

No Stress Tech
Guide To
Windows XP

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THE START MENU



The Start menu has many sections and options. In addition to learning about the Start menu and how to customize it, you will also learn the following:

- How to use the Run command
- How to use the My Computer and Windows Explorer tools
- Log off options

LESSON 2

Getting Started

The primary focus of this lesson is the Start menu. To help make learning and modifying the Start menu easier, other topics need to be covered first.

Using The Run Command

The Run command can be used to open applications like Windows Explorer or Notepad. This tool is useful if you have a good idea where the application is, but aren't sure of the file name. Without knowing where the application is, this tool may not be very helpful.

1. Start ⇒ Run. You will see the dialog box shown in Figure 2-1.

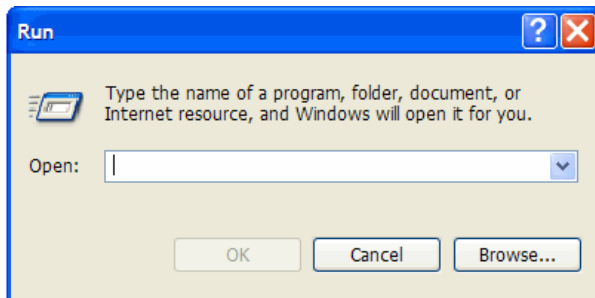


Figure 2-1 Run dialog box

If the program that you want to run is in the Windows folder, you do not have to type in the full path of the program. A nice feature about the Run command is that it saves every command that you enter. Figure 2-2 shows a list of commands that I have already run from this dialog box. Your list may be empty.

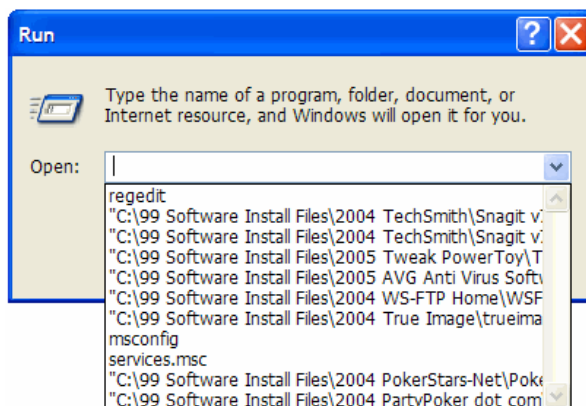


Figure 2-2 Run command entries

2. Type `notepad` in the **OPEN** field and press Enter or click OK.
3. The Notepad program should now be open. Close Notepad.

Using My Computer And Windows Explorer

Using these tools will let you see the structure of the folders on your hard drive. You can copy, move, delete, rename files and folders using either of these tools.



If you are using the new Windows XP style, you have probably noticed that the Windows Explorer option is missing from the Start menu unless you added it prior to using this workbook. Later in this lesson, you will learn how to add it to the Start menu.

How To View The Contents Of A Folder

To view the contents of a folder follow the steps below.

1. Double-click on the **MY COMPUTER** icon on your desktop. You can use the same steps in Windows Explorer. Double-click on the **LOCAL DISK** option illustrated in Figure 2-3.

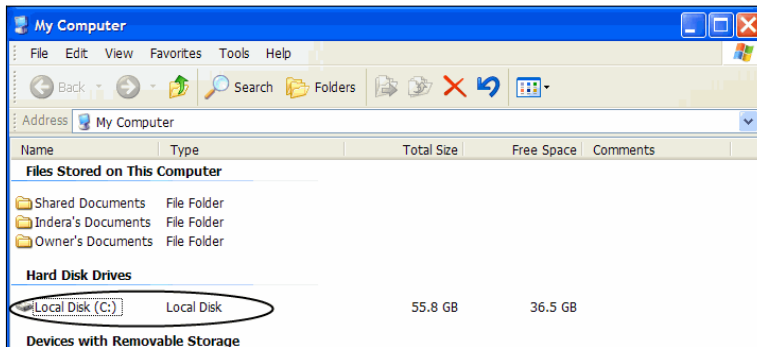


Figure 2-3 Local disk illustrated



Your window may look different, depending on the view that you have selected. In Lesson 1, you learned how to change window views.

2. Click the **FOLDERS** button on the toolbar, then click the **VIEWS** button and select **DETAILS**. You should see 2 panes, the left pane and the right pane, as illustrated in Figure 2-4.

