



Chapter 1.1 Getting more out of your software

Perhaps the most important aim of this chapter is to become more comfortable and proficient in using software in general. The emphasis is on learning generic skills that are transferable to any other program that one may not have used before. In order to be able to do this, one needs to understand what the common functions are in most programs and how programs are generally laid out. It is also essential that one becomes more self-sufficient and confident enough to explore independently, learn from one another and be able to use help facilities. In this way one experiences growth, an increase in knowledge and proficiency in skills, as well as having increased confidence when using any 'new' software.

The following **learning outcomes and assessment standards** are addressed in this chapter:

LO	Assessment standard		Contents
1	11.1.1	Report on relevant computer hardware, software and local area networks.	Common functions and general layout of various programs. Using Help functions to become more self-sufficient in using software.
2	11.2.1	Use essential procedures, techniques and operations in the accurate input of data.	Customising toolbars and using wizards to accomplish tasks such as facilitating input.



Getting more out of your software

CHAPTER 1.1



When you have finished this chapter you will be able to

- change the setup and appearance of the programs you work with to suit your needs
- effectively use the various help functions provided with programs.

We are not stuck with the way a program is set up. Virtually all programs allow you to customise their appearance to suit your needs and preferences. In addition, you can learn much more about a program and its functions *if* you know how to use the various help functions available to you.

One works more quickly and more effectively if a package has been customised to your preferences.

It's toolbar time!

In this first section we are going to learn how to customise the layout of a program by manipulating and setting the toolbars the way you want them to look. Let's, however, quickly refresh our memories and make sure we remember some of the basic components of a typical Windows program.

Typical layout of a program



Title bar	Usually a blue bar at the top of a window, giving the title of the program and sometimes the name of a file it has opened.
Menu bar	A set of commands presented as text that, when activated, presents a number of sub-options related to the main menu item.
Icons	Graphical images which represent short-cuts to some commonly used options, e.g. a picture of a disk representing a Save option.
Toolbar	A collection of icons and buttons related to a particular set of tasks, e.g. a formatting toolbar will have options to allow the user to format a document.

Selecting and positioning toolbars

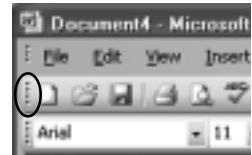
As you become more proficient with working with various programs, you will find that you prefer to have some toolbars and icons readily accessible and others that you hardly ever use. You can select the toolbars you want visible in a program.

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EXPLORE

Activity

- Open *Word* and select **View, Toolbars**.
- Experiment by displaying and hiding toolbars by selecting or deselecting the toolbar names.
- Move your cursor to the left hand side of any toolbar. You will see a perforated edge consisting of several dots.
- Move your cursor over this edge and you will see that the cursor changes to a 4-headed arrow shape.
- You can now drag the toolbar to any position on the screen. Experiment by re-arranging the toolbars.
- Try dragging some toolbars to the bottom and others to the sides of the window.
- Open *Excel* and try customising and arranging the toolbars.



Customising a toolbar

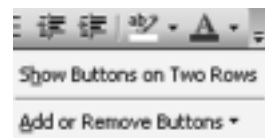
It is not possible to display an icon or button for every possible option that a program has to offer without cluttering up the screen!

When programs are installed they show a basic set of icons on any particular toolbar. It is possible to add and remove options from these toolbars to suit your own particular needs and preferences.

Splitting toolbars

Toolbars can be placed next to each other. The **Standard** and the **Formatting** toolbars in

Word appear alongside one another by default. This often results in there not being enough space to display all of the buttons, in which case only the most recently used buttons are displayed. You can split these toolbars by selecting the **Show Buttons on Two Rows** option.



Activity

- Open *Word* and look for the ▼ symbol at the end of any of the toolbars that are currently visible.
- Select this option and click on **Add or Remove Buttons** and select the name of the toolbar that appears on the pop-up menu, e.g. **Standard** or **Formatting**.
- You can add and remove buttons by selecting or deselecting the buttons (ticked or unticked).
- Make sure that the buttons you usually use appear on the toolbar.

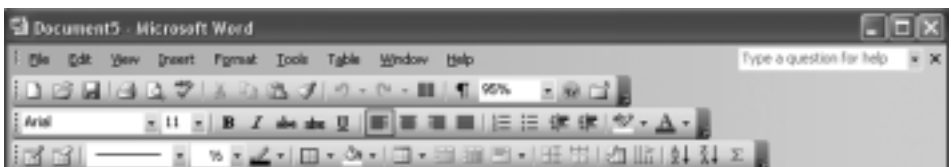
Activity

Prioritising your toolbars

- Open the document called *Toolbars* which has a table with a list of some of the toolbars you can encounter in *Word*.
- In the classification column, add a *Yes* or a *No* depending on whether you have ever used these toolbars or if you think they might be very useful or not.
- If you are not sure what they do, refer to Help and experiment.
- Now delete all the rows in the table where you entered a *No*.
- Now delete all the *Yes* values in the classification column and prioritise the various toolbars as 1, 2, 3, etc. (where 1 is the most important or useful in your opinion) in the *Classification* column.
- Sort the table according to the classification from most important to least important and compare these results with a friend.
- Explain to your friend why your results differ (if they do).

