The Amazing Mouse

Learn how to use the humble mouse to become super-efficient with Microsoft Office

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The Amazing Mouse

Dedicated to the billions of users who use the mouse everyday and do not know how to use it efficiently.

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Introduction

First things first. If you are doing serious and important work, you must use mouse. Yes, I know that there are lots of alternatives. Pros like keyboard shortcuts, newer generation likes touch and stylus. By all means use all of them. But the humble mouse does have some unique benefits to offer.

Trust me, you will **save at least ten minutes every day**. It will also do some good for your wrists because it will make your mouse usage more efficient and less stressful. Read on to find out more.

In a hurry? Learn Instant Best Practices

1. Observe the mouse cursor shape.
   Whenever it changes ask yourself – why did it change?
   What is it going to do differently? This way you can learn many nice things.
2. Whenever confused, right click. It shows menu items relevant to the place where you right clicked. This way you can learn lot of useful features. Do it as a pastime.
3. Hover the mouse on every button in the Ribbon for 1 sec. Read the tooltip.
   Notice the shortcut. Learn the shortcut if it is a frequently used button.
4. Press key and drag an object to copy it quickly.
5. Whenever you drag or drag-drop, try a right drag-drop.
6. To draw perfect shapes (circle, square, horizontal line, etc.) press SHIFT key and drag the mouse.
7. Install the appropriate mouse driver and explore all available settings.

There is much more. Read on.

Which version of Office?

Most of the content in this book will work with Office 2007 onwards

What is not covered in this book

This is not a technical review or buying guide for mice. It is a usage guide. Once you have a mouse, this book will help you unlock new methods of using the mouse can more effectively, specifically in the context of Microsoft Office and Windows.

There is a large gaming community and they use specialized and sophisticated mice which are custom built for long hours of usage. Although I love gaming myself, this book will focus only on the business usage – in the context of Microsoft Office. Gamers are already experts at what they do. They know how to use not just the mouse but all the other tools and tricks of the trade!

Finally, this book covers Microsoft Office on Windows platform only. Mac has a different approach to pointing devices. I am aware that many of you may be using Mac-based Office. But I have had very limited exposure in using Mac till date and therefore, I do not have the expertise to write authoritatively about it.

Is the mouse still relevant?

At the time of writing this book (June 2016), most laptops have Touch incorporated. Many Windows devices have a stylus as well. Of course, all laptops have a TouchPad.

Just trust me on this one. In spite of all the above innovations, the regular mouse is not just relevant – it is indispensable.

If you want to work efficiently using Microsoft Office, you need a regular mouse. Period!

Why should I use a mouse if the laptop has touchpad?

Almost all laptops have touchpad. Earlier we used to have a pointing stick as well. The touchpad provides the same functionality as the mouse, it offers two or three buttons. With some configuration, it also allows for scrolling and zooming control.

Why should we use a mouse then? Well, the short answer is that using touchpad is more stressful for your wrist. With the mouse, you can position your hand and wrist in a comfortable place. Touchpad is fixed so you have to bend your wrist while using it. Furthermore, performing drag-drop or ctrl-drag kind of operations requires awkward hand movements. These things cause RSI – Repetitive Stress Injury.

Repeated use of touchpad is likely to cause stress related injuries to your wrist much faster compared to using the mouse. Of course, we have the option of trackball as well, which reduces the chances of suffering from this type of stress injury even further.   I will cover trackball later in this book.

When NOT to use the mouse

To click on Ok/Cancel buttons.

Clicking on OK / Cancel using mouse (while otherwise working on the keyboard) is the commonest misuse of mouse!

It is not necessary to use the mouse at all to choose these buttons.

Understanding The Default Button
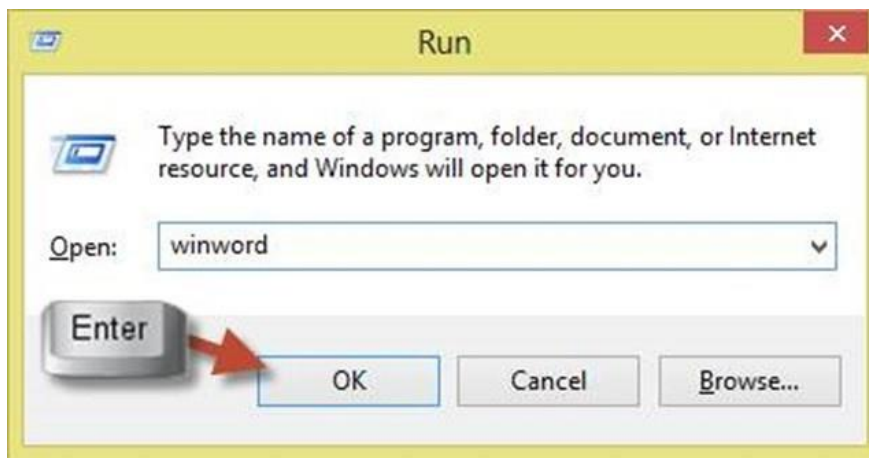
Here is a simple dialog. Notice that OK button has a darker border.
This is because OK is the default button.

Default button can be chosen by pressing ![Enter] key.

Just remember. OK = Enter key. Cancel / Close = Esc key.

Shortcut Keys

While working with menus and dialogs you will often notice that some characters are underlined.

Usually you can press ![Alt] key along with the underlined character to choose that item quickly.
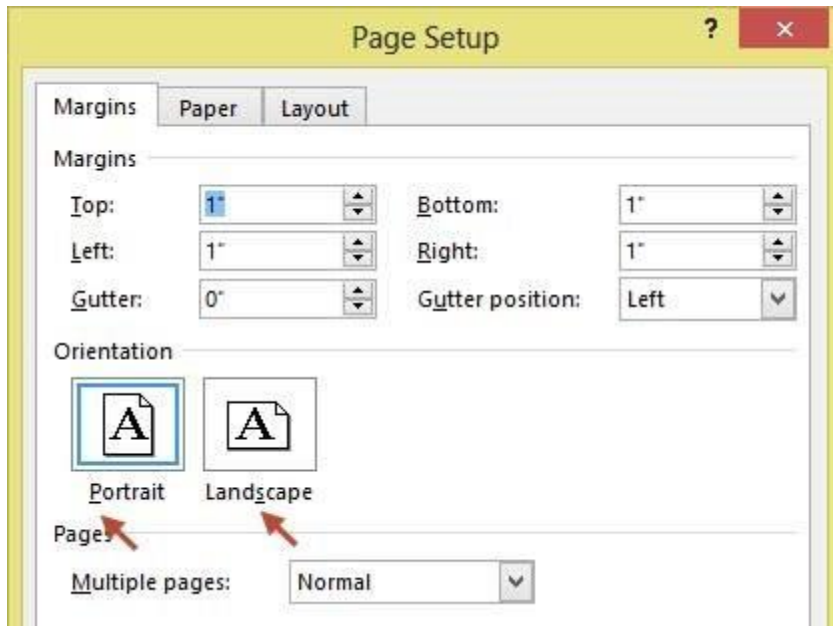
To select Landscape option, type Alt S (Word – Page Setup Dialog)

If you don't see these underlined characters, just press Alt key. Now the hot keys will be visible.

Moving To Next / Previous Item

While working with dialogs / objects we often need to move to the next item / textbox / button / shape etc. Many of us use Mouse to do this. Using keyboard is faster in most cases.

Press **Tab** to move to next item and **Shift** **Tab** to move to previous item.

This works with PowerPoint objects, Excel cells, Word table cells and items in dialogs.

How to configure your left/right mouse button if you are left-handed?

Throughout the book, it is assumed that you are right handed. If you are left handed, go to Control Panel – Mouse and choose the **Buttons** tab. Select (Turn ON), the **Switch primary and secondary buttons** option. That's it.
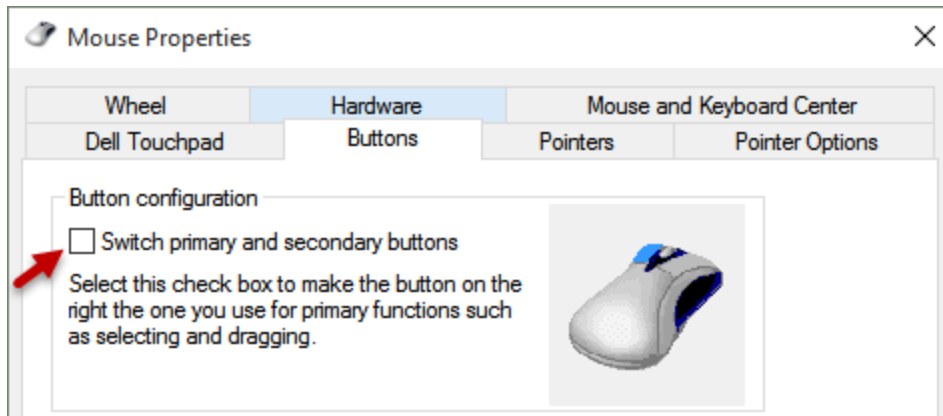
For simplicity, throughout this book, we are going to call the primary button as the left button. If you are left handed, it is actually the Right button for you. I hope you will be able to adjust accordingly.

Mouse Click(s)

How many times should you click?

We know single click and double click. But there is more.

When to single click or double click?

I get this question very often. I was trying to find a comprehensive answer to this question... but my son Zeus came up with an elegant solution.
Try single click first. If it does not work, try double click!

Table II

Item	Which click
Start programs using Desktop icons	Double click
Open a file from File Explorer	Double click
Choose a toolbar button	Single click
Choose a menu item	Single click
Start programs from Start – Programs	Single click

Double Click: Special cases

Application	Effect of double click
Word	Double click selects the word at cursor. Triple click selects the entire paragraph.
Office	Format Painter double click allows you to pick formatting once and then apply it to many different areas / objects
Office	Double clicking on some specific buttons allows you to do repetitive actions. This is called Locking the mode. Till version 2003, in PowerPoint, double clicking on any drawing shape button allows you to draw the shape repeatedly. From 2007 onwards, you right click on the shape and choose Lock Drawing Mode
Excel	Double clicking in a cell allows you to view and edit the formula (if present)
PowerPoint	Double clicking a shape, picture, video or audio brings up the relevant Ribbon tab

Application	Effect of double click
	Drawing Tools — Format; Picture Tools — Format; Video Tools — Format, Playback; Audio Tools — Format, Playback
Chart elements	With Office 2010 onwards, double clicking on any chart element, opens the corresponding customization dialog appears (e.g. Format Series, Format Axis).
Files	Double clicking a file in File Explorer executes the default action. For Office files, the file will open in the corresponding application. For a movie / sound object, the default action is Play using Windows Media Player
Pivot Table	Double clicking in **Row or Column area** brings up the drill down dialog. Double clicking inside any cell in the **Data area** (Values area) creates a new sheet and shows you all the rows from raw data which contributed to that value. Very useful to find out lineage (underlying raw data) behind summarized reports. Double Clicking on the Grand Total will create a new sheet with all the raw data.

"Slow" Double Click with charts

Sounds funny? But it is true and it is very useful in day-to-day work.

While customizing charts, we need to format a particular data point, marker or data label in a series.
We want it to stand out from the rest. How do we do it?
Single click on a series selects all items in the series.

What we want is to select a single item – not the entire series.

If you try double clicking on a series it will open the Format Data Series dialog (from Office 2010 onwards. In Office 2007, double click has no effect.)

That is where SLOW double click comes into picture. This works in ALL VERSIONS of Office.

Click on the element – let it select the whole series. Wait for 2 seconds. Now click on the element you want to want to customize. Now the single element is selected.
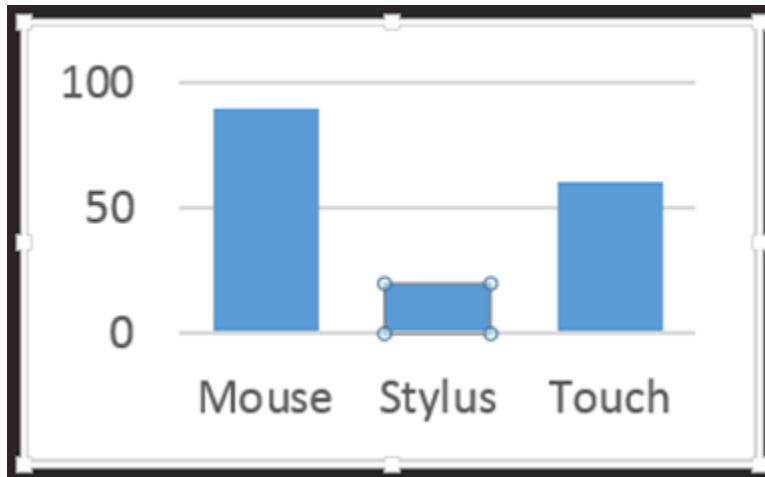
Try it immediately …

Triple Click

Yes this is possible 😊 in Word. (I don't know of any other examples of Triple Click for Office. If you know any, I would love to hear from you). If you double click inside a paragraph, the current word is selected.