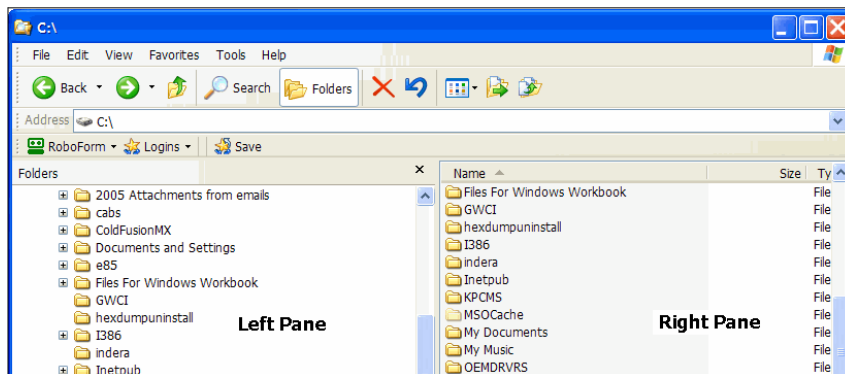


Figure 2-4 Contents of the local disk displayed

3. Click on a folder in the left pane of the window as shown in Figure 2-5. The contents of the folder will be displayed in the right pane of the window. Close the My Computer window.

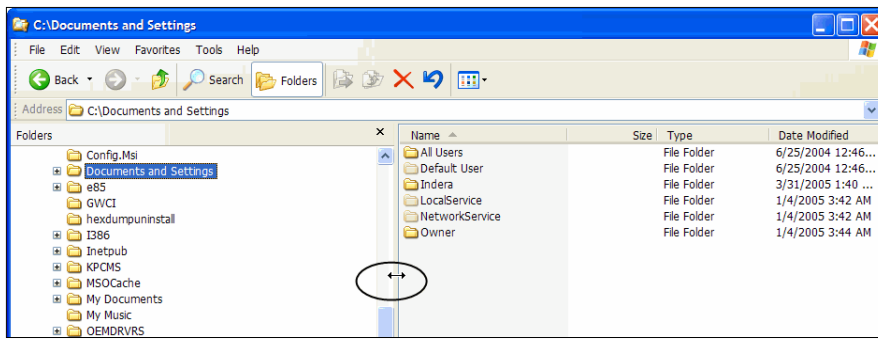


Figure 2-5 Contents of a folder illustrated in the right pane

If there are more folders under the folder that you selected, click on the + (plus sign) in the left pane to view all of the folders.

If you want to make the left or right pane of the window smaller or larger, place the mouse pointer on the vertical line between the 2 panes and drag it to the right or left as needed. The mouse pointer is in the right place when it changes to a 2 sided arrow as illustrated above in Figure 2-5.

NEW The Start Menu

Ahhhh, where do I begin. To say that there are a few changes to the Start menu from the previous version of Windows may be an understatement. I'll just say that along with a new look in Windows XP comes a new Start menu as well.

The good thing is that you can switch back to the old look if you get tired of the new look or don't like it. To be fair, this lesson will cover both versions of the Start menu and provide as much comparison between the 2 menu styles as possible. You can switch between the 2 menu styles as often as you like.

Figure 2-6 shows the Start menu in the new XP menu style, which I will refer to as the "XP menu". Figure 2-7 shows the Start menu in what is now called the Classic menu style, which I will refer to as the "Classic menu". This menu should look familiar if you have used a previous version of Windows. It is important to note that each menu style effects more than the start menu. The majority of features in Windows look different in each menu style.