Activity

1. In most cases you will need to use at least two toolbars in *Word*, namely the Standard and Formatting toolbar.
Which toolbar is shown below, together with the Standard and Formatting toolbar?



2. Indicate which toolbar would you display and use if you were performing each of the following tasks frequently:
 - a) Constructing diagrams using amongst other things, AutoShapes.
 - b) Drawing grids consisting of columns and rows to record responses to multiple-choice questions.
 - c) Inserting decorative text that can be shadowed, skewed, rotated and stretched.

3. In Activity 2 you added or removed buttons from menu bars. A classmate has removed the three buttons shown to make space for other options on a toolbar. He says that he prefers to rather use the keyboard instead of these three buttons.





Explain how it is possible to do this and which keys you would use to accomplish this.

4. If you haven't previously worked with the *Tables and Borders* toolbar, feel free to explore it and begin to use some of the buttons on the toolbar. Also use the **Add or Remove** buttons option to ensure that the buttons that you will readily use appear on the toolbar.



- a) Begin by placing the buttons that are shown in the example on the toolbar and exploring them.
- b) See how quickly and accurately you can create the following table by using the buttons on the *Tables and Borders* toolbar for formatting.

Merge the cells and change the text direction	Merge cells, centre the text and a thick outside border			
		Merge cells and shade in 25% grey	Align text to bottom left-hand corner	
	Right align text			
	Increased the row height and placed the text horizontally and vertically in the middle	Split the cell into two rows and two columns		Add clipart 
	Change the colour of the top and bottom border of the cell.	Remove the bottom border of this cell	Another kind of border	
Have fun ☺	This is a separate cell	 Add an arrow		

Help!

Modern software packages are packed with so many features that it is impossible to discuss every possible feature that they can offer. In addition, there are often a number of different ways to accomplish the same task.

It is important to be able to become confident enough to explore the package or program on your own. For all of these reasons it is essential that you learn to use the different help features that are available in most packages. Although these features might differ slightly from package to package, most of them have a very similar structure and common features in terms of presenting help to the user. Some of these common features include the following:

- wizards and assistants
- on-line help
- frequently asked questions also known as FAQs
- tutorials
- context sensitive menus

Tip:

It is often a good idea to use the wizard to perform a basic task and then you can always customise the object that has been created.

Wizards and assistants

Wizards are interactive dialogues that help you to complete a task by asking you a number of questions and then performing the task depending on your response. For example, a word processing program might have a fax wizard which allows you to create and send a document automatically by simply specifying a few responses to some questions asked by the wizard. These questions might include things like the type and purpose of the fax, the name of the recipient as well as the style and layout of the fax that you require.

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EXPLORE

Activity

Let's look at creating a CV using a wizard in *Word*.

- Open *Word* and select **File, New**.
- Find **Templates** in the task pane (**On my computer...**).
- On the **Other documents** tab open the **Resume Wizard**. (A resume is the same as a CV.)
- Now follow the steps indicated by interacting with the wizard, using options of your own choice.

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APPLY

Activity

Use the Resume Wizard to quickly plan and develop a resume for one of the holiday jobs that you wish to apply for on the following page.

The French Poodle Restaurant

Waitrons required

For school holidays, over 16's, no experience
needed - we will train you!

Basic wage plus tips.

Fax resume to 011 7778989
and include following information:

Name, contact number, age and a reference. Also tell us
about any work experience you may have.

We need senior school learners to help with administrative work in
our office.

You must be computer literate, especially in Microsoft Word.

African Adventures

africanadventures@yahoo.com

013 675 9802

Competitive wage!

Fax / e-mail resume and tell us about your interests. Add any previous
work experience. Include your ID number, contact information and at
least one reference's contact number (teacher / parent).

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TRY IT YOURSELF

Activity

Use the Calendar Wizard to create a calendar for the current month and the following months until the end of the year.

The final calendar is actually a *Word* table. You can format it by using **Table, Table Properties, Borders and Shading** and adding a Grid. You can also enter appointments, birthdays and other important information for certain dates. Look at the examples on the following page.



See if you can create a calendar that can help you with planning.

