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Windows XP Visual Guidelines

Welcome to the Windows XP Visual Guidelines

We are excited to share with you the new look and feel of Windows XP.

We changed the look of Windows to make your computer more exciting to use. Say goodbye to Windows grey and say hello to fresh colors, soft curves, rich gradients and friendly typography and imagery.

The Windows XP look is based on simplicity, color, freshness and excitement. We believe that visual design is integral to the user experience. We hope these guidelines help you generate excitement about Windows XP in your efforts.

The Windows XP Design Team

See our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page.

About these guidelines

This is a graphics-intensive site, intended for viewing in 16-bit or 24-bit color. Thanks for your patience in waiting for the 24-bit graphics to appear, and for adjusting your monitor to get the full effect.

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Site last updated August 1, 2001

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What's New in the Windows XP User Interface

Welcome Screen

The Welcome screen shows the name of every user who has an account on that computer. The screen appears when you start the computer and when you switch users. Users can pick images, also called tokens, to identify themselves. Note: if your computer belongs to a domain, as is common in many office networks, you won't see this new log-on screen.



Welcome screen

Start Menu

Click on the Windows XP start button and you'll discover a new Start menu that lets you easily access the most useful items on your computer. The left side of the menu lists the programs you use most frequently. This area includes space at the top to "pin" your favorite programs so they are always readily available.

The top of the Start menu shows the name and token of the current user. The Log Off and Shut Down buttons at the bottom provide highly visible access to those features.



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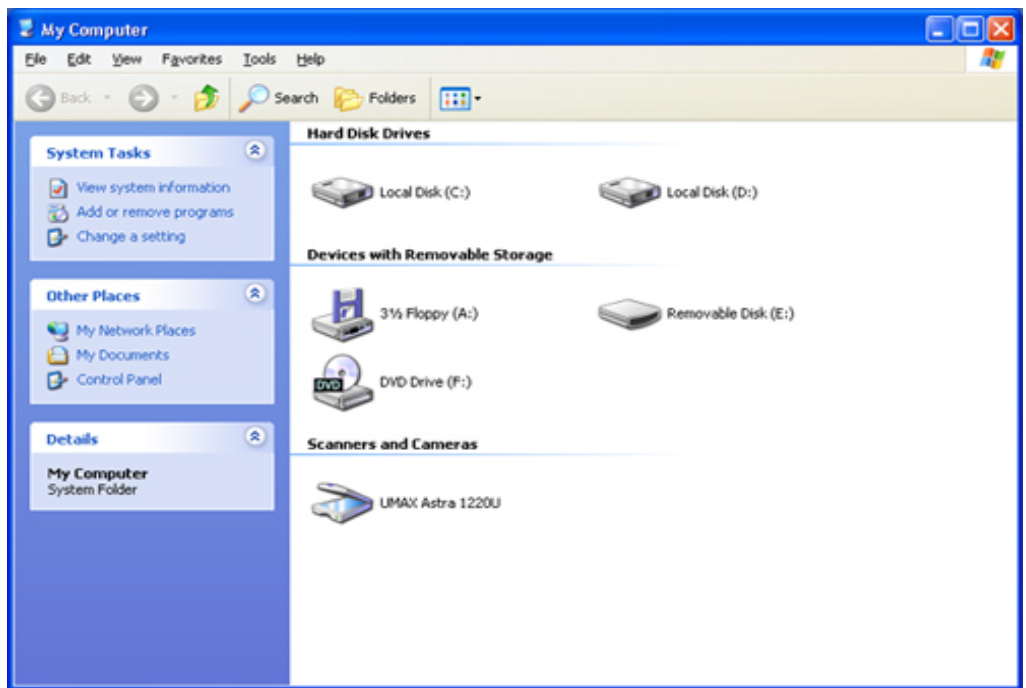
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Group view

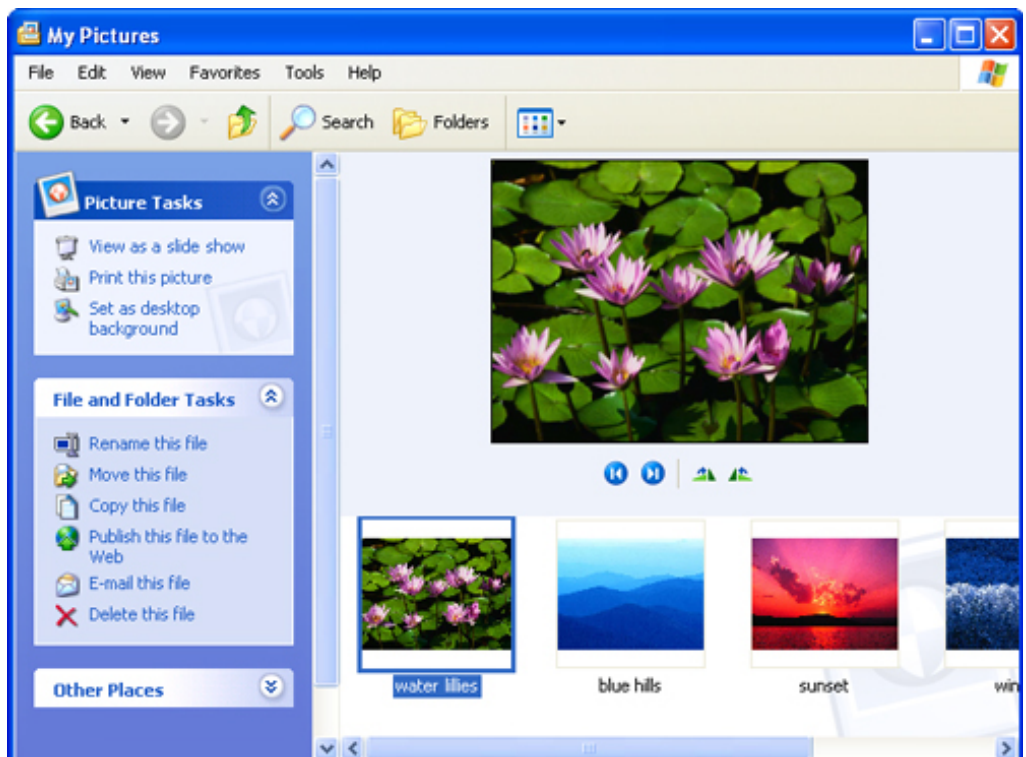
With Windows XP, you can view the contents of your folders by various categories based on file properties. To try this feature, click the View menu, select "Arrange Icons by", then select "Show in Groups". This feature lets you group files by name, size, file type, or other unique categories depending on the folder you're in. For example, you can view the files in the "My Music" grouped by artist, length, or year of release. Each group is separated by a group title and a blue line.



Example of a Group view

Filmstrip View

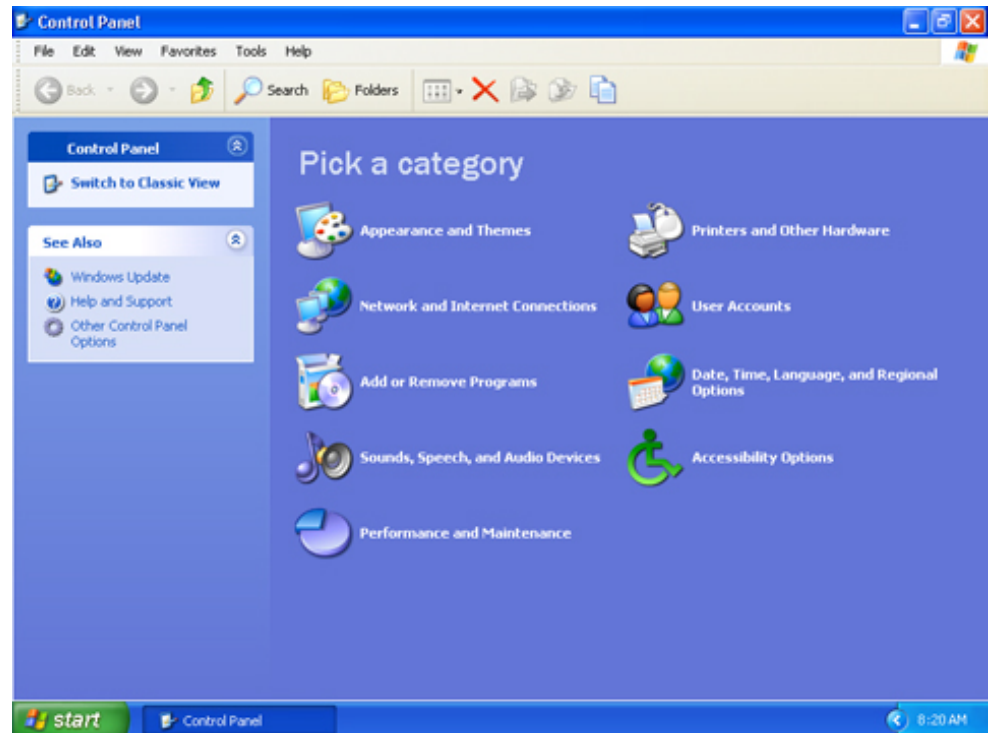
Filmstrip view shows you thumbnail previews of pictures and lets you zoom in, zoom out, and change orientation of each image. To see this feature, open My Pictures or any folder that is primarily used for pictures.



Example of a Filmstrip view

Control Panel

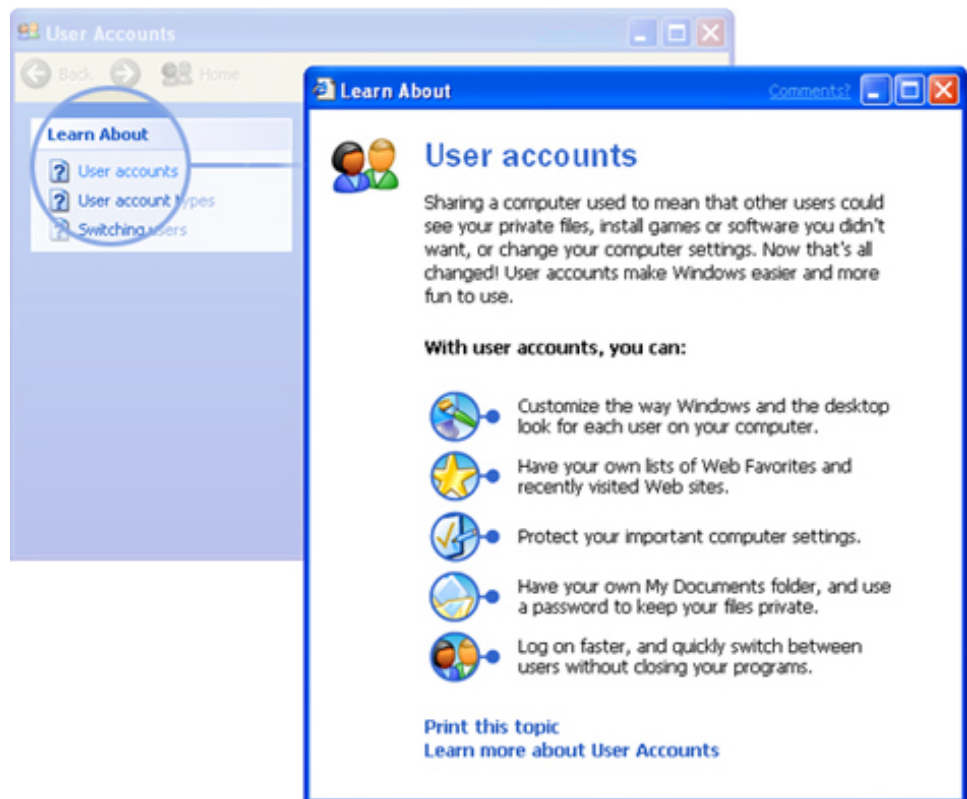
The Control Panel in Windows XP has been simplified to help you more easily find settings you're looking for. Control panels are grouped into categories. Picking a category displays a list of common tasks from the control panels in that category. You can click the control panels themselves to perform less common tasks.



Control Panel

Learn About

Learn About topics are available in the User Accounts control panel in Windows XP Home Edition. These topics provide easily accessible help that's relevant to your current task.



Example of a Learn About

Color Schemes

The new visual style of Windows XP comes in 3 different color schemes to give users you a variety of choices for enjoying their your user experience. You can change cColor schemes can be changed to match your mood, personality or activity. In addition to the Windows XP provides a default Blue color scheme there are and two alternative color schemes, Olive Green and Silver.

