

Chapter 7 – The Mouse

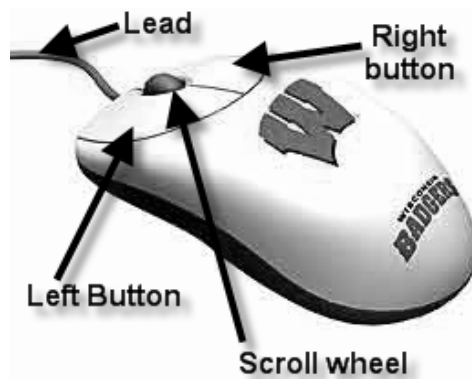


Fig. 7.1

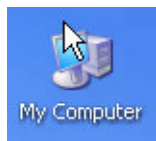
The Basic Mouse

This little rodent allows you to move a pointer across the screen and select various actions. Actions such as saving a file, printing a letter, sending an e-mail or simply confirming a request.

Mice come in various species but they all operate in the same way. It is just that some mice have more features than others. The basic mouse has a ball underneath which, when the mouse is moved on a surface, moves a pointer allowing us to navigate around the screen. Note that it is the **very tip** of the arrow that must rest on the point of action. On top of this mouse are at least two buttons – left and right. These buttons act in different ways depending upon the program in use.

The Left Click:

The left button is the most important at this stage. Pressing the left button (or left-clicking) while the pointer is positioned over an item will perform an action. This may be simply highlighting or selecting the item or it may initiate a command. As an example try moving the pointer over the My Computer icon on the screen and left click. (Press the left mouse button) You will see that the icon changes colour, becomes highlighted and is therefore selected. Not particularly dramatic but it works. Make sure that the tip of the pointer lies over the icon.



Pointer on target

Pointer missing the target



Drag and Drop:

Now let's do something a bit more interesting. Place the pointer on the My Documents icon but this time hold down the **left** button and, while still holding down the button, drag the mouse to the right. This will drag the icon across the screen. Release the mouse button and the icon remains at the dragged position. In computer terminology this is called Drag and Drop. Try dragging it back to its original position. This is not as easy as it sounds so don't get disheartened at this stage.

The Right Click:

It surprises me how many people ignore the use of the right mouse button because it can be very useful. Having said that, you will be able to get along without it - rather like cruise control or satellite navigation in a car.

The right mouse button invariably brings up an alternative menu. Right click on the My Documents icon and a menu is displayed. Somewhere in that menu is the option to Rename the file. Move the mouse pointer down the menu list until Rename is highlighted but, this time, **left** click with the mouse. The words "My Documents" are now highlighted. Let us rename this icon and individualise the Desktop. With the original words highlighted, type in "*Amy's (or Adam's) Documents*" (omitting the inverted commas). Press the Enter key and the icon has been renamed.

Don't like it? Made a mistake? Then **right** click on the icon again, highlight Rename and correct the entry.

The Double Click:

So far, so good but we have yet to come to the first major stumbling block for beginners. The dreaded double-click. Double click is only ever used with the left mouse button and as the term implies consists of a double click on the mouse button.

Let us see what happens. Point to the My Computer icon and perform a double click on the left mouse button. One of the best ways of describing the action is to think of repeating a note on a piano keyboard – Ding! Ding! – quite quickly.

The problem for beginners is that they tend to tense up when approaching this hurdle with the result that they move the mouse imperceptibly between the two clicks which is interpreted as two single clicks and nothing happens.

We are back to the bicycle analogy – keep practising. Just occasionally you will surprise yourself and bring up a screen something like Fig. 7.2. We will make mouse practice much more fun in just a moment.

