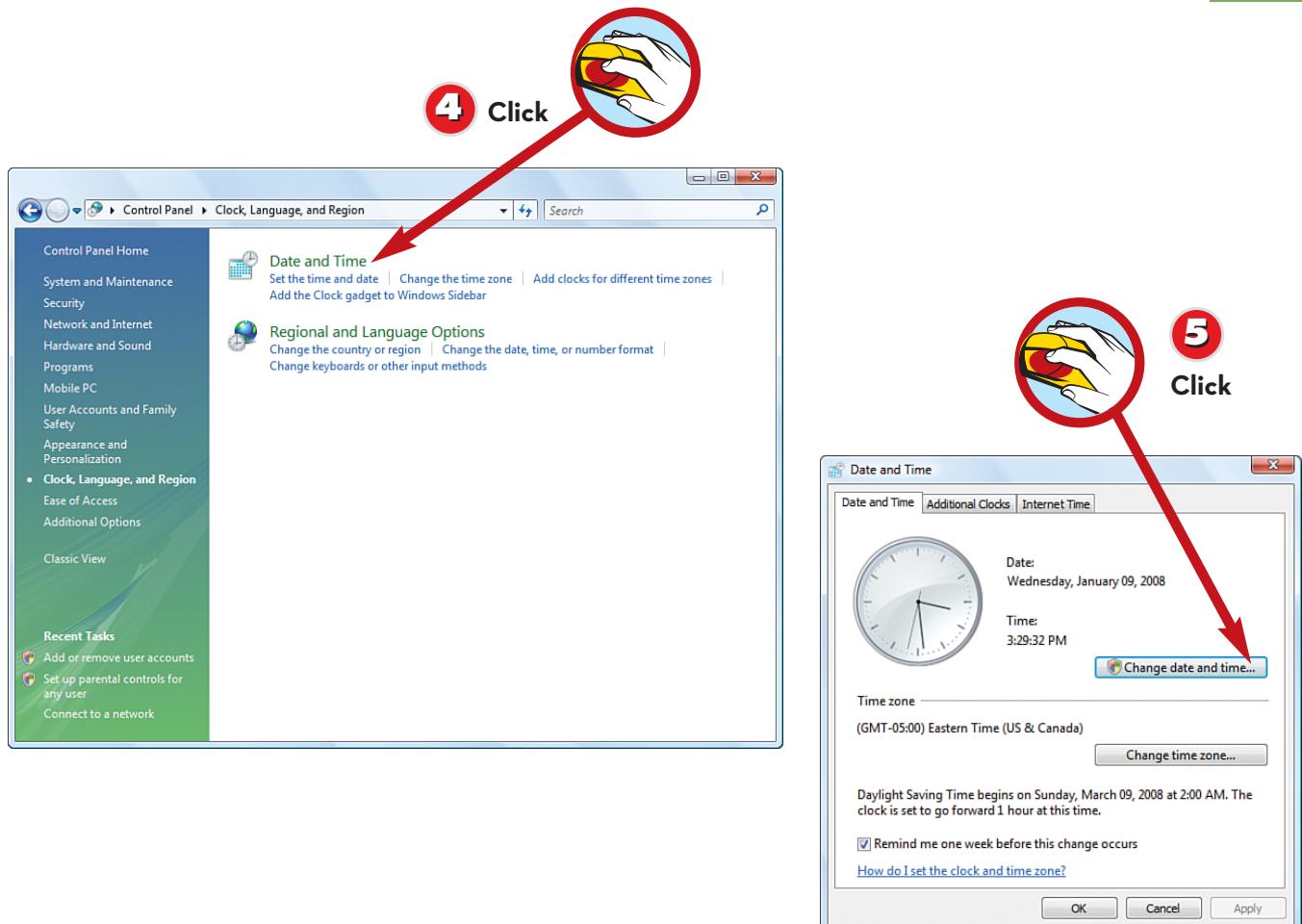


### TIP

#### Control Panel Categories

Individual settings within the Control Panel are organized by major category—System and Maintenance, Security, Network and Internet, and so on. You first have to select a specific category to access all its related settings.





- 4** Click the task you want to perform.
- 5** Configure the settings for that task using the selected utility's dialog box.