If you TRIPLE CLICK, it will **select the entire paragraph**. This is very useful to select long paragraphs, without having to struggle with cumbersome drag based selection.

While the mouse cursor is in the left margin of a paragraph:
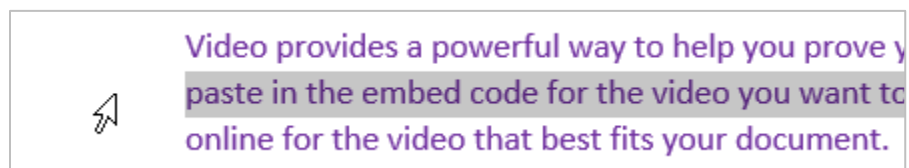
Single click	Selects the line
Double click	Selects the paragraph
Triple click	Selects the entire document (like CTRL A)
	Triple Click in a table cell to select its entire content

Reducing Mouse Clicks using Quick Access Toolbar

Many users still do not like the Office ribbon. The problem they face is that they cannot remember which button is contained in which Tab (menu) of the ribbon. Therefore, they have to click on multiple tabs just to locate the button. Of course, when they do find the desired button, one more click is required to choose that button.

Microsoft did not want people to search for commonly used buttons. That is why they added Quick Access Toolbar. It sounds like a complex name. But in reality it is very simple.

At the top left corner of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and many other applications, we see Save, Undo and Redo buttons. That area is called the **Quick Access Toolbar (QAT)**. Basically, it is a custom toolbar where you can put your favorite buttons.

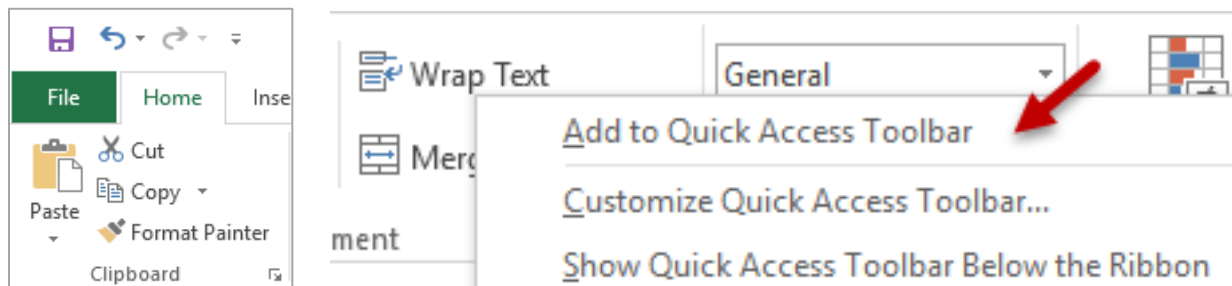How do you do it? Just right click on any button which you use more frequently and choose the option **Add to Quick Access Toolbar**. Now that button is always available with single-click access.
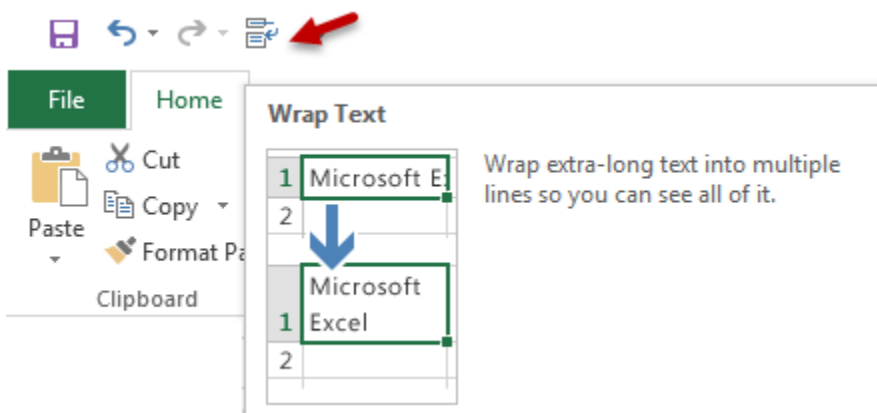
Remember to customize the QAT for all the Office tools separately. If you find the custom toolbar useful, share it with friends and colleagues using Right Click on ribbon, choose Customize Quick Access Toolbar – choose Export option (bottom right corner) and send the customization file to others. Ask them to import it from the same dialog. That's it. Now everyone can get the same custom toolbar.

Using Mouse Hover

You don't even have to click to use the mouse! Just moving the mouse over specific places is useful … (it is called mouse "hover"). Here are some useful examples:

ToolTips

Often we get confused with too many toolbar buttons. If you cannot understand what a particular toolbar button does, you can just hover on it for a second. It shows you short help and also explains the concept using a diagram in some cases.

Tooltips can also illustrate concepts. For example, Trace Dependents is very useful for auditing Excel files. But most people don't know how to use it. The tooltip explains it visually.

Excel – Formulas Tab – Formula Auditing group – Trace Dependents (hover mouse here)
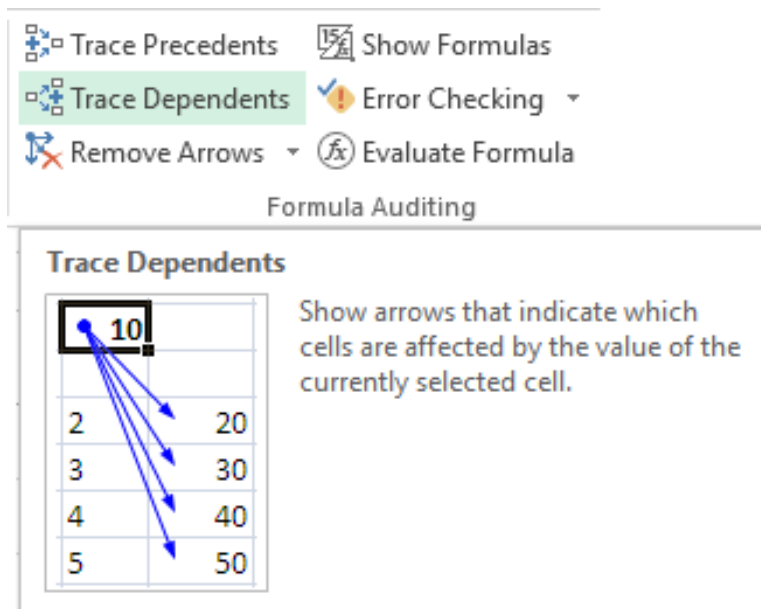
Tooltips With Keyboard Shortcut Keys

Sometimes you use a particular toolbar button for performing some common action, althoughhere could be a simpler keyboard shortcut for the same action.

But you would never know about the shortcut because you always use the mouse to click on the toolbar button.

How to find missing dialogs

Here is an example from Word – Home Tab – Paragraph group... hover the mouse on that small arrow.
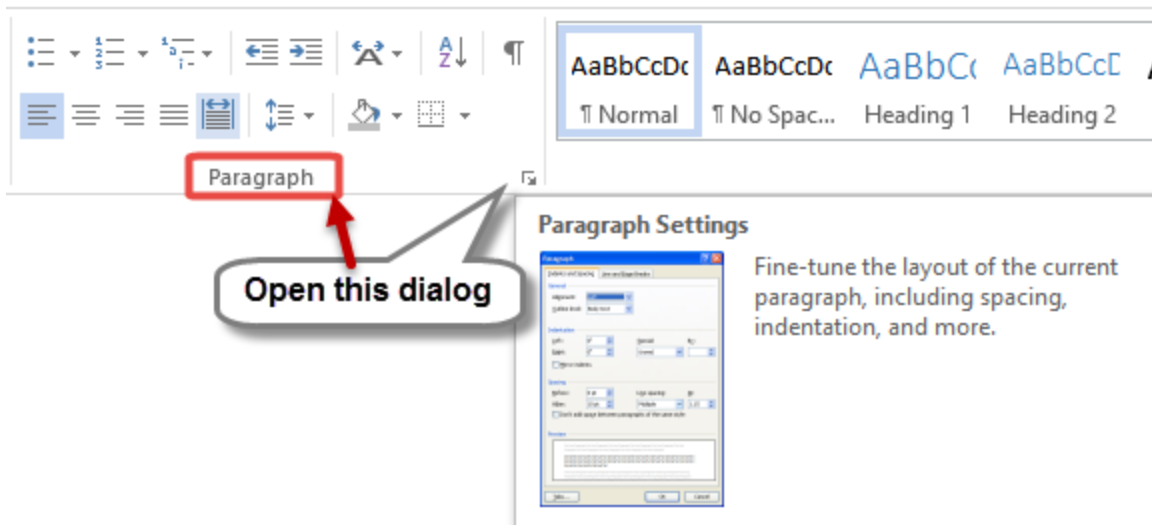
That small arrow is called Dialog Launcher. It opens the dialog related to the group name shown in the ribbon. In this case it will open the Format – Paragraph Dialog.

Try many options without undo (Live Preview)

Office 2007 onwards helps us choose from available options in a simple, easy to use way.

Remember how often you have applied some background color to a slide and then realized that you wanted to change it? Of course you had to use UNDO and lots of trial and error?

Now all this trouble has ended. In any situation where you have multiple visual options to choose from, you just need to move your mouse cursor over the options (styles, colors, fonts, special effects). The effect will then be applied automatically... but temporarily. If you like the option, then you can click on the desired item. If you don't like it, just move the cursor outside the area. Such live dropdown areas are called **Galleries** in Office.

Office Galleries

Try this... Open any Word Document, click inside any paragraph and choose Home tab, Styles Gallery (open the dropdown). Move the mouse cursor over various styles and see what happens to the paragraph.
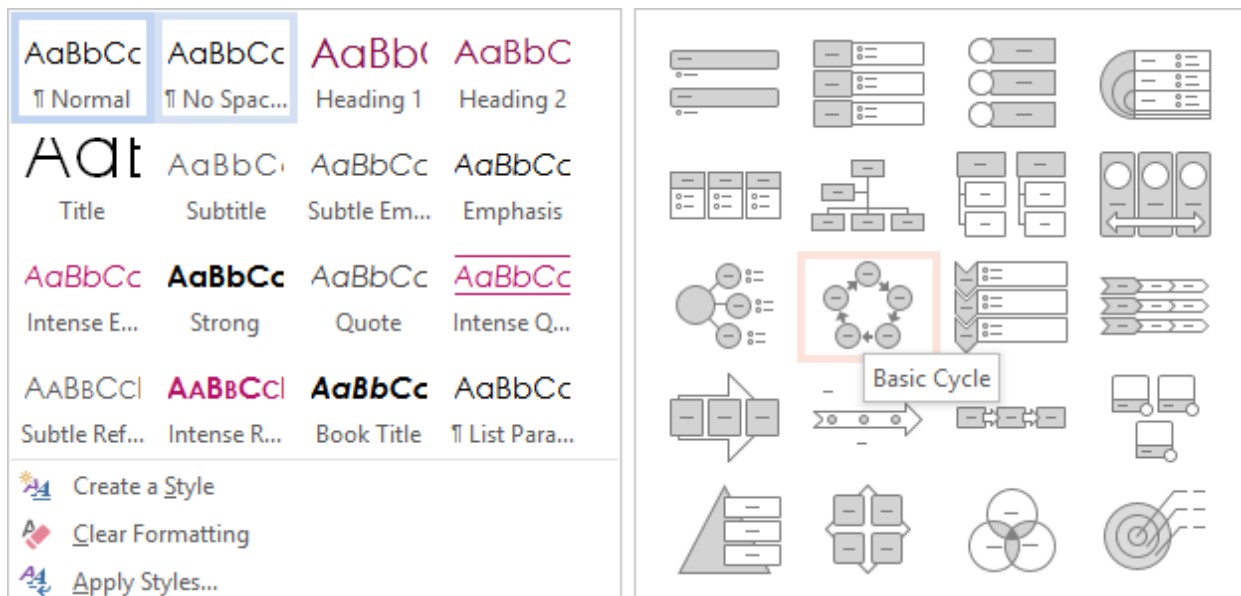
This is available in many places across Office tools. Here are some important ones.

Product	Live Preview Gallery
Word	Home tab – Styles
Word, Excel, PowerPoint	Table Tools – Design – Table Styles
Word, Excel, PowerPoint	Picture Tools – Picture Styles, Video Tools – Video Styles

Complimentary Copy. Not For Resale.

Product	Live Preview Gallery
Excel	Home – Conditional Formatting
PowerPoint	Design – to quickly change the template
PowerPoint	Animations and Transitions
All Office products	Fonts, Font Size, Themes
SmartArt	SmartArt Layouts, Colors, Styles

Paste options

This is a revolutionary feature, added in Office 2010 onwards.