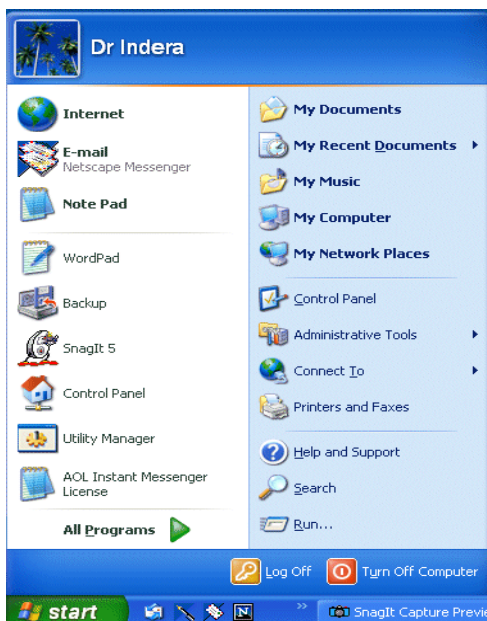


Figure 2-6 XP menu

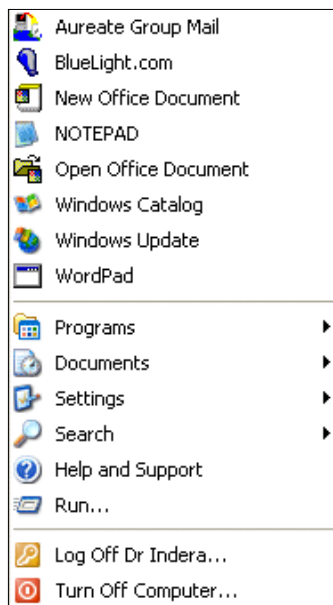


Figure 2-7 Classic menu

Submenus

Items on menus that have a right arrow, like those shown above in Figures 2-6 and 2-7 are menu items that have submenus. Examples of a submenu are the Administrative Tools option in Figure 2-6 and the Settings option in Figure 2-7. The arrow lets you know that there are additional items that you can select from.

How To Switch Between The XP And Classic Menus

In this exercise you will learn how to change the look of the Start menu.

1. Right-click on the Taskbar and select Properties, then click on the **START MENU** tab. You will see the dialog box shown in Figure 2-8 if you are currently using the Classic menu or Figure 2-9 if you are using the XP menu.

The only difference between Figure 2-8 and Figure 2-9 is the picture of the menu in the top half of the dialog box. The graphic lets you know which menu style you are currently using.

2. If you want to select the menu style that you are not using now, click on the radio button next to the other menu style and click OK, then close the Taskbar and Start Menu Properties dialog box.

If you do not plan to use the XP menu, you can read through the next few exercises or skip them entirely. If this is the case, skip ahead a few pages until you see the "Log Off Options" exercise. The Classic menu customizations start after the "Log Off Options" exercises.



Figure 2-8 Classic menu illustrated



Figure 2-9 XP menu illustrated



The options shown above in Figure 2-8 and Figure 2-9 have no effect on the appearance of the Start button or the taskbar. You will learn how to modify the taskbar in Lesson 3.

How To Customize The XP Menu

I remember reading that the XP menu has fixed some of the problems that the Classic menu had in previous versions of Windows. I don't know about you, but I didn't notice any problems with the menu in Windows 2000. Below are the differences from previous versions that I have observed. The information below only pertains to the XP menu.

- The Control Panel has its own menu. It used to be under the **SETTINGS** menu.
- Items like the Control Panel and Shut down options are further apart and are easier to recognize, which helps prevent you from clicking on the wrong button.
- There is less of a need to go into the **PROGRAMS** menu, because more options are on the Start menu.

7 Sections Of The XP Menu

The first thing that I noticed when using the XP menu is the large number of sections that it has, compared to the 3 sections that the Classic menu has. Below is a description of the contents of each section on the XP menu shown earlier in Figure 2-6.

Section 1 - Banner Section

Across the top of the Start menu is a banner-like section. This section contains the name of the person that is currently logged on. This information can be turned off completely. It can also be customized.

The name and picture can be modified through the User Accounts application, which you will learn about later in the workbook. If you have Windows XP Professional, you can turn off the banner section completely by using the Group Policy Editor, which is covered later in the workbook.

Section 2 - Permanent Section

This section is right below the banner section in the left column of the Start menu and contains permanently installed shortcut links to Microsoft programs, like Internet Explorer and Outlook Express. The good thing is that you can add other programs here by following the steps below.

How To Add Programs To The Start Menu

In this exercise you will add a program to the Start menu by selecting the executable (the program file). You can also add a program by selecting a shortcut to a program.



You have to be using the XP menu to complete this exercise.

1. Open Windows Explorer (Start ⇒ Run) and type `explorer` in the field, then press Enter or click OK.
2. Click in the **ADDRESS** drop down list field so that it is highlighted, as shown in Figure 2-10 (It doesn't matter what words are highlighted.) and type `c:\program files\windows nt\accessories` in the **ADDRESS BAR** as shown in Figure 2-11 and press Enter. You should see the WordPad application in the right pane as shown in Figure 2-12.

