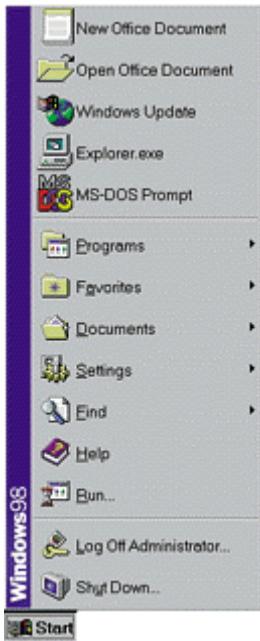




The Windows Taskbar



The Windows taskbar is a grey bar usually located at the bottom of the desktop, but you can move it elsewhere. The taskbar usually stays on the screen all the time, regardless of whether you're looking at the desktop or at an application. It tells you programs that are currently running, folder windows open, and, in most cases, the time. It also gives you access to a list of options in the Start menu, which you can use to launch programs, find files, activate Help, and shut down the computer.



The taskbar contains several sections. At the left edge is the Start button (the button with the word "Start" and the Windows logo). Clicking this button opens the Start menu, which you can use to start up Windows applications,



Immediately to the right of the Start button is the Quick Launch toolbar. You can click the leftmost button to launch the Internet Explorer browser. The button immediately to its right starts the Outlook Express program for sending and managing email and reading Internet newsgroups. The third button, Show Desktop, minimizes all open programs so you can see the desktop. The rightmost button opens a full-screen window for viewing channels, with a channel bar on the left that lets you choose which channels to view.

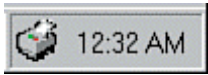




In the centre section of the taskbar is a button for each program and folder that your system is currently running or has open on the desktop. These task buttons not only provide a running status report on your working environment, but they also give you a quick means of switching from one folder or application to the next: Whenever you click a task button, Windows immediately activates the window or program. You can click the task button a second time to minimize the window you just activated.



When you first start Windows, this middle section of the taskbar will probably be empty. As you begin opening folder windows and starting programs, however, the taskbar will grow a bit more crowded. When the taskbar becomes full, Windows starts shrinking task buttons every time you open a new folder window or application. Eventually, you won't be able to see the full names of the windows and applications on the buttons. When this happens, you can let the mouse pointer hover over a button until a small ToolTip window appears with the full text of the item.



The far right section of the taskbar is called the system tray. It usually contains a clock with the current time. To display the current date, hold the mouse pointer over the clock. You can change the time or date by double-clicking the clock. Or you can get rid of the clock altogether. The system tray can also hold icons for various utility programs, such as the program that handles your connection to the Internet or the one that monitors the status of your battery on a laptop computer.