When you copy paste anywhere within Office, you can see a small icon that appears. This feature has been there for many years. Most of us get irritated with that icon because it appears uninvited. It does not go away. It stays there adamantly even if you press Escape.

Remember, if there is an irritating feature, it must be very useful. Read this article for more details.

It shows you the relevant **Paste Special** options, without going to Paste Special. When you click this button, various pasting options are shown as icons.
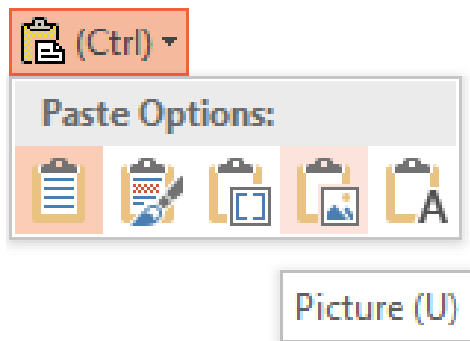
At this stage you still don't know which option is the right one for you. No problem, just hover the mouse over the each icon. You can see (temporarily) how the particular paste option will work if you choose it. Try all options quickly and choose the one you want. This eliminates the trial and error involved in checking each item and undoing the unwanted ones.
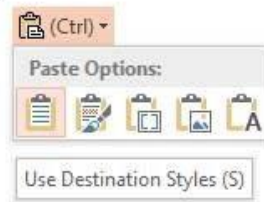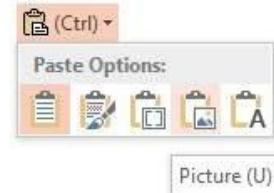
It is usually more efficient to handle this with keyboard.

Press [Ctrl] to open the options and use arrow keys to try each option. If you know the option, type the shortcut key shown in brackets.

In the example above, to paste as picture format, press [Ctrl] [U]

As though this was not enough, there is a new way introduced since 2010. Copy from source. Go to the destination but DO NOT paste. Instead, Right Click. In the right click menu, you will see all the paste options. Now preview them using mouse hover and choose the one you want.
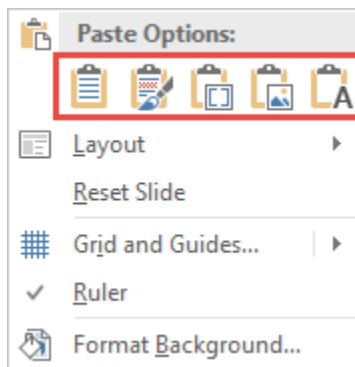
Can you now begin to notice and appreciate how much effort Microsoft has put in to make our life easier! We must reciprocate by exploring these features and using them to our advantage.

Instant Translation

MS Word 2007 onwards can show you translation in any installed language.
Here is how to make use of this great feature to learn another language.

    a.   From the Review Tab – Translate dropdown – Mini Toolbar – choose the translation language.
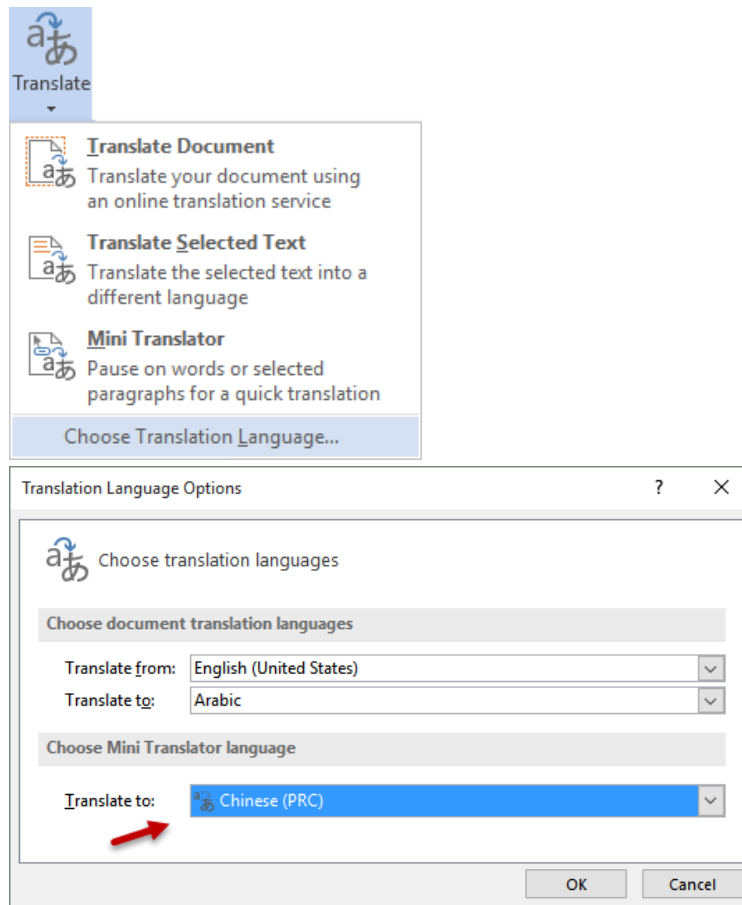
b. Activate the Mini Translator from Review Tab – Translate – Mini Translator
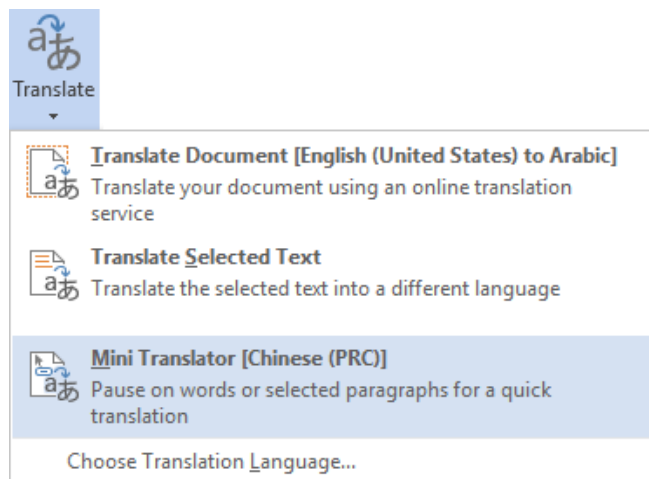
c. That's it. Now whenever you hover on top of any word (or selection), the mini-translator popup shows the translation. It is extremely useful to learn a new language

while you work on regular documents.
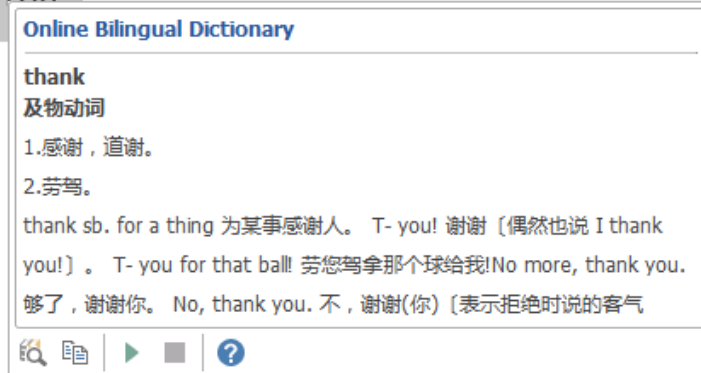
More Hover examples

1. In Windows Explorer, hovering on a directory or file shows more details about it

2. In PowerPoint, you can even configure actions that can be triggered on Mouse hover

3. In Excel Charts, mouse hover shows the actual values of any point on the series

4. Pivot Table shows more details when you hover on any cell

Drag Drop

This is a very common activity. Usually it is used for Copy Paste operations. But there is much more to it than just copy paste.

Drag and drop performs most popular action

When you drag and drop items, the most commonly expected logical action happens. For example, when you drag a file from one folder and drop it into another folder, it is moved.

That is called the DEFAULT ACTION.

Another example is... when you drag a number from the corner of the cell, it automatically adds further numbers.

This is a good thing in most cases. But if you don't like the default or standard action, then you have a problem. To solve this issue, there is RIGHT DRAG DROP.

Canceling drag drop

Sometimes you start dragging something and change your mind. How to cancel the operation without any damage?

Think a little – guess ... just press the ESC key.

Drag Drop across two full screen applications

This is a common scenario. You are composing a mail. You want to attach a file... you open Windows Explorer... find the file – drag the file .... now there is a problem if you cant see the mail window.

That is when we try to copy and paste. No need to do so.

Just drag from one window, take the cursor to the Outlook icon on the taskbar. Even if there are multiple Outlook windows shown, it is ok.
Move cursor on the thumbnail or name of the desired window and ..

WAIT THERE FOR FEW SECONDS

Now the window will automatically come in front... move the mouse and then complete the drag drop.

Drag Drop Across multiple monitors

If you use multiple monitors, you can drag-drop items across the monitors. This is useful when you have a laptop and an external monitor / LCD screen attached.

Depending upon where the external monitor is physically kept in relation to your laptop, your mouse cursor can move from edge of your screen to the external desktop. This is configured using Display Properties – Settings tab. This tab will show two monitors. If monitor 2 is physically on the left side of base laptop, then you can move the monitor 2 icon accordingly.
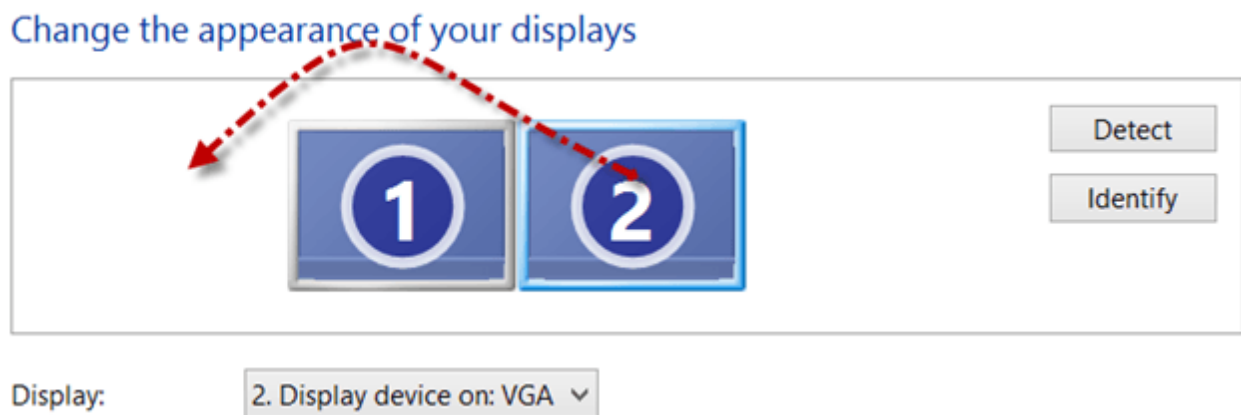
Once this is configured, the laptop mouse cursor will move over to the external monitor from the LEFT edge.

If monitor 2 was configured to be on the right side of the laptop screen, the mouse cursor will spillover from the RIGHT edge of laptop screen.

You can even arrange the second monitor above or below the main laptop screen. This configuration is often done when your external monitor is physically installed above your work table to save space.

The ignored jewel: Right Drag Drop

We usually press the LEFT mouse button during a drag or drag/drop operation. Pressing the right mouse button while dragging is called Right Drag (Drop). So what is the big deal? What benefits do you get?

Left drag drop just does the most relevant and popular action.
Right Drag Drop does NOT perform any action. It shows you all the available actions.

For example, when you drag a file from one folder to another folder on the same drive, the file is MOVED. Now let us try the same thing with RIGHT drag drop. It shows you all the available options. The item in bold helps you remember the default action.
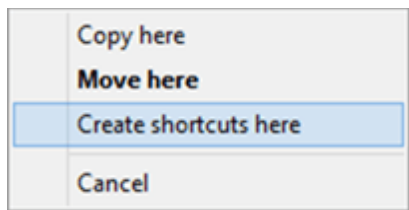
Right drag a number in Excel

Copy Cells
Fill Series
Fill Formatting Only
Fill Without Formatting
Fill Days
Fill Weekdays
Fill Months
Fill Years
Linear Trend
Growth Trend
Flash Fill
Series...
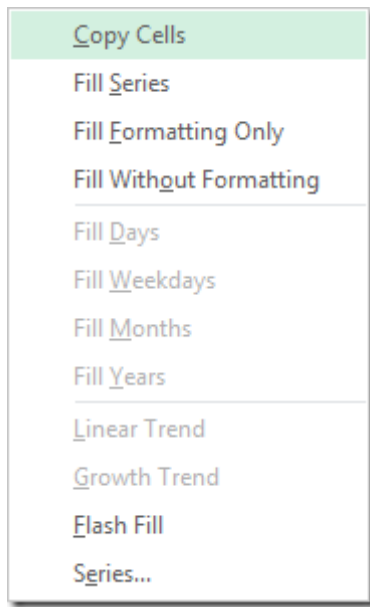
Right drag a shape in PowerPoint

Move Here
Copy Here
Cancel
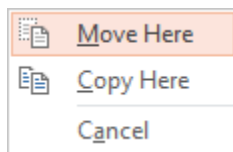
Right drag a mail from Inbox and drop it into Task folder:

Copy Here as Task with Text
Copy Here as Task with Attachment
Move Here as Task with Attachment
Cancel
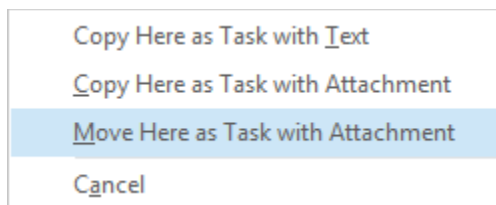
This is a great way of converting mails to tasks. Find out more about this powerful feature.

