

1. Adapting Your Work Environment



Windows 7 allows you the ability to adjust many of the settings according to your own preferences. In the bonus chapters of the book **Windows 7 for Seniors** (ISBN 978 90 5905 126 3) you learned how to set a different background for your desktop and how to select a different screensaver. But you can do much more.

Windows 7 is packed with all sorts of useful functions which will help you work faster. Such as placing shortcuts on your desktop for frequently used programs. By double-clicking the icon, your program will start right away. You can also place these shortcuts on the taskbar. Then you just need one click to open the program.

Furthermore, you can choose to lock the taskbar to keep it permanently in view, or hide it while you are using a program. You can also personalize and adorn your desktop with all sorts of nifty *gadgets*. These are tiny programs that execute specific tasks.

This chapter shows you step-by-step how to adapt your work environment.

In this chapter you will learn how to:

- put shortcuts on the desktop;
- organize, move and delete the icons on the desktop;
- lock the taskbar;
- add shortcuts to the taskbar and how to remove them when desired;
- modify the system tray on the taskbar;
- add programs to the Start menu;
- place gadgets on the desktop.




Please note!

Depending on your computer's settings and the *Windows 7* edition you are using, the windows on your computer may look slightly different from the screenshots in this book. However, this will make no difference to the procedures and operations you are going to learn.

1.1 The Desktop

The *Windows 7* desktop is the first screen you see when you start up your computer and enter the password for your user account (if required).

 **Start up the computer**

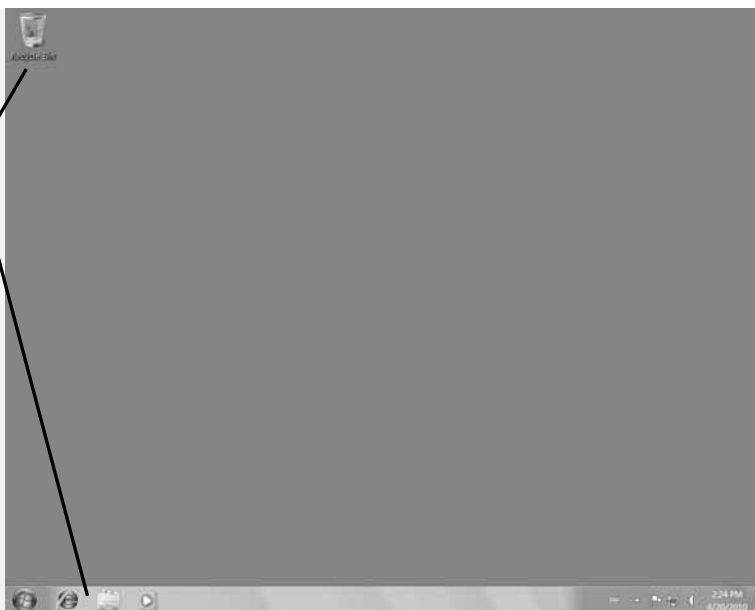
 **If necessary, turn the monitor on**

 **If necessary, enter the password for your user account**

Now you will see the desktop, which contains one or more icons:

At the bottom of the desktop you will see the taskbar:

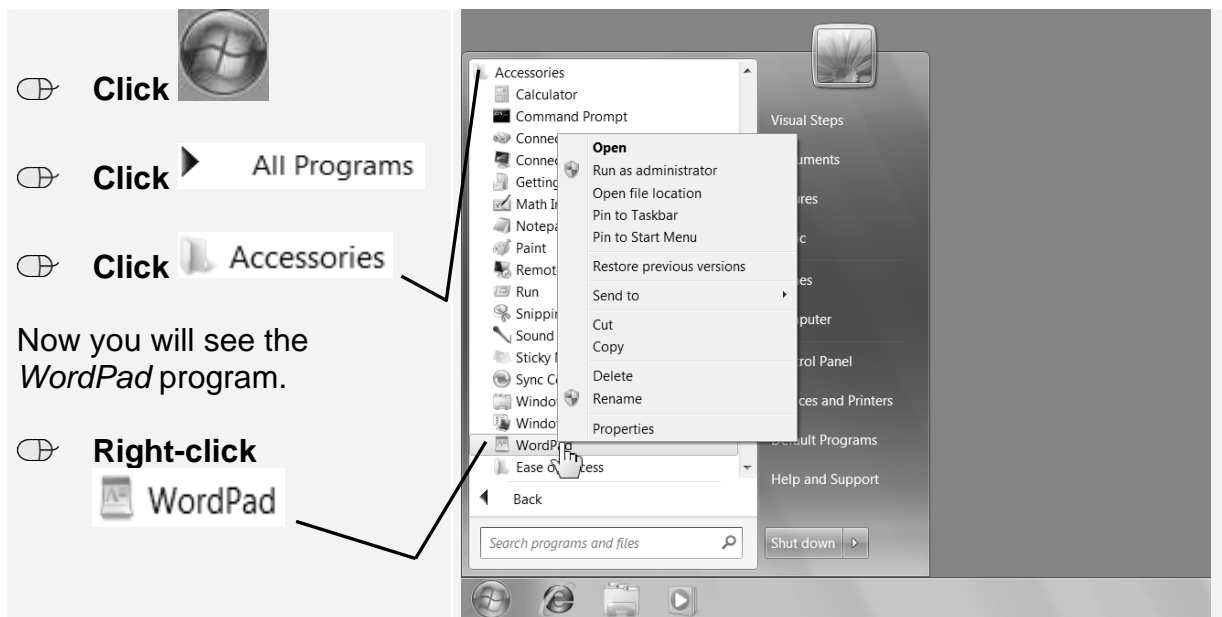
The desktop on your computer may look different. This depends on the settings you have selected for your computer.



1.2 Creating Shortcuts

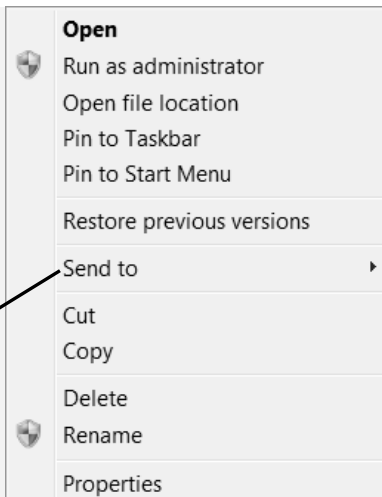
If you frequently use specific programs, it is very useful to create shortcuts for these programs and place them on your desktop. You can then open the programs faster. In *Windows 7* these shortcuts take the shape of icons: these are tiny pictures.