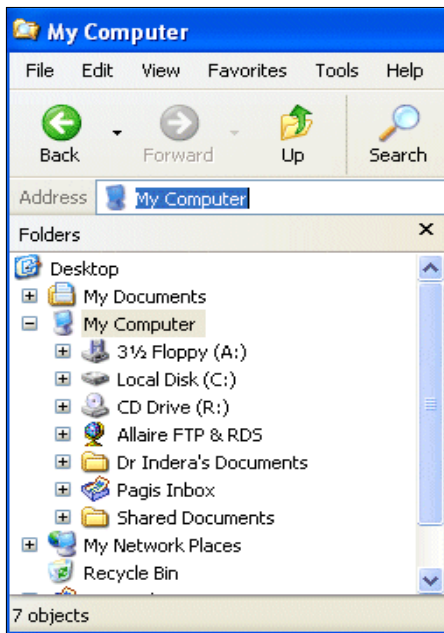


Figure 2-10 Contents of the Address drop down list highlighted

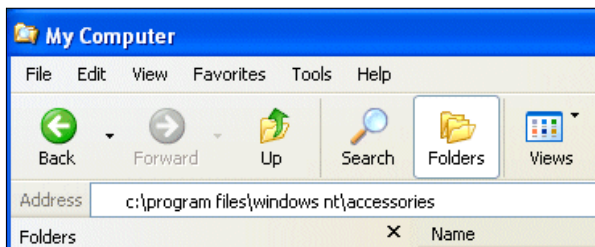


Figure 2-11 Location of WordPad in the Address bar

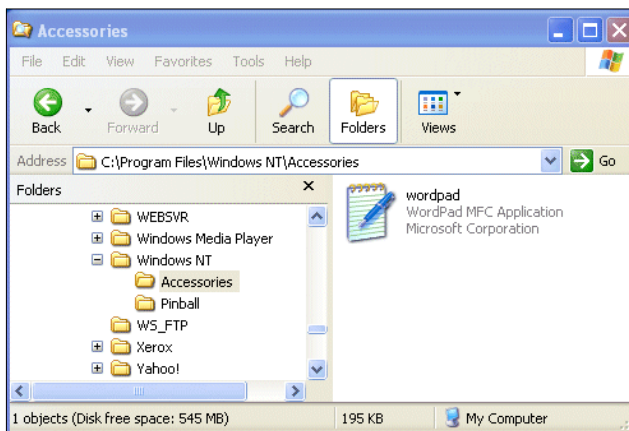


Figure 2-12 WordPad program illustrated

3. Right-click on the **WORDPAD** file as shown in Figure 2-13 and select the option **PIN TO START MENU**.

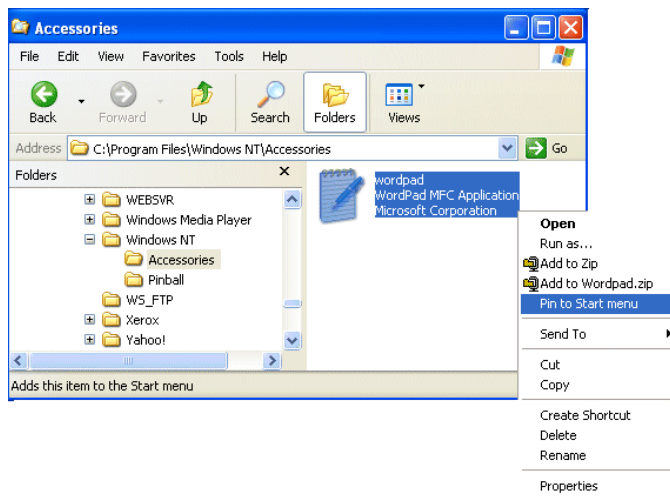


Figure 2-13 Pin to Start menu option illustrated

4. Close Windows Explorer, then click the Start button. You should now see a link for the WordPad program below the Internet Explorer option in the permanent section of the Start menu as shown in Figure 2-14.