*End*



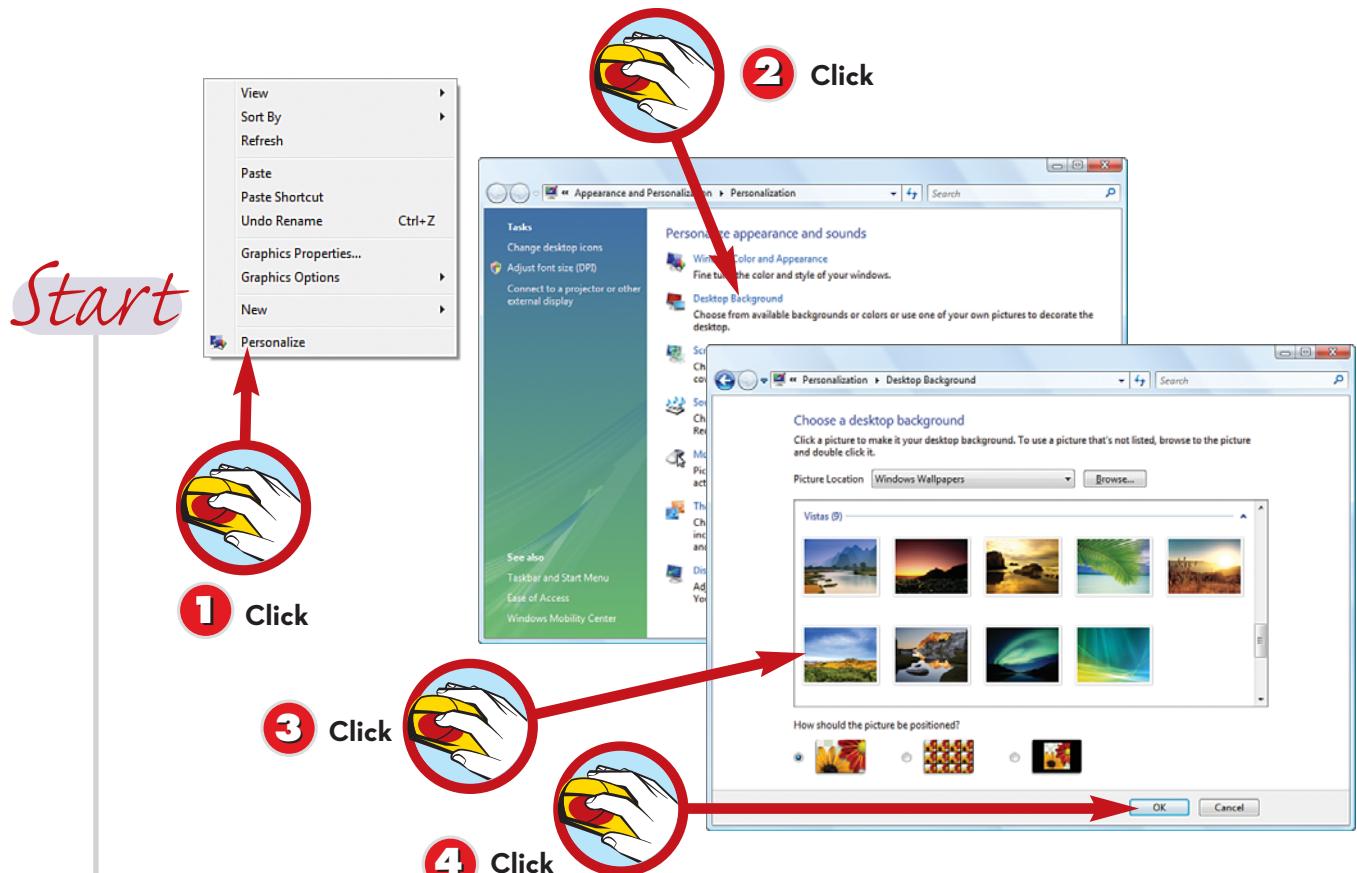
#### TIP

#### Configuring Individual Settings

When you open a configuration utility, you'll see a dialog box for that particular item. You can then change the individual settings within that dialog box; click the **OK** button to register your new settings.

## PERSONALIZING THE DESKTOP BACKGROUND

Most users like to personalize the look of the Windows desktop. Windows Vista includes a number of built-in desktop wallpapers; you can also choose your own photo or graphic for your desktop background.



- 1 Right-click anywhere on the desktop and click **Personalize**.
- 2 Click **Desktop Background**.
- 3 When the next window opens, select one of the Windows built-in backgrounds from the list.
- 4 Click **OK**.

