

Computer Bytes – June 2017

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Hello friends & associates. As I prepare this, we're heading into a heat wave here in Southern California. Be sure to keep yourselves and your pets cool and safe!

This time: HOW TO MAKE BETTER USE OF THE RIGHT-CLICK

While the bulk of our Windows operating system activities involve using the "left click" on our mouse, I for one am a heavy user of the mouse "right click" features. There are lots of additional features and 'quick' functions if you get the hang of it and remember it's there. Let's talk this time about using a computer faster and easier with these right-click tips.

Of course, you know that the computer mouse has a right button as well as a left but you may not know how powerful the right button is. I've met more people than not that NEVER use this side of the mouse., mostly because they are simply not familiar with the features it provides. Let's try to remedy some of that unknown.

In many ways, the right-click is quicker, more powerful, and more versatile than the left. From the right-click you can manage files, obtain system information, open numerous software applications and do a variety of things. We obviously won't cover ALL the features but we can give you enough to start with and you can move on and experiment on your own.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LEFT-CLICK AND THE RIGHT-CLICK?

First, so some of the following makes sense, get a feel for the right click. To start/test any of the features/options, simply right click on an item on your desktop. You can click an open area of the Desktop itself, a folder you have, a file you have, an application. You'll see immediately the menu and features we will be discussing in the following information.

The basic difference is that the left-click carries out some specific action while the right-click presents a menu of other/additional features for the action. The left-click action is predefined whereas the right-click provides choices. The table below makes this definition clearer:

Mouse button	Action	Function
Left	Single-click	Selects something, usually a file, as a target for some action to come next. On some systems, the setting is changed to make the single-click the same as on the Internet.
Left	Double-click	Causes an action to be carried out, such as opening a file. <i>Note: The Internet is different. For example, clicking once on a link in a browser will open the link.</i>
Right	Single-click	Brings up a list of possible actions for an object. Any actions on the list must be clicked again (right or left) before they occur.
Right	Double-click	Has no separate meaning

RIGHT-CLICK DRAG-AND-DROP

A good example of the difference between the right and left-click is the common operation for moving or copying objects where the mouse is used to drag the object from one place and then drop it in a new location. Most people use the left-click for this operation but the right-click can also be used for drag-and-drop and is more versatile.

When you drag and drop a file with the left-click, the results vary. A shortcut may be created or the file may be copied or it may be moved. It depends on the circumstances. That is fine, if you remember which action takes place when. Alternately, you can use the right-click to drag and drop. In this case, you first get a context menu which allows you to then choose the operation that you had in mind, i.e. 'copy'.

The choices available in a right-click action are presented in a window called a *context menu*. It is also sometimes called a *shortcut menu*. They are basically the same thing.

To carry out the actions the 'shortcut menu' provides, we need another step. Keyboard options may be available but the usual way is with the mouse. A single click (right or left) on an item in the menu carries out the next step in the action for that item. For some items it opens a second window with more details. These expandable items have a small right-pointing triangle on the right side. Usually, simply hovering with the mouse pointer will expand these items.

The categories of possible actions included in the menus vary depending on the nature of the object being clicked. For example, the context menu for the Windows 7 Desktop is different from the basic menu for let's say a text file. For a file, the menu contains software operations for that file, including the default "Open" and any operations that installed applications, such as anti-virus programs, may have added. In fact, a typical menu may have quite a few entries.

Some kinds of file will have the operations Print and/or Edit. The basic file management functions *Cut*, *Copy*, *Create Shortcut*, *Delete*, *Rename* will also be in the menu. Two very important functions, Send To and Properties, provide even more extended features. We won't go into those here but you can certainly click on them yourself and check them out as you experiment with the right click features.

As I mentioned at the start, there many options/features and they can vary with your operating system as well. That said, many of the common features/functions of the right mouse click remain. Play around with it, try a few things, and I think you'll find many of your activities can be optimized utilizing the mouse "right-click" features.

NOTE: Our sharing of information within articles includes suggestions and tips. USE AND/OR APPLY AT YOUR OWN RISK. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our offices for professional service/guidance.

Until next time, don't forget your backups! For more information, contact Harv Oliver, HANDS-ON Consultations, (805) 524-5278, www.hocsupport.com