On-line help

The F1 function key is traditionally associated with accessing help in most programs. Some programs will automatically try and give you help relevant to your current task while others might present you with an assistant or Wizard which allows you to type in a question to seek help about a particular topic.

When accessing a help menu, most programs will give you at least three choices, namely

- to be able to type in a question
- to consult or review the table of contents for the help
- to gain access via a help index.

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EXPLORE

Activity

Let's look closely at how the Help facility is structured in a typical program.

- Open *Word* and press the F1 key to activate the *Word* help window that will usually appear on the right hand side of the screen.
- You will notice that there is a dialogue box to enter some text to search for help that we will look at a later stage. Click on the **Table of Contents**.
- The table of contents provides the main headings for the various sections of the on-line help. Clicking on one of these main headings will produce a list of sub-sections that you can click on very much as you would on a web page.

- See if you can find a sub-section dealing with *word count*. Once you have located the section, read carefully what the word count function allows you to do.
- Also take note of how to use the word count function and under which menu option it occurs.
- Use this knowledge to count how many words there are in one of your existing *Word* documents.
- To move back to the main help window either click on the Back button or the home icon at the top of the help window.

It is also possible to search for help by keying in a phrase or question. The more specific you can be, the better your results are likely to be in terms of the help that is suggested. This is very similar in concept to searching for content on the Internet by using a search engine. If you are not sure how to phrase the search string, simply type it in the form of a question.

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EXPLORE

Activity

Let's use the Help facility to learn how to protect a document so that it cannot be opened by someone else.

- Press <F1>.
- In the **Search for** dialogue box type in the question: *How do I protect a document?* Either press <Enter> or click the start searching icon and see what help is suggested.
- Quite often the suggested help will give you some background about the topic you are inquiring about, as well how to accomplish the task.
- Select the option **Require a password to open or modify a file**.
- Create a new *Word* document and protect it with a password.
- Close it and see if you can open it again using the password.

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TRY IT YOURSELF

Activity

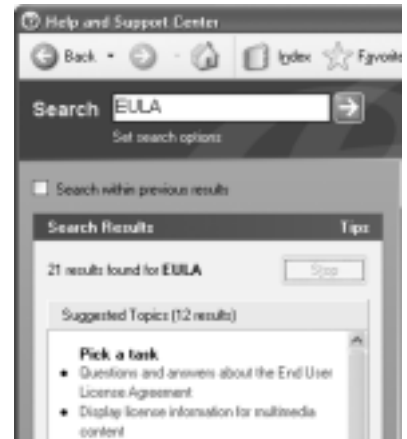
Construct a suitable table in *Word* and use the *Excel* help functions to write the correct description down for each of the following functions, as well as a suitable example of how it would be used. The square root function is given to you as an example.

Function	Description	Description
SQRT	Determine the square root of a number.	=SQRT(A2)
POWER		
INT		
PRODUCT		
MID		
MEDIAN		

FAQ

Frequently asked questions or FAQs as they are known, are often provided as a type of help in tutorials and also in help sources or web sites on the Internet. These FAQs are an attempt to try and create a list of answers to questions or queries that users often ask. By browsing through these questions you hopefully will not only find an answer to your particular problem, but you may also become aware of other features of the package or program.

As mentioned earlier, the Windows operating system itself provides an extensive range of help facilities, which has been improved upon in each successive version of Windows. We are now going to look at using one of these help facilities, namely the frequently asked questions or FAQs as they are known. We are going to use the FAQ SECTION about Windows licensing to answer some questions.



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Activity

- Click on the **Start** button menu and select the **Help and Support** option.
- You will see a search dialogue box is also provided in which you can type a query or keywords in order to obtain specific help. Key in the phrase: **EULA** which stands for End User License Agreement and press enter or click on the search icon.
- Select the option entitled **Questions and Answers about the End User License Agreement**. It will act as a hyperlink to the appropriate section of help.
- Use these questions and answers to answer the questions listed in the *Word* document called *EULA_Questions*. Click on the back icon to move back a screen to the original questions.

EXPLORE

Tutorials

Some programs come with built-in tutorials as part of the help facilities. It's a very good idea to browse through tutorials as they are often interactive and give you a very good overview of what's new in the particular version of the program, of the overall functions and features of the program as well as tips and hints on how to use the program.

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Activity

- Click on the **Start** button menu and select **Help and Support**.
- Select **What's new in Windows XP**.
- Locate and select **Taking a tour or tutorial**.
- Investigate the Windows XP and Windows Media Player tours.

EXPLORE

Context sensitive menus

Context sensitive menus or context sensitive help can be accessed or activated with a *right-click* of the mouse in a given situation. This will usually give a pop-up menu with options that are relevant to the current action you are performing or the object you have selected.

