

***Windows® XP***  
FOR  
**DUMMIES®**  
2ND EDITION

**by Andy Rathbone**



WILEY

Wiley Publishing, Inc.



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# About the Author

**Andy Rathbone** started geeking around with computers in 1985 when he bought a 26-pound portable CP/M Kaypro 2X. Like other budding nerds, he soon began playing with null-modem adapters, dialing up computer bulletin boards, and working part-time at Radio Shack.

When not playing computer games, he served as editor of the *Daily Aztec* newspaper at San Diego State University. Armed with a comparative literature degree, he began writing features for magazines and local newspapers.

He eventually combined his interests in words and computers, and sold articles to a local computer magazine. During the next few years, he started ghostwriting computer books for more-famous computer authors, as well as writing several hundred articles about computers for various techie publications.

In 1992, Andy and *DOS For Dummies* author/legend Dan Gookin teamed up to write *PCs For Dummies*. Andy subsequently wrote the award-winning *Windows For Dummies* series, *Upgrading & Fixing PCs For Dummies*, *TiVo For Dummies*, and many other *For Dummies* books.

Today, he has more than 15 million copies of his books in print, which have been translated into more than 30 languages.

Andy lives with his most-excellent wife, Tina, and their cat in Southern California. Feel free to drop by his Web site at [www.andyrathbone.com](http://www.andyrathbone.com).





## ***Dedication***

To my wife, parents, sister, and cat.

## ***Author's Acknowledgments***

Special thanks to Dan Gookin, Matt Wagner, Tina Rathbone, Steve Hayes, Becky Huehls, and Kim Darosett. Thanks also to all the folks I never meet in editorial, sales, marketing, proofreading, layout, graphics, and manufacturing who work hard to bring you this book.

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# Introduction

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Welcome to the second edition of *Windows XP For Dummies*, the world's best-selling book about Windows XP! I've expanded the book to explain all the recent patches, tweaks, fixes, and frustrations that Microsoft has added to Windows XP.

This book's popularity probably boils down to this simple fact: Some people want to be Windows whizzes. They love interacting with dialog boxes. Some randomly press keys in the hope of discovering hidden, undocumented features. A few memorize long strings of computer commands while washing their hair.

And you? Well, you're no dummy, that's for sure. But when it comes to Windows and computers, the fascination just isn't there. You want to get your work done, stop, and move on to something more important. You have no intention of changing, and there's nothing wrong with that.

That's where this book comes in handy. Instead of making you a whiz at Windows, it merely dishes out chunks of useful computing information when you need them. Instead of becoming a Windows XP expert, you'll know just enough to get by quickly, cleanly, and with a minimum of pain so that you can move on to the pleasant things in life.

## About This Book

Don't try to read this book in one sitting; there's no need. Instead, treat this book like a dictionary or an encyclopedia. Turn to the page with the information you need and say, "Ah, so that's what they're talking about." Then put down the book and move on.

Don't bother trying to memorize all the Windows XP jargon, such as "Select the menu item from the drop-down list box." Leave that stuff for the computer enthusiasts. In fact, if anything technical comes up in a chapter, a road sign warns you well in advance. Depending on your mood, you can either slow down to read it or speed on around it.

Instead of fancy computer jargon, this book covers subjects like these, all discussed in plain English:

- ✓ Keeping your computer safe and secure
- ✓ Finding, starting, and closing programs
- ✓ Locating the file you saved or downloaded yesterday
- ✓ Setting up a computer for the whole family to use
- ✓ Copying information to and from a CD
- ✓ Working with your digital camera's photos
- ✓ Scanning and printing your work
- ✓ Fixing Windows XP when it's misbehaving

There's nothing to memorize and nothing to learn. Just turn to the right page, read the brief explanation, and get back to work. Unlike other books, this one enables you to bypass the technical hoopla and still get your work done.