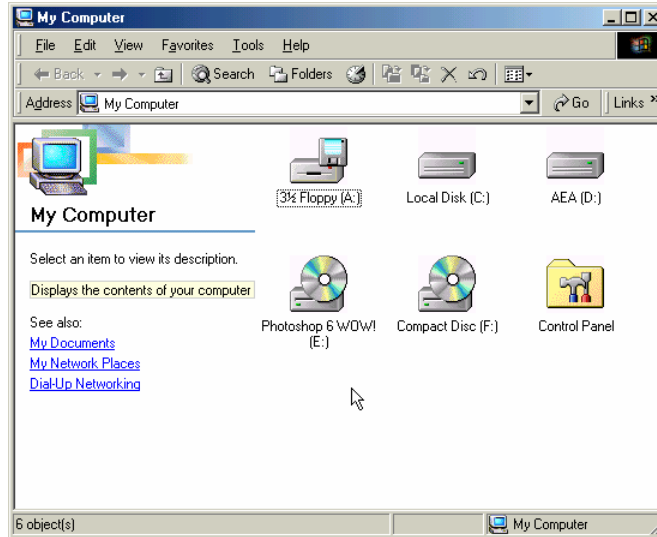


Fig. 7.2

As it says this displays the contents of your computer, which, at this time, is of no interest to us whatsoever. Look at the very top right of the picture and you will see three small boxes. Move the mouse pointer to the right-hand box – the one with the x in it and left click the mouse to remove the picture.

Mouse practice:

Do please practice double-clicking – you will need to use this skill throughout your computing life. This is not to say that this practice should be boring. There is little satisfaction in double-clicking on icons that display pictures that are beyond your comprehension at this point. Let us make it fun!

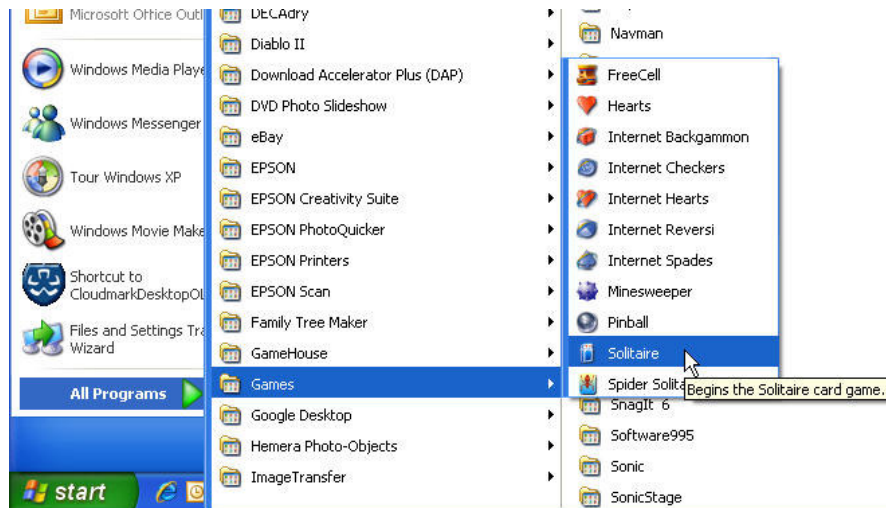


Fig. 7.3

Left click on the Start button. We are going to find a game called Solitaire that involves clicking and dragging. Choose (**left click**) the Programs menu then choose (**left click**) Games and find Classic Solitaire. (See Fig. 7.3) Navigating these menus can be tricky to start with especially when moving the pointer horizontally across the screen. If you are not accurate the pointer will open the menu above or below resulting in wailing and gnashing of dentures. Take your time – it will come.

