

Applications and the desktop

Mendlesham Computer Club

By Giles Godart-Brown

A greatly simplified Computer Architecture

User Interface – how you tell it what to do

Applications – do useful work

Operating System – schedules resources,
provides services like printing

Drivers – Insulate higher levels from individual
device manufacturers' differences

Hardware – Physical things like disks, memory
sticks, keyboards, screens, printers

What is an Application?

An Application is a computer program that performs an activity for the user, here are some examples;

| Type | Example | Activity |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Browser | Chrome, Edge, Internet Explorer, Safari | Accessing pages on the Web |
| Word Processor | Microsoft Word, OpenOffice Writer | Creating and editing documents |
| Spreadsheet | Microsoft Excel, OpenOffice Calc | Creating tables of information and calculations |
| Graphics editor | Microsoft Paint, Gimp, Photoshop | Editing images |
| Photo editor | Microsoft Photos, Mac Photos, Gimp, Photoshop | Touching up photos |
| PDF reader | Adobe reader | Displaying documents of type PDF |
| Mail Client | Microsoft Mail, Mac Mail, Thunderbird | Accessing emails |

They all sit on top of the Operating System (Windows 10 or Apple OSX)

Launching Applications

Windows

- Click on the application icon on the bar at the bottom of the screen
- Double click on an application on the desktop
- Click on the windows icon and scroll through the list.
- Click on the windows icon and enter the name in the search box

Mac

- Click on the application on the bar at the bottom of the screen
- Click on an application on the desktop
- Launch finder and select from the Applications folder
- Click on the search icon (top right) and enter the name of the application.

Shortcuts (Alias on Mac)

You normally only have one copy of an application or document on your computer; however, you may want to access it from different places (see previous slide). This is achieved using shortcuts (alias on Mac), these are simply pointers to where it actually lives.

GGB Recommendation: Do not use desktop shortcuts for frequently used web pages, they simply clutter your desktop, use the browser's bookmarks instead.

How to create a shortcut on Windows

Here is how to create an application shortcut on the desktop

1. Click on the Windows Start menu icon.
2. Find the application you want to use by scrolling through the Apps list at the left side of the menu.
3. Once you've found it, drag and drop it from your Start menu to your desktop. You'll see the word "Link" appear when you're hovering over the desktop.
4. Release the mouse button to create the desktop shortcut.

You can use a similar technique for documents by finding them using explorer, right click to create the shortcut, then move this to where you want it.

How to create an alias on Mac

Here is how to create an alias on the desktop

- Open the Applications folder using Finder
- Right click on the application you want to copy and select create Alias this will create a file with the suffix '.app alias'
- Drag-and-drop or copy/paste this file into the desktop folder

How to tidy your Desktop

- Delete any unwanted shortcuts or move them to the task bar at bottom of screen
- Create folders
- Right click on the background and select appropriate view and sort options
- Use Chrome's Bookmarks Bar rather than having lots of links on the desktop

The screen and your windows

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Managing windows 1 of 2

- When you run an application it appears in a window on your screen (desktop).
- You can have many applications running at the same time, the one you are using is brought to the front and is said to have focus.
- A window can be
 - full screen, it sits in front of everything else
 - part screen, other things can be seen around the window, it can be resized by clicking on the corners and dragging them to the size you want
 - or minimized, it looks like it is stopped, but if you look carefully at the task bar at the bottom of the screen, you can see a small blue line below the applications that are running. Clicking on them will restore them

GGB Recommendation: only have full screen windows when you really need them, e.g. when viewing videos.

Managing windows – 2 of 2

- It is possible that some windows may be hidden behind the one that has focus, especially if it is full screen; for example your zoom window may be behind your browser window so it looks like zoom isn't working
- To switch to a different application
 - Click on its icon at the bottom of the screen or
 - Press and hold the <alt> key on the left of the space bar, then tap the <tab> to show images of the applications you are currently running. Repeat tapping the <tab> key to cycle through these apps, when the application you want is highlighted, release the <alt> key and it will be brought to the front.

How to manage multiple windows

| Action | Windows 10 | Mac OSX |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Make window full screen | Click on full screen icon | Click on green icon at top left of window |
| Make window part screen | Click on part screen icon | Hit <esc> |
| Minimise window into bottom bar | Click on minimise icon, click on it to open it again | Hit yellow icon at top left of window, click on it to open it again |
| Close window | Click on close icon | <command>w |
| Quit application | <alt><f4> | <command>x |
| Switch between applications | <alt><tab> | <command><tab> |