How to change the Color Scheme

1. Right-click on the Desktop and click "Properties" in the shortcut menu to open the "Display Properties" dialog.
2. The "Display Properties" dialog appears.
3. Click "Appearance".
4. Under "Color Scheme", choose Default (blue), Olive Green, or Silver.
5. Click OK.

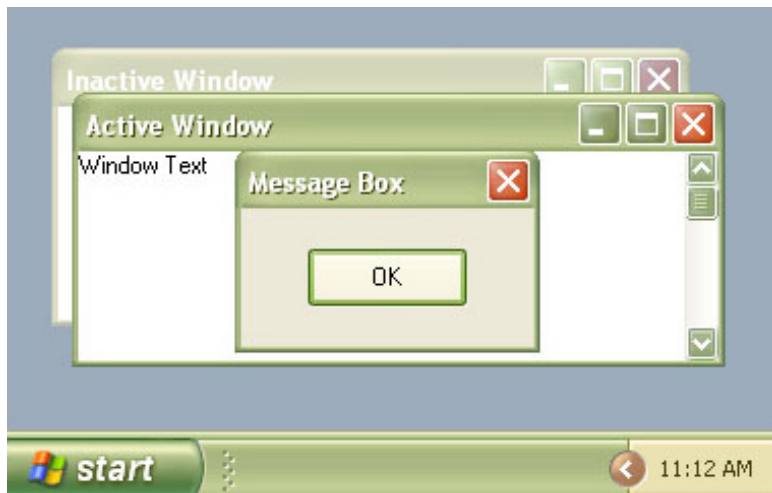
Blue color scheme characteristics

The default Blue color scheme is fresh, vivid and engaging. This color scheme is the signature of the product and has the essence of the new Windows XP.



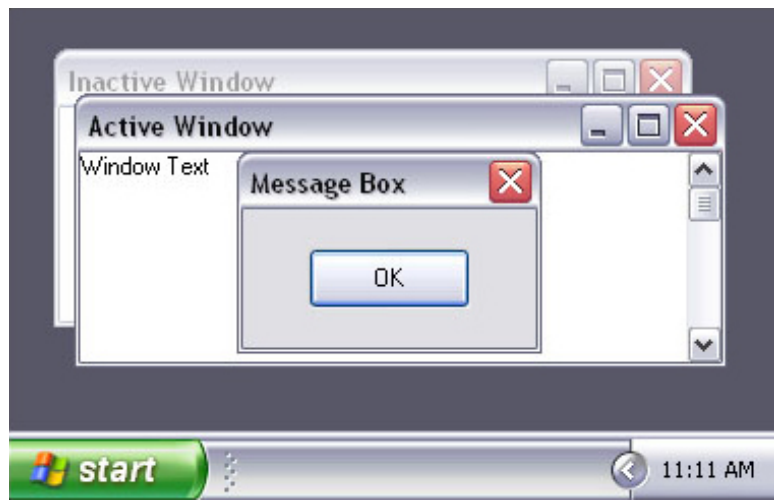
Olive Green color scheme characteristics

The Olive Green color scheme is comforting, natural and fresh. This color scheme has the feeling of home and is designed to be more neutral and soft toned.



Silver color scheme characteristics

The Silver color scheme is metallic and fresh. This color scheme is characterized by its precision sculpted look and neutral color scheme.



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About the Windows XP Design



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The new look of Windows XP is designed to create a friendly and visually simpler user experience.

There are four key adjectives that describe the Windows XP look and feel: fresh, desirable, colorful, and simple.

Fresh

Rich color, soft curves and subtle gradients breathe life into Windows. High quality graphics and new icons add sophistication and personality. Windows has been completely revamped to make your computer experience more enjoyable.

Desirable

Texture and light give the interface a more tactile feel. The title bar and taskbar have a soft plastic feel and colorful buttons light up on mouseover to invite you to click on them. Subtle three-dimensional buttons and controls use color and light to provide better feedback. Once you use the Windows XP look and feel, you'll never want to go back to Windows Classic.

Colorful

A rich color palette of blues with accents of green, red and yellow define the default look of Windows XP. Subtle gradients and glows give depth and richness to backgrounds and toolbars. Color is used to improve discoverability and convey meaning of buttons such as the green Start button and red Close button. Say goodbye to Windows grey and say hello to smart, friendly colors.

Simple

The Windows XP look is designed to enhance ease of use. Improved typography and layout provide hierarchy and clarity to help users find tasks. Colored buttons provide visual cues to communicate important system functions.

Improvements in visual design and interface design combine to make a simpler Windows.

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Windows XP Visual Guidelines

Fonts

To improve visual interest and hierarchy, Windows XP uses some new typefaces and a variety of type sizes. To better support our Microsoft brand, we've introduced Franklin Gothic into the Windows XP user interface.

Franklin Gothic Medium *Franklin Gothic Medium Italic*

Franklin Gothic is used only for text over 14 point. Franklin Gothic is often used for headers, and should never be used for body text.

Tahoma

Tahoma is used as the system's default font. Tahoma should be used at 8, 9 or 11 point sizes.

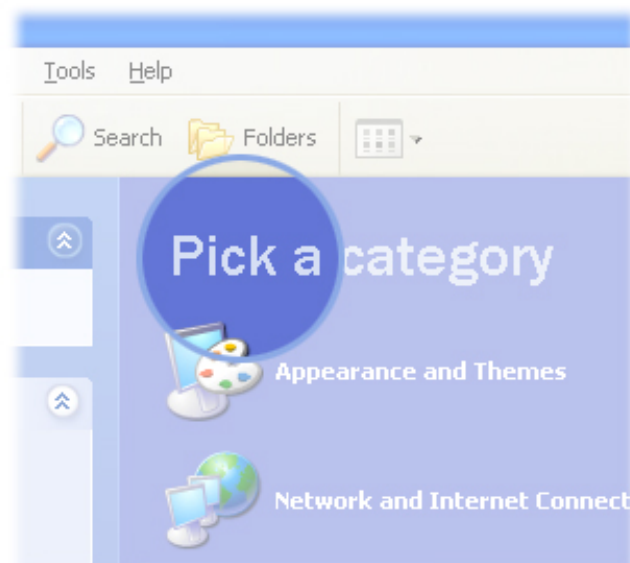
Verdana

Verdana is used only for title bars of tear-off/floating palettes- Verdana Bold, 8 point.

Trebuchet MS

Trebuchet MS is used only for the title bars of windows- Trebuchet MS Bold, 10 point.

Franklin Gothic

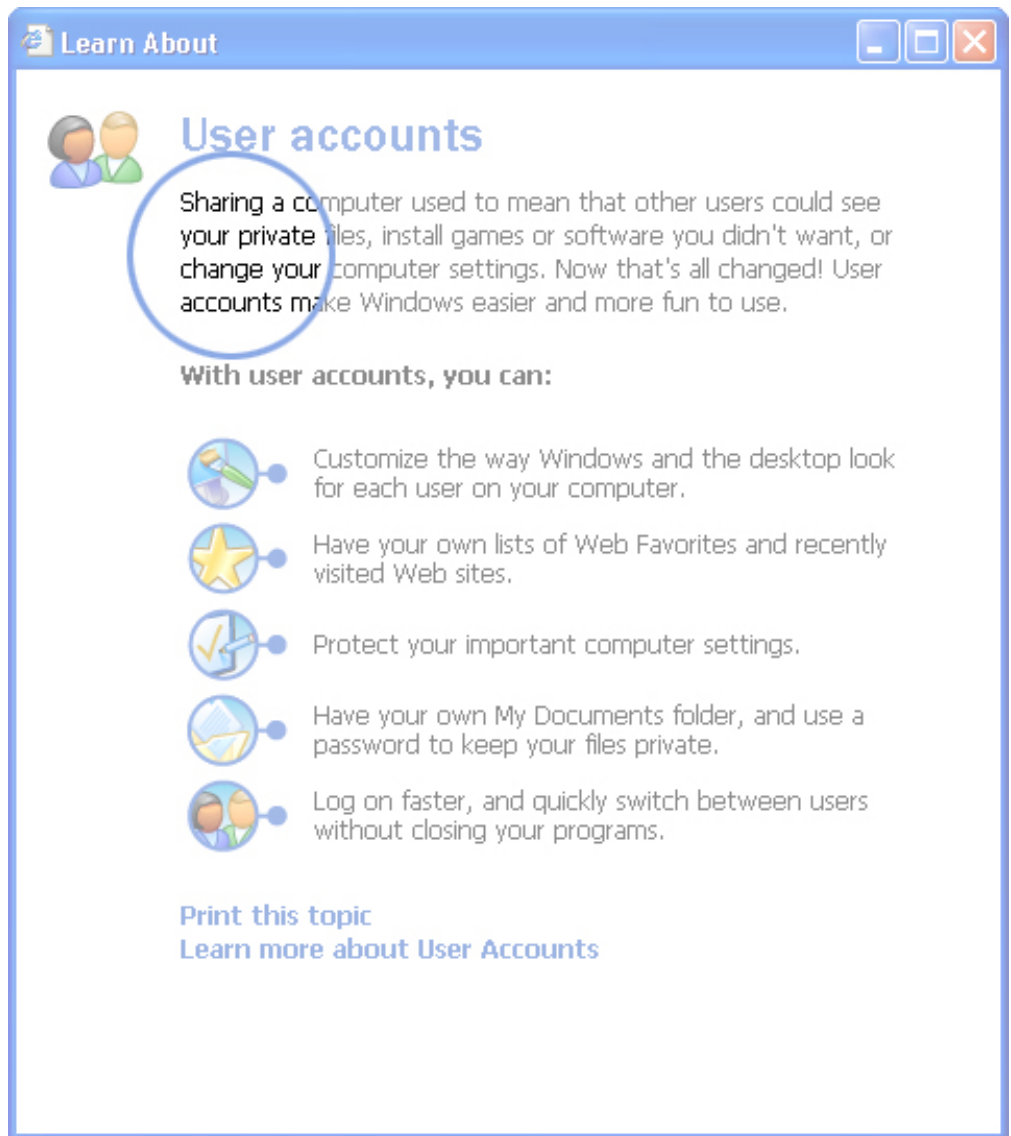


Example of Franklin Gothic Medium 21 point used as a title in the Control Panel.

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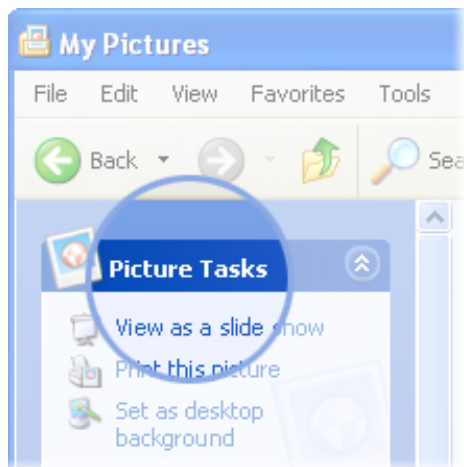
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Tahoma



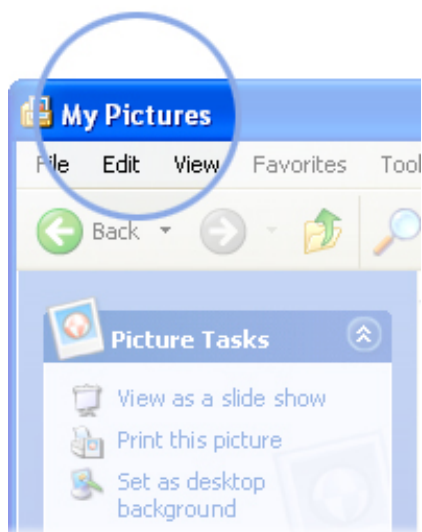
Example of Tahoma 9 point used as body copy in a Learn About help topic.

Verdana



Example of Verdana Bold 8 point as the title in a task box in the My Pictures folder.

Trebuchet MS



Example of Trebuchet MS Bold 10 point in the My Pictures title bar.

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Colors














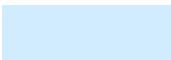
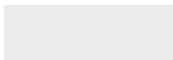



Color is integral to achieving the fresh, friendly and simple experience of Windows XP. The Windows XP look is characterized by an energetic blue complimented with red, amber and green. Gradients, glows and textures give life and dimension to Windows XP colors. Color helps guide users through their experience. For example, the red close button helps improve discoverability of how to close a window.






Below is a sample of the colors used in Windows XP. Because the Windows XP look uses many color gradients, we recommend you refer to the actual user interface to see the range of color values used.