## *How to Use This Book*

Something in Windows XP will eventually leave you scratching your head. No other program brings so many buttons, bars, and babble to the screen. When something in Windows XP has you stumped, use this book as a reference. Look for the troublesome topic in this book's table of contents or index. The table of contents lists chapter and section titles and page numbers. The index lists topics and page numbers. Page through the table of contents or index to the spot that deals with that particular bit of computer obscurity, read only what you have to, close the book, and apply what you've read.

If you're feeling spunky and want to learn something, read a little further. You can find a few completely voluntary extra details or some cross-references to check out. There's no pressure, though. You won't be forced to learn anything that you don't want to or that you simply don't have time for.

If you have to type something into the computer, you'll see easy-to-follow bold text like this:

Type **Media Player** in the Search box.

In the preceding example, you type the words *Media Player* and then press the keyboard's Enter key. Typing words into a computer can be confusing, so a description of what you're supposed to type usually follows.



Whenever I describe a message or information that you see on-screen or a cryptic Web address, I present it this way:

`www.vw.com`

This book doesn't wimp out by saying, "For further information, consult your manual." Windows XP doesn't even *come* with a manual. You won't find information about running specific Windows software packages, such as Microsoft Office. Windows XP is complicated enough on its own! Luckily, other *For Dummies* books mercifully explain most popular software packages.

Don't feel abandoned, though. This book covers Windows in plenty of detail for you to get the job done. Plus, if you have questions or comments about *Windows XP For Dummies*, feel free to drop me a line on my Web site at [www.andyrathbone.com](http://www.andyrathbone.com).

Finally, keep in mind that this book is a *reference*. It's not designed to teach you how to use Windows XP like an expert, heaven forbid. Instead, this book dishes out enough bite-sized chunks of information so that you don't *have* to learn Windows.

## And What about You?

Chances are you already own Windows XP or are thinking about upgrading. You know what *you* want to do with your computer. The problem lies in making the *computer* do what you want it to do. You've gotten by one way or another, hopefully with the help of a computer guru — either a friend at the office, somebody down the street, or your fourth-grader.

But if your computer guru isn't around, this book can be a substitute during your times of need. (Keep a doughnut or Pokémon card nearby in case you need a quick bribe.)

## How This Book Is Organized

The information in this book has been well sifted. This newly expanded book contains seven parts, and I divided each part into chapters relating to the part's theme. With an even finer knife, I divided each chapter into short sections to help you figure out a bit of Windows XP's weirdness. Sometimes, you may find what you're looking for in a small, boxed sidebar. Other times, you may need to cruise through an entire section or chapter. It's up to you and the particular task at hand.

Here are the categories (the envelope, please):

## ***Part I: Windows XP Stuff Everybody Thinks You Already Know***

This part dissects Windows XP's backbone: Its annoying Welcome screen and user name buttons, the mammoth Start button menu that hides all your important stuff, and your computer's desktop — the background where all your programs live. It explains how to move windows around, for instance, and click the right buttons at the right time. It explains the Windows XP stuff that everybody thinks that you already know.

## ***Part II: Working with Programs and Files***

Windows XP comes with bunches of free programs. Finding and starting the programs, however, often proves to be a chore. This part of the book shows how to prod programs into action. If an important file or program has vanished from the radar, you discover how to make Windows XP dredge your computer's crowded cupboards and bring it back.

Also, by popular demand, a new chapter explains how to fax, scan, and print your important information.

## ***Part III: Getting Things Done on the Internet***

Turn here for a crash course in today's computing playground, the Internet. This part explains how to send e-mail and globetrot across Web sites. Best yet, an entire chapter explains how to do it all safely, without viruses and annoying pop-up ads. (And with the newly strengthened *firewall*.)

An entire section explains Internet Explorer's new security toolbar and how it stops Web parasites from attaching themselves to your board as you Web surf.