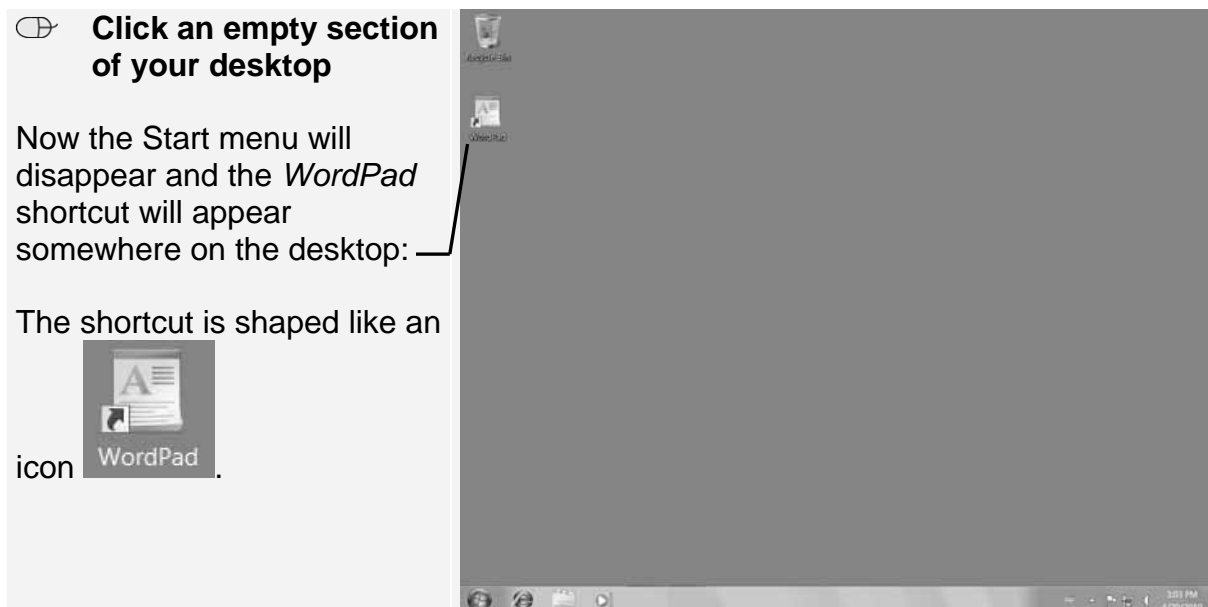
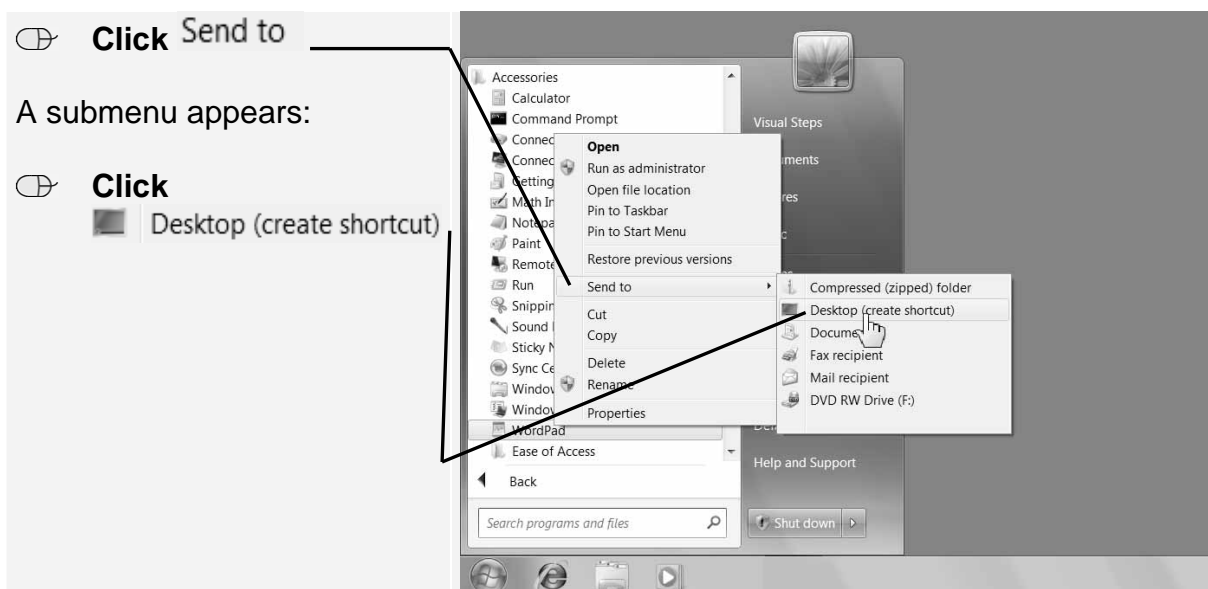
If you want to create a shortcut to a program, you first need to look it up in the program list of the Start menu. To illustrate how to do this, you can create a shortcut to the program *WordPad*. You will find *WordPad* in the *Accessories* folder:




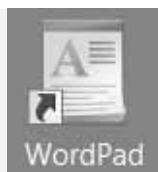
A context menu appears:

Use the **Send to** command to create the shortcut:





The little arrow  at the bottom left of the icon indicates that this is a shortcut.



In the same way you can add other frequently used programs to your desktop. By double-clicking a shortcut's icon you can start the program right away.

1.3 Moving Icons

If your desktop contains a large number of icons, it may look a bit chaotic. You can tidy up your desktop by dragging the icons to different positions. You first need to make sure the *Auto arrange icons* option is disabled. If this option is not disabled, you will not be able to move the icons where you want.