The list is endless... but remember this golden rule.

Whenever you use drag or drag drop, just try right drag drop and learn more.

Using the Mouse Wheel

It is used for scrolling vertically (and horizontally in some mice). Mouse settings in Control Panel or the mouse configuration dialog allows you to change the speed of scrolling.

Horizontal Scrolling: Tilt Wheel

Most newer models of mice have a horizontal scroll facility, called the "Tilt Wheel". This is often ignored and we possibly never end up using it.

Here are some common uses of horizontal scrolling:

1. Horizontal scrolling is probably most important in Excel as you have large number of columns to view and navigate.

    However, I find the keyboard shortcut or more convenient here.
2. Large browser pages.Some browser pages are very wide and therefore horizontal scrolling is necessary
3. PowerPoint / Word document with large Zoom level, wide tables
4. Photographs / images which are too large for your screen
5. Any document which needs Panning functionality.

Tilt wheel may not be supported by all software applications.

Controlling the amount of scrolling

This can be done from Control Panel – Mouse dialog. Notice the **One Screen at a time** option. This is the exact equivalent of Page Down/ Page Up on the keyboard. Very useful while reading Word Documents or large Excel spreadsheets.
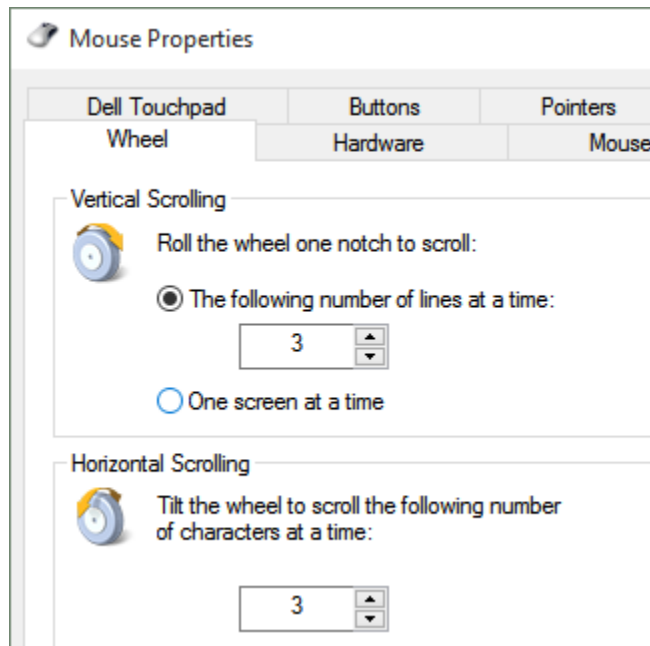
Ribbon Tabs and Scroll Wheel

This is a very useful feature. Just position the mouse cursor anywhere on the ribbon and use Scroll Wheel. It shuffles the ribbon tabs very quickly – try it NOW. This is much *better than clicking* on the tabs using the mouse. Also useful when you are searching for a particular button and have forgotten which tab it belongs to.

Document Zoom In / Out

Press CTRL key and move the wheel – ZOOM in and out the document. Practice it a little. Here are some common scenarios:

1. Zoom in to do intricate work an zoom out to see overall impact in a PowerPoint slide or a Word Document.

2. Find missing areas of data quickly – zoom out maximum in Excel.

3. Useful while browsing long web pages and social media walls

4. If you just move the scroll wheel while the cursor is over the RIBBON (Office 2007 onwards), it changes the selected menu (Tab) very quickly.

5. If you don't use a mouse with your laptop, this feature can still work if you have a touch pad with the right margin configured for scrolling.

PowerPoint Presentation Zoom In/Out

Since Office 2013, Zoom works while presenting. Just use the same Ctrl – Mouse Wheel combination to zoom. Once Zoomed In, the mouse cursor looks like a hand. Now dragging the mouse will help you PAN the screen to show details of the zoomed-in slide.

To zoom out, use Ctrl Mouse Wheel in the reverse direction. Now the slide comes back to full screen view.

But wait, continue Zooming Out and one more surprise awaits you. It shows a slide sorter like view. This allows you to jump to another slide quickly, without leaving the presentation. Of course, the side-effect is that the audience can also see the slides. This is very useful if someone asks you a question about a slide which you have already covered.

If you have organized your presentation using PowerPoint Sections, you can jump across sections as well in the Zoom Out view.
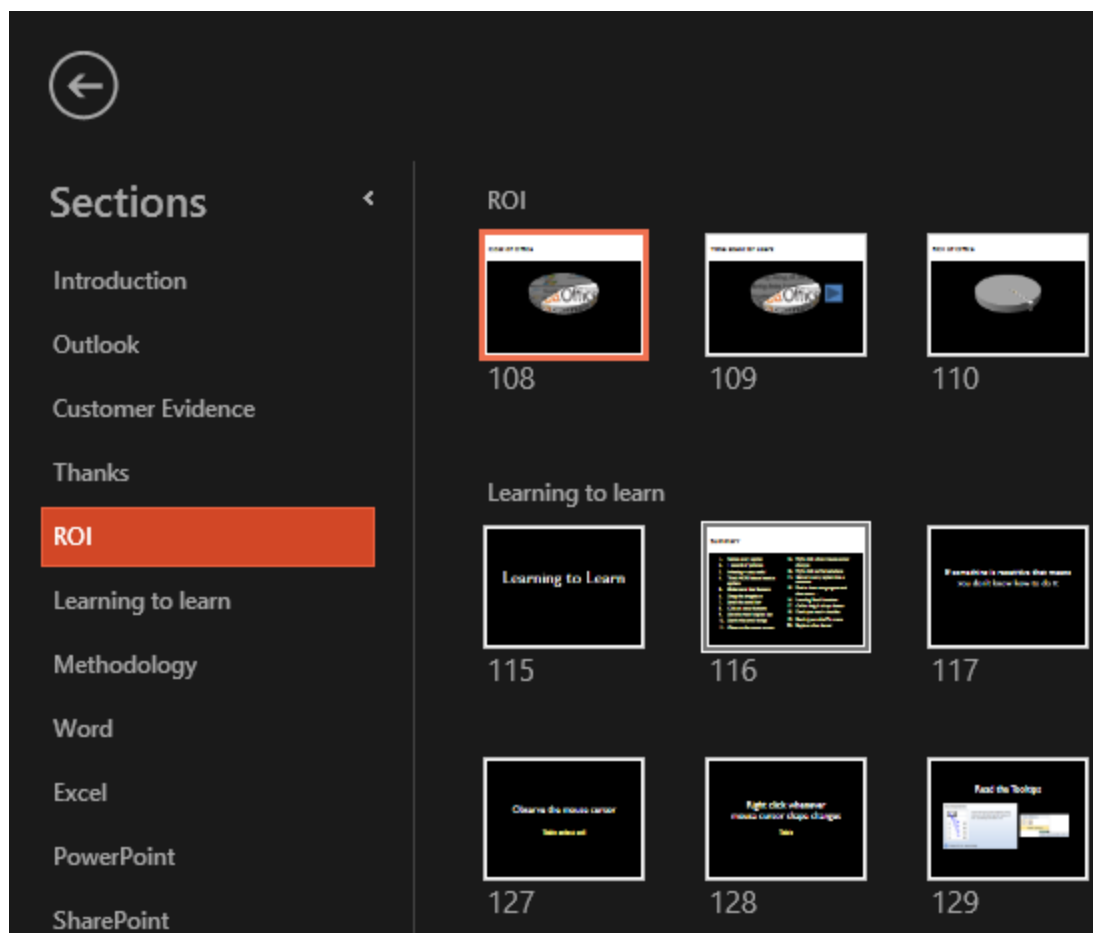
PowerPoint Laser Pointer

This feature is so good that it deserves a special mention. No. I am not talking about the laser pointers which are separately available. PowerPoint itself has a software laser pointer. You don't have to buy anything.

Just run a presentation as usual. Now press the [Ctrl] key and drag the mouse (press left button and move it). That's all. Now the mouse cursor becomes a laser pointer.

Once you start dragging and the cursor changes to laser pointer, you can release the Ctrl key. Practice it a few times to get it right. There is no need to keep pressing the CTRL key. That way you will block both your hands!

You can use the laser pointer to show areas of interest on the slide, highlight chart elements, explain a step in a process diagram, point out to abnormal areas in a CT Scan, explain features of a product and so on.
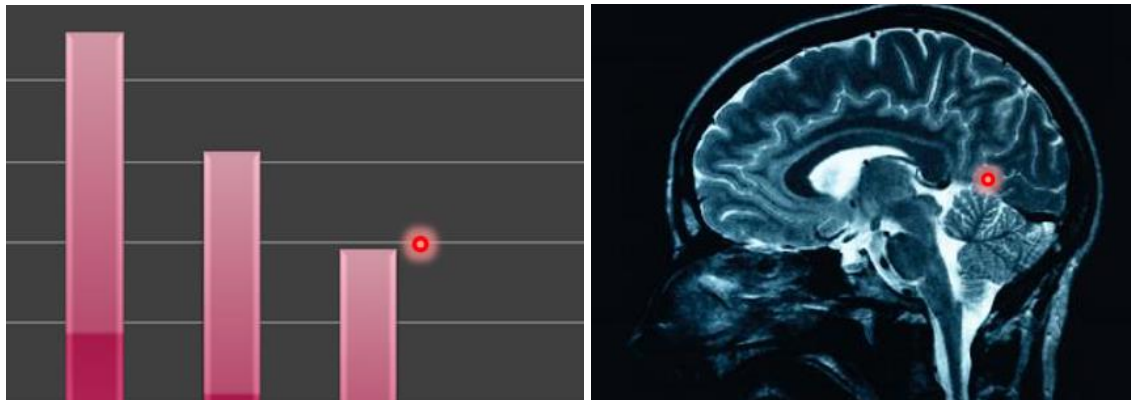
Change the color of laser pointer

If your slide background is predominantly red, the default laser pointer will not stand out. Go to Slide Show Tab – **Set Up Slide Show** dialog. Choose the Laser Pointer color which provides maximum contrast with your color scheme.
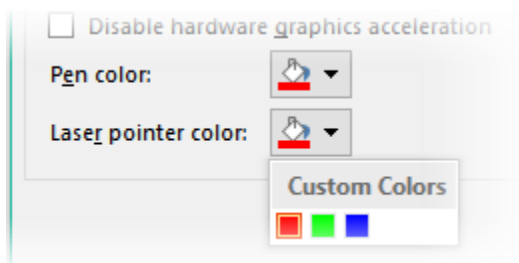
Recording the laser pointer

It is possible to record the entire presentation along with your voice. This is the simplest way of creating reusable presentations as training content. The Laser Pointer also gets recorded along with the narration. Use of laser pointer makes the recorded presentation easier to follow and keeps the attention of the viewer glued to the screen.

To create a reusable presentation while you are presenting live, choose **Record Slide Show** option from the Slide Show tab. Start recording from the first slide. Make sure that you choose the laser pointer option. (Both these checkboxes are ON by default).

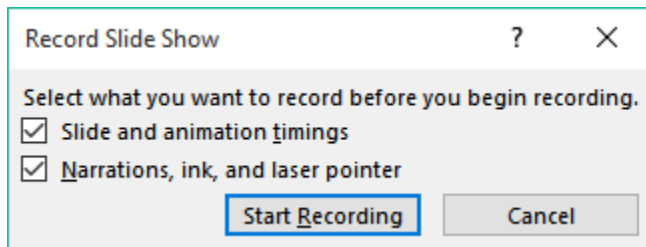It is a good idea to test the microphone of the laptop beforehand. If you are using a desktop PC, there may not be a microphone at all. You will need to attach an external microphone.

Now deliver the presentation as usual. Stop talking few seconds before and after changing a slide. Use the laser pointer as required. When you finish the presentation, save it.

