Introduction to Windows XP

Appendix B: The Mouse

The mouse

Although most commands can be sent to the computer by pressing keys or key combinations on the keyboard (see Appendix A), the Windows operating system is designed also to use the mouse to issue these commands.

The **mouse pointer** is the shape on the screen that moves as you slide the mouse over a flat surface. The pointer's shape changes depending on where it is on the screen and what program you are using.

> **arrow** - is the most common pointer shape and is the Standard. Some programs use a hand with the index finger extended. The arrow is used to point to or to click on items.
>
> **two-directional arrow** - When the pointer crosses any margin or border of a window it changes to the two-directional arrow. It is used to change the size of a window or an object.
>
> **busy (hour glass)** - An hour glass appears when the computer is busy doing tasks like opening or saving a large document. The computer will not respond to any commands while this symbol is present on the screen.
>
> **I-bar** - When the pointer moves within an area where text can be typed or edited, it appears in the shape of an I-bar. When you click the mouse button, an **insertion point** appears where you begin to type or edit text.

A mouse usually has at least **two buttons**; the primary mouse button (usually the left button) and the secondary mouse button (usually the right button).

The mouse is only one way to control the pointer. Other devices that do the same thing are:

> **Trackball** is essentially a mouse turned upside-down. The device is stationary and you roll a ball set into the device to move the pointer around the computer screen (see Figure B.1).

Figure B.1 Trackball

Touchpad is a touch-sensitive pad about 2¼" by 1½" (see Figure B.2). As you move your finger around on the pad the pointer moves around on the computer screen. Touchpads are built into some keyboards and some laptop computers. Touchpads are also available as separate devices that connect to the computer in place of the mouse.

Figure B.2 Touchpad

"Eraser-top" button is built into the keyboard of some laptop computers and looks like the eraser end of a pencil (see Figure B.3). The screen pointer is controlled by placing your fingertip on the button and tilting it left, right, up or down.

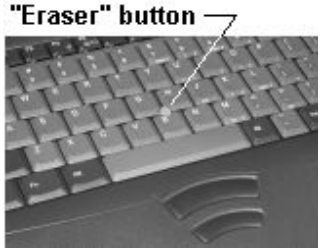

Figure B.3 "Eraser-top" button

Mouse actions

There are six main mouse actions.

Move Slide the mouse to move the pointer on the screen.
Click Quickly press and release the *left* mouse button.
Right-click Quickly press and release the *right* mouse button.
Double-click Quickly press and release the *left* mouse button twice.
Drag Move the pointer onto an item, press and hold down the *left* mouse button while you move the pointer to a new location and release the button.
Right-drag Move the pointer onto an item, press and hold down the *right* mouse button, slide the pointer to a new location and release the button.

Mouse properties

There are certain parameters that you can adjust to modify the performance of the mouse

to satisfy your needs or preferences. These adjustments do not alter the physical performance of the mouse, rather they control the way that the operating system interprets the signals that it receives from the mouse. These adjustments are made through the Mouse Properties dialog box as you learn in Lesson Four.