



Technology How-To Resource Guide



Introduction

Louisiana REALTORS has developed this Technology How-To Resource Guide as a resource for its members to help them develop a basic understanding of computers and the Internet, in cases where they may be unfamiliar with basic office technology. Content covered includes: an explanation of computer parts, computer terminology, a guide to word processing and using computers to email, connect to the Internet and browse the World Wide Web.

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Additional Resources

Using a Computer

How computers work...* Please note that the following information regarding the components and operation of a computer are for a Microsoft Windows operating system with illustrations from a system running Microsoft Windows XP. Instructions and images will be similar as long as you are running a version of Microsoft Windows, but will be somewhat different if you are using an Apple Macintosh system, though many of the concepts are similar..

Input: Information and programs are entered into the computer through input devices such as the keyboard, disks, or through other computers via network connections or modems connected to the Internet.

Output: Output devices display information on the screen (monitor) or provide printouts of information (printer), or send information to other computers. They also display messages about what errors may have occurred and bring up message or “dialog boxes” asking for more information to be input.

Operating system: All computers have some type of operating system that controls all functions of the computer. An operating system controls all functions of the computer. It manages the way files are stored and retrieved and the commands that you enter into the computer. Microsoft Windows is an example of an operating system.



Computer hardware:

Monitor: used to view computer operations on a screen

CPU or Central Processing Unit: The computer itself. The core hardware component which directs the operation of the input and output devices.

CD-Rom Drive: allows you to use CD's

Keyboard: a set of keys used to operate a computer, similar to that of a typewriter. Letter and number keys are used to type and other keys are used to perform specific functions.



Mouse: A type of input device used to help locate and activate certain things on the computer. The mouse has two to three click buttons, with the left button, primarily used.

Pointing- Means to move the mouse arrow to an object on the screen

Clicking- Means to point to something on the screen and press the button one time.

Double-clicking- Means to point to something on the screen and press the buttons two times rapidly.

Right-clicking- Means to click the right button on the mouse, which normally displays a menu with options.

Clicking and Dragging- Means to point to an object on the screen, depress and hold down the button on the mouse and move the object to another place.



Keyboard Keys/Functions:

Cursor-A bright, usually blinking, movable indicator on a display, marking the position at which a character can be entered, corrected, or deleted.

ENTER- Moves the cursor down one line and to the left margin. Enter also processes commands such as choosing an option in a message box and submitting a form.

DEL or DELETE- Deletes the character at cursor and/or characters to the right of the Cursor and all highlighted or selected text.

BACKSPACE- Deletes the character to the left of the cursor and all highlighted text.

SPACE BAR- Moves the cursor one space at a time to the right.

SHIFT KEY- Used to type capital letters and to type the upper character on keys with two characters on them.

CAPS LOCK- Locks the keyboard so it types capital letters (light goes on when caps lock is on)

TAB- Moves the cursor five spaces to the right and also moves to the next field in a form or table.

ESC- Cancels a menu or dialog box

ARROW KEYS- Moves the cursor around document without changing the text

FUNCTION KEYS or F KEYS- Access commands by themselves or in combination with the three command keys' **CTRL, SHIFT, and ALT**.

Command keys normally do nothing on their own, but work in combination with other keys. The **Control key or CTRL** is often used to access commands. The **Alternative key or ALT** is often used to access menus. The **Shift key** is used to type capital letters. The command keys are all used to move through documents and edit text faster and easier.

Basic Typing Rules:

·All sentences begin with capital letters. Type **one** space after each word, and after commas and semicolons.

·Type **two** spaces after each end of sentence punctuation mark (periods, question marks, exclamation points). Type two spaces after colons.

·Most text should be aligned at the left margin, with a ragged right margin. In some instances, you may want to justify (which means align both left and right margins).

·The terms "single-spaced" and "double-spaced" refer to the number of lines between text, not the number of spaces between characters on the line. This page is single-spaced.

·General text, such as essays, reports, and term papers, should be double-spaced. At the end of each paragraph, hit the *Enter* key only **once**. The first line of each paragraph should be indented (hit the *Tab* key) ½ inch.

·Business documents such as letters should be single-spaced. At the end of each paragraph, hit the *Enter* key **twice**. This double-spaces between each paragraph. The ½ inch indent at the beginning of each paragraph is optional.

Turning on the Computer

Electronic devices need to warm up. When you turn on the switch, the computer will first go through a complex series of self checks as each part of the system is powered up.

