

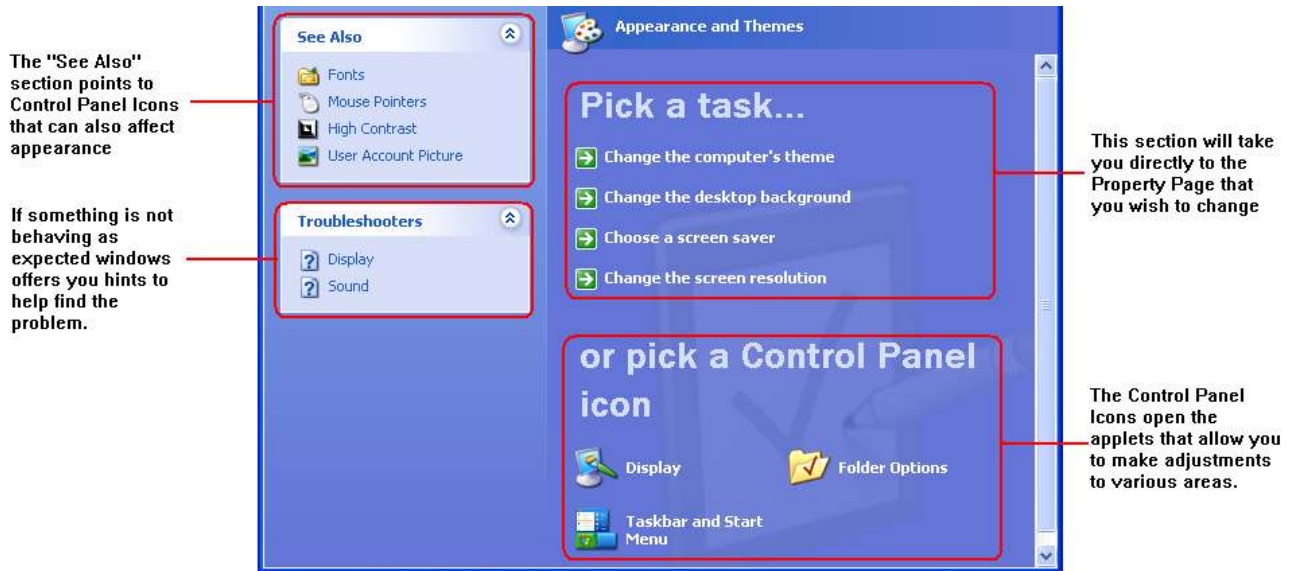
Windows Control Panel

We now need to come back and look at the Control Panel in some detail. The Control Panel is where you can make adjustments to the way that Windows XP looks, and feels, acts, and sounds. With the Control Panel, you can personalize your computer to your own preference. In Windows XP the Control Panel is arranged logically into different Categories. Within each Category there will be a number of related Tasks and Icons that will start little applications, called applets.

Let's open the Control Panel now and take a closer look. To open the Control Panel, simply click the "Start Button" and then click "Control Panel." The Control Panel will open, and we can see the categories we are able to choose.



A category that most people use is the first in the list, "Appearance and Themes." We will take some time here and explore this category in detail. Click the "Appearance and Themes" category icon and the following screen appears.



Next, click on the task to “Change the computer’s theme.” The following window will open up.

A theme is an overall coordinated look for the Windows XP Desktop. A theme can change the background image, the color scheme, and the way the Icons appear.



This is the Display Property Page. A property in Windows XP is simply a description of how something in Windows XP will behave.

Normally Windows XP will be set to the default theme. You can also select the Windows Classic theme by clicking on the down arrow in the list box, and selecting the Classic Theme. Let’s try that now. We can see how it will look by checking the “Sample” pane. If you like what you see, and want to keep the new theme, you must click the “Apply” button or the “OK” button at the bottom of the window.

the theme now, just press cancel.