For example, when clicking on a picture in a document you would be presented with options that are related to manipulating the picture. It is often a good idea to use this as the first source of help if you are stuck in trying to perform a particular action or if you're not sure what to do.

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EXPLORE

Activity

Quickly create a *Word* document and add the following to experiment with:

- a table (you can leave it blank to start off with)
- a Clip Art picture
- any AutoShape
- WordArt

Right-click in turn on each of these objects and take note of the options on the pop-up menu that appear in each case. Do you see that these menus are 'context sensitive'? In other words the options that appear depend on what we have clicked on.

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CHECK IF YOU UNDERSTAND

Activity

Choose the description from Column B that best describes the term in Column A. Write down the number and corresponding letter.

Column A		Column B	
1	Wizard	A	They are often interactive and give you a very good overview of what's new in the particular version of the program, of the overall functions and features of the program as well as tips and hints how to use the program.
2	F1 key	B	This will usually give a pop-up menu with options that are relevant to the current action you are performing or the object you have selected.
3	FAQs	C	Graphical images which represent short-cuts to some commonly used options, e.g. a picture of a disk representing a Save option.
4	Tutorials	D	Interactive dialogues that help you to complete a task by asking you a number of questions and then performing the task depending on your response.

5	Right-click	E	The key associated with accessing help in most programs.
6	Title bar	F	A set of commands presented as text that, when activated, presents a number of sub-options related to the main menu item.
7	Menu bar	G	A collection of icons and buttons related to a particular set of tasks, e.g. a formatting toolbar will have options to allow the user to format a document.
8	Icons	H	These are an attempt to try and create a list of answers to questions or queries that users often ask.
9	Toolbar	I	Usually a blue bar at the top of a window, giving the title of the program and sometimes the name of a file it has opened.

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APPLY

Activity

Use Help functions or facilities available on your computer to find out how to do the following and see if you can apply what this help provides.

Open the document *CanUseHelp* and complete the table to indicate that you have acquired the following skills using the Help function:

1. Use keyboard short cuts to increase the font size in *Word*.
2. Use keyboard short cuts to go to a specific page number in *Word*.
3. Find out how to change the background of a document (Use the keywords *Change background*).
4. Use the help facility in Windows to find out the various ways in which you can arrange your programs on the desktop. (For example display them in blocks alongside one another- *Tiled horizontally*, or one behind the other so that parts of each window are visible- *Cascaded*.) (Hint: Key words which you might consider to use are: *Arrange windows, managing windows*)
5. Use the help facility in Windows to find out how to change the names of several files simultaneously so that they all have the same name with a number in brackets to distinguish between them e.g. Photo (1); Photo (2); Photo (3). (Hint: use the keywords: *Series of files*.)
6. Find out how you can set a bookmark in a document. Bookmarks are used for example, when you're working on a very long document and you are busy making changes somewhere in the middle of the document. When you open the document the next time you want to go directly to this position in the documents that you can work further. (Hint: use the key word *Bookmark* in the help facility of *Word*.)

7. Make use of the Help facility to find out what a hyperlink is. Write a short paragraph which explains what it is, how to add it in a file and what it is used for.

Following is the first section of the table in the document CanUseHelp:

	New skill acquired with the help of a Help facility	How to	Proof	Skill demonstrated ✓ or ✗
1	Use a keyboard short cuts to increase the font size in <i>Word</i> .	To increase the the font size, select the text and use <Ctrl><Shift><>> To decrease the font size use: <Ctrl><Shift><<>	I have selected text in a <i>Word</i> document and increased and decreased the font size of the selected text using the appropriate keyboard shortcuts.	
2	Use a keyboard short cut to go to a specific page number in <i>Word</i> .			

Check if you have mastered the following:

Knowledge	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> < identify the various parts of a typical Windows program such as the menu bar, icons and toolbars. < list and identify various common forms of help that are provided in programs such as wizards, tutorials and FAQs. < explain what FAQs are and give a typical situation where they might be used. < describe what is meant by context sensitive help.
Skills	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> < move a toolbar to another position on the screen. < customise a toolbar by adding and removing buttons from the toolbar. < determine which toolbars are active or selected in an application. < effectively use various forms of help that are available in a program such as wizards, context sensitive help, tutorials and help indexes.

Values and attitudes



I strive to work more productively by customising my programs to my own preferences so that I can work more efficiently and comfortably.

I have developed the confidence to explore programs on my own and have learnt to help myself when stuck with the problem by consulting various sources of electronic help.

I have started to become an independent learner by exploring new concepts that I have not necessarily been taught in programs.