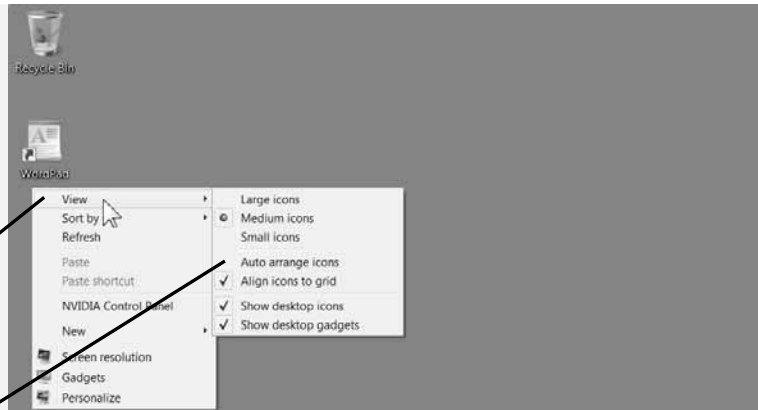
Right-click the desktop

You will see this menu:

Click **View**

Now you will see a submenu:

In this submenu you will see the **Auto arrange icons** option:

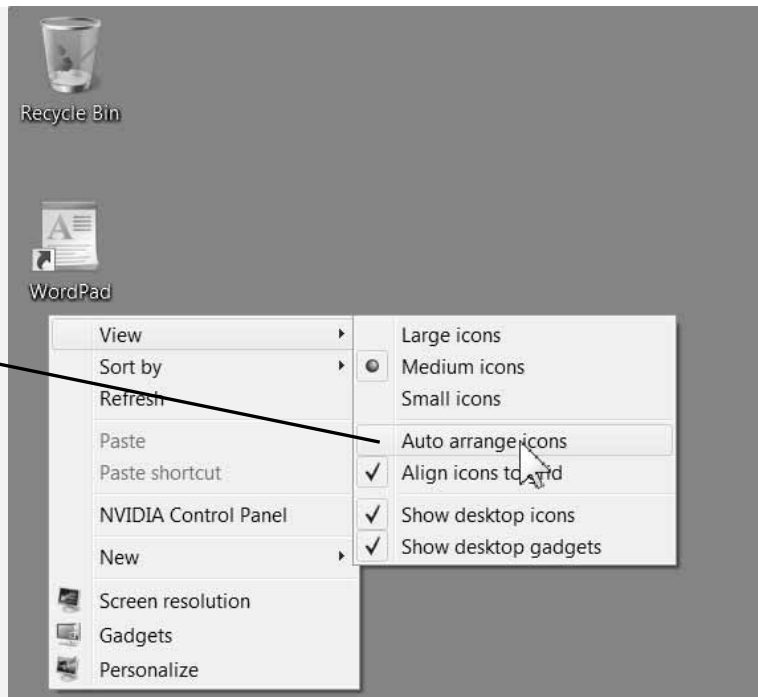


If the **Auto arrange icons** option is checked :