*End*



### TIP

#### Position Your Picture

To determine how the image file is displayed on your desktop, select one of the options from the How Should the Picture Be Positioned? section: **Fit to Screen**, **Tile**, or **Center**.



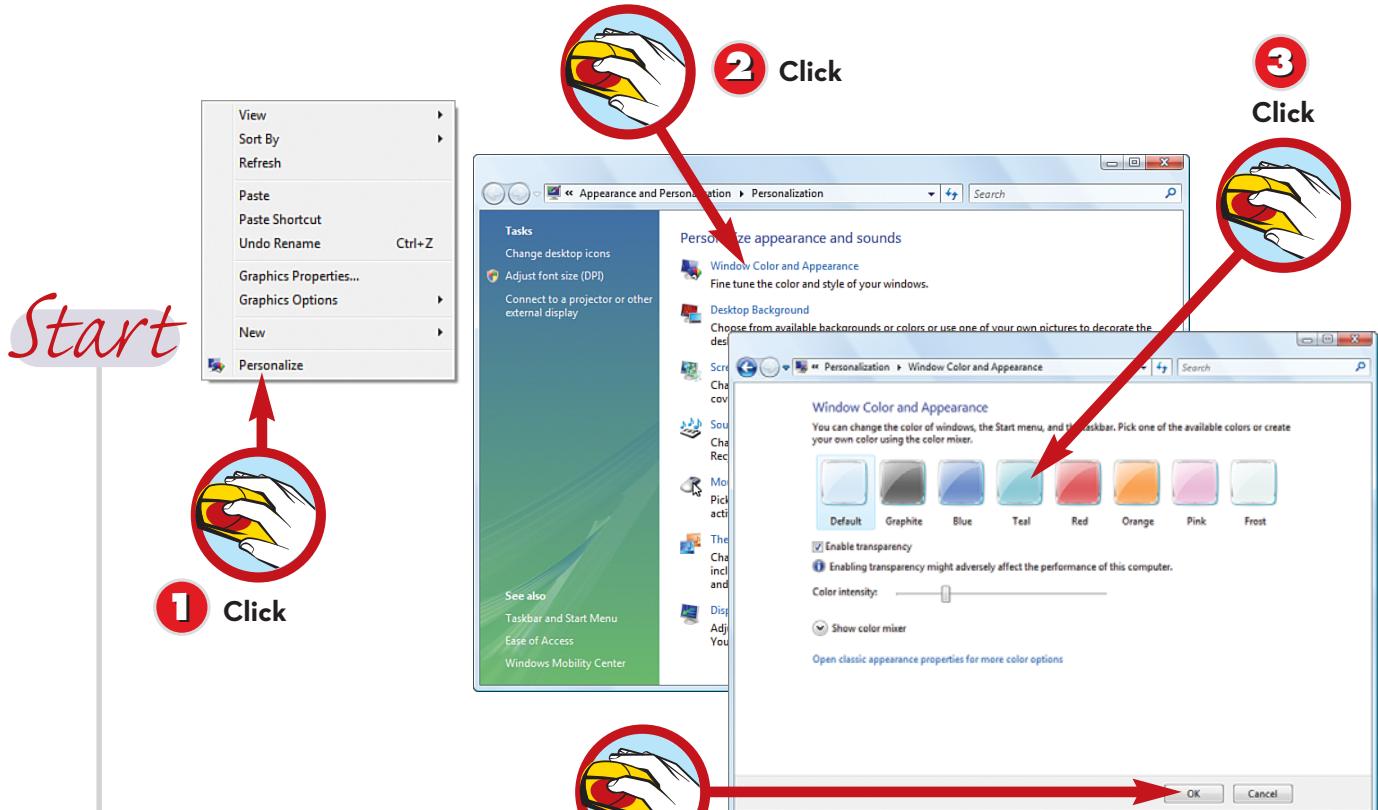
### TIP

#### Choose a Custom Background

To use a picture of your own for your desktop background, pull down the **Picture Location** list, click the **Browse** button, and then select the picture you want from your computer's hard disk.

# CHANGING THE COLOR SCHEME

The default Windows Vista desktop uses a predefined combination of colors and transparencies. If you don't like the way this looks, you can choose from several other predefined schemes.



- 1 Right-click anywhere on the desktop and click **Personalize**.
- 2 Click **Window Color and Appearance**.
- 3 Click any of the default color schemes.
- 4 Click **OK**.