There is typically a prominent button on the front of the CPU that will power up the computer when pressed. Depending on make and model, the monitor may have a separate “on” switch or it may power up when the computer is turned on. After you turn on the switch, you will hear a variety of sounds: fans coming on, disks beginning to whirl, and other devices clicking and humming.

Turning off the Computer

The shut down process should go through much of the same procedure in reverse. Go to “START” menu in the bottom left of the screen and select “shut down”. Always follow proper shut down procedure rather than just pressing the power button if you want to protect your computer and the information you have stored.

Once your computer is turned on and ready to use, the screen you see is called the **desktop**. It is the background for all programs and contains the commands needed for accessing those programs. Windows systems are based on **Graphical User Interface or GUI**, which means that the interface uses graphics or pictures to help navigate and access programs.



You will find **icons** or small pictures on your desktop that are linked to programs. Double-clicking on the icon runs the program or accesses the file. Shortcuts can be added to your desktop to quickly access programs also. Right-clicking will access a menu offering options, actions and properties.

At the bottom left edge of the screen, you will see a long, thin bar with a box labeled “Start” on one end and a clock on the other end. This is the **taskbar**- another graphic tool that helps access programs and files. Icons can be on the taskbar also. These are called “**Quick Launch**” icons that allow one-click access to frequently used programs.

The **Start Menu** can be used to access programs, files and folders. It is also where you find the “Shut down” option to turn off the computer or the “Log off” option to switch users. The Start menu can be personalized like the desktop by adding and removing programs, files and folders.

Types of Computer Programs

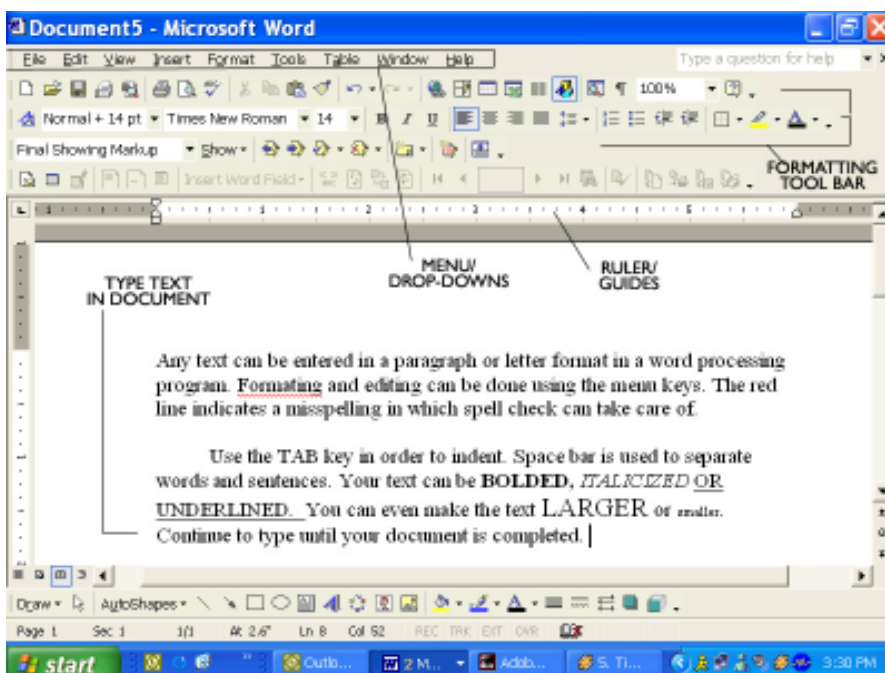
There are many different types of programs for the computer.

- Word processing- letter writing, essays, memos, etc.
- Database- address books, mailing lists
- Spreadsheets- financial information
- Research- encyclopedias, informational programs
- Entertainment- games, music, video programs
- Education- tutorials and how-to programs
- Desktop Publishing- creating birthday cards, business cards, newsletters, etc.

Programs translate between users and computers.

Word Processing Program

There are several types of word processing programs, all with basic functions including: typing; creating, opening and saving documents; copying, pasting, cutting and editing text; and printing.