Since we do not want to change

Many other themes are available. If you have the Plus! For Windows XP package, it includes many other themes you can apply to your desktop. There are also many sites on the Internet where you can find and download additional themes.

I want you to notice a few things about the Display Properties window before we move on. The Display Properties Dialog Box has a row of Tabs along the top. These Tabs indicate the settings that are available on the different pages of the Dialog Box. As we go through the Tasks in the Appearance and Themes, we will notice that all four tasks open the Display Properties Dialog Box but each time a different tab will be selected for us. This illustrates the purpose of the tasks in each category. Clicking on a task will open a window that will let us make the change that the task relates to. If we use the “Pick a Control Panel Icon” section and click on the Display Icon the same Display properties dialog box will open to the first tab. Another way to get to Display Properties is to place the mouse pointer over a empty part of your Desktop, (your screen), a click the right mouse button. From the pop out menu choose “Properties.” Notice, again the Display Properties Dialog box appears.

As you can see, there are several different ways to accomplish the same task, none are incorrect, whichever method you use is your preference.



If we choose the second task, “Change the desktop background” the window to the left appears. Here we see a monitor sitting in the center of the window. This is our preview pane. You can see the effect of the changes you make before you apply them.

In the background list box we have a choice of pictures and patterns available for screen backgrounds. Let’s take a few minutes and see what they look like. Find one that you like, and click “apply” to change your background.

You can also use a scanned picture or digital photo you have taken with your own camera for your background.

If you have a photo of a grandchild, or a favorite landscape, you can use it for a background. Simply press the browse button, navigate to the picture on your hard drive, and select the picture you wish.

This picture will now appear in the preview pane, and if you decide to keep it, simply click the “Apply” button followed by “OK.”

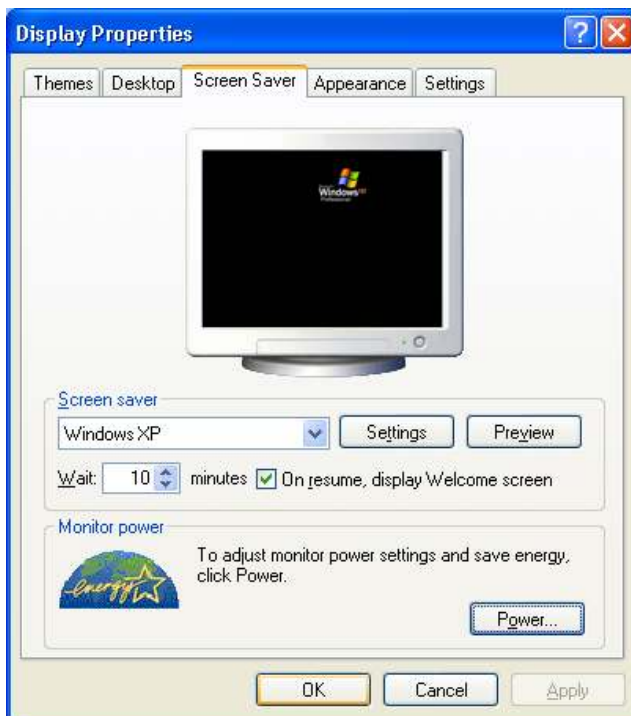
If you choose “None” for a background, you will have a solid color for the background. You can change the color by clicking the arrow beside the Color drop down box and selecting the color that you prefer.

One final setting on this page needs to be explained. If you click the “Customize Desktop” button, a dialog box called Desktop Items appears. The top section is called Desktop Icons, and has check boxes next to My Documents, My Computer, My Network Places, and Internet Explorer. If any of these boxes are checked, a shortcut to that item will appear on the desktop. Let’s check “My Documents.” Now when you look at your desktop, you will see a “My Documents” Icon for easy access.

One other feature of this page is Desktop cleanup. It will prompt you to remove unused items from your desktop every 60 days. This is a matter of preference, if you find the reminders annoying, and don’t mind the icons on your desktop, simply uncheck the box to remove that option.