*End*



## TIP

### Change the Transparency

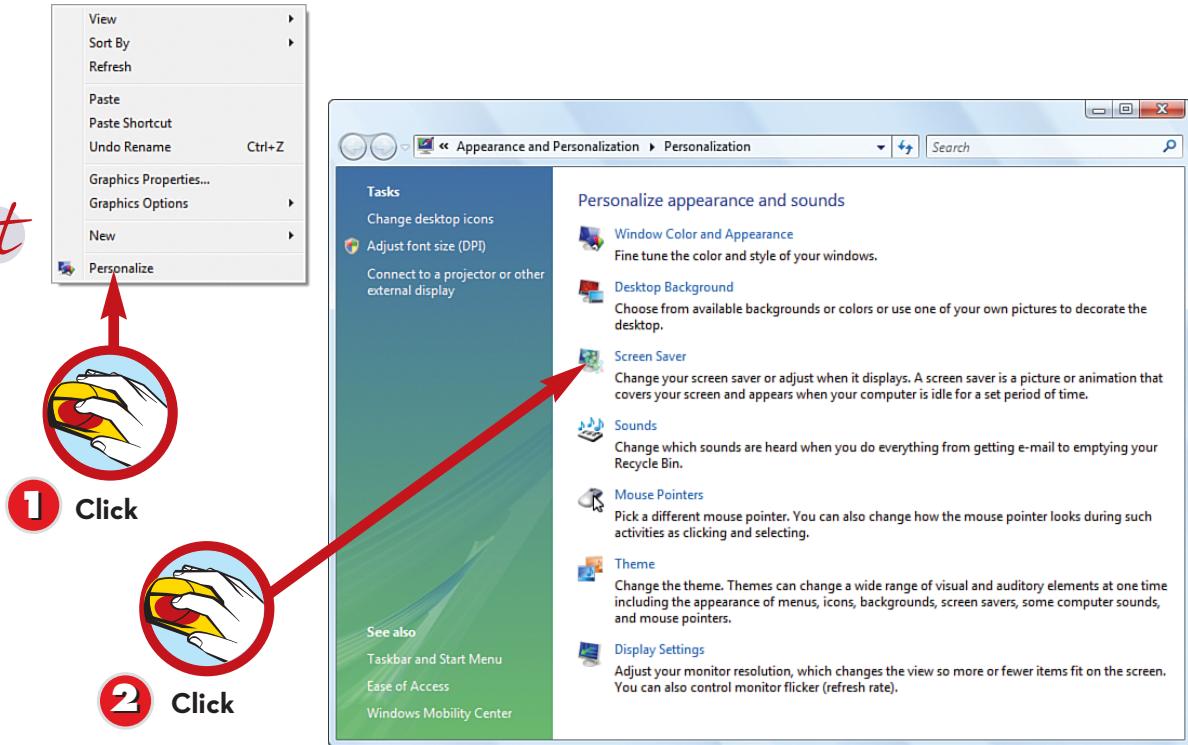
To change the amount of transparency in Vista's windows and dialog boxes, adjust the Color Intensity slider. Or, to turn off the transparency, uncheck the Enable Transparency option.



## USING A SCREENSAVER

Screensavers display moving designs on your computer screen when you haven't typed or moved the mouse for a while. This prevents static images from burning into your screen and provides some small degree of entertainment if you're bored at your desk.

*Start*



- 1 Right-click anywhere on the desktop and click **Personalize**.
- 2 Click **Screen Saver**.