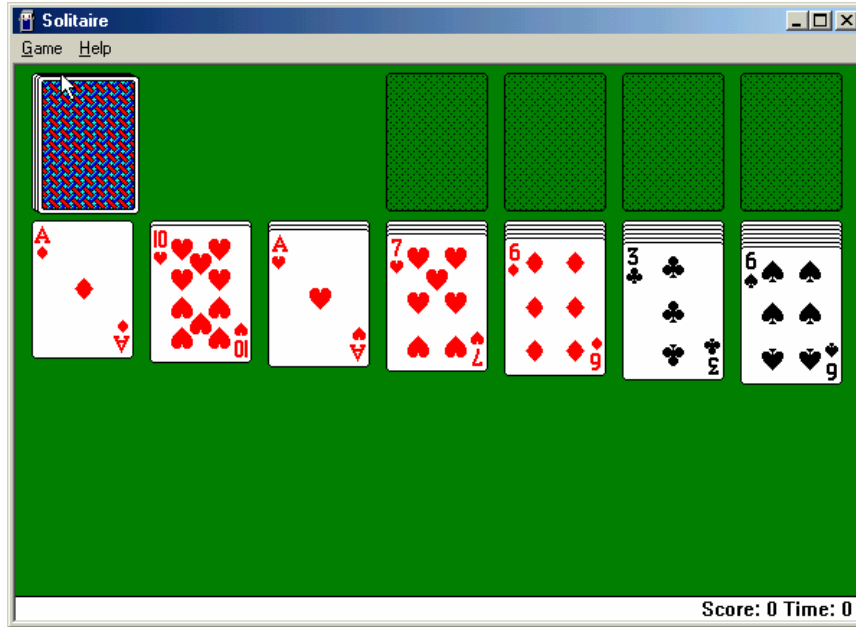


Fig. 7.4

Once you have the Solitaire window on the screen you can relax because the mouse work is a lot easier in the game than in the Start menus. The rules are similar to the old-fashioned game we played as youngsters. In the example above the two aces should be dragged to the empty squares at the top right of the screen. The black six can be dragged onto the red seven. Left click on the face down cards revealed by removing the black six and the ace of hearts and continue to build up the various columns and piles until the options run out. To deal the next card left click on the face down pack at the top left of the screen. Spaces can only be filled with Kings. Once the pack has been fully dealt click on the circle to start the next deal. The 'targets' in Solitaire are nice and large which will begin to give you confidence in using the mouse.

To finish with the game left click on the word Game at the top left-hand corner of the screen and click on Exit.

More mouse fun:

Now for something completely different – we are going to do a bit of drawing and painting with the mouse using a program called Paint.

As with Solitaire, left click on the Start button – left click on All Programs – but this time, left click on Accessories and finally left click on Paint. (See Fig. 7.5 below)

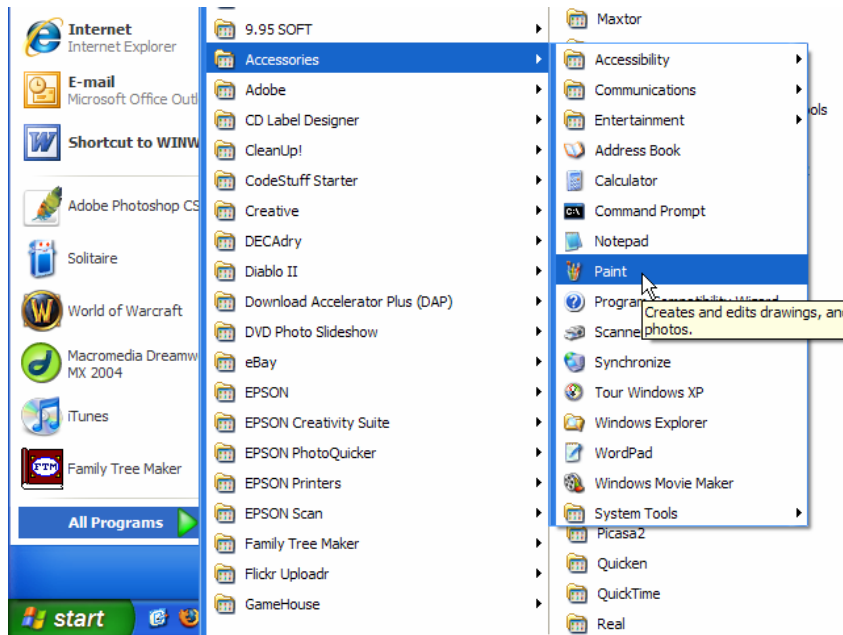


Fig. 7.5

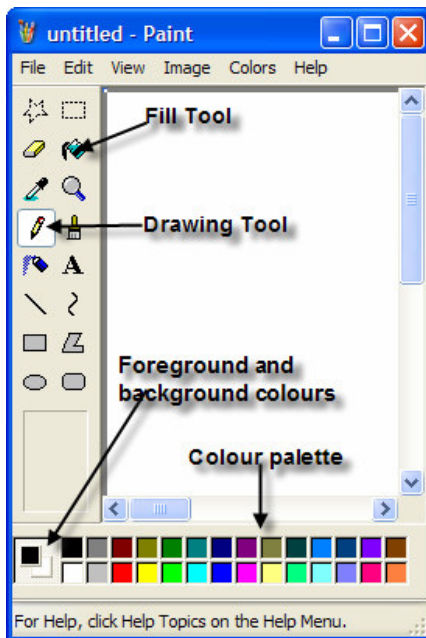


Fig. 7.6



Fig. 7.7

The Paint program window will appear as in Fig. 7.6. The Toolbar lies at the right hand side with the colour palette at the bottom of the window. You may notice that the Drawing tool is already highlighted and mouse pointer has changed shape to that of a pencil. Hold down the left mouse button while moving the pointer around the drawing window to create a doodle as in Fig. 7.7. You can move the pointer to a new starting area by releasing the left mouse button and moving the pointer without drawing. Hold down the left button to continue drawing.