Base colors








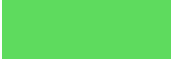

	R: 255, G: 204, B: 0 Hex: #FFCC00		R: 140, G: 170, B: 230 Hex: #8CAA6E
	R: 255, G: 153, B: 51 Hex: #FF9933		R: 100, G: 135, B: 220 Hex: #6487DC
	R: 227, G: 92, B: 47 Hex: #DE5C2F		R: 0, G: 51, B: 153 Hex: #003399
	R: 230, G: 234, B: 216 Hex: #E6EAD8		R: 19, G: 146, B: 13 Hex: #13920D

Control colors [example]






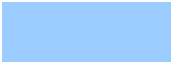











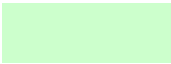

	R: 242, G: 201, B: 119 Hex: #F2C977		R: 127, G: 157, B: 185 Hex: #7F9DB9
	R: 230, G: 139, B: 44 Hex: #E68B2C		R: 33, G: 120, B: 224 Hex: #2178E0
	R: 128, G: 128, B: 128 Hex: #808080		R: 18, G: 139, B: 231 Hex: #128BE7
	R: 161, G: 161, B: 146 Hex: #A1A192		R: 77, G: 159, B: 225 Hex: #4D9FE1
	R: 184, G: 180, B: 163 Hex: #B8B4A3		R: 131, G: 166, B: 244 Hex: #83A6F4
	R: 199, G: 197, B: 178 Hex: #C7C5B2		R: 183, G: 211, B: 252 Hex: #B7D3FC
	R: 201, G: 199, B: 186 Hex: #C9C7BA		R: 210, G: 236, B: 255 Hex: #D2ECFF
	R: 235, G: 235, B: 238 Hex: #EBEBEE		R: 38, G: 124, B: 8 Hex: #267C08
	R: 0, G: 60, B: 165 Hex: #003CA5		R: 130, G: 130, B: 130 Hex: #828282

	R: 8, G: 46, B: 162 Hex: #082EA2		R: 34, G: 192, B: 32 Hex: #22C020
	R: 0, G: 70, B: 213 Hex: #0046D5		R: 155, G: 234, B: 156 Hex: #9BEA9C
	R: 49, G: 106, B: 197 Hex: #316AC5		

Window Frame and Taskbar colors [example]

	R: 8, G: 27, B: 203 Hex: #081BCB		R: 93, G: 179, B: 255 Hex: #5DB3FF
	R: 73, G: 119, B: 180 Hex: #4977B4		R: 0, G: 141, B: 0 Hex: #008D00
	R: 0, G: 98, B: 234 Hex: #0062EA		R: 49, G: 164, B: 49 Hex: #31A431
	R: 20, G: 165, B: 244 Hex: #14A5F4		R: 94, G: 219, B: 94 Hex: #5EDB5E
	R: 142, G: 182, B: 217 Hex: #8EB6D9		

Icon colors [example]

	R: 155, G: 102, B: 0 Hex: #9B6600		R: 0, G: 102, B: 204 Hex: #0066CC
	R: 204, G: 155, B: 0 Hex: #CC9B00		R: 0, G: 155, B: 255 Hex: #009BFF
	R: 255, G: 204, B: 0 Hex: #FFCC00		R: 155, G: 204, B: 255 Hex: #9BCCFF
	R: 255, G: 255, B: 0 Hex: #FFFF00		R: 204, G: 255, B: 255 Hex: #CCFFFF
	R: 255, G: 255, B: 155 Hex: #FFFF9B		R: 0, G: 102, B: 0 Hex: #006600
	R: 255, G: 204, B: 102 Hex: #FFCC66		R: 255, G: 157, B: 51 Hex: #31A431
	R: 255, G: 51, B: 0 Hex: #FF3300		R: 102, G: 204, B: 51 Hex: #66CC33
	R: 152, G: 0, B: 0 Hex: #980000		R: 155, G: 255, B: 102 Hex: #9BFF66
	R: 102, G: 0, B: 0 Hex: #660000		R: 204, G: 255, B: 204 Hex: #CCFFCC
	R: 0, G: 51, B: 152 Hex: #003398		

Welcome screen colors [example]



R: 255, G: 153, B: 51
Hex: #FF9933



R: 62, G: 53, B: 171
Hex: #3E35AB



R: 200, G: 222, B: 255
Hex: #660000



R: 90, G: 126, B: 220
Hex: #5A7EDC



R: 0, G: 51, B: 153
Hex: #003399

Folder colors [example]



R: 1, G: 72, B: 178
Hex: #0148B2



R: 100, G: 135, B: 220
Hex: #6487DC



R: 40, G: 91, B: 197
Hex: #285BC5



R: 140, G: 170, B: 230
Hex: #8CAAEE



R: 85, G: 130, B: 210
Hex: #5582D2



R: 214, G: 223, B: 245
Hex: #D6DFF5

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Icons

This section walks you through the process of designing and creating Windows XP-style icons.

The Windows XP icon style is all about fun, color and energy. Windows XP icons include a 32-bit version that provides smooth edges -no more jaggies! Each icon is rendered in a vector program and then massaged in Photoshop to create a beautiful image.

This section is intended primarily for graphic designers. We strongly recommend you work with a designer to create your images, preferably one with experience in using vector or 3D programs.

Characteristics of Windows XP-style Icons

1. Color is rich and complementary to the Windows XP look.
2. Angle and perspective provides a dynamic energy to the images.
3. Edges and corners of elements are soft and slightly rounded.
4. Light source is coming from the upper left-hand corner with the addition of an ambient light to illuminate other parts of the icon.
5. The use of gradients provide dimension and give the icon a richer appearance.
6. A drop shadow provides contrast and dimension.
7. Outlines provide definition.
8. Everyday objects have a more modern consumer look such as computers and devices.

Icon Sizes

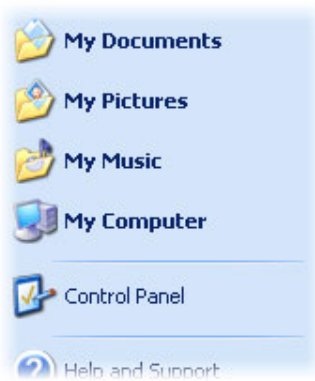
There are 4 sizes of Windows icons- 48x48, 32x32, 24x24 and 16x16 pixels.

We recommend that your icon contains these 3 sizes:

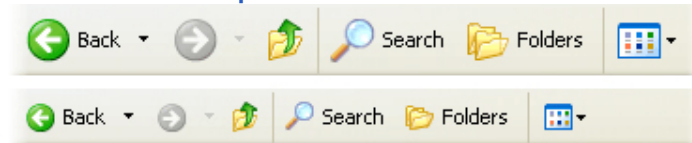
- 48x48 pixels
- 32x32 pixels
- 16x16 pixels



Icons on the right side of the Start menu are 24x24 pixels. You need not include this size in your icons.



If you are creating icons for a toolbar, the Windows standard sizes are 24x24 and 16x16 pixels.



Icon Color Depth Support

Windows XP supports 32-bit icons which are 24-bit images with an 8-bit alpha channel. This allows icons to display with smooth edges that appear to blend into any background.















Each Windows XP icon should contain these 3 color depths to support various monitor display settings:


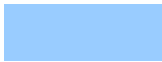

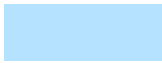











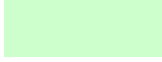

- 24-bit with 8-bit alpha (32-bit)
- 8-bit (256 colors) with 1-bit transparency
- 4-bit (16 colors) with 1-bit transparency



Color Palette

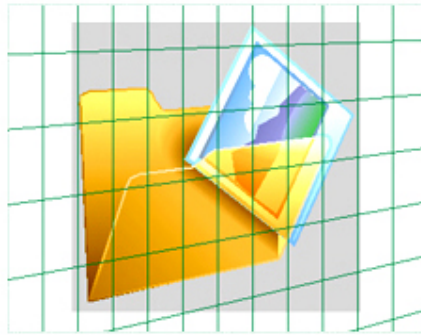
These are the main colors that are used in our icons:

	R: 153, G: 102, B: 0 Hex: #996600		R: 102, G: 102, B: 153 Hex: #666699
	R: 204, G: 153, B: 0 Hex: #CC9900		R: 51, G: 51, B: 102 Hex: #333366
	R: 255, G: 204, B: 0 Hex: #FFCC00		R: 0, G: 51, B: 153 Hex: #003399
	R: 255, G: 255, B: 0 Hex: #FFFF00		R: 0, G: 102, B: 204 Hex: #0066CC
	R: 255, G: 255, B: 153 Hex: #FFFF99		R: 0, G: 131, B: 215 Hex: #0083D7
	R: 255, G: 219, B: 157 Hex: #FFDB9D		R: 62, G: 154, B: 222 Hex: #3E9ADE
	R: 255, G: 204, B: 102 Hex: #FFCC66		R: 0, G: 153, B: 255 Hex: #0099FF

	R: 255, G: 153, B: 51 Hex: #FF9933		R: 153, G: 204, B: 255 Hex: #99CCFF
	R: 255, G: 121, B: 75 Hex: #FF794B		R: 180, G: 226, B: 255 Hex: #B4E2FF
	R: 255, G: 51, B: 0 Hex: #FF3300		R: 222, G: 255, B: 255 Hex: #DEFFFF
	R: 153, G: 0, B: 0 Hex: #990000		R: 0, G: 102, B: 0 Hex: #006600
	R: 255, G: 204, B: 255 Hex: #FFCCFF		R: 0, G: 153, B: 0 Hex: #009900
	R: 204, G: 204, B: 255 Hex: #CCCCFF		R: 102, G: 204, B: 51 Hex: #66CC33
	R: 153, G: 153, B: 255 Hex: #9999FF		R: 153, G: 255, B: 102 Hex: #99FF66
	R: 102, G: 102, B: 204 Hex: #6666CC		R: 204, G: 255, B: 204 Hex: #CCFFCC
	R: 153, G: 153, B: 204 Hex: #9999CC		

Angle and grouping of objects

This is the perspective grid that Windows XP-style icons use:



Not all objects work well displayed at an angle in the 16x16 size. For example, the following objects are usually shown straight-on:

1. Document icons.
2. Icons that are symbols such as warning or information icons.
3. Icons that are not as recognizable at an angle or are single objects, such as the magnifying glass.



If your icon includes overlapping secondary objects, you should place them at an angle as well, with the exceptions for straight-on icons described above. Consider also how your icons will be viewed as a set to help determine how to group objects.



Drop Shadows

Windows XP icons use a drop shadow to provide definition and added dimension. This effect is added in Photoshop and is described in more detail below.

To add the drop shadow to your images, double-click on the image's layer in Photoshop and select Drop Shadow. Then change the angle to 135, Distance to 2 and Size to 2. The drop shadow is black at 75% opacity.



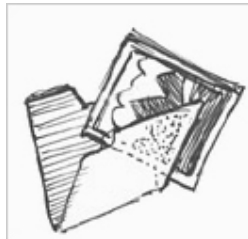
Outlines

When illustrating Windows XP-style icons, add an outline to the image to provide definition and ensure that the image works well on different background colors.

Step 1: Conceptualize

When designing new icons, we recommend sketching your ideas out with pen and paper.

Here's an example of an initial sketch for the Windows XP My Pictures icon:



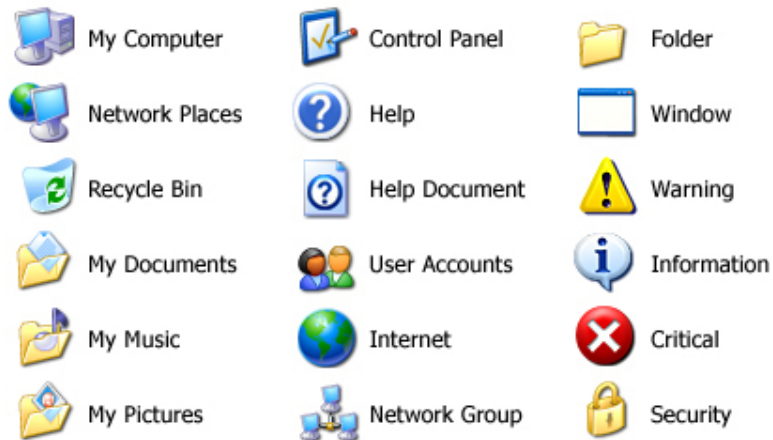
Considerations when designing icons:

1. Use established concepts where possible to ensure consistency of meanings for the user.
2. Consider how the icon will appear in the context of your user interface and how it might work as part of a set of icons.
3. Consider the cultural impact of your graphics. Avoid using letters, words, hands, or faces in icons. When you must represent people or users, depict them as generically as possible.
4. When you combine multiple objects into one image in an icon, consider how the image will scale to smaller sizes. We suggest you use no more than 3 objects in an icon. For the 16x16 size, you can also consider removing objects or otherwise simplifying the image to improve recognition.