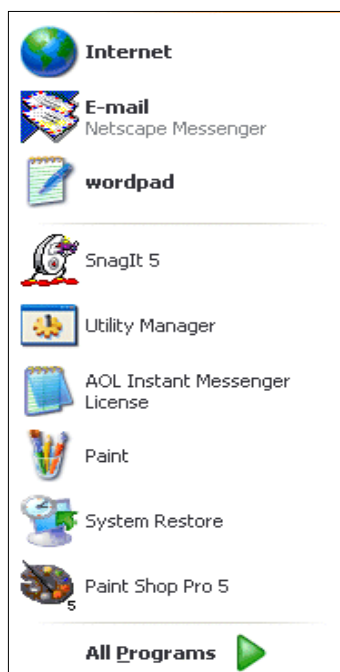


Figure 2-14 WordPad program added to the XP menu

How To Remove A Program From The Start Menu

Just like you can add programs to the Start menu, you can remove them by following the steps below. Unless there is something that you want to remove from the Start menu now, just read the instructions below, so that you will be familiar with the process.



Removing a program from the Start menu, does not delete the program from the hard drive.

1. Right-click on the program that you want to remove in the **PERMANENT SECTION** of the Start menu and select either **REMOVE FROM THIS LIST** as shown in Figure 2-15 or **UNPIN FROM START MENU** as illustrated in Figure 2-16. The program will be removed from the Start menu.



Figure 2-15 Option to remove an item from the Start menu illustrated

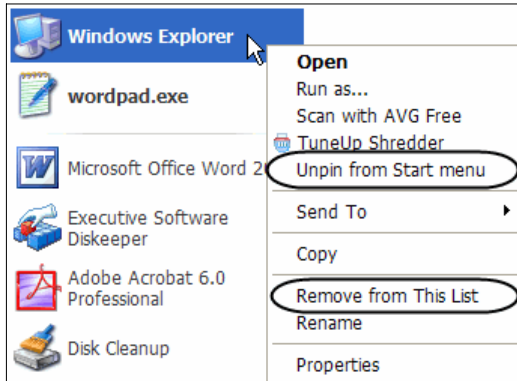


Figure 2-16 Options to remove an item from the Start menu illustrated



The option **REMOVE FROM THIS LIST** is available for every application that you can remove from the Start menu. The option **UNPIN FROM START MENU** is only available for applications that you add to the start menu. As shown in Figure 2-16 above, you will see both options if you are removing an application that you added to the Start menu.

Section 3 - Recently Used Programs

This section will display the last several programs that you have opened. This section of the Start menu changes all the time, which may get on your nerves. This is one reason that I do not use the XP menu.

To show how this section changes, refer back to Figure 2-6. Notice that the first 4 programs shown in this section are WordPad, Backup, SnagIt 5 and Control Panel.

Now look at Figure 2-14 shown earlier. The first 4 programs shown are SnagIt 5, Utility Manager, AOL Instant Messenger License and Paint.

You have 2 options for trying to control this section. You can hide the list completely or you can set a limit to the number of programs that will be displayed in this section. If you want to modify this section of the Start menu, follow the steps below.

How To Modify The Recently Used Programs Section Of The Start Menu

1. Right-click on the Taskbar and select Properties.
2. Click on the **START MENU** tab, then click on the **CUSTOMIZE** button across from the Start menu option. You will see the dialog box shown in Figure 2-17.

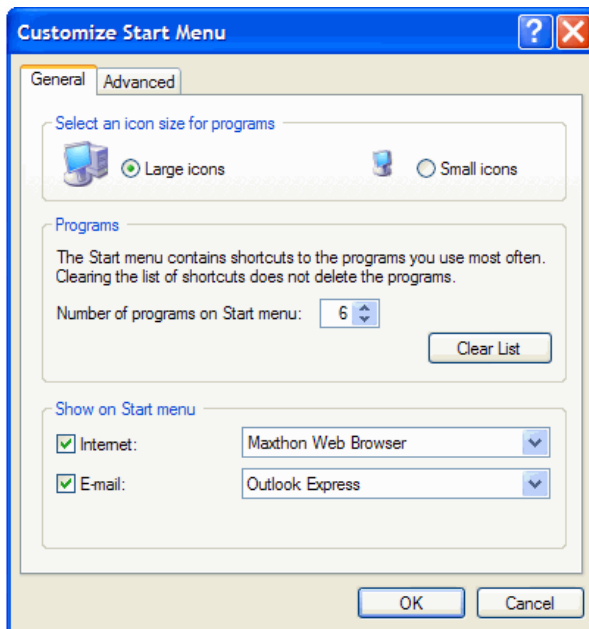


Figure 2-17 General tab on the Customize Start Menu dialog box

The **LARGE** and **SMALL** icon options are for the icons on the Start menu. The default is large, but you can select the small icon option to see if you like it better.