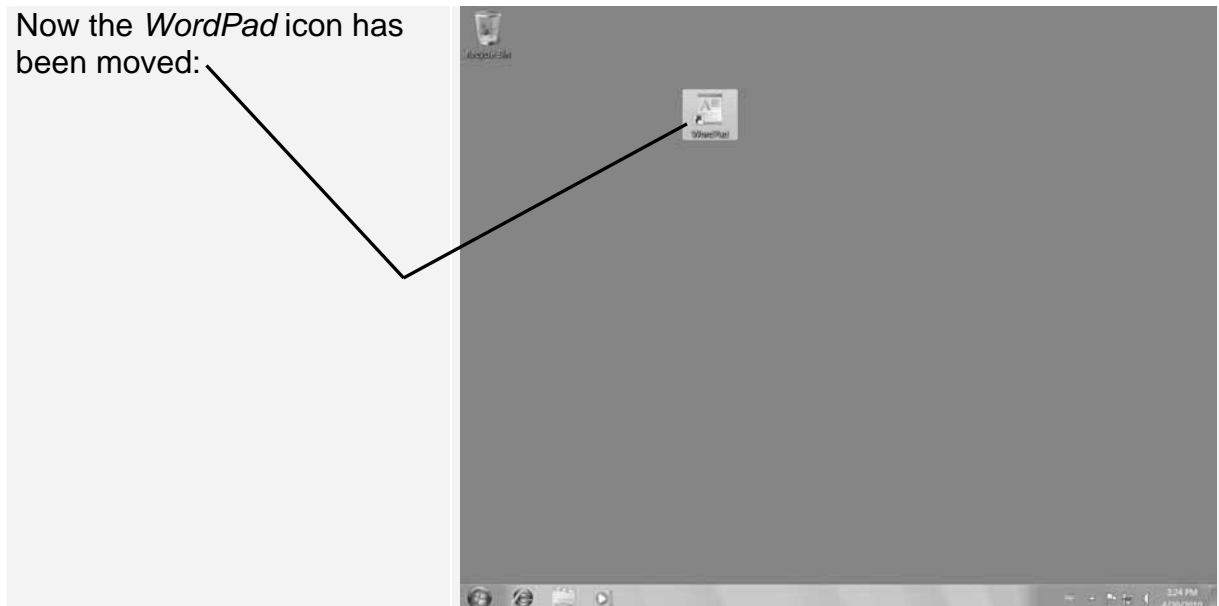
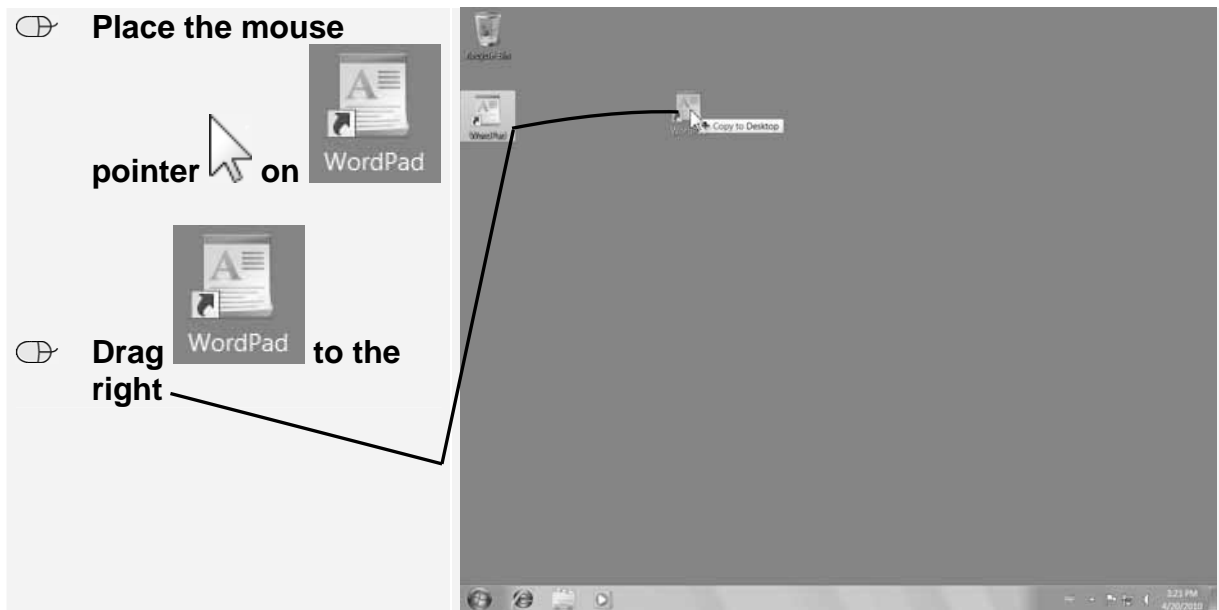
Uncheck the **Auto arrange icons** option

If the option is already unchecked:

Click an empty part of the desktop



Now the *Auto arrange icons* option has been disabled. This means you can freely move the icons anywhere you want to on the desktop.



