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Portal > Knowledgebase > General Troubleshooting + Tips > Tips - Windows > How can I create a shortcut on the Desktop in Windows?

How can I create a shortcut on the Desktop in Windows?

Customer Service - 2019-09-21 - in Tips - Windows

In Windows, it is generally possible to create a shortcut (to a file, folder, or program) on the Desktop by using a contextual menu item. With a shortcut, you can specify a link (in Windows Explorer) to an original or target file (or folder, or program file)--any time you double-click the link, the original file (or target file) should open.

This knowledge base article deals specifically with saving a shortcut to the Desktop. For example, you could use the instructions provided here to create a link on the Desktop to a program file (such as Contour or Dssktop Poet).

To create a shortcut on the Windows desktop, follow these steps:

1. **Right-click** on the file or folder you would like to create a shortcut to.
2. From the contextual menu, **select Send to > Desktop (Create Shortcut)**.

Clicking Send to > Desktop (Create Shortcut) should create a new shortcut on the Desktop, to the item you right-clicked on in step 1.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a shortcut?

A shortcut is a reference to another file or folder on your computer. Normally it is possible to open a file or folder (or launch a program) in Windows Explorer by double-clicking the File; with a shortcut, you can store a file in one location (such as within your Documents folder) and a reference to the same file in another location (like your Desktop).

To illustrate, a shortcut is sort-of like mail forwarding from the Postal Service: when you move (change your physical address) you specify a location with the Postal Service that mail should be received at (your former address) and be forwarded to. With a shortcut in Windows, you specify a location that instructions should be received at (the location the alias is stored in--such as the Desktop) and the location that instructions should be forwarded to (the target file, also referred to as the original file).

For full instructions on how to use shortcuts (and how shortcuts can be expected to work), please refer to documentation provided by Microsoft.

The option to create a shortcut is not always available in the contextual menu. Why is this?

The Send to Desktop command is a contextual menu item, meaning it may (or may not) appear depending on the context you are right-clicking it in. For example, in the following contexts, it should be possible to access Send to Desktop (Create Shortcut) command in

either of the following situations:

1. You right-click on a file, folder, or program file in Windows Explorer.
2. You right-click on a file, folder, or program file that appears in the Start Menu.

In certain other situations, though (such as right-clicking on text in a search field in Windows Explorer), the option may not appear.

For more information on the Send to Desktop contextual menu item, please refer to documentation provided by Microsoft

I'm right-clicking on one of the locations you've provided above, and no option is displaying to create a shortcut. What can I do to resolve this?

If you are right-clicking one of the locations we've listed above and you do not see the option

- **Click elsewhere, then try right-clicking the target again.**
- **Seek assistance from a qualified technician (or from Microsoft, if available).**

The behavior you are experiencing could be related to a specific technical issue.