The **INTERNET** and **E-MAIL** options in the Show on Start menu section of the General tab can be changed to the software packages that you are currently using. Notice in Figure 2-17 above, that I have the browser set to Maxthon, which is the browser that I use. The options in each of the drop down lists come from the software that you have installed on your computer. The options shown in the Internet drop down list shown in Figure 2-18 contains the list of the web browsers that I have installed. The options that you see will depend on the web browser software packages that are installed on your computer.

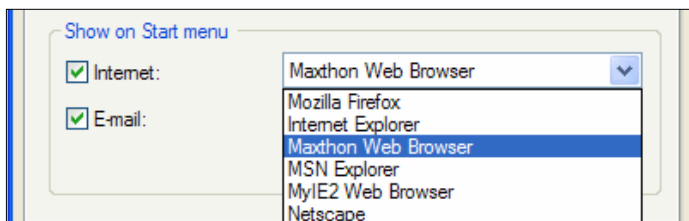


Figure 2-18 List of web browsers that I have installed

In the **PROGRAMS** section, you will see that my current setting is 6. This means that the 6 most recent applications that I have opened, will be displayed in this section of the Start menu.

3. Change this setting to 3, by clicking on the down arrow to the right of the field and click OK. Click OK again to close the Taskbar and Start Menu Properties dialog box.
4. Click the Start button. You should only see 3 programs in the **RECENTLY USED PROGRAMS** section of the Start menu.



If you do not want any programs to show in this section of the Start menu, repeat the steps above. In step 3, change the **NUMBER OF PROGRAMS ON START MENU** option to zero.

Section 4 - All Programs Menu

This section only has one entry, **ALL PROGRAMS**. It is below the Recently Used Programs section on the Start menu. This link points to the **C:\DOCUMENTS AND SETTINGS\{USERNAME}\START MENU\PROGRAMS** folder as shown in Figure 2-19.



{username} corresponds to the user account that is currently logged on to the computer.

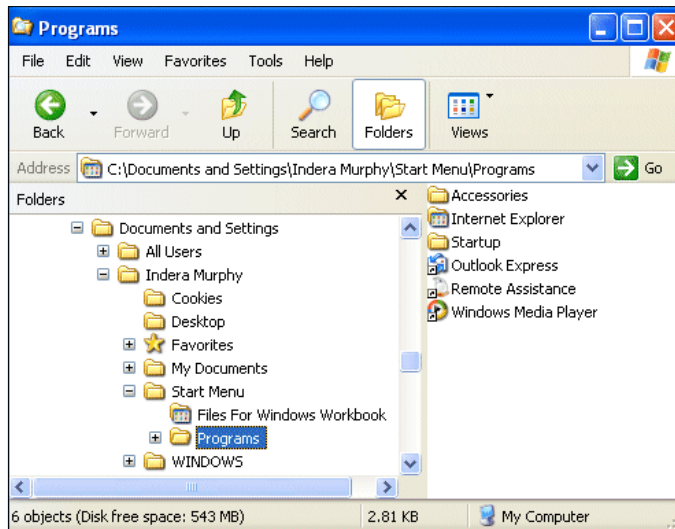


Figure 2-19 Programs folder

You can add items to this menu, but the majority of the applications that you have installed or will install in the future, are added to this menu for you automatically. The **ALL PROGRAMS** menu is the same as the **PROGRAMS** menu on the Classic menu. The All Programs menu can be removed from the Start menu, but not as easily as you can modify other options. I personally do not recommend removing this menu, but if you want to, the instructions are in Lesson 14 in the section, "How To Remove The All Programs Menu From The Start Menu".

Section 5 - The "My" Section

This section is at the top of the right column of the Start menu. I call it the "My" section because all of the options start with the word "My". This may not be the "official" name for the section. Many of the folders in this section were created when Windows was installed. Others will be added when you install software. These options can be removed by following the steps below. If you do not want to remove any of the "My" folders you can just read through the steps, so that you will be familiar with the process.

1. Right-click on the Taskbar and select Properties.
2. Click on the Start Menu tab, then click on the **CUSTOMIZE** button across from the Start menu option.
3. Click on the Advanced tab and scroll down the list in the **START MENU ITEMS** section until you see the option(s) that you want to remove from the Start menu. When you see the option that you want to remove, select the option, **DON'T DISPLAY THIS ITEM** in that section as shown in Figure 2-20.