Formatting Tool Bar contains options to edit text to be:

- BOLDED**
- ITALICIZED*
- UNDERLINED
- CENTERED
- LEFT JUSTIFIED
- RIGHT JUSTIFIED
- BULLETED
- I. NUMBERED
- LARGER FONT**
- SMALLER FONT
- DIFFERENT COLORS
- HIGHLIGHTED

Use icons in toolbar or go to menu and select format from the drop-down

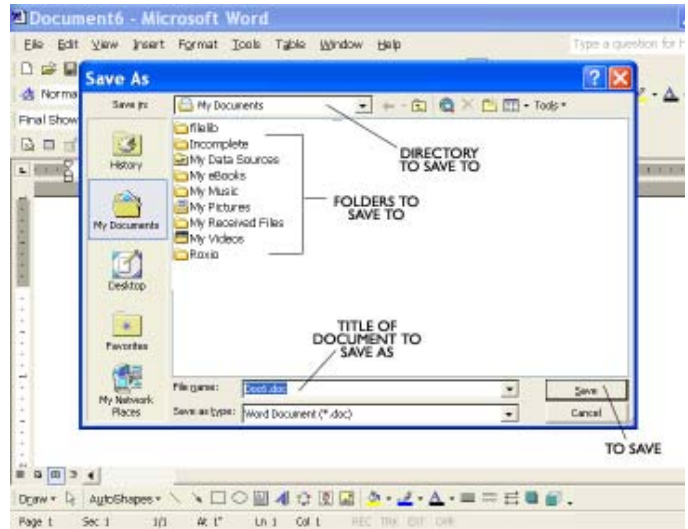
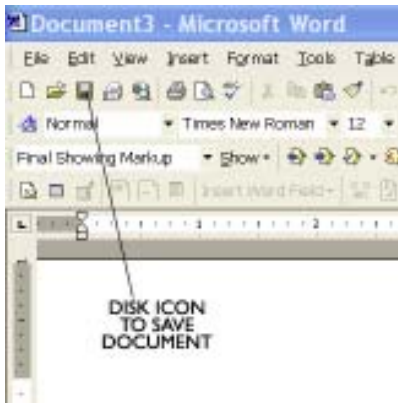
** Above picture shows illustration from Windows computer running Microsoft Word. The other word processing programs will perform all the same functions. Please refer to the program's instructions if running another word processing software.

WORD PROCESSING BASICS



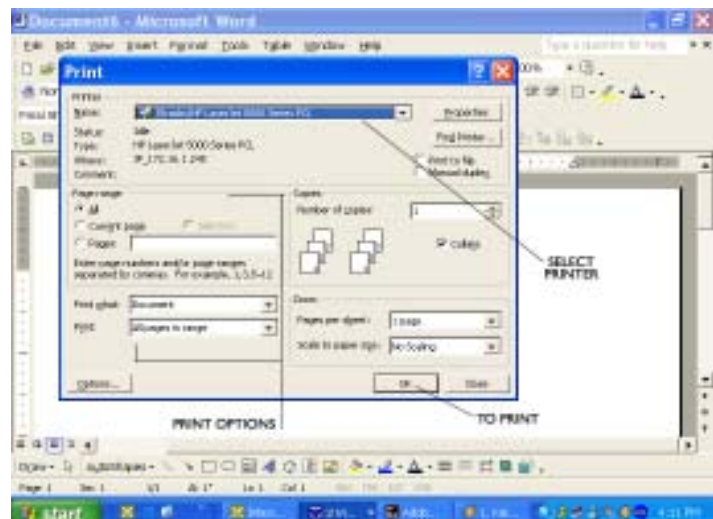
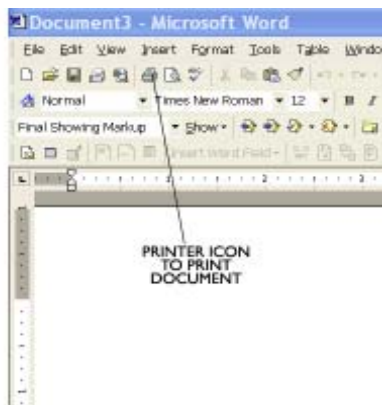
To **Save** a document, you have two options:

1. Click with mouse the icon with the disk
2. Go to **file** on the menu and select **save as** in the drop-down menu. This option lets you specify which folder to save the document to.



To **Print** document, you have two options:

1. Click with mouse on icon with printer
2. Go to **file** on the menu then choose **print** from the drop-down menu. This option will give you printer setting options.



** Above picture shows illustration from Windows computer running Microsoft Word. The other word processing programs will perform all the same functions. Please refer to the program's instructions if running another word processing software.

Using the Internet

Internet- a large computer network linking smaller computer networks worldwide. Web pages can include text information, pictures, sounds, video and links for downloading.

There are 4 things that are necessary to “get on the net”

- A computer- recommended to have a fast processor and lots of memory.
- A modem- an electronic device that makes possible the transmission of data to or from a computer via telephone or other communication lines.
- Browser software- often already installed with your computer operating system, but can also be downloaded off the internet.