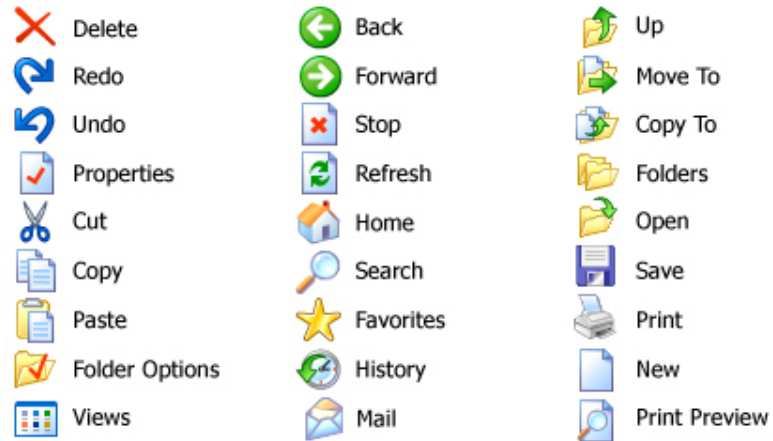
Note: Only icons that Microsoft ships as part of Windows may use the Windows flag logo. Don't use the Windows flag in your icons.

To support trademark and Windows branding guidelines, we are not using Windows flag icons with the exception of the Windows update icon.

Common Icons



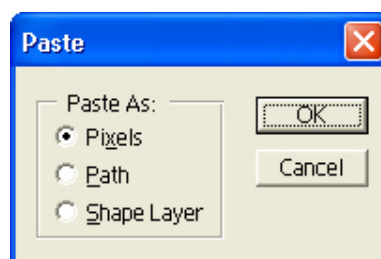
Common Toolbar Icons:



Step 2: Illustrate

To illustrate Windows XP-style icons, we recommend using a vector tool such as Freehand or Illustrator. Use the palette and style characteristics as outlined in the [Icon Design Overview](#).

1. Illustrate your image using Freehand or Illustrator.
2. Create 3 sizes of the image. Because there will be a drop shadow added to the image later, you should create 3 sizes that are around 46x46, 30x30 and 14x14 pixels.
3. Copy and paste the vector images into Photoshop.

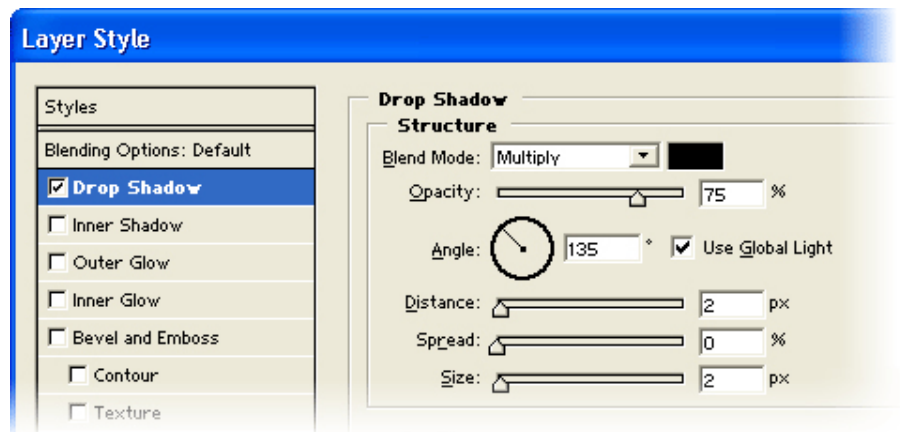


Note: Photoshop is the recommended image creation tool because the tool we use to create the .ico files, Gif Movie Gear, offers a direct import of Photoshop files. Any image created in Photoshop that uses the "RGB" mode has an alpha channel attached. If there is transparency in the image or layer, that channel becomes meaningful for icon purposes.

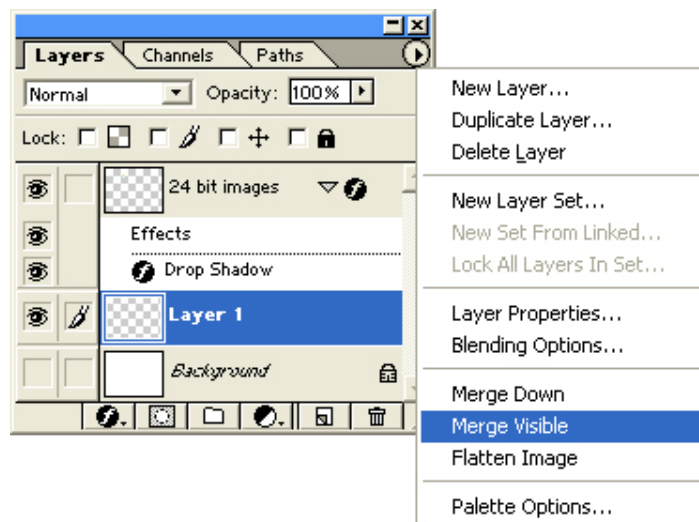
Step 3: Creating the 24-bit images

After pasting your vector files into Photoshop, the next step is to finalize the 24-bit images.

1. Once you've pasted your 3 sizes in Photoshop, check the readability and resolution of your images, especially at the 16x16 size. You may need to do some pixel-pushing. If the 16x16 is not reading clearly, consider going back to Freehand to simplify the image at that size.
2. Add the drop shadow to your images by double-clicking on the image's layer and selecting Drop Shadow. Then change the angle to 135, Distance to 2 and Size to 2. The drop shadow is black at 75% opacity.



3. To merge the drop shadow and the 24-bit images together, create a new blank layer. In the Layers menu, select Merge Visible and merge the 3 layers together.



4. Create 3 new Photoshop files, one for each size: 48x48, 32x32 and 16x16 pixels. Copy and paste the appropriate image. If an image's drop shadow gets cropped, you should go back to Freehand and scale down the image and follow the steps again.
5. Save each file as a .psd file. Do NOT merge the image layer with the Background layer. It's helpful to include the size and color depth in

the file name.

Step 4: Creating the 8-bit and 4-bit images

Now that you have the 24-bit images ready to be made into 32-bit icons, you need to create 8-bit versions. The 8-bit icons will be displayed in any color mode lower than 32-bit.

The 8-bit versions will not have the 8-bit alpha channel. They will need to have their edges cleaned up because there's no anti-aliasing, so their edges will be jaggy.

1. In Photoshop, duplicate your 24-bit image layer and rename the layer to 8-bit images.
2. Create a new blank layer and fill the layer with a dark color such as blue.
3. Merge the 8-bit image layer with the new layer.
4. Clean up the edges with solid colors, removing any anti-aliased pixels. Use consistent stair-stepping to make your jaggies less pronounced.
5. Check your image on a light background such as white to see how the image looks.



6. Create 3 new Photoshop files for each size: 48x48, 32x32 and 16x16 pixels. Copy and paste the appropriate image.
7. Next you need to index the images down to 256 colors. The 8-bit icons can have custom palettes.
 - a. Take your 48x48 image and fill the background color with a unique background color that your image is not using. Windows XP icons often use magenta (R255 G0 B255).
 - b. Go to Image>Mode>Indexed Color and select Flatten Layers.
 - c. In the Palette dropdown, select Custom. In the Custom dialog, click OK. Click OK in the Indexed Color dialog.
 - d. Save the file as a .psd file.
 - e. Save the other 2 size files using the same background color and applying the custom palette.
8. Save each file as a .psd file.

If you want your icons to look good on older versions of Windows, provide 16 color versions of your icon.

1. Index your 8-bit images to the Windows 16 color palette.
2. Clean up your images using only the colors from the 16 color palette.
3. Use a black outline on the bottom and right edges of the image.
4. Use a dark gray or dark color outline for the left and top edges of the image.
5. Save the 3 sizes using the same background color. Be sure that the background color isn't used in the image because that's the color that will be the transparent color.



Step 5: Creating the .ico files

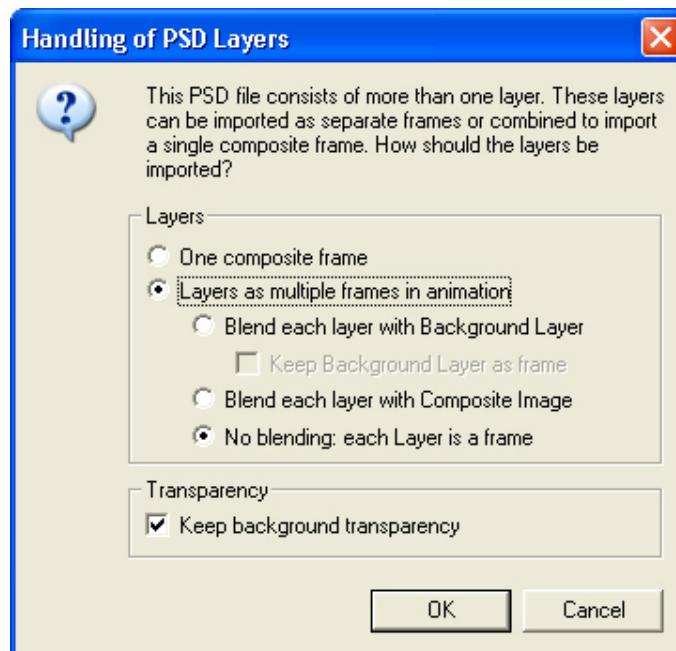
Once you have all of your images, it's time to compile them into an .ico file. To create 32-bit icons, we use a tool called Gif Movie Gear (GMG). To get this tool, go to www.gamani.com/foricons.

These steps will walk you through the process of creating a typical .ico file which has 3 sizes and 3 color depths.

1. You should have a total of 9 files- 3 sizes per color depth:
 - 48x48 at 24 bit
 - 32x32 at 24 bit
 - 16x16 at 24 bit

 - 48x48 at 8 bit
 - 32x32 at 8 bit
 - 16x16 at 8 bit

 - 48x48 at 4 bit
 - 32x32 at 4 bit
 - 16x16 at 4 bit
2. Open Gif Movie Gear (GMG) and simply drag each image file into the window (or use File>Insert Frames). Each image will become a frame.
3. When you drag the 24-bit images (or any .psd file with layers) into GMG, you will be prompted with a dialog:



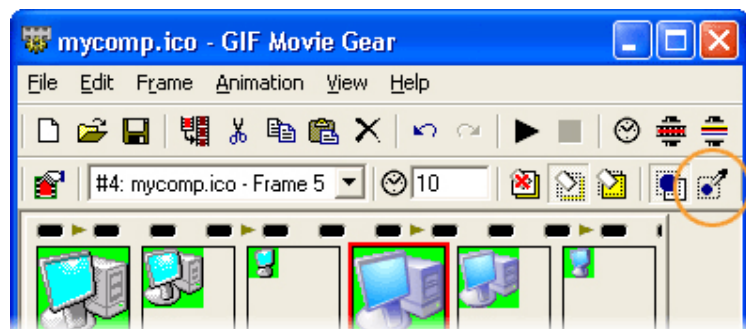
Check that the settings are: Layers as multiple frames, No blending, and Keep background transparency.

4. The background layer of each 24-bit image will appear as a frame. Remove these blank frames by selecting the frame and hit the Delete key.
5. Now you should have a total of 9 frames. The icons should be ordered in increasing color resolution: the first three are 4-bit (16 color), the next three are 8-bit (256 color), and the last three are 24-bit color with an 8-bit alpha channel (32-bit total).



Note: To check your image's attributes, move your mouse over the images. You will notice a tooltip box containing resolution information about each image. The default setting shows dimensions, transparency, and bit count. You can add or remove the items shown by going to **Edit>Preferences>Frame Tips**.

6. For the 8-bit and 4-bit versions, you need to make the background transparent. GMG uses lime green to represent the "transparent" color. You can set your own color (or stick with the default background color) by using the **View>Transparency As** menu item. The color chosen is only used for viewing and does not affect the images.
7. To make the 8-bit and 4-bit versions transparent:
 - a. Select a frame and click the dropper toolbar icon (the Pick Transparency Color icon).