Run the presentation again. Notice that it has now become a self-running presentation with your audio integrated. The slides will change automatically, animations will be synchronized and the laser pointer will be shown exactly as you used it.
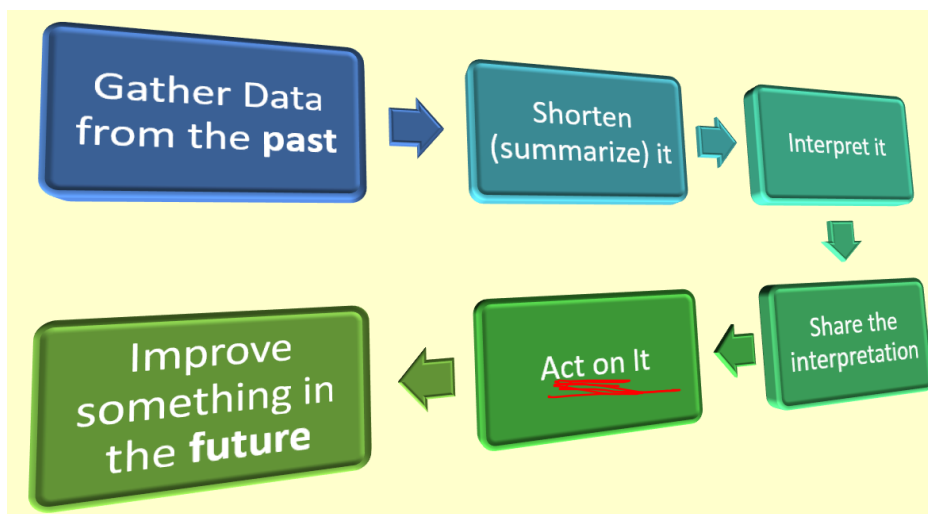
Here is a detailed article about this great feature:
Creating reusable, narrated training content using PowerPoint

Annotation while presenting

Laser Pointer is transient. It does not leave a trace. It is good for pointing at things temporarily. But what if you want to highlight something or draw on top of the slide? No problem. That is also possible. Just press Ctrl P (change the mouse pointer to Pen) during a PowerPoint presentation. The default color is red, but you can right click to change into any color you want. You can also change the default pen color from the Slide Show Setup Dialog.

Once in Pen mode, you can draw anything you like. Just drag the mouse with left button pressed down. Of course, the drawing will not be precise. But even then it is quite useful. For example, you can strike out items in Agenda which are finished or encircle important steps/ concepts.

You can erase all the annotation by pressing the E key.

If you have drawn too many things and want to erase them one by one, press Ctrl E. Try it out. It is very nice.

What if you don't erase this annotation and move to the next slide? Nothing to worry. PowerPoint keeps the annotations intact. You can come back to the slide and revisit the annotations if you like.

When you finish the presentation, PowerPoint will ask you if you want to keep or discard the animations. If you choose to keep, the annotations become a part of those slides. This way, you can just copy paste the relevant slides and share those with the audience. No need for the audience to draw what happened on the whiteboard on their notepads manually.

There is a problem though. If you use the same presentation again, the annotations will be seen on the slide. You may not want that to happen. But now you are in trouble because the annotations cannot be erased using the E key. But don't worry. Microsoft has thought of that as well. Just press CTRL M – it will hide only the annotations. Amazing. Is it not?

Did you know you can draw Tables in Word?

Ever tried to create a complex table like this? You can imagine how painful this is. Lots of manual selection and Merge/ Split cells activity is required to get this done. Of course there is a better way.

Name		Mobile No	
Address		Email Id	
		Photo	

Draw a base table and go to **Table Tools** tab – **Layout** and Choose **Eraser**. Now the mouse cursor becomes an eraser. Just drag the mouse across any borders and they simply disappear – exactly what we try to do with Merge Cells.
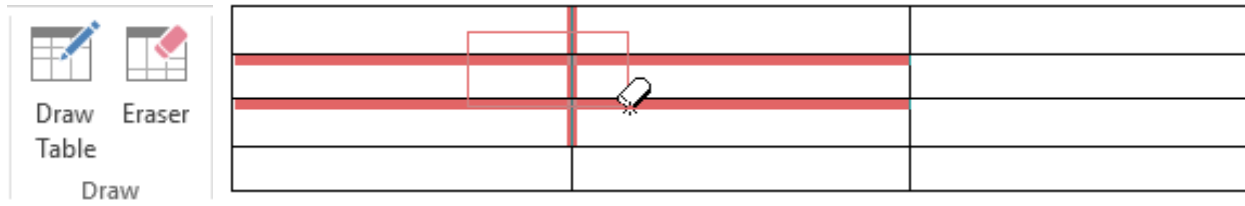
Now you get this. This feature is around for 18 years at least!

Of course, you can use the Draw Table button to turn your cursor into a pencil. Now you can drag the mouse within a table to Split columns. You can even draw tables within tables. In fact, you can start with the Draw tool and create a new table from scratch as well.

Don't believe me? Just stop reading and try it now!

Get all features: Install the mouse driver

All vendors provide you with a mouse driver for all models. When you attach a mouse, Windows uses the general purpose mouse driver. It will provide you with the base usage for navigations, buttons and wheel. But many mice manufacturers are able to provide a lot more features depending upon their specific mouse model. In order to enable these extra features, you must find, download and install the correct mouse drivers. Here are the links for Microsoft and Logitech mice drivers.
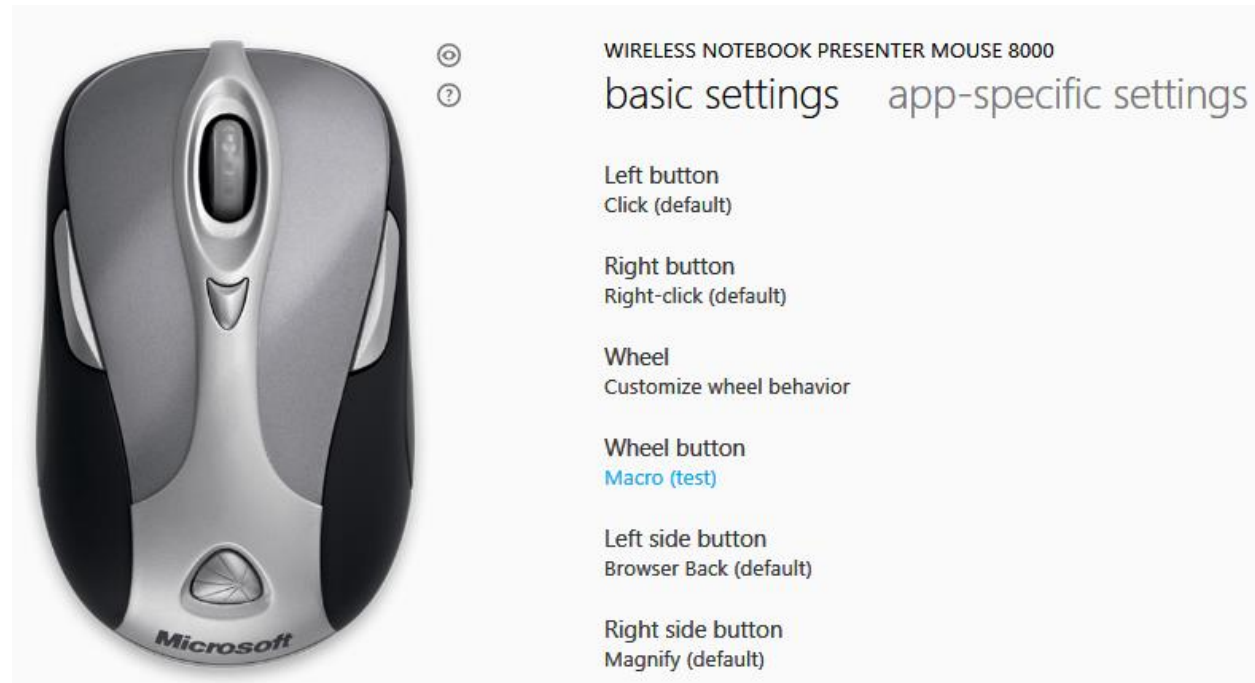
Explore all options from the configuration dialog. These settings do not appear in Control Panel – Mouse settings. You will need to start the relevant product specific settings.

Customizing mouse button actions

If you have additional buttons (for example, mouse wheel is also a clickable button), then you can customize the action. Go to Control Panel – Mouse – Customize and you will be surprised to see so many options. Here I am going to explain how to configure Microsoft mouse.

The configuration options for mice will differ for each vendor. Some of the features explained below may not be available with certain vendors or certain mouse types.

Here is what can be done using a button click. Usually we leave the left and right button untouched. Wheel click and extra buttons are configurable.

Back/ Forward	Instant viewer	Gaming toggle
Next window/ Previous	Alt	Magnifier
Window	Shift or Ctrl keys	Show / Hide Desktop
Autoscroll	New	Zoom in / out
Cut	Open	Precision booster
copy or paste	Close documents	Start ... a program
Undo / Redo	Double click	Keystroke...
Digital Ink On/Off	Exit program	

Instant Viewer

I find the Instant Viewer to be very good. This shows you all open applications on the desktop – allowing you to choose the desired one quickly. This is faster than Alt – Tab or Taskbar. The equivalent keyboard shortcut is Windows Key and Tab Key (in Windows 10).

For Microsoft mouse devices, start the Mouse and Keyboard Center. Choose the button you want to customize. In this case I am using Wheel Click button. Choose **View All Commands,** and then select Instant Viewer option.
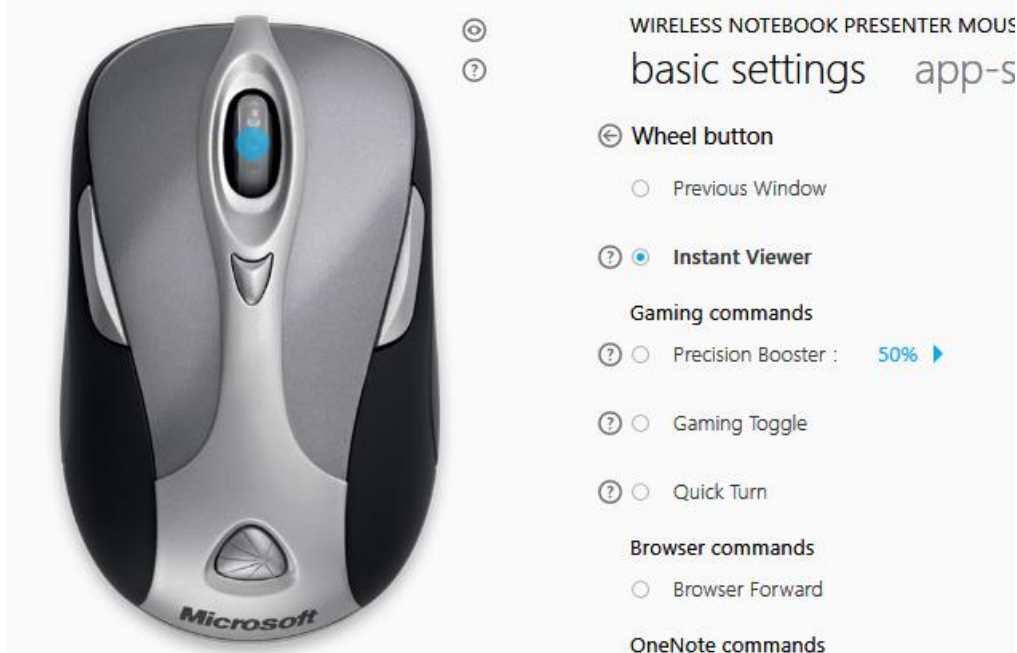
Now, clicking the wheel button will open Instant Viewer which shows all open program thumbnails. You can then choose the application or document you want to navigate to.
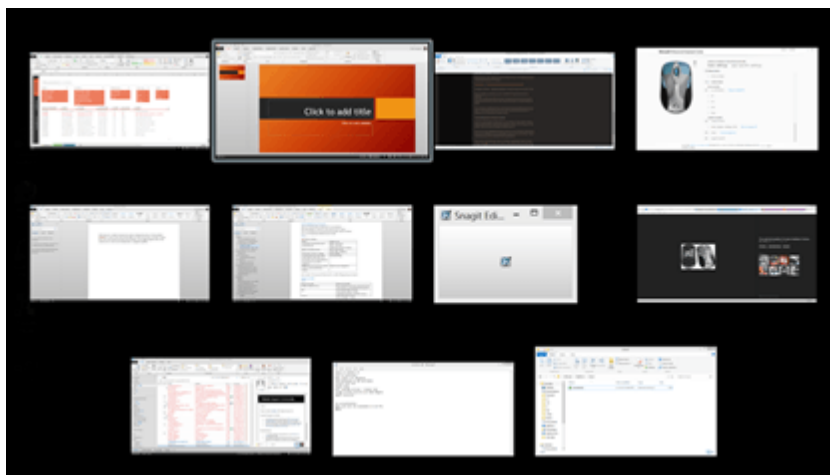
Magnifier

Magnifier is used for enlarging part of the screen for easier viewing and interaction. Usually magnifier is invoked using a keyboard shortcut. However, a mouse with extra buttons can be configured to magnify on a button click. Why use a magnifier?

