

INTRODUCING THE WINDOWS KEY

A QUICK USER GUIDE

Most modern PCs come with a handy little key that most people ignore, and a lot of people don't even realise its purpose. But it's *very* handy and *very* powerful.

WHERE IS IT?

The **Windows Key** is usually located on the bottom left of the keyboard near to the Control (Ctrl) Key.



Picture 1 - Location of the Windows Key


It opens up a whole world of new keyboard shortcuts – some you can learn and some you'll need the **Quick Reference Page** at the back of this document which you can print out and keep handy for reference (or just view it online, [here](#)).

ON ITS OWN



On its own, the **Windows Key** isn't really that impressive.

Go ahead, try it now – Just press the **Windows Key**  and to get back here, just press it again. It simply opens (and closes) the **Start Menu** for Windows.

LOCK YOUR SCREEN

It's not only for the workplace. It's always good practice to lock your screen if you step away from your computer. By far the fastest way of achieving this is  + L¹

Again, go ahead and give it a go! Of course, you'll have to log back in to get back here...

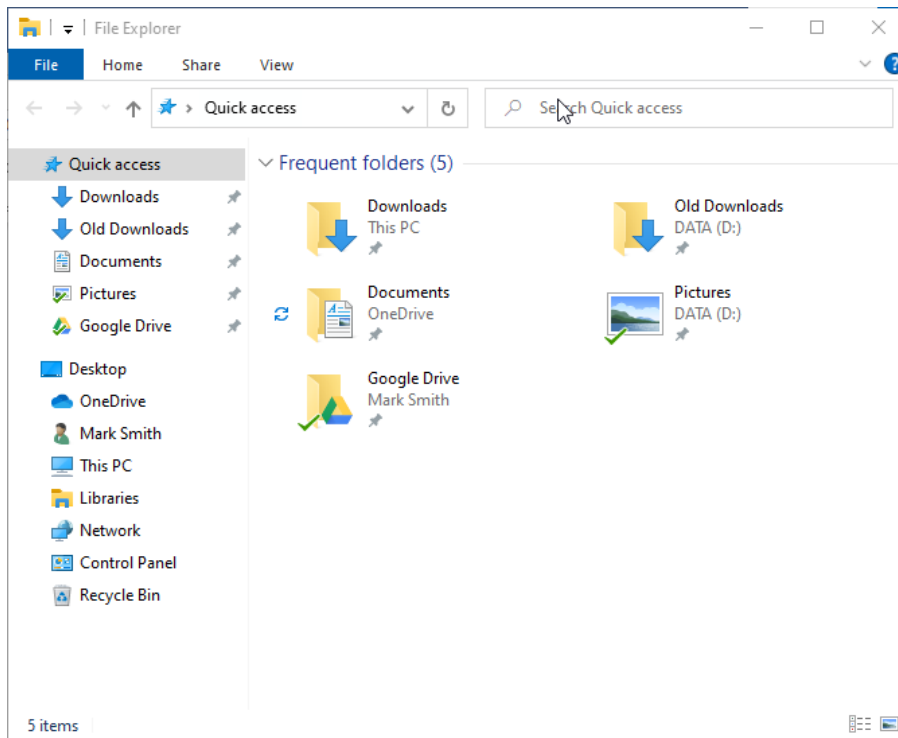
¹ In this document, " + " means press and hold the **Windows Key** " " and then also press the key following the + sign

OPEN THE FILE EXPLORER

This is one that is probably the most commonly used **Windows Key** shortcuts. Open up Windows Explorer (not Internet Explorer) so you can see all of your files and folders.


You do this by pressing **Windows + E** (for Explorer, see?)

Try it, and you get:

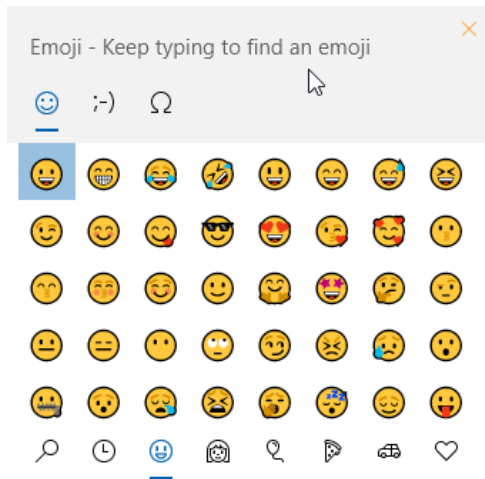


Picture 2 - File Explorer (or just plain old 'Explorer')

OPEN THE EMOJI MENU

Need to add emotions and gestures to your messages? You *could* spend ages looking around the App that you are using for the Emoji menu, or you can simply press  + . (full stop).