## ***Part IV: Customizing and Upgrading Windows XP***

When Windows XP needs a jolt, fix it by flipping one of the switches hidden in its Control Panel, described here. Another chapter explains computer maintenance you can easily perform yourself, reducing your repair bills. You discover how to share your computer with several people in a family or shared apartment — without letting anybody peek into anybody else's information.

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And when you're ready to add a second computer, head to the networking chapter for quick instructions on linking computers to share an Internet connection as well as files.

## ***Part V: Music, Movies, Memories (And Photos, Too)***

Turn here for information on playing music CDs, digital music, and movies. Buy some cheap CDs and create your own greatest hits CDs from your favorite tunes. (Or just copy a CD so your favorite one doesn't get scratched in the car.)

Digital camera owners should visit the chapter on transferring pictures from your camera to your computer, organizing the pictures, and e-mailing them to friends. Bought a camcorder? Head to the section that explains how to edit out the dopey parts and create a movie the relatives will *enjoy* for a change.

## ***Part VI: Help!***

Although glass doesn't shatter when Windows XP crashes, it still hurts. In this part, you find some soothing salves for the most painful irritations. Plus, you find ways to unleash the Windows XP program's wise team of Troubleshooting Wizards.

Stuck with the problem of moving your files from an old computer to a new one? You'll find help here, as well, with a walkthrough of Windows XP's Files and Settings Transfer Wizard. (If you're ready to upgrade your old version of Windows to Windows XP, check out the appendix, too, which holds complete instructions.)

## ***Part VII: The Part of Tens***

Everybody loves lists (except during tax time). This part contains lists of Windows-related trivia — ten aggravating things about Windows XP (and how to fix them) and ten simple things to keep in mind about Windows. As a bonus (and to help you make conversation with your kids), check out ten things found in the *upcoming* version of Windows.

## Icons Used in This Book

It just takes a glance at Windows XP to notice its *icons*, which are little push-button pictures for starting various programs. The icons in this book fit right in. They're even a little easier to figure out:



Watch out! This signpost warns you that pointless technical information is coming around the bend. Swerve away from this icon to stay safe from awful technical drivel.



This icon alerts you about juicy information that makes computing easier: A tried and true method for keeping the cat from sleeping on top of the monitor, for instance.



Don't forget to remember these important points. (Or at least dog-ear the pages so that you can look them up again a few days later.)



The computer won't explode while you're performing the delicate operations associated with this icon. Still, wearing gloves and proceeding with caution is a good idea.



There's a bad corner in every large neighborhood, and the Internet's global reach makes for some very large bad corners. Look here for information about keeping you, your computer, and your information as safe as possible.

## Where to Go from Here

Now, you're ready for action. Give the pages a quick flip and scan a section or two that you know you'll need later. Please remember, this is *your* book — your weapon against the computer criminals who've inflicted this whole complicated computer concept on you. Please circle any paragraphs you find useful, highlight key concepts, add your own sticky notes, and doodle in the margins next to the complicated stuff.



The more you mark up your book, the easier it will be for you to find all the good stuff again.

# Part I

# Windows XP Stuff Everybody Thinks You Already Know

**The 5<sup>th</sup> Wave** By Rich Tennant

OF THE MANY INSTALLATION SCENARIOS,  
THE MOST DIFFICULT IS INSTALLING  
WINDOWS XP SERVICE PACK 2 ON A  
PENTIUM 4 IN A HERD OF RESTLESS  
CAPE BUFFALOS

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## *In this part . . .*

**M**ost people are dragged into Windows XP without a choice. Their new computers probably came with Windows XP already installed. Or maybe you have Windows XP at the office, where everyone has to learn it except for the boss, who doesn't have a computer. Or perhaps your favorite program's latest version requires Windows XP, so you've had to upgrade.

Whatever your situation, this part gives a refresher on Windows XP basics and buzzwords like dragging and dropping, cutting and pasting, and tugging at mischievous toolbars.

And if you're completely new to computers, the first chapter answers that question you've been afraid to ask around the lunchroom: "Just how do I *use* this thing, anyway?"