- b. A dialog will open showing your icon. With the dropper, click the background color of the icon. This color will change to the lime green (or whatever color has been chosen as the transparent background color in GMG).
 - c. Repeat for all 4-bit and 8-bit frames.
8. To save the icon, select **File>Save Icon As...**

Toolbar Creation

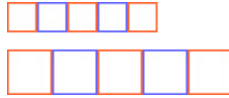
The Windows toolbar icons follow the same style as other icons except that they do not use a drop shadow. Because toolbar icons are fairly small, we recommend keeping the images simple. You can make the images straight-on rather than angled if it helps clarify the meaning of the image.

The Windows toolbar displays 2 sizes: 24x24 and 16x16 pixels. There are 2 states: default and hot (mouseover). For the hot state, we slightly increase the saturation of the images.

The process for creating toolbar icons is very similar to other icons,

except that the images are put into .bmp strips -- basically an ordered row of icons.

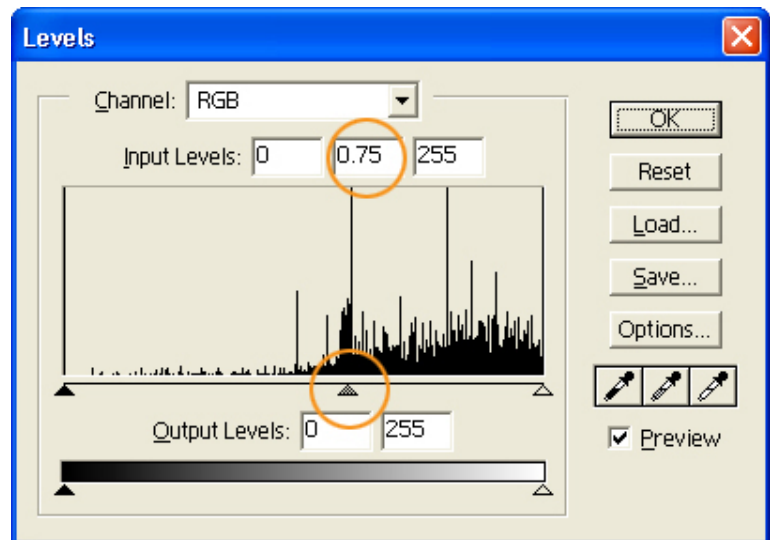
1. Once you've illustrated the icons in Freehand at each size, copy and paste them into Photoshop. Put the 24x24s on one layer and the 16x16s on another.
2. Draw a single row of boxes for each size on a separate layer, one row of 16x16 boxes and another row of 24x24 boxes.



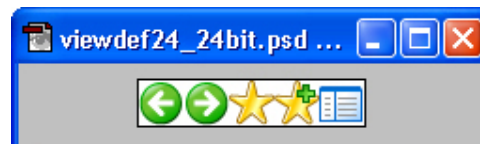
3. Place each image in a square in the order you need them. Check that there's no overlap between images.



4. Save your Photoshop file.
5. Next you will create the hot states in Photoshop.
 - a. Take your 24x24 and 16x16 layers and duplicate each one. Rename the layers so they're clearly labeled as the hot versions.
 - b. For each hot version, select the layer and go to Image>Adjust>Levels... and move the middle arrow to 0.75. Click OK.



6. Once you've created the hot versions, you should have 1 layer per strip: 1 default 24x24, 1 hot 24x24, 1 default 16x16, and 1 hot 16x16.
7. Next you need to create individual files for each strip.
 - a. One way to do this is to use the Crop tool and crop the file down to a strip's dimensions and then save that file. Each strip must be measured from the beginning of the first box to the end of the last box.
 - b. Save each strip as a separate 24-bit .psd file.



8. To save a strip as a 32-bit image, drag a strip into GMG. Remove any blank frames. Go to File>Export as>Filmstrip. On the Film Export dialog, check that BMP/DIB and 24-bit with Alpha is selected.

AVI Creation

Windows XP uses 8-bit AVIs. The process for creating .avi files is the same as for icons: you prepare the pieces in Photoshop then drag them into GMG. Follow the instructions for creating 8-bit icon versions.

To save your AVIs using GMG, go to File>Export As>AVI file...

Considerations when creating .avi files:

- Use magenta (R255 G0 B255) as the background transparency color.
- In Photoshop, it's important that you don't have any stray pixels that could appear. Set your fill tolerances to 0 and make sure anti-aliasing is not checked.

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Windows XP Visual Guidelines

Controls

Controls in Windows XP are characterized by round corners, subtle dimensionality, and color to help distinguish states. The images in this section are shown in the default Blue color scheme and change color if the user selects the Silver or Olive Green schemes.

Radio Buttons

Radio buttons have 3 sizes: 13x13, 16x16 and 25x25 pixels. Only the 16x16 size is available in Windows XP. Windows XP automatically uses the best size based on the video card DPI settings.

The text for a radio button should change depending on its state. The following RGB values should be used for the text of these states:

Checked Disabled Text: R: 161 G: 161 B: 146
 Unchecked Disabled Text: R: 161 G: 161 B: 146

- unchecked normal
- unchecked hot
- unchecked pressed
- unchecked disabled
- checked normal
- checked hot
- checked pressed
- checked disabled

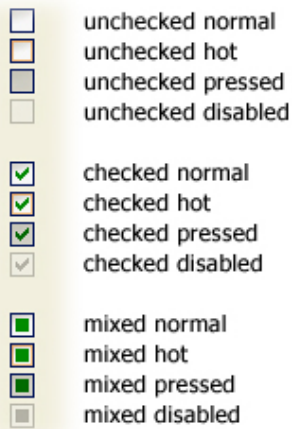
Radio button states

Check Boxes

Check boxes have 3 sizes: 13x13, 16x16, and 25x25 pixels. Windows XP automatically uses the best size based on the video card DPI settings.

The text for a check box should change depending on its state. The following RGB values should be used for the text of these states:

Checked Disabled Text: R: 161 G: 161 B: 146
 Unchecked Disabled Text: R: 161 G: 161 B: 146
 Mixed Disabled Text: R: 161 G: 161 B: 146



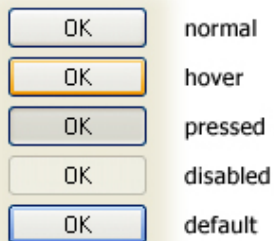
Check box states

Command Buttons

A command button should typically be 75 pixels wide (50 dialog units) by 23 pixels tall (14 dialog units). The curve of a command button is a 1 pixel indent.

The button text for a command button should change depending on its state.

Disabled Text: R: 161 G: 161 B: 146



Command button states

Text Boxes

The colors for an edit box should change depending on its state.

Normal Border Color: R: 127 G: 157 B: 185

Fill Color:

Disabled: R: 235 G: 235 B: 228

Read Only: R: 235 G: 235 B: 228

Text Color:

Disabled: R: 161 G: 161 B: 146

Read Only: R: 0 G: 0 B: 0



Text box states

Tabs

Tabs have a rollover state as shown below.



Tabs

Group Boxes

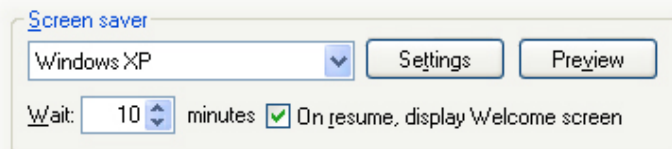
Group boxes can be any size necessary to accommodate the intended grouping of controls.

A group box title should change depending on its state.

Text Color:

Normal: R: 0 G: 70 B: 213

Disabled: R: 161 G: 161 B: 146



Group Box

DropDown Combo Boxes

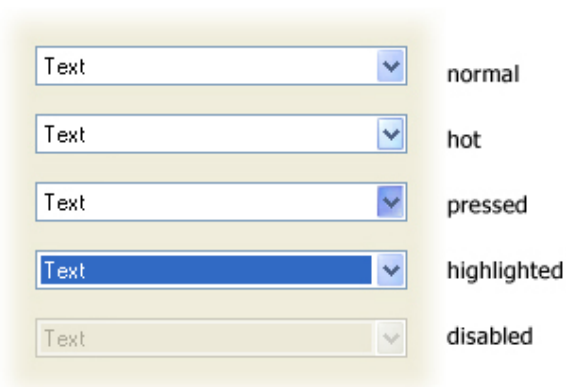
A dropdown combo box's text should change depending on its state.

Text Field Fill Color:

Normal: R: 255 G: 255 B: 255

Disabled: R: 201 G: 199 B: 186

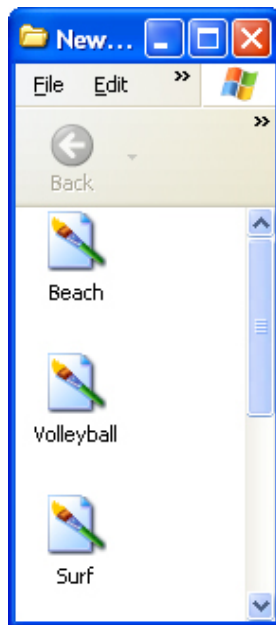
Text Field Border Color:
 Normal: R: 127 G: 157 B: 185
 Disabled: R: 245 G: 244 B: 234



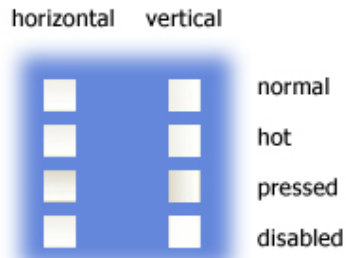
Dropdown Combo Box states

Scroll Bars

Scroll bars are composed of three different pieces: the scroll arrow buttons, the scroll box, and the scrollbar shaft which is the vertical background of the scroll bar.



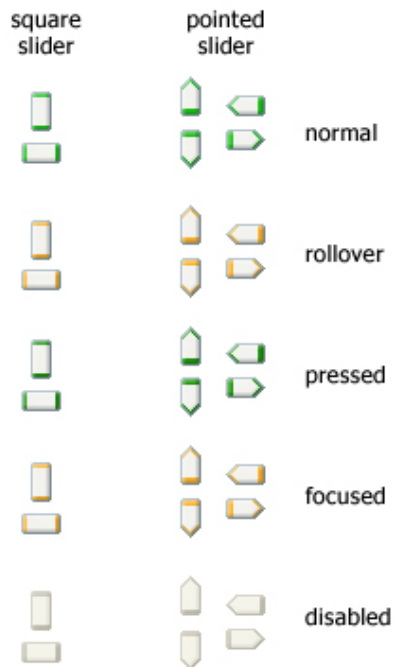
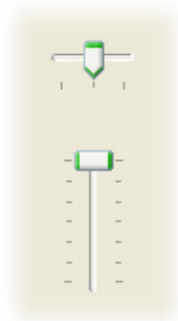
Scroll box and button states



Scroll shaft states

Slider

The slider control can be displayed in a vertical or horizontal orientation. Sliders are available in two different styles: square and pointed. The square style is typically used for vertical sliders, and the pointed style is used horizontally.



Slider control states

Spin Buttons

The text for an edit box should change depending on its state.

Text Field Normal

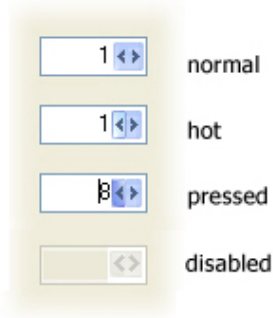
Outline Color: R: 130 G: 130 B: 130

Fill Color: R: 255 G: 255 B: 255

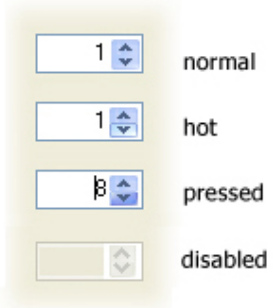
Text Field Disabled

Outline Color: R: 161 G: 161 B: 146

Fill Color: R: 235 G: 235 B: 228



Left/right spin buttons

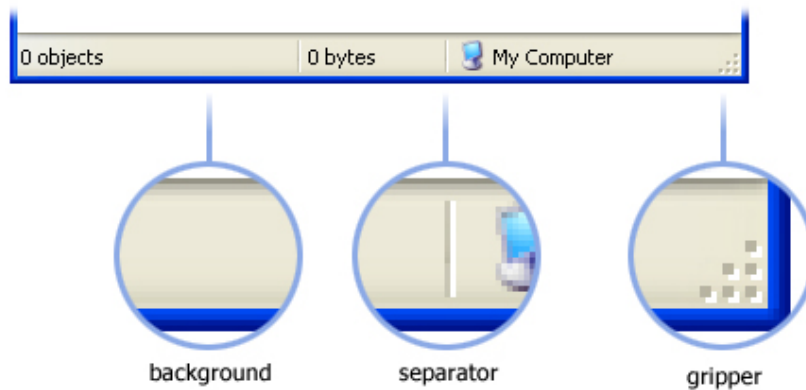


Up/down spin buttons

Windows Status Bar

The status bar is located at the bottom of a window and displays information about the current state of the document or other information in the window.