Your Internet Service Provider will provide information on how to configure your software. Once configured, you simply run the software to connect your computer’s modem to the ISP’s modem, giving you access to the Internet.

- An ISP or Internet Service Provider- a service that connects your home or office computer to the Internet.

For a monthly fee, the service provider gives you a software package, username, password and access phone number. You will be given an account name which is often times your email address as well. A generic password is provided with your account and should be change to one of your own. Protect your password as you would any personal identification number (PIN) number. You can then log on to the Internet and browse the World Wide Web and send and receive e-mail.

Internet Browser- a program that locates websites for you and allows users to maneuver or “surf” the World Wide Web and view web pages. Some examples are: AOL’s Netscape Navigator, Microsoft’s Internet Explorer.

** Note: Illustrations are shown using an Internet Explorer browser.



Viewing Web pages

** Illustrations are based on an Internet Explorer browser.

The most important thing on a web page is the **address bar**. Every web page on the Internet has its own address. For example, the address for Louisiana REALTORS is www.larealtors.org.

The **URL or Uniform Resource Locator** is the address on the **World Wide Web** that you are visiting. Some common URL suffixes:

- **.org** - Non-profit organization (www.larealtors.org)
- **.com** - Private company or corporation (www.realestatelouisiana.com)
- **.gov** - Government agency (www.louisiana.gov)
- **.net** – Traditionally registered by Internet Service Providers or networks



Hyperlinks, connect to other webpages, websites, or files and are typically activated by clicking on a highlighted word or icon at a particular location on the screen. A hyperlink is usually a blue color and underlined, but can vary. If you move your mouse over a hyperlink, the arrow changes to the shape of a hand. When a web address appears in an email or on a web page you can often go straight to it by just clicking on the address.

The web browser buttons:



Located at the top of your window in an Internet Explorer browser. A browser is an application that provides a way to look at and interact with all the information on the World Wide Web.

You can download a version of Internet Explorer at <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/default.msp>.

Web Browser Buttons Explained



Back ▾

The BACK button lets you go back to the last page that you were looking at.



▾

If you went back to a previous page, you can use the FORWARD button to return to the original page.



If you want to stop a web page loading, you can tell Internet Explorer to stop loading it by clicking on the STOP button.

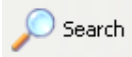


If a web page doesn't load properly, or it seems to have stopped loading (and you are still waiting for things to appear), press the REFRESH button. This will tell Internet Explorer to download the page again.

This button is also useful when you are looking at a web page which changes regularly. Clicking this button will force Internet Explorer to download the latest copy of the page.



Clicking on the HOME button will take you to the web page which loads when Internet Explorer first starts.



Search

This button will open a search bar inside your browser which allows you to search for things on the Internet.



Favorites

When you click on the Favorites button, you will see a list of your favorite web sites. You can then click on one of the names to visit that site. Fortunately you do not have to remember the URLs. The browser you use to travel the web can make "bookmarks".

Bookmarks are like an electronic address book in which you write the address once, and thereafter just click on it when you want to go to that page. Another name for bookmarks is **Favorites**.



Clicking on the HISTORY button shows list of the web pages which you have visited during the last few days / weeks. This makes it easier to return to sites which you have looked at recently.



Clicking this button will let you print the web page that you are looking at.

Searching for Information on the Web

The first is to visit the web-sites that you already know about and click on links which look like they could take you to the information which you need. However, searching in this way might not lead you to the information which you need. You could also get distracted, and follow links which take you further away from what you want. Luckily, there are some very special web sites on the Internet.

These are called **search engines** and they make it much easier to find the information that you need. All you have to do is visit a search engine, tell it what you would like to find out about, and it will show you hyperlinks which point to the correct information. The results from a search are a list of pages with links to the documents that match your search.

Search engines are run by companies that collect information from the Internet, sort and categorize it and present the information to the user based on **keyword searches** or through **directory listings**. Different search engines will display different results and sort those results differently. If you don't find the information you want on one search engine, try another. Directory listings are where information is categorized to specific categories. To find a specific website, you would follow links to the category that matches your interest.

*** There are many types of search engines. The illustrations show a few examples and how search results will be displayed.*



Email

One of the other popular features of the Internet is **electronic mail or e-mail**. Email is a system for sending messages from one individual to another via telecommunications links between computers or terminals. There are many host systems to set up an email account.

Electronic mail needs a name and address just as paper mail does. When we speak about an email address, we usually mean the whole address, including the name.