For users with weak eyesight

Magnifier was originally designed for users with eyesight problems. You can use it to magnify parts of the screen for easier viewing.

For demonstrating any software which is not a presentation

Many presenters use the magnifier for technical demonstrations. Regular presentations use large font and are visible even from the last row of the audience. However, when you need to demonstrate any software, UI, Code, Dialogs, configuration options, etc…, these elements are never seen properly by the audience. Therefore the full screen Magnifier is a very good tool to map to an extra mouse button.

How to use the magnifier

The shortcut is to press the **Windows key along with the** = **(equal to or plus) key**. You can press **Windows** = multiple times to zoom in with higher and higher magnification levels. To Zoom Out, choose **Windows and minus** key.

Using Magnifier correctly: When you invoke it, the Magnifier window appears on screen. If you try to get rid of it, the window converts into a lens and that lens remains on the screen. This will disturb your presentation.
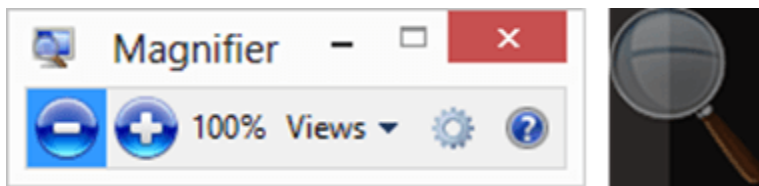
Solution: Click on the lens to show the magnifier window again and click Minimize button on the window. Now that window or the lens will not trouble you.

I map the magnifier to an extra mouse key. This is a very handy way of managing demos of software applications as well as conducting hands-on training programs.

Different views of the magnifier

Magnifier can be used in three different ways. In each case it enlarges things on the screen, but the way it does so is different. Here are the three options. I am showing the same screen with different zoom option. That way you will understand the modality of zoom. These modes have their keyboard shortcuts as well.

Regular Screen without magnifier	Full Screen
Lens	Docked

You will find these articles written by me about how to use Zoom to enhance your presentations.

Gaming

Precision booster, key combinations and Macros can be very useful for gamers. Special gaming mice offer even more sophistication. As mentioned earlier, I am not going into details about mouse usage for gaming in this book. Well, I love gaming. But I am not an expert in it ☹

Program specific button customization

Yes there is more!

For example, in case of Excel you may want wheel button to scroll but in PowerPoint you want that same button to be a Zoom In / Out button. This type of customization is called Application Specific Settings. Explore this for applications you use commonly.

Imagine how much thought has gone into a simple, taken-for-granted thing called mouse! Just to make our lives easier.

Let us customize the wheel click button of Microsoft mouse for PowerPoint so that it runs the magnifier. Go to the Mouse and Keyboard center and choose **App Specific Settings**.

Choose PowerPoint. Now choose the action from the available list. I chose **Magnify** option. That's it.
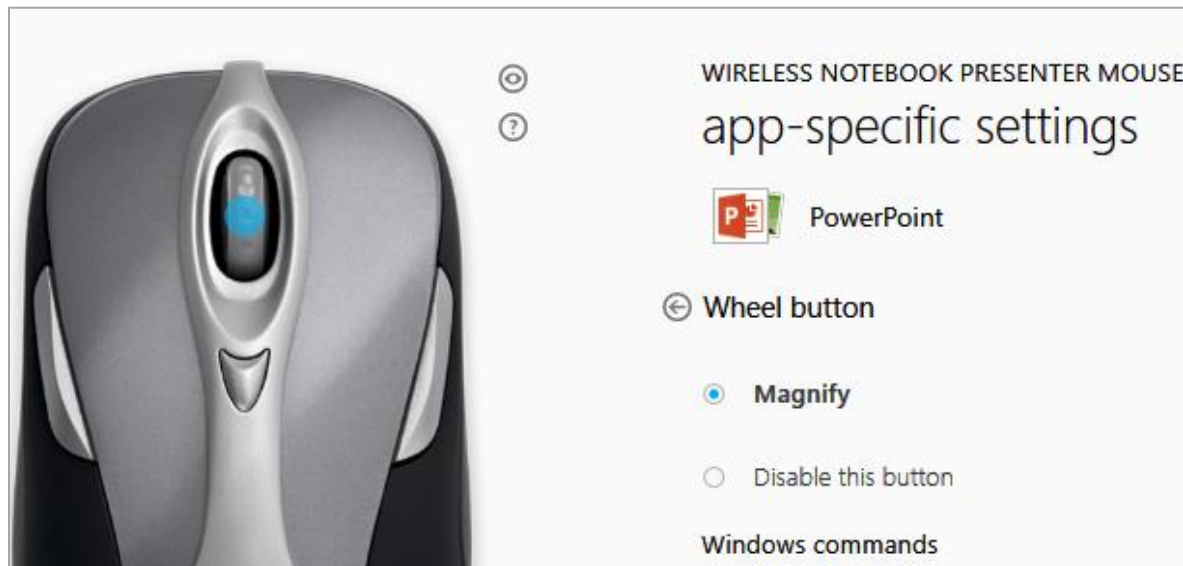
Now onwards, when PowerPoint is running, clicking the mouse wheel will run magnifier. When PowerPoint is not running, it will do the default action as configured.

Using Click Lock

Usually, we select things by pressing the left button at the starting point and dragging the mouse to the destination while the left button is pressed. Sometimes, this is difficult to achieve. May be you want to select a very large area or selection is happening across two monitors. In any case, you are struggling to keep the left button pressed while the navigation is in progress.

That is when the Click Lock comes into picture. Once configured to a spare button on the mouse, just press click at the beginning of the selection and also press the Click Lock button, release the left button and navigate to the destination. Once you reach the destination, left click and then press the Click Lock button again. That's it. Now it selects the area between the beginning and ending point. It does sound confusing. But there is no way to demonstrate it either using screen shots or a video. Just try it out and then you will learn it quickly.

Macros!

Not Office macros – but Mouse Macros. These are typically used by gamers to perform multiple actions quickly. However, potentially any task requiring repetitive sequence of mouse clicks can use macros. Macros can either be created or recorded. Here is a comprehensive article on how to use mouse-related macros by Microsoft. Of course macro feature is mouse vendor specific and requires the relevant driver to be installed.

Using Keyboard along with mouse

Mouse has a limited number of buttons.
But combining it with keyboard keys (Shift, Alt, Ctrl) makes it more versatile and useful.

Ctrl Mouse Drag = Copy

Generally while working with shapes / objects/ files if you press Ctrl key while dragging, it usually means COPY the object. To indicate the copy operation, the mouse cursor typically shows a PLUS sign. If you don't see the plus sign, it means a MOVE operation!

This works with file drag drop as well. The default action is reversed by pressing CTRL key while dragging a file. If you are dragging a file from one folder to another on the SAME drive – the default action is MOVE. Across drives, the default action is COPY. So be careful while pressing CTRL key while dragging files.

Ctrl Drag = RESIZE FROM CENTER

Usually, to increase the size of a picture or shape, you drag from the corner. However, this disturbs the alignment of the picture because it grows in size in the direction you drag. If you press Ctrl key while dragging from any corner, resize happens, but without disturbing the center position.

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This is very useful for resizing pictures after pasting in PowerPoint.
Pasted object is automatically put in the center – usually.
Exception... if you copy an object from one slide and paste it into another slide, it is pasted in the ORIGINAL position – not the center of the slide. Nice touch ... someone thought about our convenience!

Zoom in and out with Ctrl - Scroll Wheel

We have covered this <u>above</u>. Mentioned here for the sake of completeness.

Select a sentence in Word with Ctrl Click

Press Ctrl key and click anywhere in the paragraph to select the SENTENCE – a very smart and useful feature in Word. It does NOT select a line. It understands where a sentence begins and ends.

Discontinuous selection using Ctrl key

To select items (like a shape) we usually click on them. To select text / data, we click and then drag.

But what if we want to some items and skip some items?
That is when CTRL key is useful.

Here is an example:

Click on the first file to select it, then keep pressing CTRL key and click on rest of the files. When you finish selection, release the CTRL key

Similar concept works in Excel if you want to select multiple ranges.

Shift Key

Very useful for selecting many things which are far away from each other.
Windows Explorer – Do you want to select from fifth file to the last file?
Just click the fifth file, then use the scroll bar to move to the last file...

Press SHIFT key .. keep it pressed and then click on the last file
Now release the SHIFT key.

It can also be used with CTRL key to select combination of continuous and discontinuous object selections. Difficult to describe – try it out.

Alt ⌨ Alt key in older versions

In MS Office (up to version 2003) Pressing Alt key makes all menus and visible toolbars customizable (without opening the Tools – Customize dialog)

While pressing ALT key you can drag any menu item and move it to another place. If you want to COPY it, you need to press CTRL key as well.

This feature DOES NOT work from Office 2007 onwards. In newer versions, right click on the desired toolbar button and choose Add To Quick Access Toolbar (see this blog post for details).

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
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Mouse as your teacher!

Now, I will demonstrate a simple method of learning. Usually, learning requires reading help files, books or visiting web sites. With this method, you just need to Right Click with your mouse. Read on and find out how powerful this method is...

Right Click to Learn

The simple mantra – Right Click to learn more

What happens when you right click?

A menu appears – called the Right Click menu.

So what do you do next?

Just read the options from top to bottom.

Think a little about each option.
If you understand what it does – move on.

If something is not clear, try it out.

That's all.

Is that all? Sounds too simple... Well, IT IS simple.

Basically, the Right Click menu is the answer to a question we rarely ask:
"What can I do here" (here being the place you right clicked).

What is special about Right Click options?

Agreed, most of the right click options are available in the Ribbon (or menus on the top). The difference is that the options in ribbon are always available. They are too many to read, decipher and learn. You don't know which option to choose in what context or scenario.

When you right click, all the options you see are GUARANTEED to be useful and relevant in the current context. That way, you get a reassurance that reading and knowing them will help you immediately.

The menu changes …
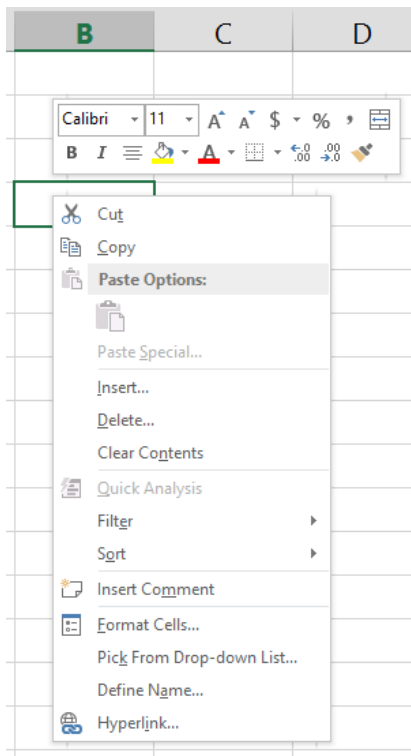
There is no catch. It is just that the menu which appears on right click changes depending upon where you clicked. Why so? Here is an example.

Right clicking in an Excel cell B2 shows this menu.

You might have seen it many times before. But just go through each option very quickly and see how many of them you have missed till date. You will be surprised

Notice the **Delete...** option. If you click it, Excel does not know what exactly you want to delete – row or column. So it will ask for that information from you. That is what the ellipsis... indicate.

Now right click on a column header and compare the menu… See that it has shrunk considerably. Some options like Copy, Paste are still there. But many irrelevant options were removed.

Notice that the **Delete** option is still there but the three dots are gone. Why so? Because Excel now KNOWS that you right clicked on a column. Which tells Excel that if you choose Delete, you want to delete the entire column. There is no question of deleting a Row here. This is what I mean by **context sensitive** menu. The technical name for Right Click menu is actually Context Menu. It is assembled based upon where you right clicked.
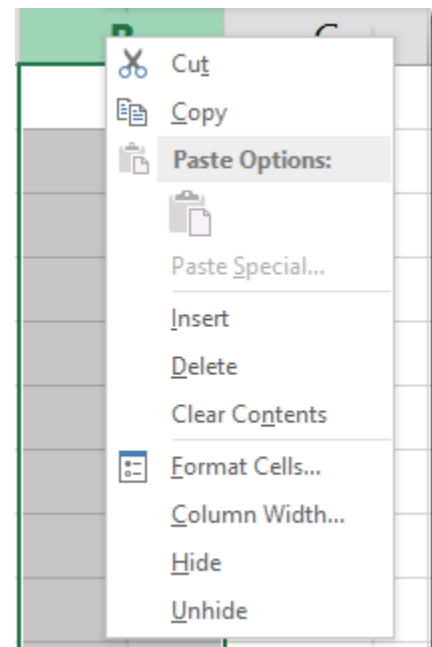
When should you try a right click?