The status bar is composed of 3 different pieces: the background area, separators to group information and grippers for resizing the window.



Example of a status bar

Separator Left Line: R: 199 G: 197 B: 178

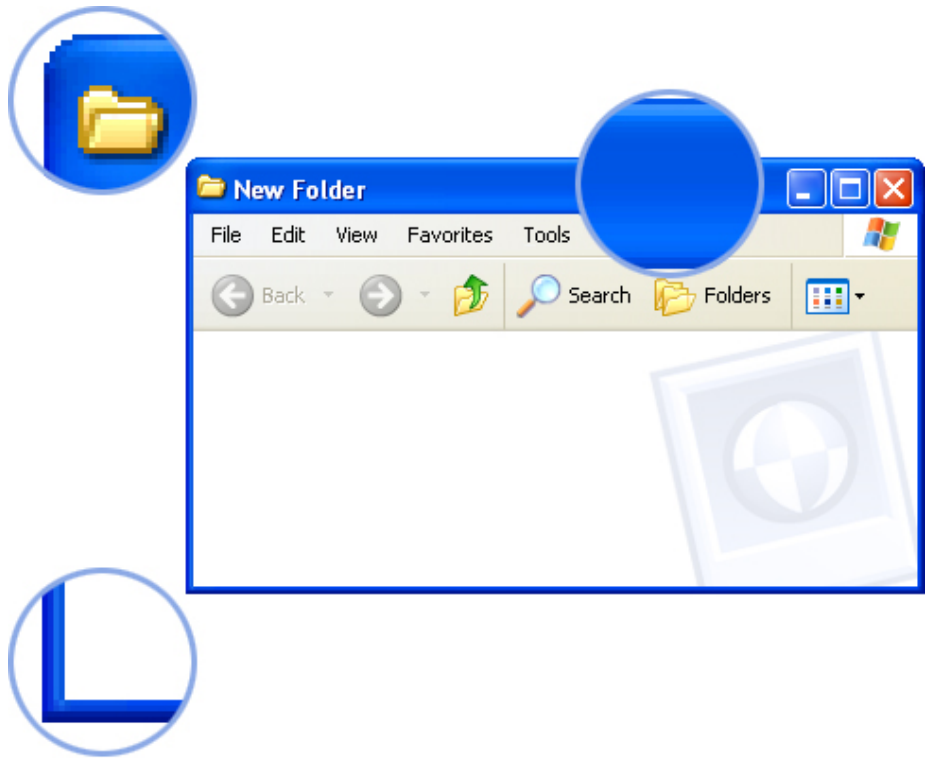
Separator Right Line: white

Gripper Front Squares: R: 184 G: 180 B: 163

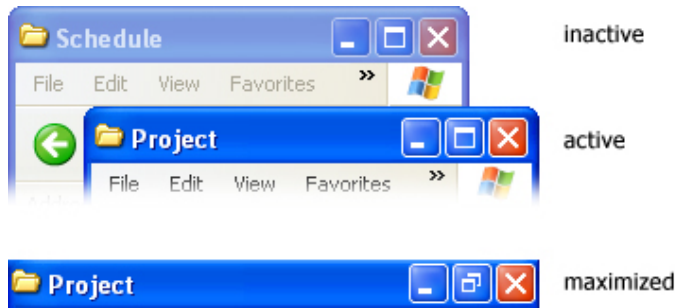
Gripper Front Squares: white

Window Title Bar and Frame

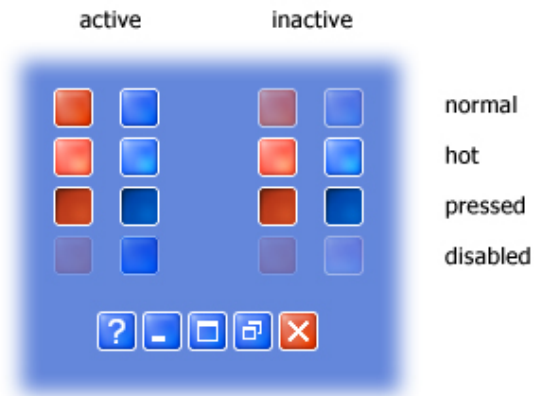
The window title bar and frame are the outer most elements of a window. There are two sets of frames and title bars: standard windows and tool palettes.



Standard window components in actual size



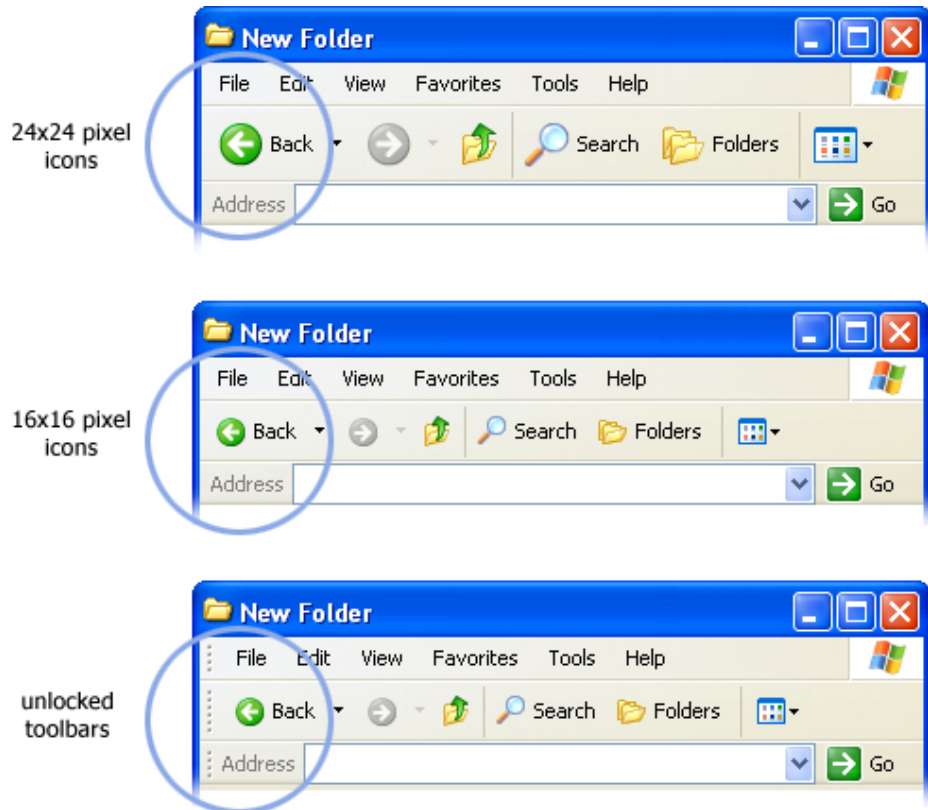
Title Bar Buttons



Example of the states for Title Bar buttons

Toolbars

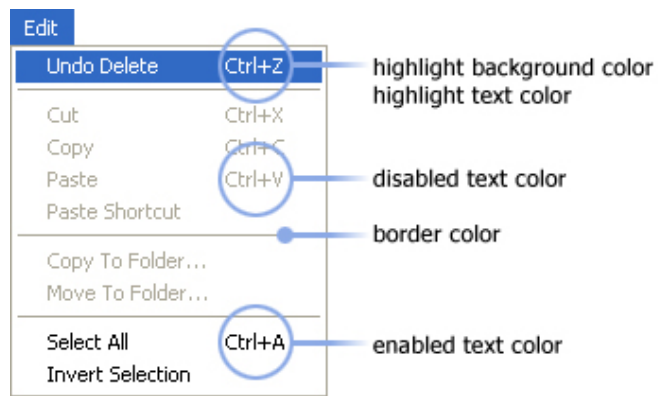
The Windows XP toolbar displays 2 icon sizes: 24x24 and 16x16 pixels. There are 2 icon states: default and hot. By default, the icons are in color and on mouse-over they appear slightly more saturated.



Example of toolbar

Menus

Here are the colors and states for menus:



Highlight Background Color: R: 49, G: 106, B: 197

Highlight Text Color: R: 255, G: 255, B: 255

Border + Separator Color: R: 128, G: 128, B: 128

Disabled Text Color: R: 128, G: 128, B: 128

Background Color: R: 255, G: 255, B: 255

Enabled Text Color: R: 0, G: 0, B: 0

Column Heading Controls

The column heading control, also called a header control, has some new visual cues to help you sort your information. When you mouseover a column, an orange highlight appears on the column's header. Clicking on a column to sort displays a grey background under the list to give feedback on the sort selection.

Name	Size	Type	normal
budget	12 KB	Microsoft Excel Worksheet	
proposal	11 KB	Microsoft Word Document	
logo	0 KB	Bitmap Image	

Name	Size	Type	pressed
proposal	11 KB	Microsoft Word Document	
logo	0 KB	Bitmap Image	
budget	12 KB	Microsoft Excel Worksheet	

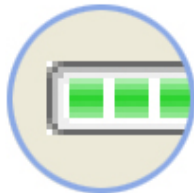
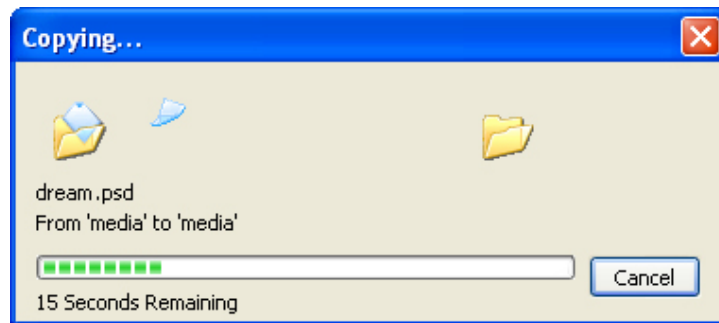
Name	Size	Type	hot
proposal	11 KB	Microsoft Word Document	
logo	0 KB	Bitmap Image	
budget	12 KB	Microsoft Excel Worksheet	

Name	Size	Type	sort
proposal	11 KB	Microsoft Word Document	
logo	0 KB	Bitmap Image	
budget	12 KB	Microsoft Excel Worksheet	

Example of column header states

Progress Indicator

The progress indicator is composed of the progress track and the progress indicator. The progress track is the outline of the progress indicator. The progress indicator is the green square that fills the progress track.



Navigation Buttons

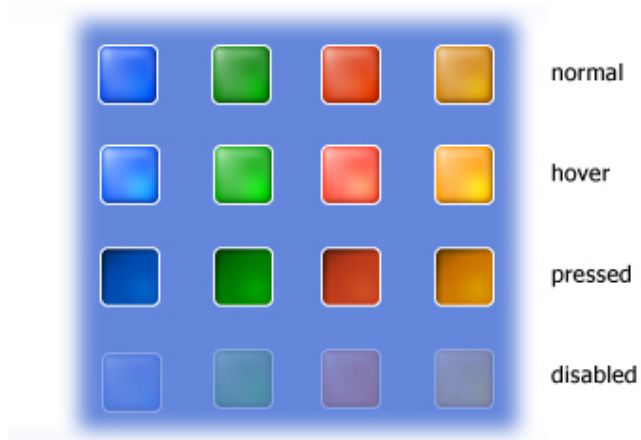
Navigation buttons are used for actions that navigate the user to a new place in Windows XP. The signage style of these buttons emphasizes their navigational purpose.

These buttons are used for a defined set of tasks or actions in Windows XP. They should not be used for command buttons.

