

MOUSING

Many people get a fairly good working knowledge of Windows just by use. They learn through repetition to check their email, write documents, make birthday cards, surf the web, etc. The reason it is so easy to learn is because the visual interface that Windows offers is best accessed by hand eye coordination with the mouse.

Unfortunately, very few people seem to know what else the mouse can do. Remember, the mouse has two buttons, left and right, plus all new mice have a scroll wheel. Let's go through the list:

Left Single Click - This is for selecting things, or turning on/off buttons, or placing a cursor.

Left Double Click - This is for opening things, or running things. If you double click on a picture file, Windows will open that file with whatever picture viewer you have installed. The way that Windows knows this is through what is called a file association.

Left Drag – This is a powerful feature that allows you to do two different things, you can select a range of items in a list and you can move things around either individually or in groups. When selecting a range, you normally have to click off to the side of an item; otherwise you will end up actually dragging that item. As for moving things, it works differently depending on where and what you are dragging. Sometimes it will move, sometimes it will copy and sometimes it will just make shortcuts. I use Left Drag to select a range of items but I hardly ever move things with it, it's too dangerous.

Right Drag – The second most important thing that your mouse does is Right Drag. When you right drag something, it will always give you several very important options before it finishes the operation. You can select Move, Copy, Create Shortcuts, or most importantly of all, you can cancel. It is not uncommon for client machines to come in where a user has inadvertently left-dragged something important and ended up killing the Windows. Use Right Drag, and make it do exactly what you want.

Right Click – I call this the most important function of the mouse because it is the most flexible; it changes depending on what you right click on. A context-sensitive menu will pop up when you right click on something and give you a long list of possible things you can do. For example, right clicking on the desktop gives you access to icon arrangement, display properties, and create new file options. Right clicking on a file gives you options like opening the file, quick viewing the file, deleting the file, or renaming the file, plus selecting properties will tell you how big the file is and when it was created.

Scroll Wheel – I use the scroll wheel primarily to go up and down in long documents or websites, though its click function can be programmed to do other things.

If you have never used Right Drag or Right Click, you will be amazed at how much easier some things get. Sending a file to a floppy disk or CD-RW can be as easy as right clicking and selecting the Send To menu.

If you have question or comments, I can always be reached via email sean@intrex.ca or join our forums at <http://intrex.ca> for more in-depth conversations.