

## Customizing Your Computer with Preferences

### Making Your Computer Work with You - Not Against You

Although you did not design or build your computer, you can turn it into a device that responds to your way of using it as if you were its original engineer or programmer. This is because the computer is a mere platform - a blank canvas, if you will - waiting for you to direct its operation or paint the picture of the perfect machine. All this is possible from making just a few changes in your computer's current configuration.

Your computer's main configurations are housed in Windows Control Panel. Within this small section of Windows, you can make some major changes from the way that your computer looks to the way that your computer responds to the people who use it. But your specifications don't just apply to Windows, they also apply to the many software programs that are installed onto the computer (not to mention that many software programs can be further customized through their own configurations). We aren't going to cover them all, but we will introduce some of the most popular so that you can get a feel of the control over your system that these configurations give you.

Users. Before we get into the individual settings, it's important that you understand that each set of configurations you make is specific to the users that sit down in front of a computer. Changes made to a system by one person will differ from the changes made by another. Enabled by a username and password, individual desktop settings (icons, background picture, and other settings) are available after logging onto Windows.

Display Properties. Through Display Properties, a user can change the background of the Windows Desktop, add a screensaver, change the overall color scheme and fonts of Windows, and adjust a computer's color depth and/or resolution (screen area). Not just a bunch of preference settings, display properties help individuals who have to deal with visual problems.

Accessibility Options. Speaking of visual problems, another setting that's useful is accessibility options. This setting allows people with disabilities to use a computer that accommodates vision and hearing problems.

Keyboard and Mouse Options. The keyboard and mouse controls give users the option of speeding up or slowing down the movements of both of these peripherals. For those entering the United States from a foreign country, users will appreciate how Windows grants use of keyboard layouts native to their original language. Other users will appreciate the different selection of cursors and the ability to add additional ones.

Passwords. Since the computer in use may be shared with others, Passwords gives the almighty administrator the means to determine whether all users will share the same preferences and desktop settings or if users can customize preferences and desktop settings.

Regional Settings. Things get really personal in Regional Settings - as this configuration makes changes according to a user's location and language. Options available can accommodate a person's preference for the display of numbers, currency, time, and date format.

Sounds Properties. Multimedia fans can create a rich PC environment filled with sound through this setting. Sounds can be assigned to numerous events and they don't even need to be the default sounds installed by Windows. Users can download sounds from the Internet or create their own sounds with a microphone.

Dialing Properties. Even the way a user connects to the Internet can be customized. Through Dialing Properties, users can determine how a phone and modem dials into an Internet service provider.

From just these basic configuration options, you can create your own experience with a computer each time you sit down in front of one. Customizing your PC is what makes using a computer truly unique and enjoyable, so have fun and build a situation at home or a work in which you'll love to work with everyday. Should you feel a little nervous about it at first, remember that your computer's original configuration can be saved to a back up file should you ever want to restore it to the same state that it was in when you first bought it.

PPPPP

Word count 691