Try it and you'll see:



Picture 3 - The Emoji Menu

CAPTURE A SCREENSHOT

There are a plethora of ways of taking a screenshot in Win10 (Windows 10).

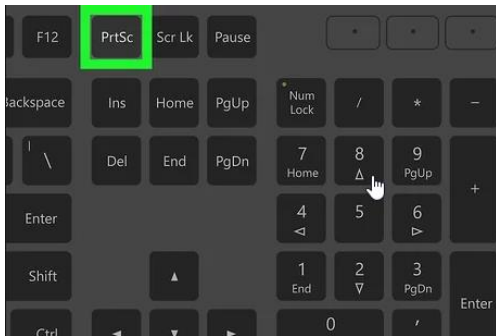
If you are asking for help with your computer, it's often really useful to include a screenshot with your email or message so the person that you are asking can see what's going on. Otherwise, it's the equivalent of trying to fault-find a car engine with the information, "My car is making a funny noise"...

Let's keep on topic and explain the way you can use the **Windows Key**. The other options may form another document in the future 😊.

CAPTURE THE WHOLE SCREEN & SAVE IT AS A PICTURE

Note: All of the screenshot method below place a copy of the screenshot on the clipboard allowing you to paste it into a document – see [here](#).

Capturing the whole screen is as simple as pressing **Windows + PrtSc** - That's the **Print Screen** key usually found at the top-right of your keyboard somewhere.



Picture 4 - Location of the PrtSc key

By pressing **Windows + PrtSc** you take a screenshot of the entire screen and then saves it in a folder – usually in

 > Libraries > Pictures > Screenshots

(That's **C:\Pictures\Screenshots** in old money)

Note: Depending on how your computer has been set up, sometimes just pressing the button takes a screenshot of the entire screen and saves it to a folder in your **OneDrive\Pictures\Screenshots** folder – have a look in your **OneDrive\Pictures** folder and see if there's a **Screenshots** folder in there. But, either way, the above works so it's a safe bet.

CAPTURE PART OF THE SCREEN & SAVE IT AS A PICTURE

Win10 comes with a handy little app that allows you to do more with screenshots, such as selecting an area of the screen to grab by dragging a rectangle with your mouse, or by just capturing a single window.

It's called **Snip & Sketch** and it can be easily got at by using the **Windows Key**.

Press **Windows + Shift + S** and **Snip & Sketch** will open up. Across the top of the screen is a menu bar:

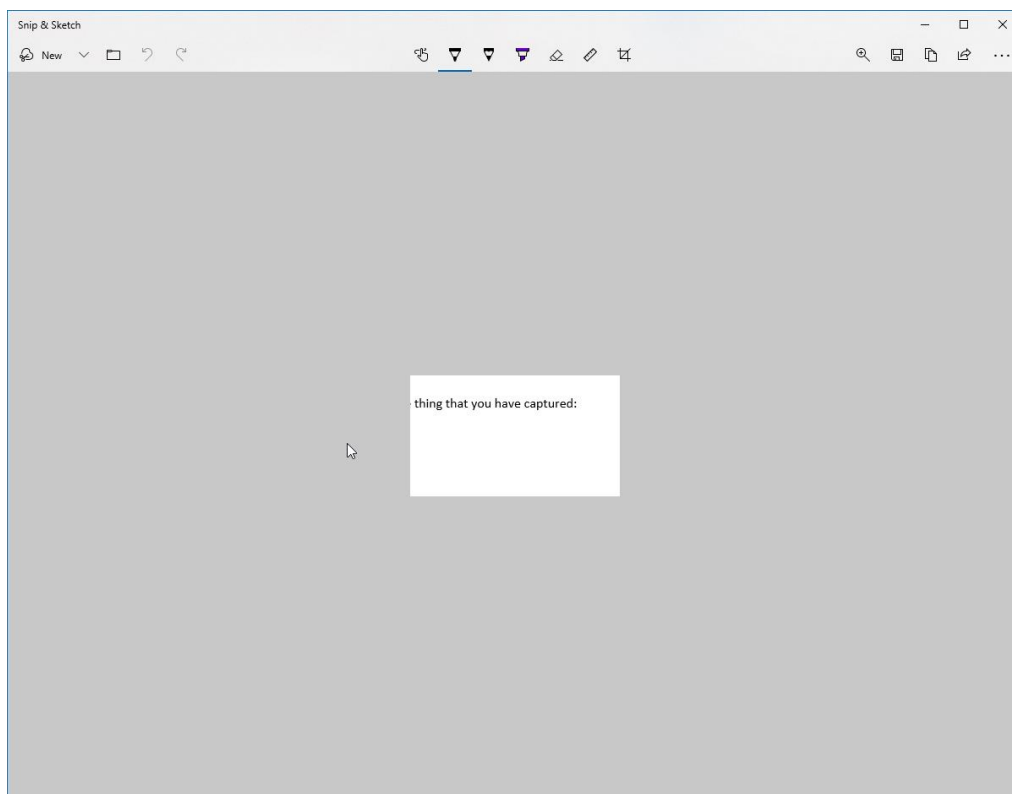


Picture 5 - The Snip & Sketch menu bar

From the left, the five buttons are:

1. Select a rectangular area of the screen to capture by clicking this button and dragging a rectangular area while holding down the mouse button. When you let go of the mouse button, the screenshot is captured.
2. Select a freehand area of the screen to capture by clicking this button and dragging a freehand area while holding down the mouse button. When you let go of the mouse button, the screenshot is captured.
3. Select a window to capture. Click this button, then click the window you want to capture. When you let go of the mouse button, the screenshot is captured.
4. Capture the entire screen.
5. Exit **Snip & Sketch**

Snip & Sketch will then show the thing that you have captured:



Picture 6 - Snip & Sketch capture screen

You can then annotate the screenshot or manipulate it and then save it as a picture to the place of your choosing. That is outside the scope of this document. But do have a play with it and see what it does – you can't break anything.

MANIPULATE THE APP WINDOWS

Most of us start out manipulating windows by using the minimise, maximise, resize or close buttons at the top right of a window:



Picture 7 - Window Manipulation Buttons

The **Windows Key** has some snazzy shortcuts that help you see everything that you want to see.

MINIMISE EVERYTHING (SHOW THE DESKTOP)

Sometimes you have so many windows open, it's all a bit of a clutter. But you don't want to shut apps down because you'll need them in a minute.

To help declutter the **workspace**², you can **minimise all windows** by pressing **Windows + M**

Go ahead, try it. This one doesn't work the other way though – you can't press it again to maximise them, you have to click the ones you want on the **taskbar**.

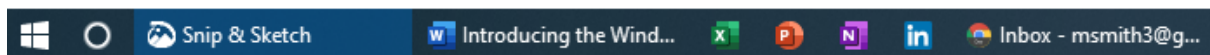
TEMPORARILY PEEK AT THE DESKTOP

I have no idea why this one is useful, but if you don't want to actually minimise everything, but wanted to have a peek at the desktop, you can press and hold **Windows + ,**

OPEN PINNED APPS

If you have apps pinned to your taskbar (next to the **start button**), you can open them as if they were numbered starting at 1 for the left-most app.

For example:



Picture 8 - Pinned Taskbar Apps

The **Windows** icon is the **start button** and the circle is **Cortana**³ which isn't counted as an app.

So the first app in the list is **Snip & Sketch** in the example, so pressing **Windows + 1** would open (or bring to the front if already open) Snip & Sketch, **Windows + 2** would open Word, **Windows + 3** would open Excel and so on. If there isn't an app at that number, pressing it doesn't do anything.

² It seems obvious, but it's a new term here. Your **workspace** is your Windows desktop – the bit where you do you work.

³ Cortana is Microsoft's assistant – Like Alexa for Amazon or Google Assistant.