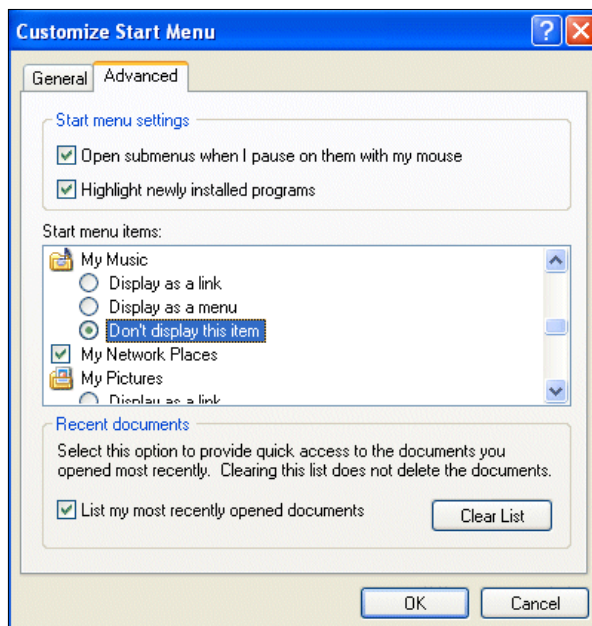


Figure 2-20 Start menu items illustrated



You can add items to the Start menu by selecting **DISPLAY AS A LINK** or **DISPLAY AS A MENU**.

Notice all of the other options in this section of the dialog box that you can turn on or off on the Start menu.

4. Scroll down to the bottom of the Start menu items list and select, **DISPLAY ON THE ALL PROGRAMS MENU AND THE START MENU OPTION** under the System Administrator Tools section. Once you have selected the options that you want, click OK. Click OK again to close the Taskbar and Start Menu Properties dialog box.

If you open the Start menu, the options that you selected should or should not be there, based on the options that you selected.

Section 6 - Standard Options

This section is right below the "My" section. This section contains options that allow you to take control of your computer. You cannot add software applications like WordPad to this section of the Start menu. These options can be removed by following the steps below. They are the same steps that were just covered in Section 5.

1. Right-click on the Taskbar and select Properties.
2. Click on the Start Menu tab. Click on the **CUSTOMIZE** button across from the Start menu option.
3. Click on the Advanced tab and scroll down the list in the **START MENU ITEMS** section until you see the option(s) that you want to remove from the standard options section of the Start menu. Once you have selected the option(s) that you want, click OK. Click OK again to close the Taskbar and Start Menu Properties dialog box.

Display As A Menu Option

By now you have probably seen this option for several of the Start menu options. If selected, all of the items associated with that menu item will be displayed as a submenu. If there are items on one of these menus that you use on a frequent basis, it makes sense to turn this option on because you will be able to get to the options quicker. Doing this will eliminate one step in getting to the option on the menu that you want.

Notice that the **ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS** option has an arrow to the right of it in Figure 2-21. This lets you know that the menu item has additional options. If you hold the mouse over this option, you will see the submenu shown in Figure 2-21, if you have the option **DISPLAY AS A MENU** selected.

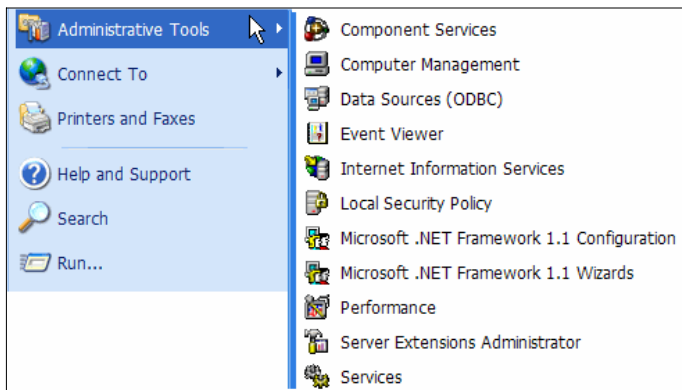


Figure 2-21 Administrative Tools menu illustrated

You may have more, less or different options on the Administrative Tools menu. Other software that is installed on your computer will add options to the Administrative Tools menu.



The Administrative Tools option is also available in the Control Panel.