An email address has the form: name @ address

- The name is called the **user identification** (userid or username). Sometimes it looks like a person's name, but sometimes it is a set of symbols
- The name is followed by @ for "at,"
- followed by the actual address, which is often called the **domain or name of the user's ISP**.
- The last 2 or 3 characters describe the type of service. For example: .com, .gov, .mil, .net

Whichever software you use, the way you send and receive messages will be similar:

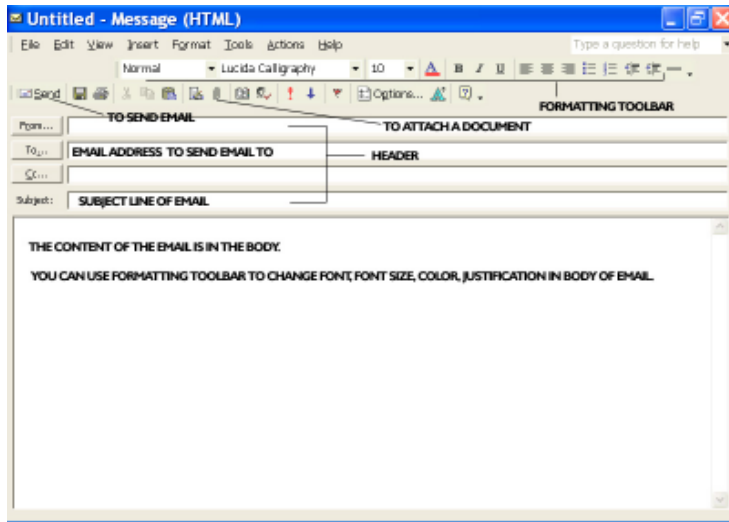
To read an email you usually:

1. Find and/or open a mail folder.
2. Look at the list of senders and subjects to see which you want to read.
3. Highlight one you want to read.
4. Open it by clicking on an open button.

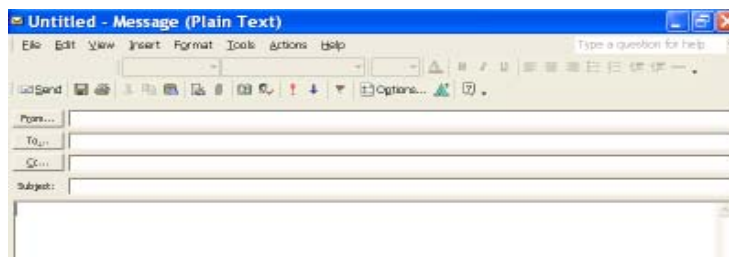
To write an email you will usually:

1. Go to the new message window.
2. Type in the email address of the person you are sending the message to.
3. Type in the subject. This will give the recipient an idea of who the message is from and what it is about.
4. Type in your text.

EMAIL BASICS



Today many modern email programs allow HTML (hypertext markup language) to be included in email messages which allow you to format your email messages with font sizes, bold, etc. The recipient must have HTML capable email reader to see the formatting.



The Plain text email includes no options for formatting the body of an email.

To send an email you will usually click on a button marked send in the new message window.

***The look of your email message will vary depending on your ISP and account.*

Being **online** means being connected to another computer. Going **offline** means disconnecting. You have to be online in order to read or send your emails, but you can compose an email message offline and then send when you are online again.

Receiving information from another computer is called **downloading**. When you visit a web Page the browser automatically downloads the information from the page and displays it on the computer screen. You can also choose to download specific files such as attachments in emails.



Content for this Technology How-To Guide was compiled from several different sources and websites based on an Internet search of computer basics and Internet basics. Listed are a few of those websites to reference for more information. This list is not intended to be exclusive; information can be found conducting your own Internet search.

Computer Basics/Online Tutorials

www.grassrootsdesign.com/intro/
www.kidsdomain.com/brain/computer/lesson.html
www.coolnerds.com/

Guide to Internet, Web Surfing and Email

www.imagescape.com/helpweb/
www.learnthenet.com/
www.webcurrent.com/tcrc/basics/

To Download Internet Browsers

Internet Explorer: www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/default.msp
Mozilla Firefox: <http://www.mozilla.com/firefox/>

Search engines

www.google.com/
www.yahoo.com/
www.msn.com/
www.dogpile.com/

Microsoft Help and Support

support.microsoft.com/

Louisiana REALTORS Resources/Websites

www.larealtors.org
www.realestatelouisiana.com

Louisiana Real Estate Commission

www.lrec.state.la.us