It will let you change your standard desktop icons, if you wish, but this is usually done through themes, and I don’t recommend doing that here.

The next task in the Appearance and Themes group is “Choose a Screen Saver.” Let’s select that now. Again, we see the Display Properties Dialog box and it is opened to the Screen Saver page.



Here again is our monitor image on the top half of the window, so that we can preview our changes.

In the Screen saver section, there is a drop down box which contains a number of selections which we could use as a screen saver. As you select the different choices, you can see what it looks like in the preview screen. Try it, and you can see screensavers from the complex to a simple blank screen.

If you click Settings, you will have an opportunity to change the way the screen saver behaves. For example, if you have the Marquee screen saver selected, you can insert your own message for the screen saver to display.

The Preview button allows you to preview the screen saver in full screen mode, when you move your mouse the screen is restored.

The wait time is the idle time of no keyboard or mouse activity before the Screen Saver starts. If “On resume, display Welcome screen” is checked, you will return to the Welcome screen Windows uses when it starts up. This is useful if you have a Windows password, to prevent people from accessing your computer when you are away. If you have small children in the house, it can prevent them from messing up the computer. If it is unchecked, when you end the screen saver, you will return directly to what you were doing when you left.

The Monitor power section enables you to set up various energy savings conditions. It can turn your monitor and hard disk drives off when the computer is left sitting for a long period, thus going into a low power mode. Moving the mouse, or hitting a key, will end the power saving mode and return you to what you were doing. Think of the power saving mode as kind of a long term screen saver. I suggest that you accept the settings that Windows XP uses by default.

That ends the survey of the four tasks that are available to us under the Appearance and Themes category. At the bottom of the Appearance and Themes category is a group of three icons that we can choose. Choosing the display icon will bring us to the property pages for Display that we have been looking at while going through the tasks. Folder Options allows us to change the behavior of Windows Explorer, and Task Bar and Start Menu allows us to modify the way that both the Task Bar and the Start Menu behave.

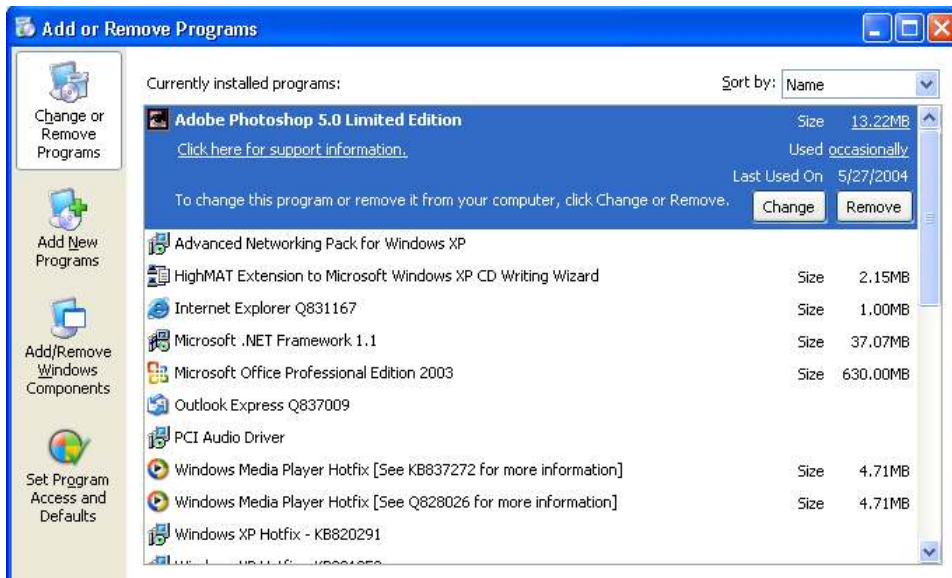
We will now continue on our tour of the Control Panel with a general description of the remaining Categories.