BUGGERING ABOUT WITH WINDOW SIZES AND LOCATIONS

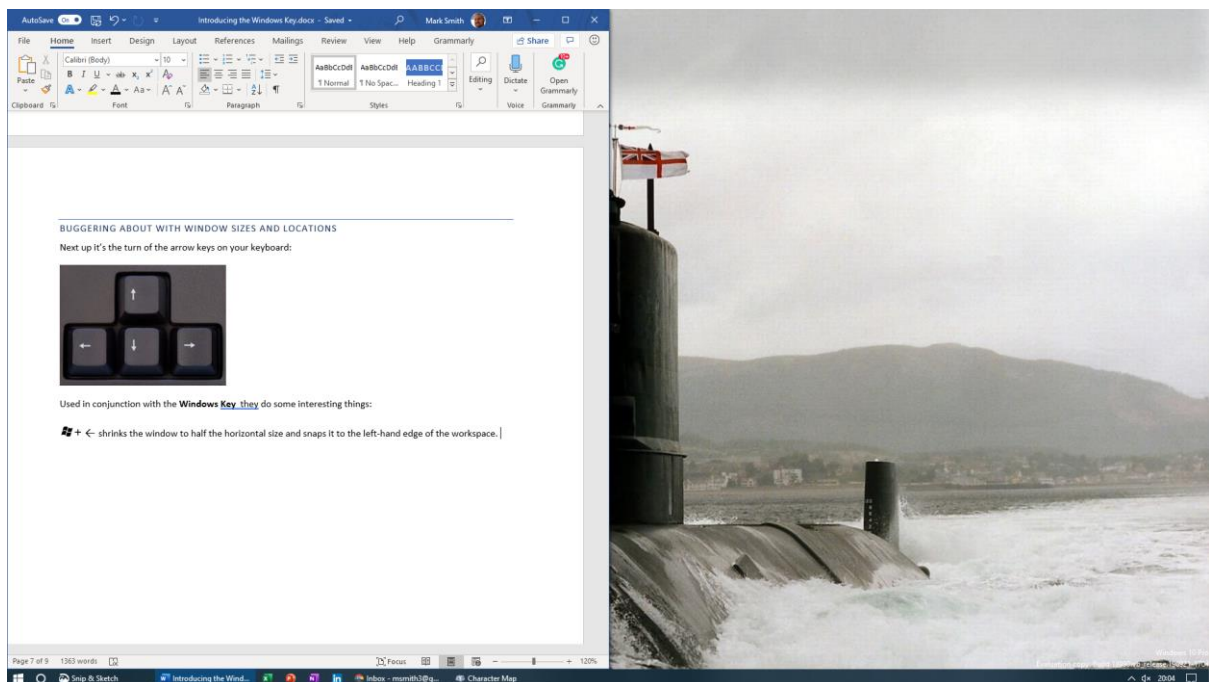
Next up it's the turn of the arrow keys on your keyboard:



Picture 9 - The Arrow Keys

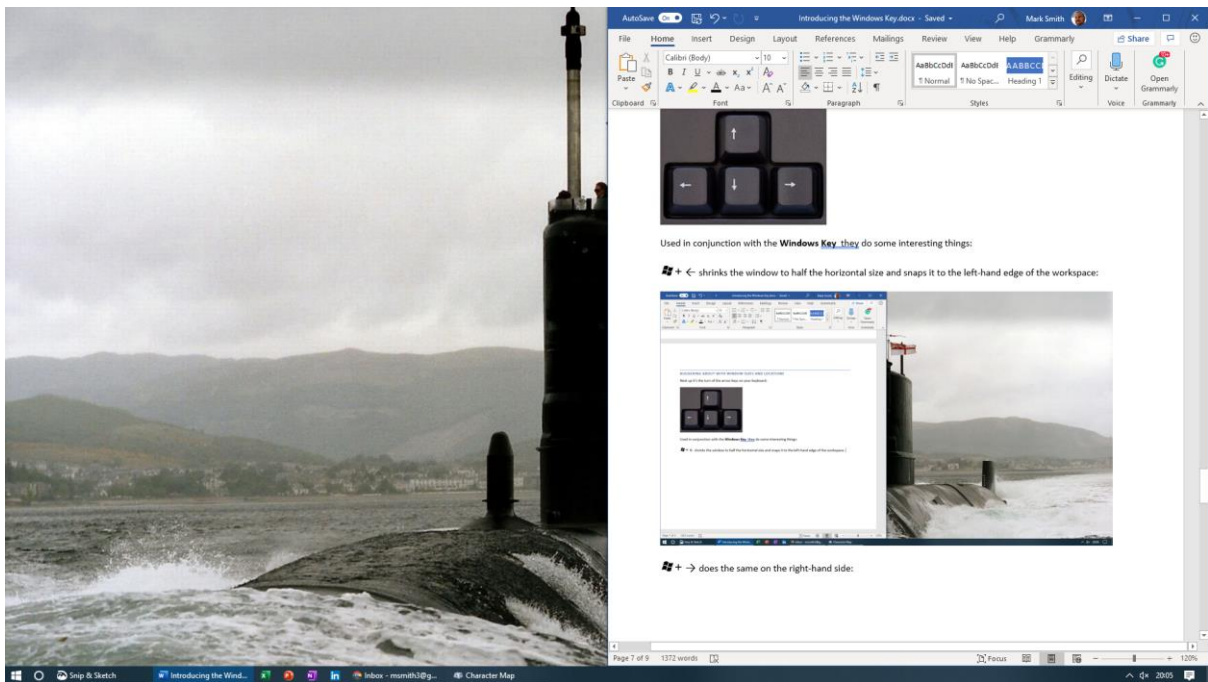
Used in conjunction with the **Windows Key**, they do some interesting things:

 +  shrinks the window to half the horizontal size and snaps it to the left-hand edge of the workspace:



Picture 10 - Window snapped to the left

⊞ + → does the same on the right-hand side:



Picture 11 - Window snapped to the right

⊞ + ↓ makes the window the smallest size possible, and ⊞ + ↑ maximises the selected window.

SUMMARY

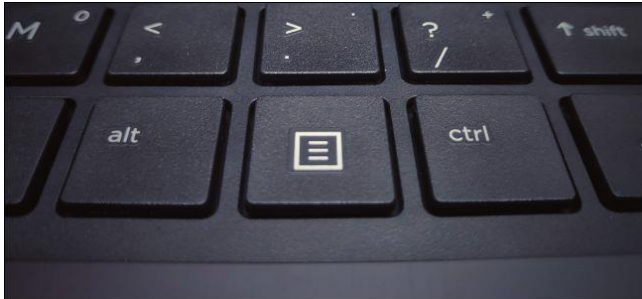
These are the only **Windows Key** combinations and shortcuts that we will discuss in this document. There are many more and it's often just worth experimenting to see what each does. There's no combination that will delete, destroy or wreck anything (except the delete and backspace keys, obviously).

Many good references can be found on the internet, including this one [here](#).

Don't forget that there is a Quick Reference Page at the end of this document.

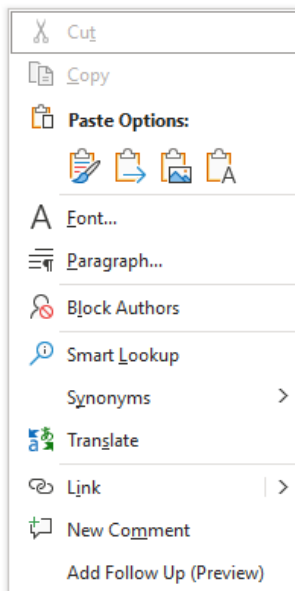
THE CONTEXT MENU KEY

As a bonus, there's another key on the opposite side of the keyboard which brings up the **Context Menu** which is the menu you get when you Right-Click your mouse.



Picture 12 - The Context Menu Key

Give it a go:



Picture 13 - The Context Menu

QUICK REFERENCE PAGE

Windows on its own	Opens and Closes the Start Menu
Windows + L	Locks the screen
Windows + E	Open File Explorer
Windows + .	Open the Emoji Menu
Windows + PrtSc	Take a screenshot of the entire screen and save it in C:\Pictures\Screenshots
Windows + Shift + S	Open up Snip & Sketch for various ways to capture the screen
Windows + M	Minimise All Windows
Windows + ,	Temporarily Peek at the Desktop
Windows + <number>	Opens the pinned app corresponding to the number
Windows + <Arrow Keys>	Buggeres about with the window sizes