*Continued*



### NOTE

#### Default Screensavers

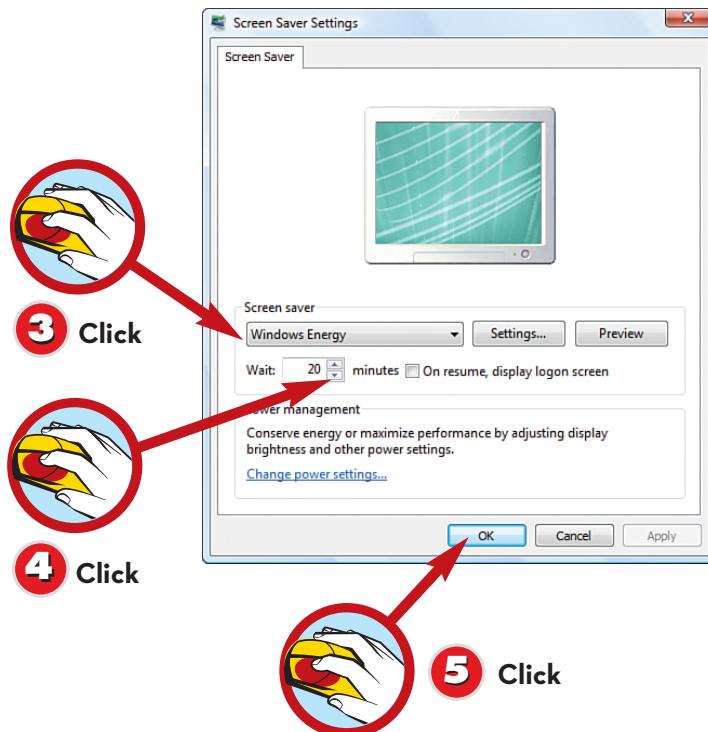
Windows Vista's default screensavers include 3D Text, Aurora, Blank (nothing onscreen), Bubbles, Mystify, Photos, Ribbons, Windows Energy, and Windows Log.



### TIP

#### Photo Slideshow

The Photos screensaver turns your computer screen into a slideshow of your favorite pictures. It's like your computer has been turned into a digital photo frame!



- 3 Select a screensaver from the **Screen Saver** drop-down list.
- 4 Select the number of minutes you want the screen to be idle before the screensaver activates.
- 5 Click **OK** when you're done.

*End*



**TIP**

**Configure the Screensaver**

Click the **Settings** button to configure settings specific to an individual screensaver (if available).



## USING THE WINDOWS SIDEBAR

New to Windows Vista is the Sidebar, a collection of small utilities called gadgets. The Sidebar is docked on the right side of the screen; you can add or delete different gadgets from the Sidebar.

*Start*



- 1 To delete a gadget from the Sidebar, hover over the gadget and then click the X.
- 2 To add a new gadget, click the + button at the top of the Sidebar.

*Continued*



### TIP

#### Configuring Gadgets

To configure a gadget, hover over the gadget, click the wrench button, then select **Options**.



### TIP

#### Closing the Sidebar

To close the Sidebar, right-click anywhere on the Sidebar and select **Close Sidebar**.

**3**

Double-click a gadget to add it to the Sidebar.

**4**

To view more gadgets, click **Get More Gadgets Online**.

**5**

Select a category, then click the **Download** button under the gadget you want to add.