Next we come to the Network and Internet Connections group. This is where you make the settings that enable you to connect to the internet, or to connect several computers in a home or small office to each other. When you select your Internet Service Provider (ISP) you will be given detailed instructions and software to connect to his particular service.

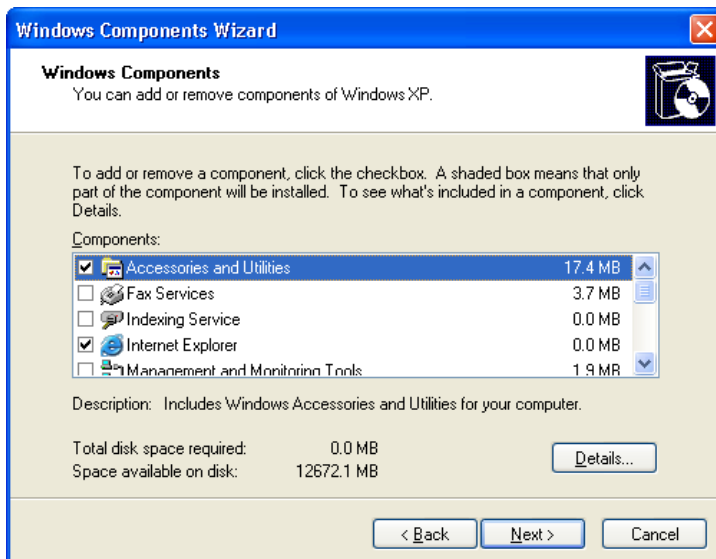


Add or Remove Programs is next. Since most software comes on CD today, it will automatically offer to install itself on the computer when you put the CD in the CD Drive. So this will not be used very often to Add Programs. However, it is an excellent and safe way to remove unused and unwanted programs from your computer.

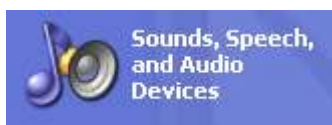


Change or remove programs on the left is selected, and you are presented with a list of all programs currently installed on your computer, including Windows

Update fixes. Selecting any of these programs and clicking remove, will safely remove the software from your computer.



If “Add Remove Windows Components” on the left is selected we can add Windows XP features that have not been installed, such as Fax Services that allow your computer to send and receive faxes. You can also remove an unused feature, such as MSN Explorer, or Windows Messenger.



The next Control Panel Category is “Sounds, Speech, and Audio Devices.” You can adjust the volume of “System Events.” System events are the sounds that Windows makes when it starts up or shuts down. Other events, such as new mail notification, trigger unique sounds. The volume of these sounds can be changed here. You can also change the sounds that the system event triggers using this category. Often if you employ a Theme from Appearances and Themes the sounds may change to enhance the new theme.



Performance and Maintenance allows you to make settings to improve the performance of your computer. However, this is an area that should not be changed unless you are aware of what the implication of the changes will be. I highly recommend that you become familiar with this area, but trying to explain it now is beyond the scope of this introductory course.



The **Printers and Other Hardware** Category helps you to connect a printer to your computer. Your printer came with software and installation instructions from the manufacturer that should be followed. Because of that, this area is not used very often. One time when you might use this category is if you have two or more computers in the home, and you wish to share a printer over a home network. You also have icons available to enable you to configure other hardware, such as game controllers, mouse, scanners and cameras, and phone and modem options. These are not used very often.



Next up is **User Accounts**. We need to spend a little time here. There are several situations where user accounts can be useful. If more than one person uses the computer, having an individual user account will provide each user with their own “My Documents” folder. Each user can set up the “Appearance and Themes” category to his own preferences. And whenever a user logs on to a machine, the machine starts up exactly the way you left it.