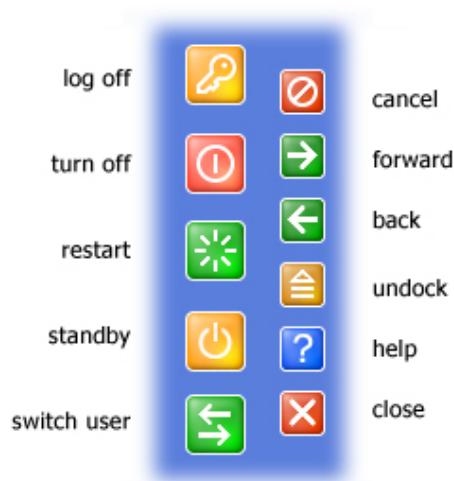
The color of the navigational buttons is designed to convey the level of severity of the action. Windows XP uses four colors:

- Blue:** A neutral action. Example: the control to minimize a window.
- Green:** The start of an action, or a simple navigation. Example: the Go button in the Address bar.
- Red:** An action that has a high impact result. Examples: the Close button in the title bar; the Shut down button in the Start menu.
- Yellow:** A less severe result than red, but still high impact. Example: the Log Off button in the Start menu.

These navigation buttons are used at these sizes: 32x32, 24x24, 21x21, 16x16, and 13x13 pixels.



Navigational buttons are completed by adding a white sign to the colored background. The following signs are available in Windows XP:



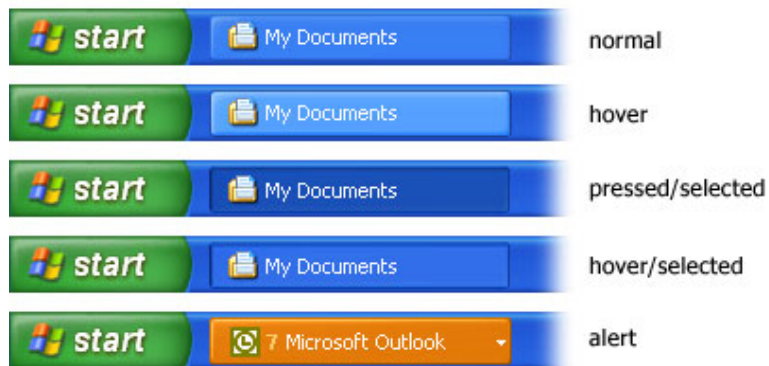
Start button and Taskbar

The Start button and taskbar define the look of Windows: colorful, softly curved and engaging the user in a fresh yet familiar way.

We've colored the Start button green to help improve discoverability of where users should be going. Move your mouse over the Start button and it lights up to give you feedback. The plastic texture of the taskbar gives a nice tactile feel and the notification area on the right uses a lighter color value to indicate it has a unique usage.



Start button and taskbar



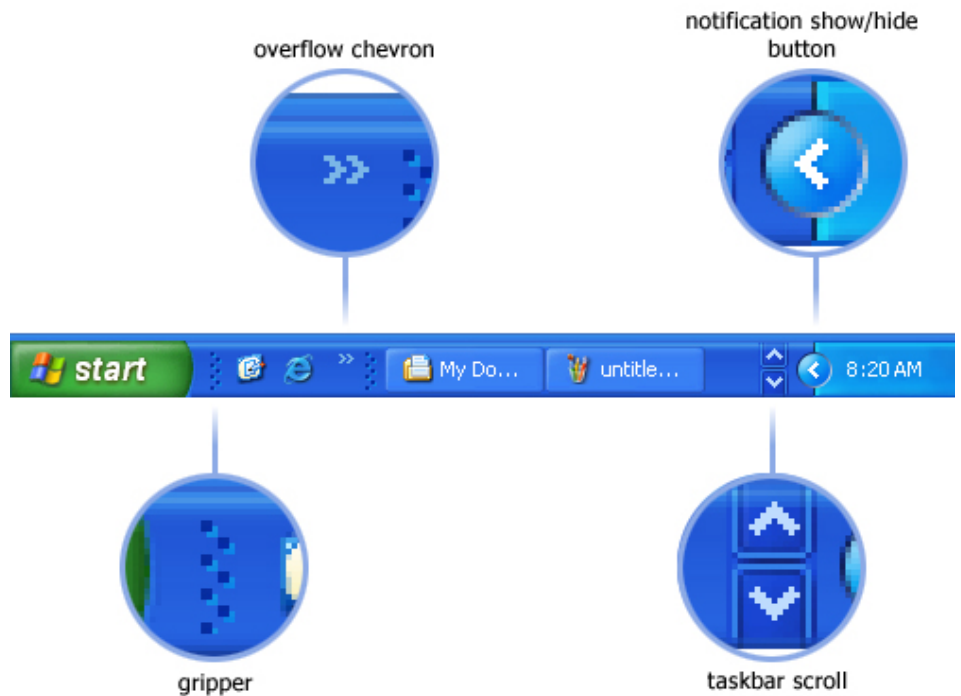
Taskbar button states



Start button states

Taskbar Elements

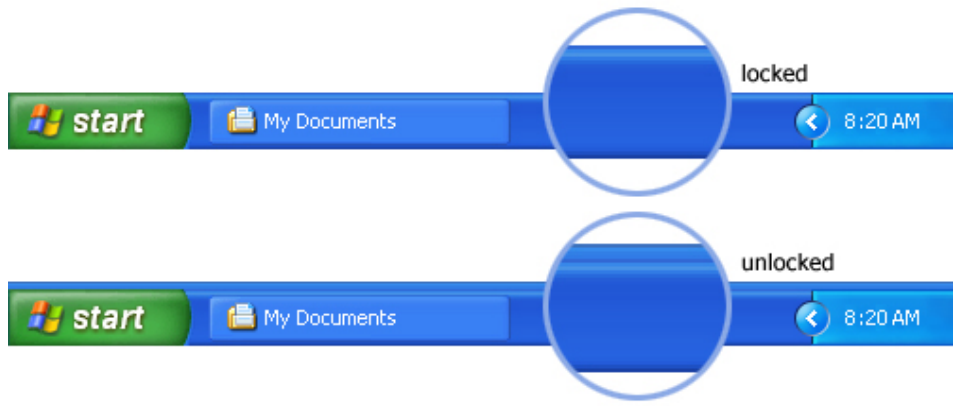
These are some of the main elements of the taskbar:



When you open several windows in one application, Windows XP automatically groups them together in one taskbar button, making the taskbar less cluttered and easier to use.

Locking the taskbar

The taskbar is locked by default to prevent users from moving it accidentally. To unlock the taskbar, right-click on a blank area of the taskbar and select **Lock the taskbar**. A gripper bar at the top of the taskbar appears when the taskbar is unlocked.



Taskbar Orientations



Top



Bottom



Right



Left

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Windows XP Visual Guidelines

Folders & Layouts

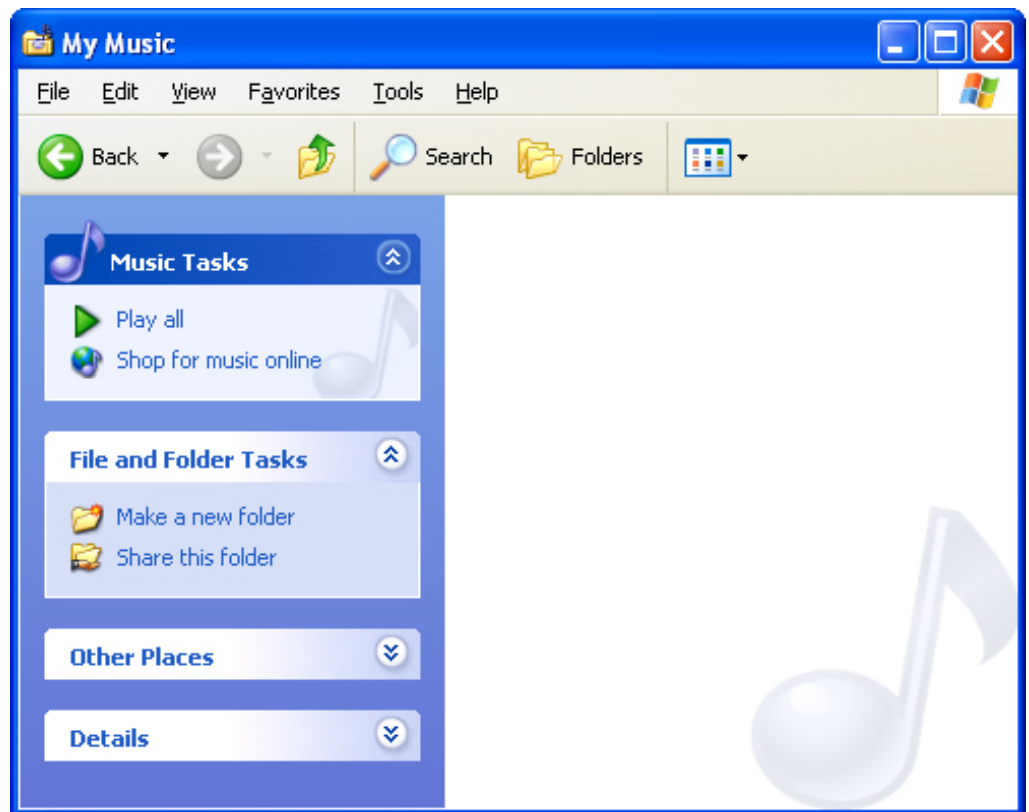
Folders

There are three types of designs for folders in Windows XP: special folders, soft barrier pages, and generic webviews

Special Folders

Special folders, such as My Music and My Pictures, are visually distinguished by the unique design of the special task box at the top of the left pane and a large watermark in the right side of the folder. All graphics are stored as 32-bit .BMP files.

The large watermark in the bottom right of the folder is 150x150 pixels. It's designed to be anchored to the bottom of the page. Tint the image blue (R71G94B148) and screen back to about 12% opacity with an alpha channel.



Example of the My Music special folder

The special task box contains:

1. One 32x32 pixel icon to the left of the header.
2. A watermark in the bottom right of the special task box. Tint the image blue (R71 G94 B148) and screen back to about 12% opacity with an alpha channel.
3. The header font is Tahoma Bold, 8 point, white
4. Body font is Tahoma, 8 point, R33 G93 B198



Visual Guidelines

Welcome

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+ New

About the

Design

Fonts

Colors

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+ Controls

+ **Folders &**

- **Layouts**

Letterbox

Layouts

Special Folders

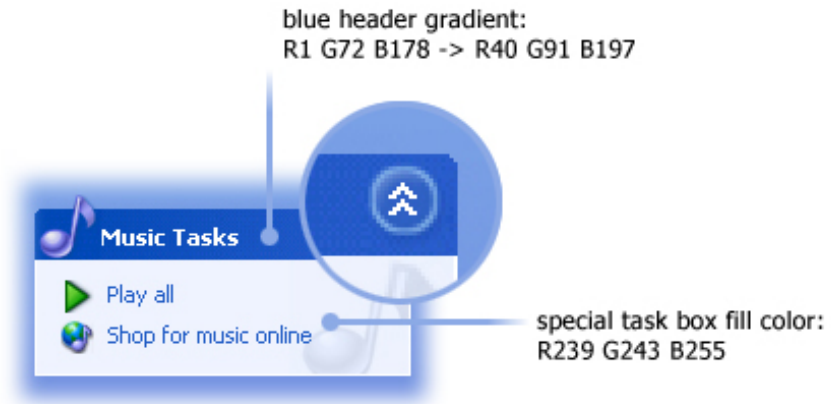
Soft Barrier

Pages

Generic

Webviews

FAQ



Example of a special task box

Soft Barriers

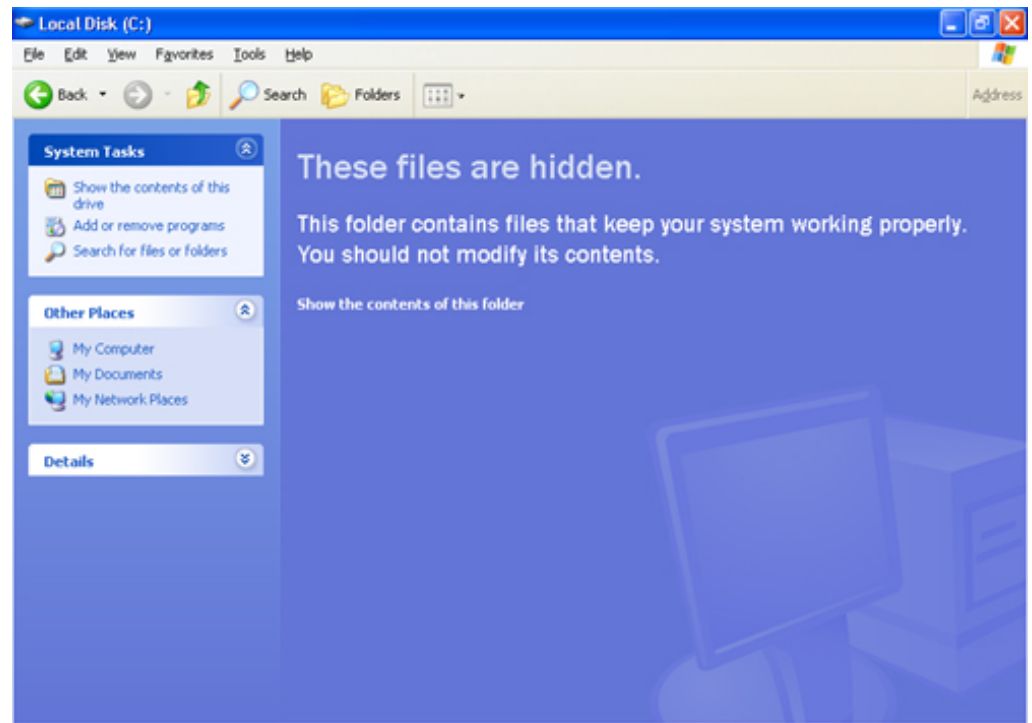
The soft barrier pages contain a large watermark of the folder's icon in the bottom right measuring 300x300 pixels. It's designed to be anchored to the bottom of the page.

