

COMPUTER GURU — by Don Benjamin

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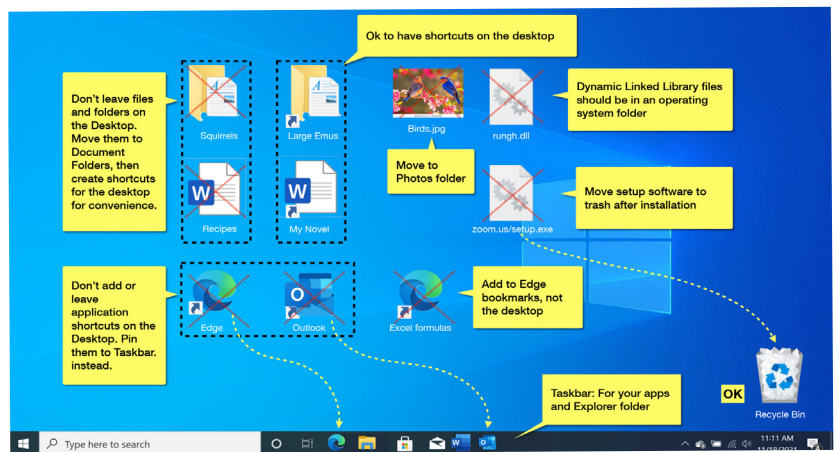
How to Use Your Windows Desktop

We shall now tread carefully into the philosophically perilous recommendations on how to use your Windows desktop...

We see a lot of Windows desktops. Some are tidy with a few icons here and there, while others are strewn with files, shortcuts to applications, and web bookmarks. If you like the strewn look, then read no further. But a mess of icons makes me *verklemp*—I like my computer desktop to be neat. And to that end, I offer the picture and explanation below as a guide for what goes on the desktop and what goes elsewhere.

Pin Applications to the Taskbar

When you install new software, Windows usually (and unfortunately) adds its shortcut on your Desktop, so if you're reading a webpage and want to check your mail in Outlook, you may have to close your browser to find the Outlook icon. That's why the Windows folks invented the Taskbar, which is always visible, and is where your application icons go. To add an application to your taskbar when you run it for the first time, right-click the icon and select "pin to taskbar."



Move Files to Documents Folders

The desktop is not a good place to store files (documents) or folders because they're probably not being backed up and they're too easy to delete by accident. **Files and folders should be in your documents (or OneDrive) folders.** You can then create shortcuts to place on your desktop.

Move Setup Files to the Trash

Move application setup files to your recycle bin after you've added the application. You'll usually find these in your downloads folder, but sometimes end up on the desktop. And files that end in .dll should be in a Windows programs folder. But don't move them until you ask for help.

Add Website Links to your Browser's Bookmarks

Website links should be in your browser bookmarks, not the desktop. If you're like me, you'll accumulate hundreds of these, and you'll get utterly lost looking for them on your desktop.

Reserve the Desktop for Shortcuts and Temporary Documents

What you CAN keep on your desktop are *shortcuts* to files and document folders that you create by 1. Navigating to the file or folder, 2. *Right-clicking* the file or folder icon, and, while holding the *right button*, 3. *Dragging* the icon to the desktop, and 4. Selecting Create Shortcut. The arrow symbol designates the icon as a shortcut to the file or folder and not the actual document. When you're finished working with the document you can trash the shortcut icon—the actual file remains safely stored in your document folder.

If you need help managing your Windows Desktop, just ask us for help at PSRC Tech Resources at princetonsenior.org/psrc-tech-resources/.