

UNCLUTTER YOUR DESKTOP, for Word 2003

By Shannon Sharpton and Grace McMillan

Is your computer desktop littered with program icons and internet shortcuts of your favorite places? Would you like to know how to organize those AND find them quicker?

1. First of all, Internet Explorer has a **"Favorites" feature** which you really should use. Go to "e" – and then your favorite web site: thehouseandsenate.com. ☺

RIGHT click on the web page. Choose "Create Shortcut" or "Add to Favorites." I prefer to add to favorites – less clutter on my desktop. ☺

USE your Favorites button. Rename each listing if necessary to help you remember (RIGHT click on the item and choose "Rename"). Organize the list alphabetically EVERY TIME you add an item, so that you can find things quickly. It's like filing. It takes only a minute to do it right the first time – but it saves you hours later when you're looking for it. Reorganize, rename, and delete periodically – your "Favorites" will change throughout the year.

2. Another way to organize your desktop is to put commonly used programs on the **bottom toolbar** (on the left side) of your computer screen – and then DELETE the shortcuts from your desktop.

Put your cursor on your toolbar at the bottom. RIGHT click on the toolbar on the left. Make sure the toolbar is unlocked.

Select "Toolbars" from the list.

Make sure "Quick Launch" has a checkmark beside it.

To add most commonly used programs (Excel, Word, Publisher, Outlook, time sheet, etc.) from your desktop:

Go to your computer desktop

Click on a program icon

DRAG it down to the left toolbar – and release.

Delete the program icon from your desktop. This will not delete the program; just the shortcut.

I also do this with "My Computer > (House: G Drive) > My Documents" – one click gets me to My Documents folder.

I also create a shortcut on my Quick Launch toolbar with my desktop, so I don't have to minimize each program ... I just click on the Desktop shortcut at the bottom of my screen.

RIGHT click on the icon in the toolbar, choose "Properties" and then "Change Icon" to give it the picture you want.

3. If worst comes to worst and you do nothing else, at the very least, do this:
RIGHT click anywhere on your desktop (not on a program or shortcut, though)
Select "New > Folder"
Call it "Desktop Files" and drag all your shortcuts in there.

If you use only the Desktop Files folder, can we take you one very small step further?

Organize similar shortcuts into your subfolders: "Agencies, Programs, My Faves," etc.