1. Open the Customize Start Menu dialog box. (You can refer back to the previous exercise if necessary.)
2. Scroll up to the top of the Start menu items list and select the option, **DISPLAY AS A MENU** under the Control Panel. Leave the Customize Start Menu dialog box open to complete the next exercise.

When you hold the mouse over the Control Panel option, you should see the submenu shown in Figure 2-22. You will learn more about the Control Panel applications in Lesson 7.

Maintaining The Documents List On The XP Menu

The Documents list is on the Start menu. This list stores the last 15 files that you opened or created. The purpose is to let you get to these files quickly. You will learn more about the Documents list in Lesson 12.

1. Check the option, **LIST MY MOST RECENTLY OPENED DOCUMENTS** at the bottom of the Customize Start Menu dialog box, if it is not already checked and click OK. Click OK again to close the Taskbar and Start Menu Properties dialog box.



Notice that you can also clear the Documents list here.

2. Click the Start button and click on the **MY RECENT DOCUMENTS** option. You will see the last 15 documents that you opened, as shown in Figure 2-23. Close the Start menu.

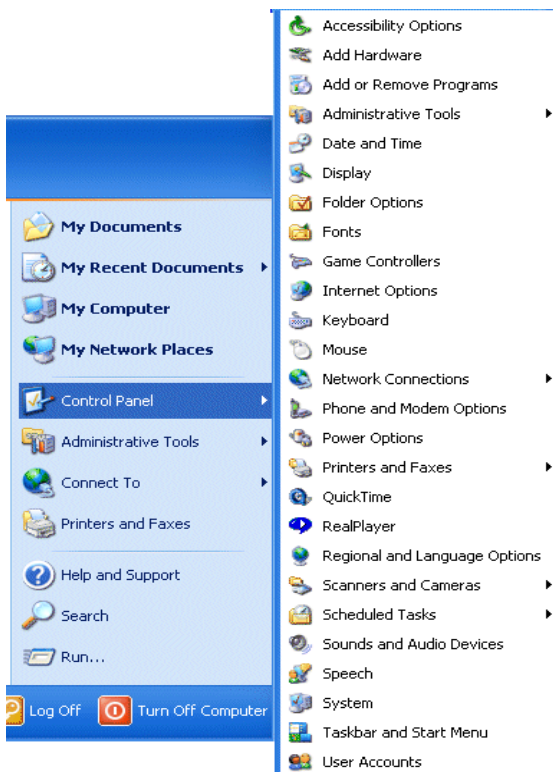


Figure 2-22 Control Panel menu

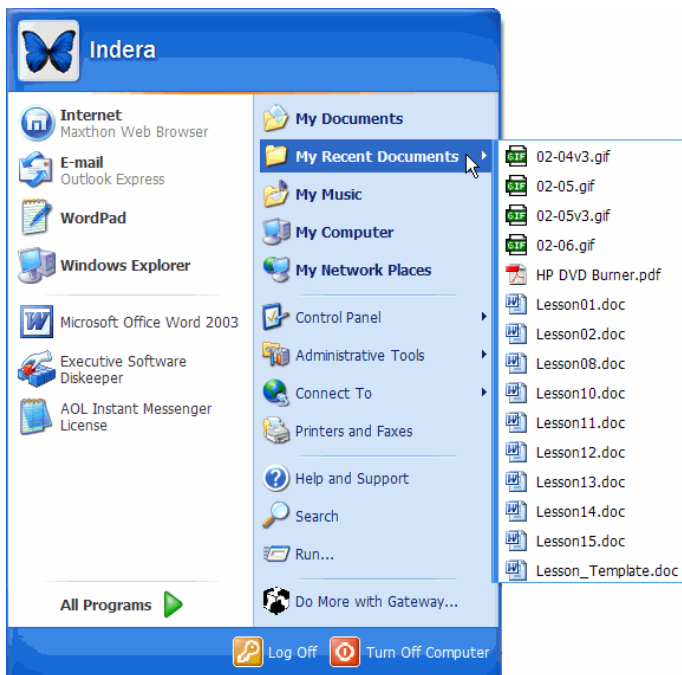


Figure 2-23 Documents menu illustrated

Section 7 - Log Off

This section is below both columns of the Start menu and provides a variety of ways to log off of the computer. You may see the option **TURN OFF COMPUTER** instead of the option **SHUT DOWN** depending on what your user account settings are. You will learn more about user accounts in Lesson 9.