The title text in the soft barrier page is Franklin Gothic Medium 21 point, R214 G223 B245.

The body text is Franklin Gothic Medium 14 point, white.

To create the watermark in Adobe Photoshop:

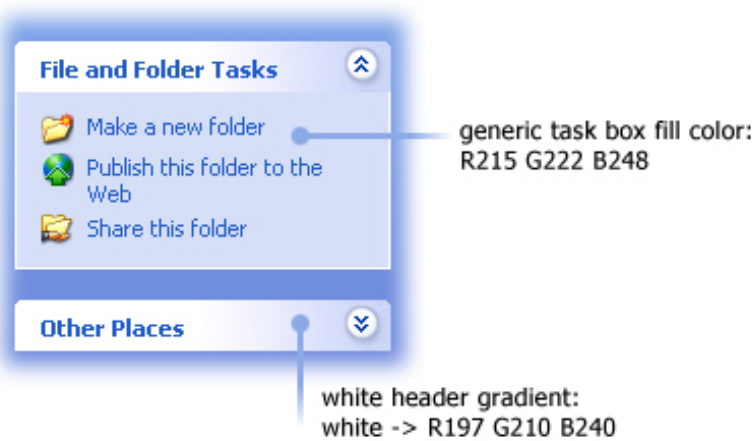
1. Use a 300x300 image
2. Set the opacity to 15%
3. Tint the image applying this colorization: Hue 222, Saturation 0, Light 0
4. Set the input levels to 40, 100, 255



Example of a watermark in a soft barrier page

Generic webviews

Any folder that isn't a special folder and doesn't have a soft barrier page is a generic webview. A generic webview has task boxes in the left panel. The header font is Tahoma Bold, 8 point, R33 G93 B198.



Example of a generic webview task box.

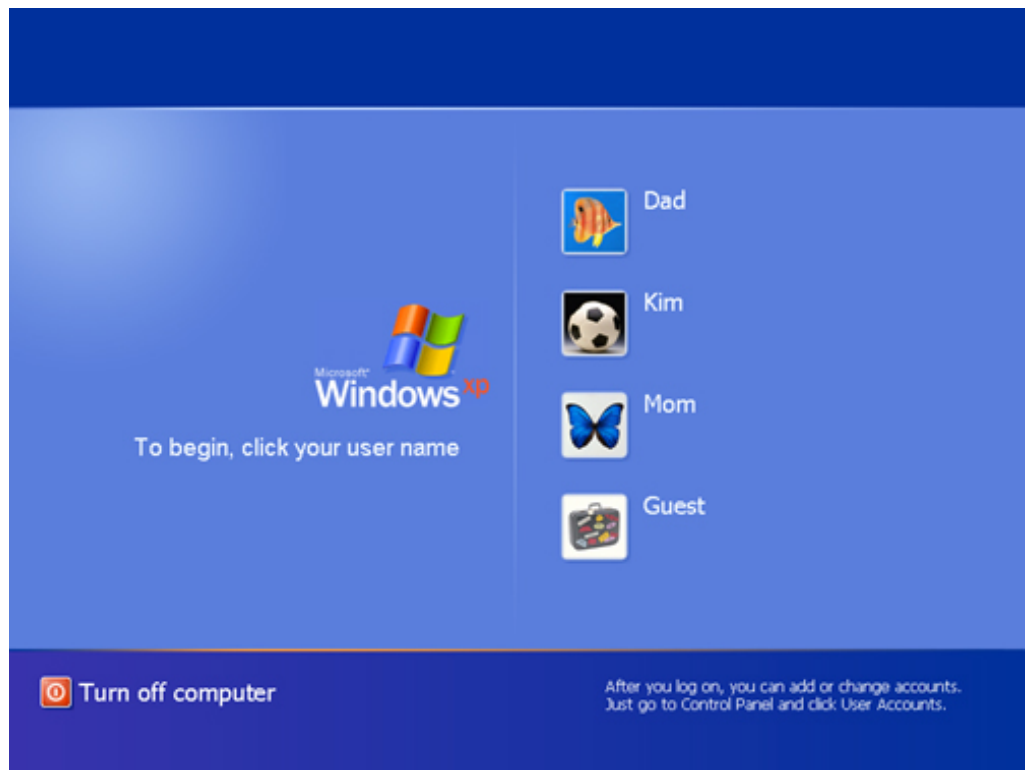
Letterbox Layouts

A letterbox style layout is used for unique full-screen pages in the initial user experience. Two examples of this are the setup screen and the Welcome screen below. These layouts are characterized by dark blue horizontal strips framing a rich blue background. The background contains a soft glow and there are 2 horizontal accent gradients of white at the top and orange at the bottom.

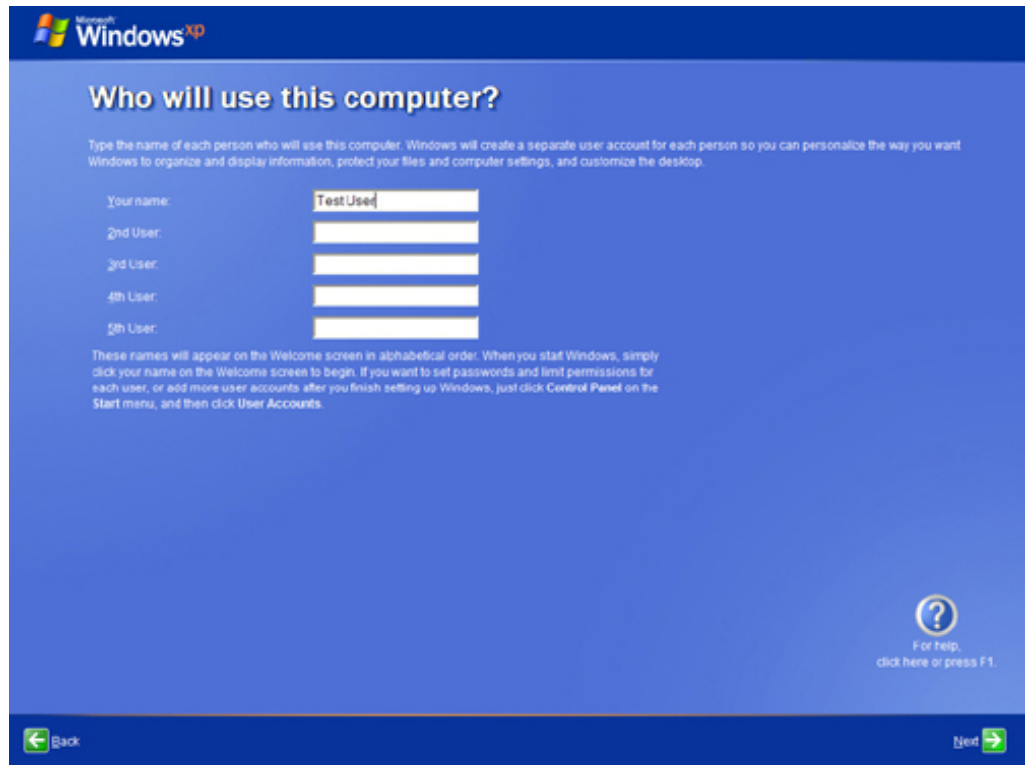
White horizontal accent gradient: (from left to right)
R0 G51 B153 to R140 G170 B230 to R0 G51 B153

Orange horizontal accent gradient: (from left to right)
R62 G53 B71 to R53 G157 B53 to R171 G48 B171

In addition you can use a 1 pixel vertical line to visually separate content. This line is (from left to right):
R90 G126 B90 to R126 G222 B126 to R220 G255 B220



Example of the Welcome screen



Example of a screen in the set up experience

Frequently Asked Questions

Icons

Q: Can I just take a screenshot of an icon to use it?

A: No, you can not. The Windows XP icons have a dropshadow and anti-alias to the background so taking a screenshot will reduce the quality of the image. Additionally you may only reuse icons that are redistributed for public use. We will be releasing some common icons in the near future such as cut, copy, paste.

Q: I see an icon in Windows XP that I like, how can I get it?

A: Windows XP icons should be used consistently to represent the same task or object. Using an icon to represent multiple things in the user experience dilutes the meaning and recognition. For example, always use the same scissors icon to represent "cut" or only use the Control Panel icon to represent the Control Panel folder.

Q: Can I modify an existing icon to represent something else?

A: The modification of an icon needs to be very significant to avoid any potential confusion with the existing icon.

Q: Is there somewhere I can go to have the icons I need made to match the style of Windows XP?

A: There are companies such as IconFactory (www.iconfactory.com) that are experts at making Windows XP style icons. A good illustrator or designer should be able to emulate the style following the guidelines and looking at Windows XP.

Graphics

Q: Is it possible to implement graphic elements that anti-alias on the fly by the OS or should



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we not anti-alias these elements?

A: Yes, the operating system does support 32-bit bitmaps. You can use tools such as GifMovieGear to create these images. When creating an anti-aliased element it is important to remember to test your graphic in 16-bit and 24-bit color configurations.

Q: The page layout includes a header. Is it acceptable to have a web-like navigation bar inside the header?

A: Yes. However we do not have an example of this in Windows XP to recommend how you could apply this.

Themes

Q: How do I create a theme?

A: At this point in time we are not allowing additional themes to be created for Windows XP. This is primarily because we have found that additional themes can cause application compatibility issues. Allowing the creation of additional themes is something that we are investigating for future releases.

Q: Can individual applications theme themselves separately from the OS?

A: Yes it is possible for applications to theme themselves separately from the OS. Windows Media Player is an example application that does this however theming separately is not recommended. Most users will expect a consistent user experience, across multiple applications so doing a custom look on your application can detract from the user experience of your application. Diverging from the Windows XP look and feel will also mean that your application will manually need to adjust for the currently selected theme, as well as handle accessibility and system colors appropriately.

Q: Can I get access to the bmps for the different Windows XP themes?

A: No, you should never use any of the theme bitmaps directly, you should always render the theme images using the theme API's. This way if new themes are released in the future your application will work correctly.

Q: How do I make my application/design work

with different color schemes such as Lilac or High Contrast?

A: When rendering your application and there is no theme selected (Null theme handle) your application should use system metric colors to correctly render the various aspects of the application. This is the same technique as used on Windows 2000.

Q: Do I need to create 3 different sets of graphics (blue, silver, olive green) for my application?

A: If you have decided to theme your application separately from the OS then we recommend that you stay in sync with the currently selected theme and provide the user with a consistent experience. Because of the added complexity we do not recommend that applications theme themselves separately from the OS.

General

Q: Will Microsoft critique the work we have done on our project to be sure we are on the right track?

A: We are very interested in the applications that you make and will often provide feedback on how these applications can work better with Windows XP however we can not guarantee that you will get a response. Unfortunately we just don't have the time to see all the great work people are doing with applying the Windows XP look to their products.

The document "Using Windows XP Visual Styles" describes how to use Microsoft Windows XP to perform the more common tasks that are necessary to apply visual styles to your applications.

If you have further questions, please email your inquiries to winxpdes@microsoft.com

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