In this way, you can arrange your icons in specific positions on your desktop and locate them more easily.

1.4 Enabling the Auto Arrange Icons Option

If you prefer to position all your icons in organized rows and columns, you can let *Windows* do that for you with the auto arrange option. Here is how you do that:

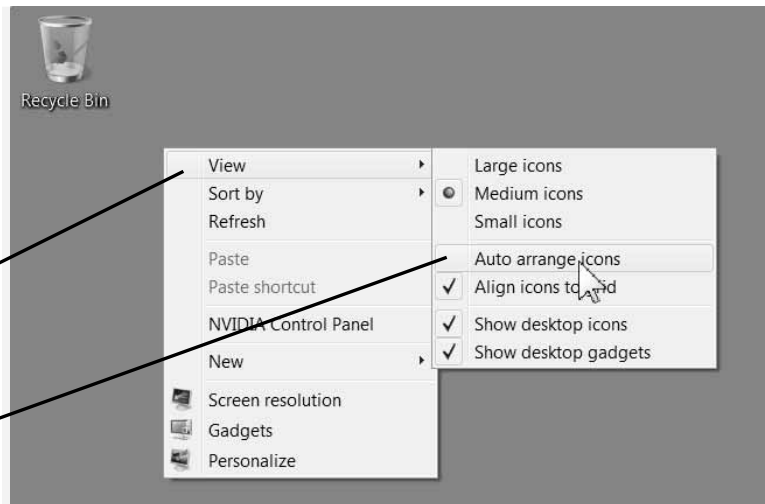
➤ **Right-click an empty area somewhere on the desktop**

A context menu appears:

➤ **Click View**

In the submenu:

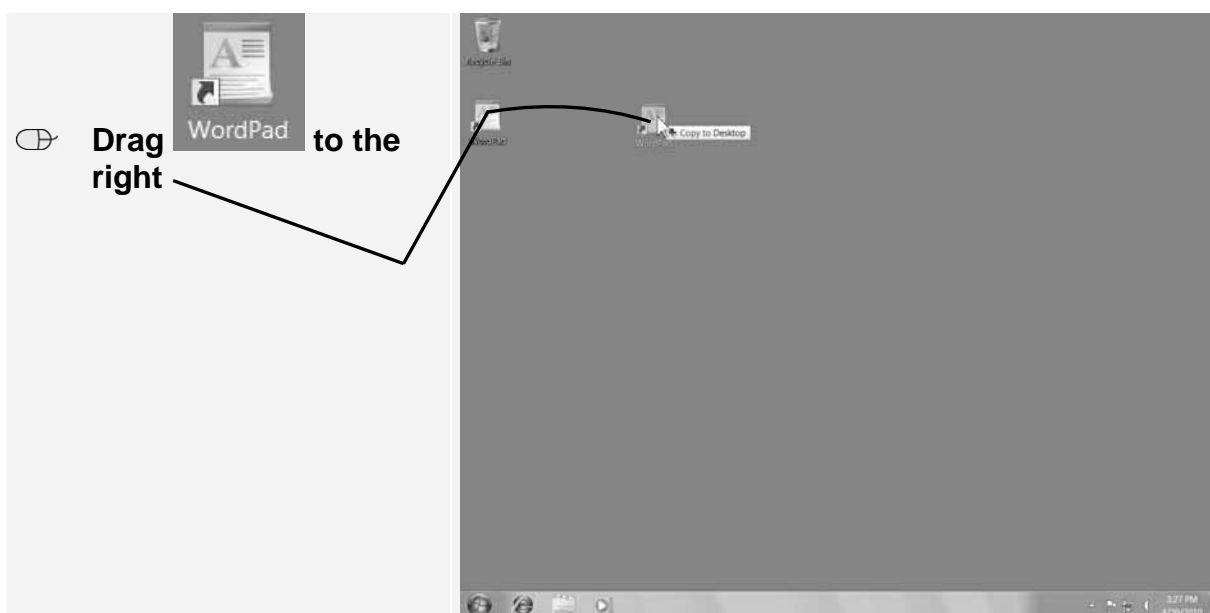
➤ **Click Auto arrange icons**



You will see that the *WordPad* icon is neatly arranged in a column:



If you use this option your icons will always be lined up in rows and columns, even if you move them. Just give it a try:



You will see that the *WordPad* icon automatically reverts to its original position:



Tip

Drag to a different row

If you have enabled the *Auto arrange icons* option, you will still be able to drag an icon to a different row or column. The other icons will adjust themselves accordingly.