Another reason for setting up **User Accounts** for each user is that the new users have more restricted rights to do things with the machine. If you set up a user account for a child, it would be limited in that you would have to install the software for the child, and the child would not have the rights to change many of the control panel settings we have been looking at.

With this for background, we will now take a closer look at Users. Let’s click on **User Accounts** in the Control Panel now. We are presented with three possible tasks.

We will begin by selecting “Creating a new account.” A Wizard appears to guide us through the process. In Windows a Wizard is simply a step by step process to simplify a task. Here a wizard will guide us through the process of creating a new user account. The Wizard prompts us to name the new account. Let’s type in a user name; I will use “Grandchildren” in this example.

Name the new account

Type a name for the new account:

This name will appear on the [Welcome screen](#) and on the [Start menu](#).

Now click “Next.” You will be asked to “Pick and Account type.” We are given two choices. We can either create an account that will have the power of a Computer Administrator, or a Limited User.

A Computer Administer is a powerful account type. You can create, change, and delete user accounts. Once a user account is deleted, it is gone forever. You can make system wide changes, many of the adjustments in Control Panel are system wide, and require an account with Administrator privileges to change. You can access all files on the computer, including those of other users, if necessary. You must be an Administrator to install new software programs on the machine. As you can see, every machine needs an account with administrative rights on it. However, for safety, if not convenience, only one administrative account is recommended.

With a Limited Account, you can change things that apply to your account only. You can change your password, if you have one. You can change your desktop settings, as we did in “Appearances and Themes.” You can view files that you have created, and any files that are in the shared documents folder. This type of account is what we should use for creating a new user.

Pick an account type

Computer administrator Limited

With a limited account, you can:

- Change or remove your password
- Change your picture, theme, and other desktop settings
- View files you created
- View files in the Shared Documents folder

Users with limited accounts cannot always install programs. Depending on the program, a user might need administrator privileges to install it.

Also, programs designed prior to Windows XP or Windows 2000 might not work properly with limited accounts. For best results, choose programs bearing the Designed for Windows XP logo, or, to run older programs, choose the "computer administrator" account type.

So we will click on the radio button next to the Limited account option, and then we can click the Create Account Button on the bottom of the screen. We now have a Grandchildren account listed on the accounts page.

If the grandchildren can still access your account with administrative rights, we still have some risk to the computer. So, on the User Accounts Screen we will now click on the “Change and account” task. We are prompted to pick an account to change, and in this case, we will pick Jim, who is the Computer administrator. A list of possible changes now appears.

What do you want to change about your account?

→ Change my name

→ Create a password

→ Change my picture

→ Change my account type

→ Set up my account to use a .NET Passport



Jim
Computer administrator

Today, we are going to “Create a password” and “Change my picture.” Click on “Create a password now.

You are invited to type in a new password. I suggest something that you can easily remember, but would not be obvious to someone else. An old nickname, or grandmothers maiden name are often good choices. The more complicated a password, the harder it is to guess, but in the home, a simple password will often suffice. Let’s type in “password” as an example in this case. You have to type it in again, to ensure it is correct. And you can even put in a password hint, that will help you recall your password if you forget it. Now click “Create password.”

A new screen appears, asking you if you wish to make your files private. This means that other users are prevented from viewing your documents.

Do you want to make your files and folders private?

Even with a password on your account, other people using this computer can still see your documents. To prevent this, Windows can make your files and folders private. This will prevent users with limited accounts from gaining access to your files and folders.

Yes, Make Private

No

Click “Yes, Make Private” and the password has now been set, and your files have been protected. You are returned to “What do you want to change” Page.

We will now change the picture that appears beside your name on the log on screen, and at the top of the Start Menu. Click on the “Change my picture” option. We are presented with a variety of pictures to choose from.

Pick a new picture for your account

The picture you choose will appear on the [Welcome screen](#).



 [Browse for more pictures](#)

Change Picture

Cancel

Since I am a big fan of the Space program, I have chosen the shuttle launch for my picture. You may choose anything that you feel is attractive, or says something about you. After you have made your selection, click change picture, and we are done.