Apart from the standard use of right click – to get to an option you already know – here are more reasons to do so…

When you want to get something done but **don't know how** to do it

When you want to **explore and learn**

When you know the answer but want to check if there is a **better solution** available

Whenever mouse cursor shape changes, it is worth Right Clicking.
Mouse cursor changes when the context changes. And when the context changes the right click menu also changes.

Observe The Mouse Cursor While Dragging

This is very important. It changes to show many useful things during drag drop… Observe it and try to decipher the meaning…

Best example to illustrate this is drag dropping fields into a Pivot Table. This works only with the Classic mode – blue border – pivot tables. When you start dragging a field and move to the Excel

sheet, the cursor is like this.

When you continue to drag it over the Row, Column or Data (Values) area, it changes dynamically. The cursor becomes a miniature pivot table. The area shown in dark blue indicates

where the field will be dropped.

Observe it and you will never make the mistake of dragging a field to the wrong area in Pivot table!

Did you know that someone from Microsoft implement this thoughtful feature 20+ years back?

Drop all Dropdowns

Yes, these are very powerful techniques of learning more, while you are working. First step is to notice them. Next, you must have the courage (initially) and curiosity (which will be rekindled very soon) to look at all the options. Many buttons have a **dual existence**. The upper part does the default job and the lower part has a drop-down which shows more options. Here are two classic examples.
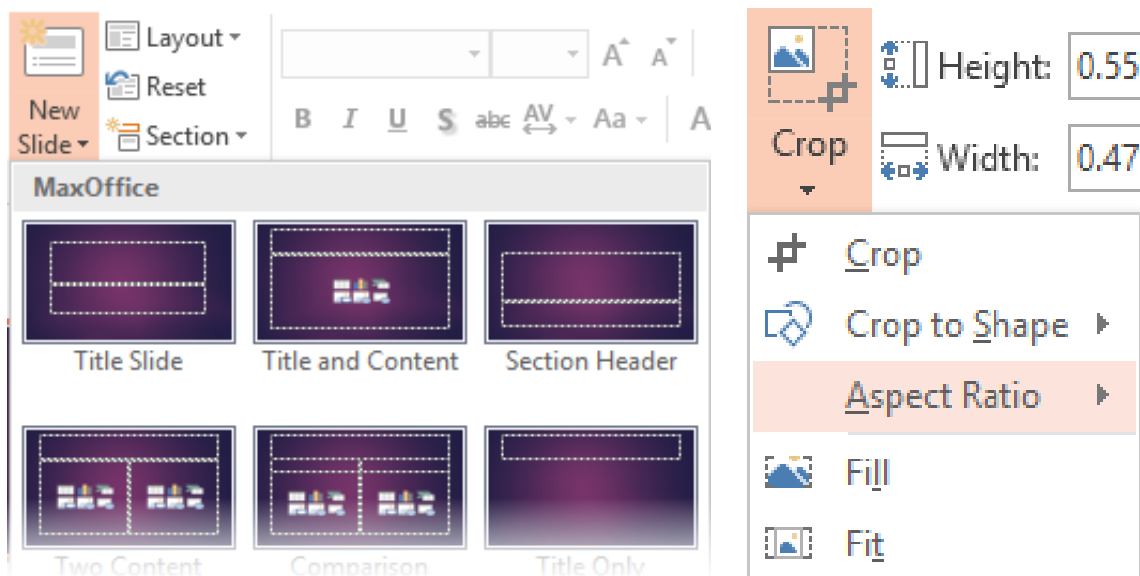
Scroll all scroll bars

No. I don't mean scroll bars associated with document or spreadsheets. We use them alright. But there is more.

Scroll bars which are a part of user interface are ignored by most of us. Dropdowns as well as lists have scroll bars. Scroll bar simply means that there is not enough space available to show all the options. We think that options which are down below are less important. But that is not true.
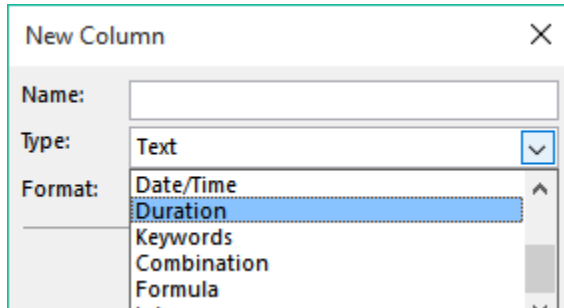
They are just not fitting.

Remember to scroll every scroll bar you see and you will be amazed at the treasures you can find there. For example, the scroll bar of Outlook New Field dialog has few brilliant types of fields like Duration and Formula (yes, Outlook has a formula field).

Here is another useful one in Outlook – the Rules dialog. This shows the actions Outlook can take on a mail. Just scrolling and reading this list will give you ideas about where you can use rules to your advantage.
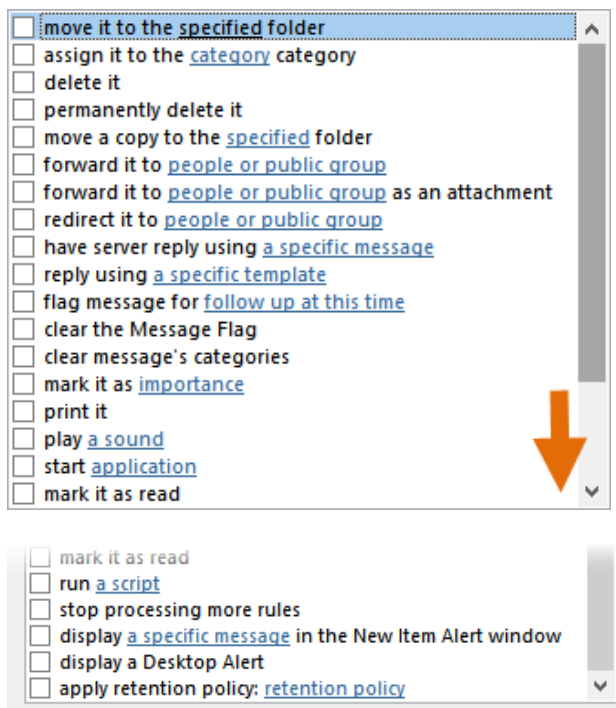
The Art of selection

The need

Selecting text, data or objects is so commonly done that we don't even think how it is ACTUALLY being done. As a result, many methods of selecting things are inefficient. Each time you may waste few seconds, but it adds up. Based upon what I have seen, I feel most of us waste at least 15 minutes a day because we don't use the right method of selecting things.

Selecting using the Mouse

Before you proceed, just remember that pressing **Shift** helps in working with many items at once whereas **Ctrl** helps us work with one item at a time.

Selecting Large Amounts Of Text

Usually we drag the mouse to select text. However, if the text is very lengthy, there is another method available. It is a three-step process.

1. Click where you want to begin the selection.
2. Do not try to highlight the text using the mouse. Simply scroll till you can see the end point of selection.
3. Now press SHIFT key and then CLICK at the end point. Now all the text from begin to end point will be selected.

This is very useful while selecting large chapters in Word or Selecting long tables in Browser. Of course, if you use Styles, you DON'T need to select large blocks of data EVER AGAIN in Word (I will explain some other time).

Selecting Large Blocks Of Data In Excel

The same concept applies to Excel as well. If you have a large block of data, click in the first cell, scroll to the last row and column and then SHIFT-CLICK.

However, in Excel finding the last row itself may require lot of manual scrolling. There is one useful shortcut which can help you. Press **Ctrl** **End** keyboard shortcut.

This takes you to the LAST CELL in Excel. This is the cross section of the last row and last column used in that sheet. If your worksheet contains just one large block of data, you can know the last row by pressing CTRL-END quickly.

However, CTRL A is a faster way of selecting large amount of data in Excel. Click anywhere inside the data block and type CTRL A.

Selecting multiple items in a list

This is also done in a similar way. Click in the beginning, move to end and SHIFT-CLICK.
If you want to remove some selected items, use CTRL-CLICK.

Selecting objects

You need a different approach to select multiple drawing objects, shapes, images etc in PowerPoint (and other programs).

To select a single object, just click on it.

To choose and select multiple objects one by one, use CTRL-CLICK. You can also use CTRL-CLICK to UNSELECT an object which is already selected.

To select multiple objects in one action, draw a large rectangle AROUND the objects. Any objects that are completely inside the rectangle will be selected.
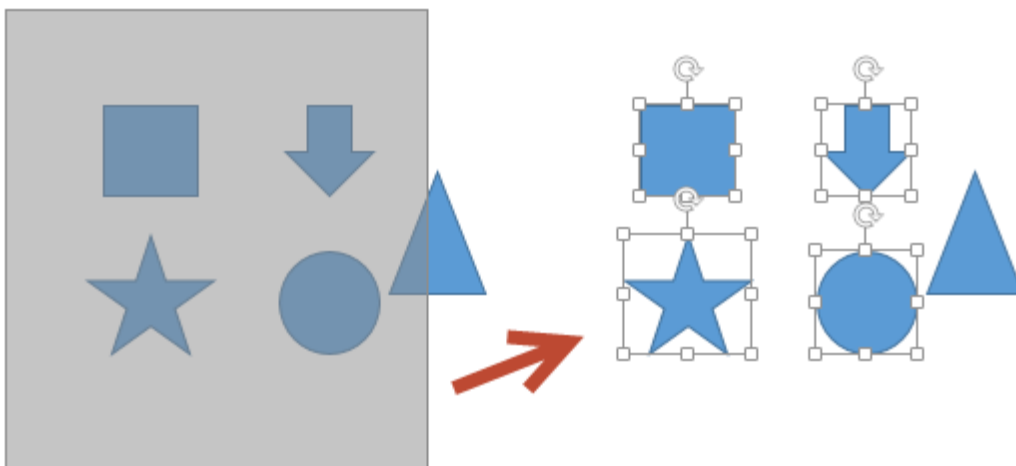
Selecting All pictures in Excel

What if we want to select all images in an Excel worksheet? Selecting all objects using the mouse may not be practically possible in Excel. The sheet has a very large area and therefore none of the methods of selecting items quickly using the mouse work here.

Ctrl A selects the current region or the entire sheet in Excel. Pictures, textboxes and charts are sort of a separate layer. They are not a part of the underlying Excel sheet. Therefore, Ctrl A just ignores them.

All that you need to do is to select one picture (or object) using the mouse. We just changed the context from worksheet to an object. Now use CTRL A and it will immediately select all objects across the sheet.

Ctrl A = Select All – not just in Word

All of us know that pressing CTRL A selects the whole document in Word. Unfortunately, we never try it elsewhere. The idea is simple. Wherever there is a logical need for selecting everything in a given context – try CTRL A

Excel Table: If cursor is inside a table CTRL A selects the data portion. Another CTRL A selects the header row as well. Another CTRL A selects the whole sheet. The active cell always remains the same. (will explain this in another article)

Excel data: CTRL A selects a contiguous block. Another CTRL A selects whole sheet.

Excel Find - Search Results: CTRL A selects all results. Ctrl Click can be used for unselecting individual items.

In a Slide: Selects all objects. Ctrl Click for exceptions.

CTRL A does NOT work with SmartArt because it is not just a collection of objects. SmartArt will require you to use Shift Click for multiple selection needs. Furthermore, commands like Group are not available in SmartArt. If you want full control over individual shape in a SmartArt, go to Design tab and choose Convert to Shapes. Ungroup them to get individual shapes – with full flexibility. Of course, you will lose the SmartArt in the process. But that is usually an acceptable compromise in order to get full control over constituent shapes.

Select beginning, scroll to end, Shift Click

This is useful for very long lists, long data, long portions of text, web pages etc.

Start the selection at the beginning. But don't try to drag the mouse all the way to the end, because it is very cumbersome. Let some small portion in the beginning be selected.

Now scroll to the end point without clicking anywhere inside the document. Now press SHIFT key and click at the end point. The entire intervening area from beginning to end will be selected.

Go To in Excel

If you know the beginning and ending of the range, you can choose F5 (Go To) and type the range like A1:D1000 and click ok.

If you have a name for the range or the table, you can type the name itself.

You can open the dropdown near the name box to move to and highlight any named item.
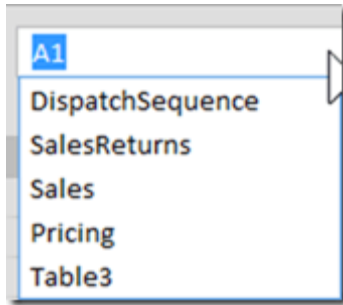
Triple Click

Double click selects a word. Triple click selects a paragraph in Word. Did you know that?

Shift is the selection key

If you are moving from place A to place B in the document by any method – page down, scroll, mouse scroll , whatever… and if the shift key is pressed, then it selects things.

Try this out to understand what I mean.

End mode in Excel

This can help you select things more quickly. The idea is to move from initial position to the final position in either up, down, right or left direction. This can be done very easily by learning about an unknown feature of Excel – called **End Mode**. This does not require the mouse, but I felt it is important to mention it here so that you learn this efficient alternative.

Make sure you have a block of data to try this out.

	B	C	D	E	
2	45	70	59	26	
3	81	61	55	99	
4	89	61	69	71	
5	14	29	45	43	
6	47	96	86	68	
7	91	28	59	56	
8	88	81	35	46	
9	32	89	77	39	
10					

Look at the status bar. It should show **Ready.** Now press and release the **END key**. Now status bar shows **END mode**.

What does this mean? Excel now knows that you want to move the selection from the current place to the end. But it still does not know end in which direction. So it is waiting for you to clarify that. That is called End Mode.

Now you are supposed to guide Excel by just pressing and releasing up, down, right or left key. Then it will move to the end in that direction.

Of course if Shift key was pressed all along then it will SELECT from original to final position.

So if you want to select from current position (C4) to the end of the row, the exact sequence would be like this.

1.   Keep pressing SHIFT key
2.   Press and release End key
3.   Notice that End mode is active in the status bar
4.   Press and release Right arrow key
5.   Now C4 to end of the row will be selected
6.   Now release the SHIFT key

Selecting within Word tables

Lot of convenient methods of selection are available using mouse. The best way is to create a table. Move the mouse cursor slowly and whenever it changes try a single or double click.

One of the most useful ability is to be able to choose the contents of an entire table cell in one click. Just move to the border of the column and observe the mouse cursor while moving it back and forth (left and right). You will notice that if the cursor is on the column border, it shows resizing cursor. If inside the text it shows the editing cursor. However in between these two cursor types, it changes to a solid black, tilted arrow. At this point of time, a single click will select the contents of the entire cell.

Reading is easier, too, in the new Reading view. You can collapse parts of the document and focus on the text you want.	Reading is easier, too, in the new Reading view. You can collapse parts of the document and focus on the text you want.	Reading is easier, too, in the new Reading view. You can collapse parts of the document and focus on the text you want.

This is very useful whenever you have large table cells, often cutting across multiple pages.

Drawing with the mouse

Mouse is designed primarily for pointing, clicking and dragging. It is NOT designed for precise drawing. If you really want precise and smooth strokes, look for a stylus or a separate drawing surface like Wacom.

Adding Ink

In Word, Excel and PowerPoint, if you draw rough shapes, those can be converted to more perfect looking shapes. To enable this feature, go to Review tab and choose **Start Inking**. (This button is available on Touch enabled devices running Office 2013 onwards)
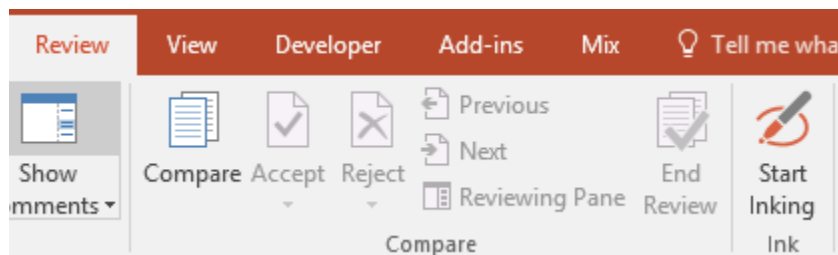
Now a Drawing toolbar appears. Choose a color and type of pen.

Now you can draw using the mouse. The shapes you draw will not be perfect.

If you choose the **Convert to Shapes** button, and then draw an approximate shape, it will be coneverted to a more accurate shape automatically. Here is how...

The right shape was also drawn approximately like a circle. But the **Convert to Shapes** button was on.

OneNote handwriting recognition

OneNote is a special tool. Even if you scribble using a mouse, it can recognize it as text. Of course, you have to write horizontally and the text has to be legible. Otherwise, it will make mistakes.

Even without converting to text, you can use CTRL F (Find) to search for words which are handwritten. However, the conversion and search feature is not perfect. If you use a stylus, it is much more accurate.
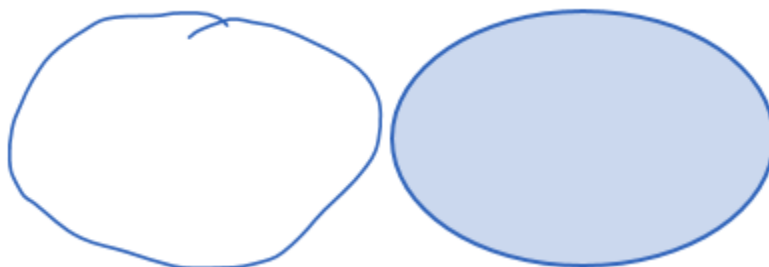
Remove Background in Picture Tools

Earlier, we had to use PhotoShop or a similar tool to remove unwanted areas of a picture. Since Office 2010, this facility was added across all Office tools (Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook). All that you need to do is to select the picture and choose **Remove Background** from the Picture Tools ribbon.

It does take a guess of what can be removed and marks it in magenta color. Of course, PowerPoint is not capable of intelligently understanding what you want to keep or remove. Therefore, it asks for your help. It shows a smaller rectangle inside the image. You need to resize the rectangle so that the area of your interest (the area which you want to keep) fits as tightly as possible within this rectangle. Now PowerPoint will think again and readjust the area to be removed.

This is usually enough to extract what you want. But in some cases, we need to help PowerPoint further by showing what to keep and what to remove. In the example below, PowerPoint has removed some portion of the picture which I want to keep. The area is too difficult to identify by drawing its exact outline using a mouse. But you don't need to draw the precise shape. Just draw a line in the area you want to keep and it automatically figures out what you really want. Very smart!
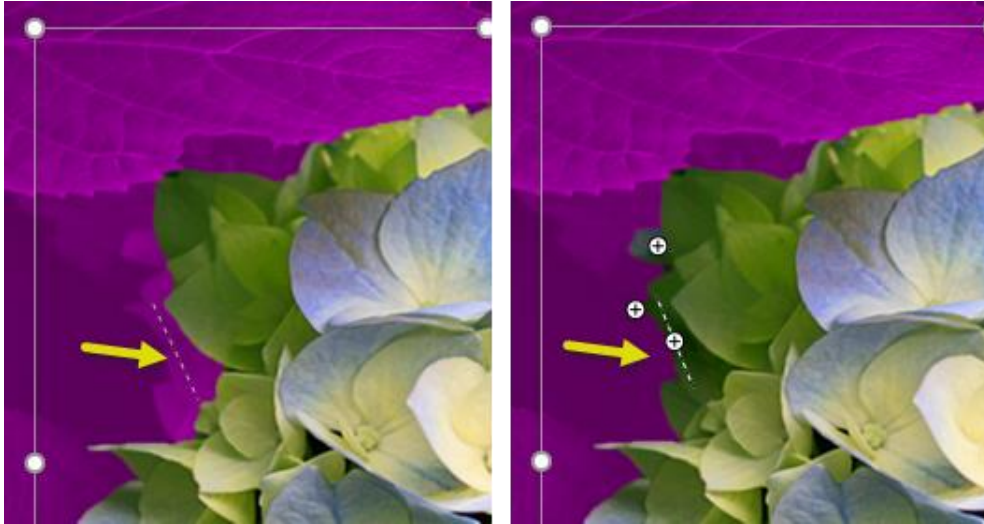
Read more about this unbelievably useful feature.

Using a Trackball

Trackball has always been available as an alternative to the mouse. It is more ergonomic, because the entire hand does not need to move. Only the thumb is used for moving the trackball.

Technically, the wrist is spared but the stress on the thumb increases.

It looks big but it works for kids and ladies as well. It sits in one place. Therefore, the size does not really matter. You must try it to understand its benefits. Just looking at it will put you off.

I find it useful while working in places which are shaky or are narrow. **I use it in the car as well as in the flight.** I am sure you can think of more scenarios where it is useful.

I use the Logitech Wireless Trackball M570. It has amazing battery life. One AA battery has lasted me more than 8 months. It shows that the same battery will last for over

Having said that, all the functionality we have discussed so far regarding the mouse is applicable to the trackball as well.

Using Trackball along with Mouse

I have tried that as well. It may sound like an overkill. But it is not.

First of all, it works! Microsoft Mouse and Logitec Trackball. What is the benefit? Freedom of choice. Trackball can be used for gross movement and mouse for precision activities.

I use mouse for activities which require movement precision like drag-drop, remove background, live preview and trackball for navigational tasks. Both work together flawlessly. If you want to know more, please read the article I wrote about this combo usage.

Touch Mice

This is the latest breed of mice which have a touch sensitive surface. In addition to the regular buttons and scrolling, these devices understand gestures (like trackpad, and more). These give you many more convenient ways of doing things like zoom, next/ previous, switch applications and so on.

Again, all the capabilities we have discussed so far is applicable to this type of mouse as well.

Mouse, Touch Screen and Stylus

I use a Surface Pro 4. This allows me to mix four input methods: Keyboard, Mouse, Touch and Stylus. That may sound excessive. But trust me, each one of them has their own advantages.

The skill lies in using them to your own advantage. Here are the strengths of each type of input method. Once you get used to it, you will love the flexibility and the ease with which you can do what you want in the most efficient manner.

Input Method	Most suited for ...
Keyboard	Typing, Keyboard shortcuts for common commands, Quick Selection using shortcuts
Mouse	Navigation, Drag-Drop, Complex Selection, Quick Scrolling, simple drawing, PowerPoint laser pointer
Touch	Zoom In/Out (pinch zoom), Panning, Navigation in tablet mode (where keyboard and mouse are not available), On-Screen Reading (Word Reading View)
Stylus	Handwriting- especially with OneNote, Annotation, Pen strokes during a presentation, Handwritten comments in Word, Drawing, Sketching, Painting

Choosing the right mouse type

There are too many types and price ranges available. In most cases, we just buy the cheapest one. In a corporate environment, it is usually a bulk purchase. Ideally, the type of work you perform should help you choose the right type of mouse.

For most activities using Windows and Office, any regular mouse with two buttons and a wheel will do. Both Wired and Wireless. For desktop use, wireless is better. Gamers, on the other hand, prefer wired ones because they need very fast response time.

Wireless ones are available in two categories: RF and Bluetooth. Currently Bluetooth is preferred. The advantage of Bluetooth variety is that it can also be used with other Bluetooth devices like tablets and mobile phones which support mouse as a pointing device.

If you are into gaming, it is a different ball game! There is a wide variety to choose from with different ergonomic designs, configurable weights, extra buttons and so on. For gaming, a large mouse pad is also important.

Which mouse do I use?

This is the one I use, <u>Microsoft Notebook Presenter Mouse 8000</u>. In my opinion, the best mouse ever created (across vendors, not just Microsoft). This one is Bluetooth, has a tilt wheel (for horizontal scrolling, very good for Excel), Zoom button, PowerPoint draw button.

But that is just the beginning. When you turn it around, it becomes a presenter...

It has next / previous slide buttons, Volume Up and Down buttons, and a built-in laser pointer.

It also has a Play/ Pause button (works only with Windows Media Player). This is very convenient if you are watching movies with the laptop connected to the TV. Usually, we sit far away from the laptop. That is when this play pause button is very useful.

Unfortunately, this model is discontinued long back, *but I have my own stock*!

Mouse or Keyboard: Which one to use?

The answer: use both, depending upon what is more convenient at that point of time.

If you are typing text and then you want to highlight it, keyboard shortcuts are preferred.
If you were scrolling and reading a document using mouse wheel and now you want to highlight some part of it, then use mouse because your hand was already holding the mouse.

The key thing is to maintain your flow. If you are busy typing something and then just to click on the OK button you move your hand all the way from keyboard to mouse ... it disturbs your concentration and thought process.

Summary

The humble mouse can be a very powerful tool if you know how to use it. Now you know!

If you like this book, please teach this to your friends, colleagues, subordinates and superiors. I am sure they will be happy as well. Do share your thoughts and feedback on my blog http://efficiency365.com or on using twitter handle @drnitinp. You can also stay up-to-date with my latest posts and videos on Facebook at http://facebook/efficiency365 or Youtube channel (Efficiency 365).

You learnt something more? Want to share it with me and all the readers? Feel free to send the useful scenarios and innovative usage of Mouse on my email id nitin@maxoffice.biz. I will be happy to feature it on my blog with full credit given to you.