Tip

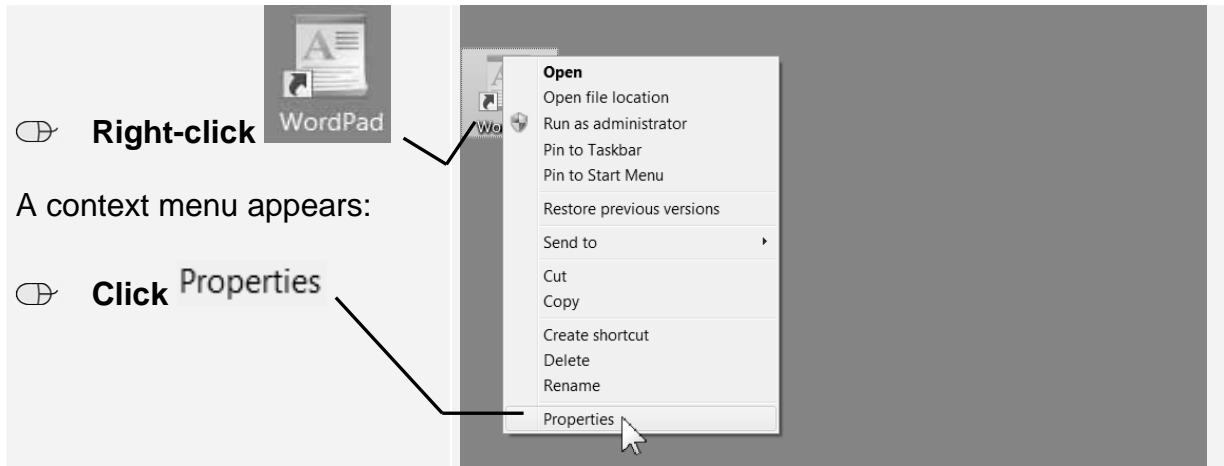
Drag into a folder



You can also place folders on your desktop. If you do have folders on your desktop, be careful not to drag an icon into one of them. The icon will seem to have disappeared, but in fact is now located in the folder.

1.5 Change the Shortcut's Icon

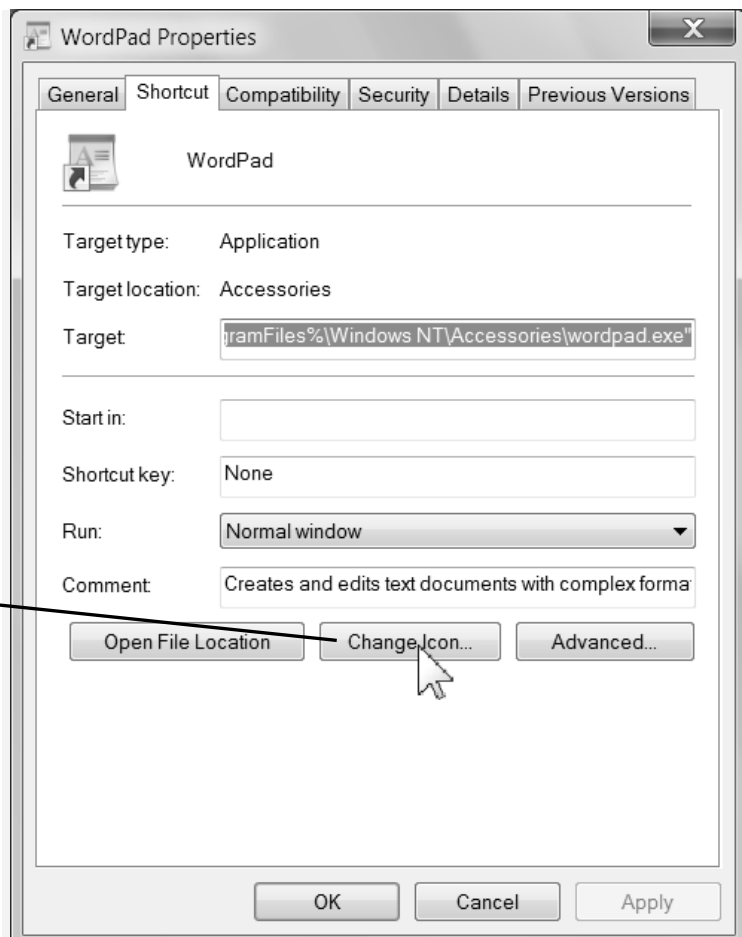
Did you know that you can change the icon's picture for a specific shortcut? This comes in handy when you have icons that look a lot alike.