Now we will fill some of the enclosed areas with a paint colour. Look at Fig. 7.8 and you will see the arrow pointer lying over a red colour. Left click on the red square and the foreground colour will change to red. Now left click on the Fill tool which looks like a paint can, move the pointer to an enclosed area and left click to fill the area with the colour as in Fig. 7.9.

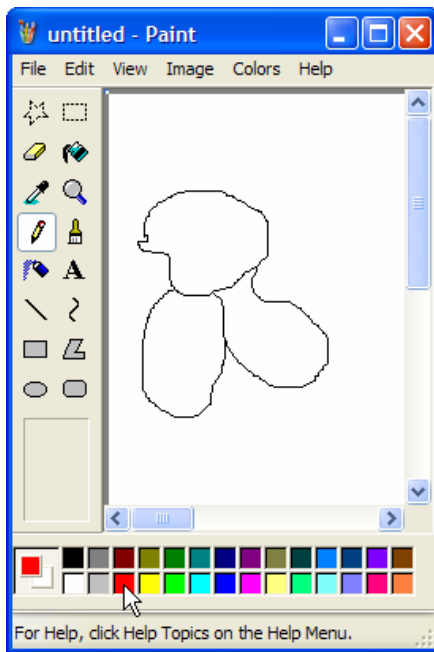


Fig 7.8



Fig. 7.9

Play around with different colours, draw different shapes using other tools on the toolbar, click on the “A” tool and draw a text box to enclose typed letters – go on, make a real mess of it. It is simply finger painting with the computer – without the cleaning up afterwards! To finish, left click on the word “File” along the top then left click on Exit.

Summary of Mouse Clicks:

The use of the mouse buttons confuses many people so let me summarise –

A single left click in most cases “selects” something.

A double left click always activates something.

A single right click brings up an alternative menu.

Click and dragging is almost always done using the left button

There is **no** double right click.

Being told to “click” on an object always means a single left click

To “double click” always means double click the left button.

Drag and drop always uses the left button and “right click” means exactly what it says.

Revision:

There may be more than one correct answer to each question.

Question 1 – What happens if you double click on a desktop icon?

1. You will open the program.
2. You will select/highlight the icon.
3. Not a lot.

Question 2 – What happens if you right-click on a blank area of the desktop?

1. Nothing.
2. An alternative menu appears.
3. The Start menu appears.

Question 3 – Why do your attempts at double-click sometimes fail?

1. There is too long a gap between the clicks.
2. You move the mouse imperceptibly between the clicks.
3. The tip of the arrow pointer is not on an icon.

Question 4 – What actions can you perform with the right mouse button?

1. Single click.
2. Double click.
3. Drag and drop.

Question 5- The Delete key removes which characters?

1. Those to the right of the cursor
2. Those to the left of the cursor
3. The character beneath the cursor

Question 6 – What does the Tab key do?

1. Creates a table.
2. Moves the cursor to the next tab point.
3. Moves the cursor previous tab point.

Question 7 – What key have you pressed that results in the following typed entry – “wHY HAVE I GOT 3 COPIES OF THE eVENING pOST?”

1. The Control Key.
2. The Alt key.
3. The Caps Lock key.

Question 8 – What actions might a single left mouse click perform?

1. Place the typing cursor.
2. Highlight an icon.
3. Start a program.
4. Open the Start menu.

Question 9 – What is the most common use of the F1 key?

1. Close a program.
2. There isn't one.
3. Raise a Help menu.

The Answers

Question 1. - 1

Question 2. 2

Question 3. – 1, 2 and 3 – They are all possible reasons

Question 4. – 1 and 3 – There is never a double right click command

Question 5. – 1 and 3 - The Backspace key removes those to the left of the cursor

Question 6. – 2 – Tab means tabulate not table

Question 7. – 3

Question 8. – 1, 2, 3 and 4 – It all depends what and where you are clicking

Question 9. – 3 – The F1 key invariably brings up a Help facility if there is one available.