Continuing on with our Control Panel Categories, next up is “Date, Time, Language, and Regional Options.”

We can set the date and time from here. We can also choose to have Windows adjust the time automatically for Daylight Savings time. If we are connected to the Internet, we can have Windows set the time automatically using a Internet Time Standard. This way we will always have an accurate computer clock. If you choose to do this, it works best if you have a high speed connection, either Cable or DSL. We can also change the way Windows formats the currency, dates, and time to account for different countries. You can add additional languages as well. You can add French (Canada) and be able to type documents using the special French characters.



Our final Control Panel Category is Accessibility options.

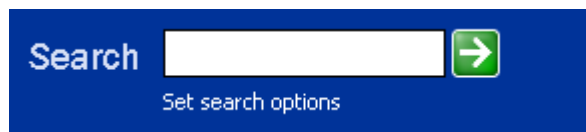
This is helpful for users who have some type of physical impairment. An example of the assistance available, is the built in magnifier for people who have poor vision. If you need to use these options, there is a Wizard that will guide you through the setup. There is also a link to a Microsoft Web Site that contains information on other companies that provide products to assist those who have special needs.

This completes our overview of the Control Panel. There is much more to be learned here, but I did want you to have a look at some of the options and capabilities that are at your disposal here.

When You Need Help...

There will come a time when you want to do something with your computer, and just don't know where to start. This is where windows help come in. Windows Help contains links to an overwhelming amount of information, so it is important to be as specific as possible when searching for help.

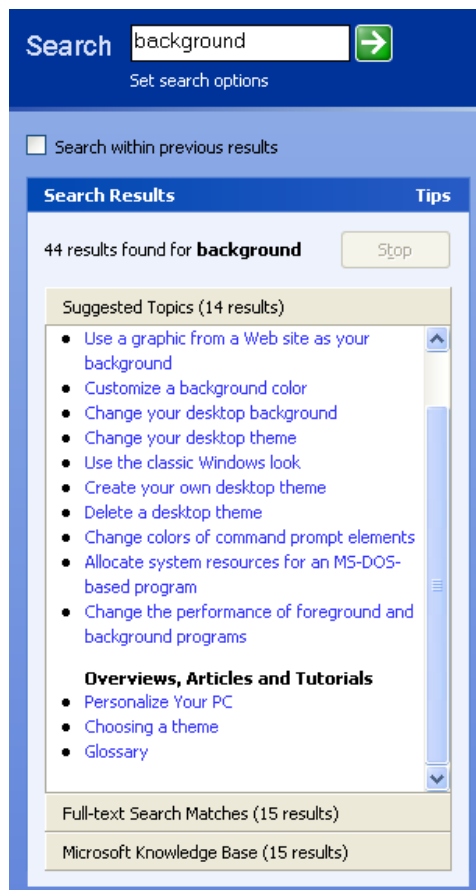
When you open the Help and Support Center, Windows XP helpfully provides some common topics as starting points in your search.



The Search section is the most important part of the Help and Support Center. Here you can type in a question, or a term, and Windows will

search both the computer you are at, and, if you are connected to the Internet, the Microsoft Web Site.

If you come across a computer term that you are unfamiliar with, simply type it into the search box and click the green arrow. Let's try it. Type the word "Background" into the search box, and click the green arrow. The Help program will search the help files on your machine, and if you are connected to the Internet, it will search the Microsoft Web site for related information. It will then present you with the results of the search.



Note that you are presented with a list of things you can change about the background. Many of these things were changed when we looked at the Control Panel, so you should be familiar with some of these topics.


We will explore this further in a moment. But now let's look at other parts of the Search results pane. Notice at the bottom there is a section called "Overview, Articles, and Tutorials." This section is a valuable source of information about the requested topic. The Glossary is extremely useful. Whenever you come across a computer term and have no idea what it means, the Glossary can define it for you.