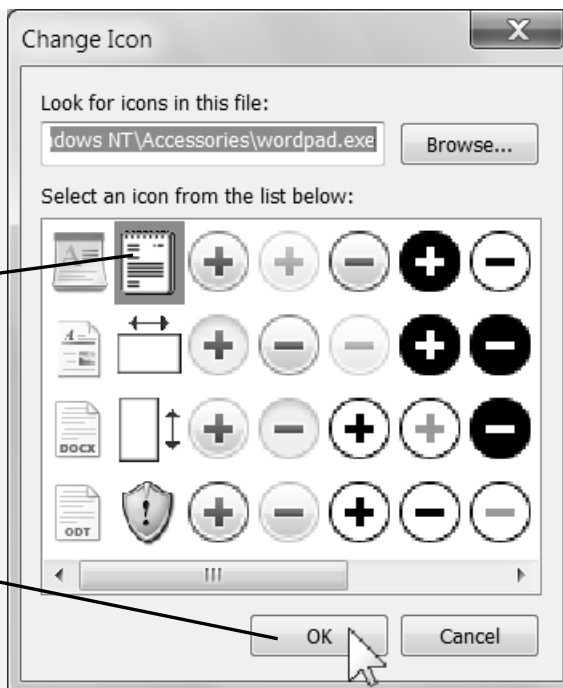
Now you will see the *WordPad Properties* window:

Click

Change Icon...

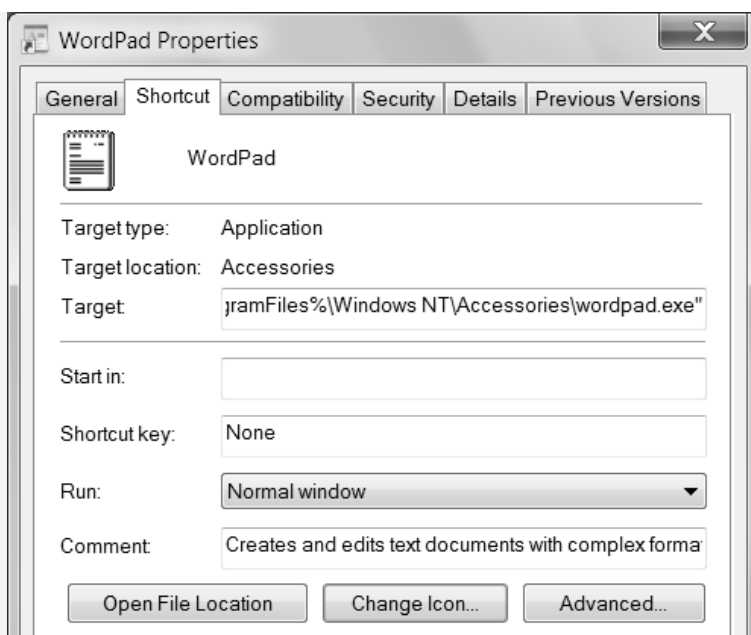


You will see a window containing various icons:



You will return to the *Properties* window:

At the bottom of the window:



The icon's picture has changed:

