

On Becoming an e-Agent— Quick Keyboard Moves

By Jo Becker, BA

Following are a number of quick and simple computer tips you can use to improve your computing performance.

The art of mouse-ing can be quite an art indeed and it can prove very frustrating to those unfamiliar with a mouse's movements and the corresponding movements and changes in your cursor on the screen. Following are some alternatives that may make your computer use more convenient for you and is consistent with the maxim that there are always two or three (or ten) different ways to accomplish the same thing on a computer.

Highlighting Mayhem

If you're using your mouse to highlight text, you should know that there is more than one means to your ends. The typical method (clicking and then sliding your mouse to the end of the text you want to highlight) can be a challenge for some. Alternative text selection methods:

- LEFT click once at the beginning of the text you want to highlight. Hold down the "Shift" key on your keyboard and then LEFT click once at the end of the text you want highlighted— Voilà!
- If you want to highlight an entire line of text, move your mouse to the left of the line until the cursor icon changes to an arrow that's pointed inward to the right. LEFT click once and the line of text the arrow was pointing at will be highlighted. You can choose to continue to hold your LEFT mouse button as you move the mouse up or down to select multiple lines of text.
- To select and highlight just one word, DOUBLE LEFT click on that word. LEFT clicking THREE times will highlight the entire paragraph.
- And finally, to select everything in the document (including graphics), go to Edit/Select All.

Believe it or not, there are several other shortcuts along these lines, but hopefully these tips have given you some new and more versatile tools to use.

Double clicking

If you have difficulty quickly double clicking to open files or folders you may be accustomed to the exasperating experience of chasing the item you're trying to open across your screen (or, alternatively, sitting there waiting for something to happen and nothing does). You'll be pleased to know there's a happy alternative.

RIGHT click ONCE on the item you're trying to open and you'll see that a menu pops up. Move your mouse so that your cursor slides up (or down) the menu until you reach the word "Open." LEFT click ONCE on this menu option. Voilà! You are now the master of your mouse!

Clicking vs. Double clicking

If you have difficulty distinguishing between clicking and double clicking, you might appreciate knowing some pointers and alternative methods.

- Generally, you want to click once to select or highlight an icon; double click to open or launch it.
- Double clicking should be done rather rapidly.
- If you want to rename an icon, aim your mouse at the text below the icon to select the text. If you want to launch the program or file, aim at the graphic (the picture part of the icon).
- If you hate the whole double clicking thing all together, get in the habit of RIGHT clicking once instead. As we saw above, this will pop up a short menu of commands you can choose from including Open as well as Delete and Rename detailed above.

Visual Aid

If you're having trouble reading the text on your computer monitor (a document or a website, for example), here's a quick way to make the text larger. Now, I do have to admit that this doesn't work with all websites, but it does with most of them and it does require that you have a "wheel mouse," that is a mouse with a scrollable wheel between its left and right buttons.

With the document or site you want to read up on your screen hold down the "Ctrl" (short for Control) button on your keyboard and scroll the mouse wheel up or down. You can simply adjust the way the text appears on your screen to better suit your eyes. If you don't have a wheel mouse, you might consider picking one up at an office or electronics store; they're fairly inexpensive and also make scrolling through long documents and long websites quick and easy!

Keyboard Shortcuts

If you use your mouse for everything, you can likely increase the speed of your computing by learning a few, frequently use keyboard shortcuts. Keyboard shortcuts refer to hitting a prescribed set of keys for a desired computer function. A few examples that are consistent in most common software programs include:

- Ctrl + A = select everything in the open document (notice this is yet another alternative to the last bulleted item under "Highlighting Mayhem" above)
- Ctrl + B = make the selected text bold
- Ctrl + U = underline the selected text
- Ctrl + I = format the selected text in italics
- Ctrl + F = find a word or phrase in the open document
- Ctrl + S = save the changes made to the open document

For those of you (or those you know) who have trouble getting your mouse to do what you want when you want, I hope these keyboard tips were helpful. If all of this seems too overwhelming, ask for help, but keep trying! Before long you will get the hang of it. In the meantime, *hang it there!*

Jo Becker has eight years of licensed real estate experience. As a former broker, she knows how important, and sometimes scary, technology and self-promotion can be. Jo has provided personalized one-on-one marketing consultation and computer software training to the industry since 2002.

Call or write today for a free monthly eLtr offering helpful marketing hints and computing tips!

Services include relationship selling tips and techniques, data entry, software application training, custom marketing campaigns, design of collateral pieces, and website content design. 503/493-6883; JoByEmail@yahoo.com

Copyright 2006