*End*



### TIP

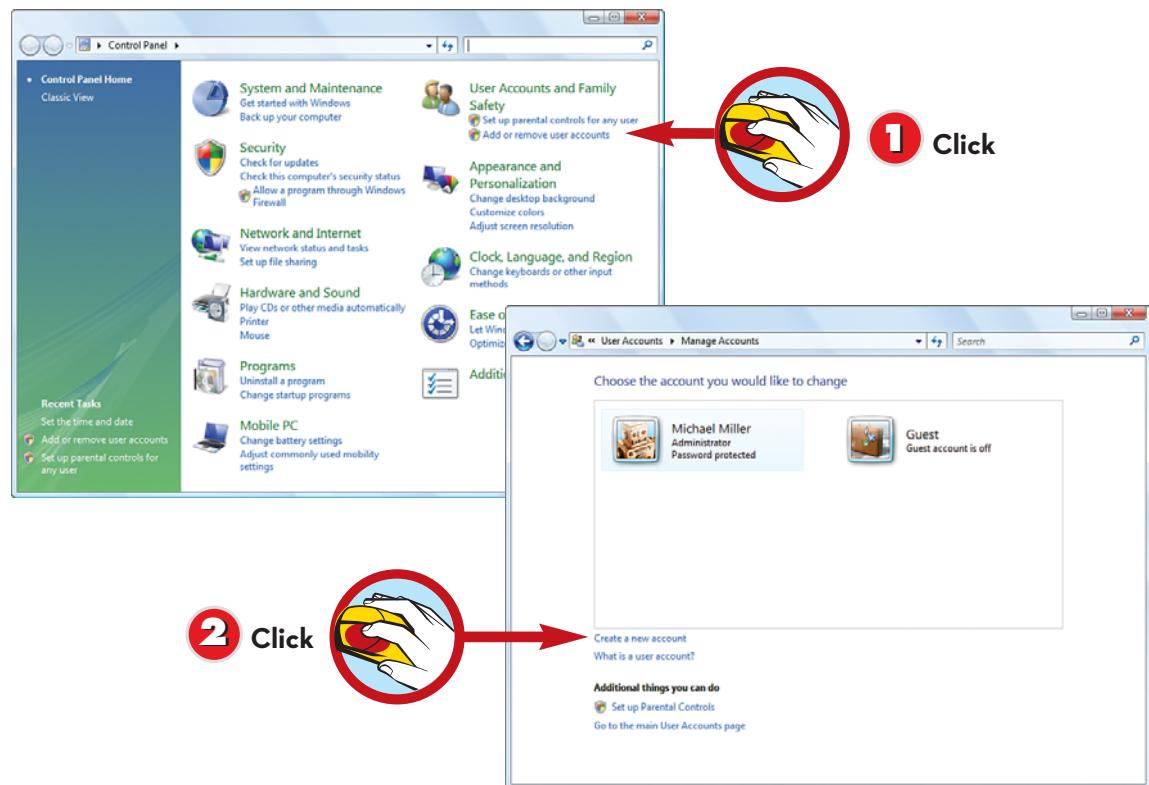
#### Gadgets on the Desktop

You can undock gadgets from the Sidebar and display them directly on the Windows Vista desktop. Just drag the gadget from the Sidebar to the desktop.

## SETTING UP ADDITIONAL USERS

If you have multiple people using your PC, you should assign each user in your household his or her own password-protected user account. Anyone trying to access another user's account and files without the password will then be denied access.

*Start*



- 1 From the Windows Control Panel, click **Add or Remove User Accounts**.
- 2 Click **Create a New Account**.

*Continued*



### CAUTION

#### User Account Control

When you try to create a new user account, Windows displays a dialog box asking for your permission to continue. This is part of the User Account Control safety feature; click the **Continue** button to confirm.



### TIP

#### Different Users

You can create two types of user accounts—Standard User or Administrator. You should set yourself up as an administrator because only this account can make system-wide changes to your PC.



- 3** Enter a name for the account.
- 4** Select the type of account to create, **Standard User** or **Administrator**.
- 5** Click the **Create Account** button. Windows Vista now creates the new account and randomly assigns a picture that will appear next to the username.

*End*



#### TIP

#### Change Your Picture

You can change an account picture by returning to the Manage Accounts window, selecting the account, and then selecting the **Change the Picture** option.



#### TIP

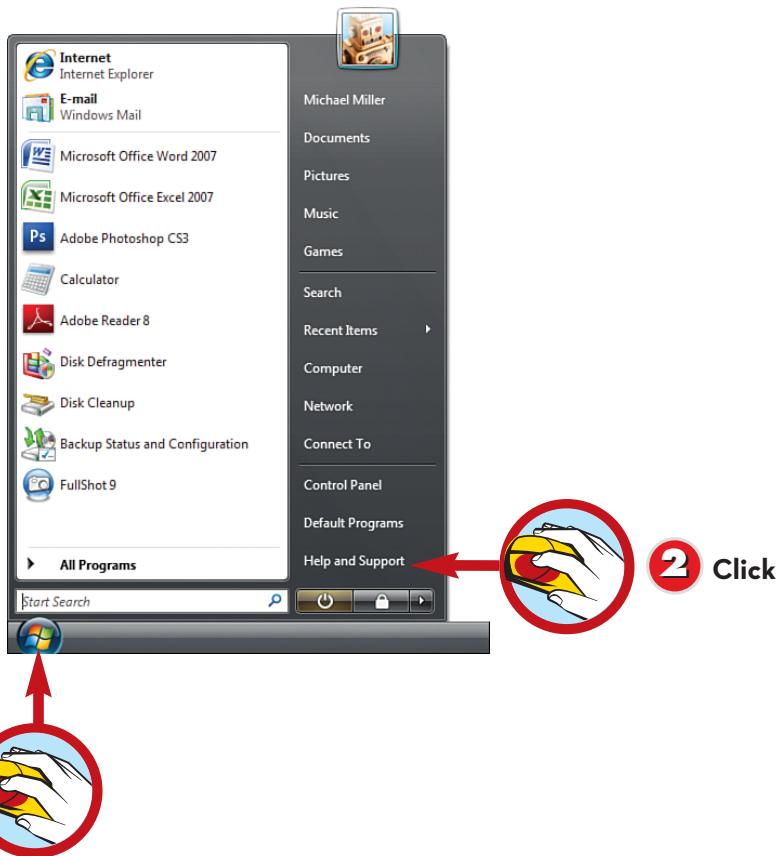
#### Create a Password

By default, no password is assigned to the new account. You can assign a password by returning to the Manage Accounts window, selecting the account, and then selecting the **Create a Password** option.