Full-text Search Matches shows an additional 15 results. There may be some repetition in this section.

Finally, the Microsoft Knowledge Base, which is part of Microsoft's Web site, has another 15 articles to give you more information.

To try this, select the topic, "Use the classic Windows look." On the right pane of the window, you will see the instructions to make this change.

To use the classic Windows look

1. Open  [Display](#) in Control Panel.
2. On the **Themes** tab, under **Theme**, click **Windows Classic**.

 **Notes**

- To open Display, click **Start**, click **Control Panel**, click **Appearance and Themes**, and then click **Display**.
- After you select **Windows Classic**, you can change individual Windows elements, such as window borders, icons, and menus. Click the **Appearance** tab, and then click **Advanced** to make your changes.

[Related Topics](#)



There are two simple steps to change to the "Windows Classic" appearance. In the first step we are provide with a shortcut to open the Display Properties. Simply click on the shortcut arrow or the underlined word "Display." Following step two completes the task.

If the Display shortcut does not work the Notes provide you with manual instructions to reach the same result. Related topics often will give you more information. We have the information we need, so let's close any Help and Support Center Windows by clicking on the red Close Button, remember, in the top right corner of your screen.

If you're not sure where you want to go exactly, or what terms to use in the Search window, Windows XP Help and Support Center is willing to give you a start. Start the Help Center again to get to the initial screen.

Pick a Help topic

- What's new in Windows XP
- Music, video, games, and photos
- Windows basics
- Security and privacy

- Networking and the Web
- Working remotely

- Customizing your computer
- Accessibility

- Printing and faxing
- Performance and maintenance
- Hardware
- Fixing a problem
- Send your feedback to Microsoft

On the left, there is a section called “Pick a Help Topic”

Windows suggest a number of help topics that you can pick. Selecting one of these topics will bring you to a list of more specific topics.

It is interesting and informative to read these articles, they are well written and will add to your knowledge of computers.

New to Windows XP is the ability to ask for assistance over a network, or even the internet. With Remote Assistance a trusted and knowledgeable friend or relative can connect to your computer, and help you solve your problems. The trusted helper can take over your machine, and operate it in a remote control mode to try to fix whatever settings have gone wrong. One note of caution; be very careful when using this option, because not only can problems be fixed, but they can be made worse as well. Make sure whoever you seek to help you is knowledgeable about Windows XP.

Ask for assistance

- Invite a friend to connect to your computer with **Remote Assistance**
- Get **support**, or find information in **Windows XP newsgroups**

Pick a task

- Keep your computer up-to-date with **Windows Update**
- Find **compatible hardware and software** for Windows XP
- Undo changes to your computer with **System Restore**
- Use **Tools** to view your computer information and diagnose problems

The final section of the opening Help Screen is the Pick a task section. You should have noticed by now that Windows XP is very Task oriented. We were given a list of tasks when we were looking at the Control Panel, and here in Help, we are given

some tasks that Microsoft considers important to this area. Windows Update will be covered in detail when we talk about connecting to the Internet. Finding compatible hardware and software for Windows XP is an exhaustive (and exhausting) listing of everything you can buy that will work well with Windows. I never use this section, because it is easier to check for the Windows XP logo on the package before I make my purchase. Don't skip this step when you are in the store.

If you make a change in Windows, usually when installing new hardware, or software drivers for hardware, and your machine goes nuts, you can return to your previous state by using the new System Restore function. This feature has solved problems for me a number of times.

Finally, Help Center presents you with a list of Tools to enable you to go further.

For most people, using the Search section as Illustrated earlier in the section will give you the information you need to solve most of your problems, which is why we demonstrated that function with an example. Help usually presents articles in brief bite-sized formats to enable you to quickly get answers to your questions.

However, feel free to explore the other sections of Help for more information and articles.