## GETTING HELP IN WINDOWS

When you can't figure out how to perform a particular task, it's time to ask for help. In Windows Vista, this is done through the Windows Help and Support Center.

*Start*



- 1 Click the **Start** button to display the Start menu.
- 2 Click **Help and Support**.

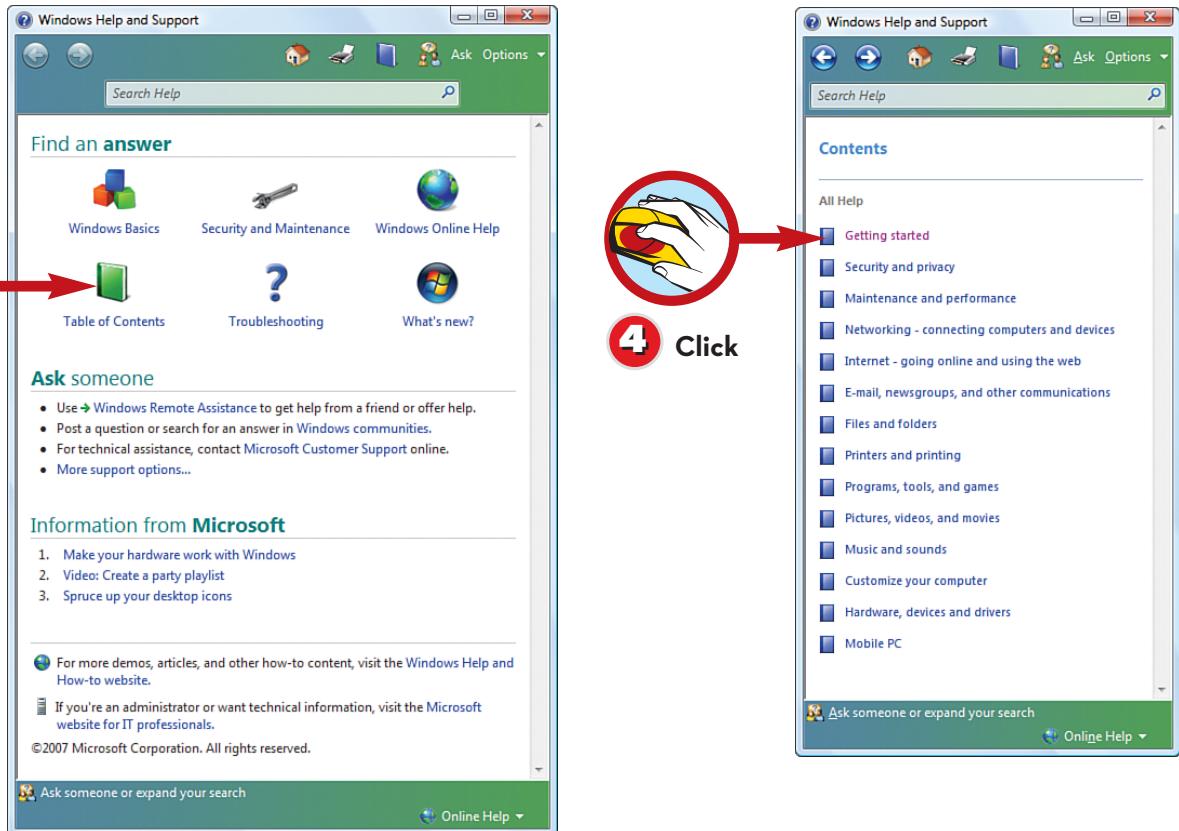
*Continued*



### TIP

#### Other Help Options

Microsoft provides other options in the Help and Support window, including Windows Basics, Security and Maintenance, Windows Online Help, Troubleshooting, and What's New.



- 3** Click the **Table of Contents** icon to display a list of help topics.
- 4** Click a topic to display information about that topic.



### TIP

#### Search for Help

You can also use the Search Help box to search for specific help topics. If you're connected to the Internet, Windows will search Microsoft's online Knowledge Base for more answers.

*End*



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