

# JIMS VIRTUAL WORLD

A NEWSLETTER BY THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

## 5 ways to make your keyboard easier to use

For most people, the keyboard is the main way to enter information into and control their computer. But are you controlling your keyboard, or is your keyboard controlling you? If you make typing mistakes or find your keyboard a bit uncomfortable, it's not hard to correct those problems. Here's how to quickly and easily change your keyboard settings and comfort options.

### 1. Get to know your keyboard

Even if you've been using a PC for a long time, there may be features on your keyboard you don't know about. Take a moment to get to know your keyboard so you can be more efficient when you're working.

### 2. Change keyboard settings

Once you've gotten more familiar with your keyboard, there are a few settings you can change to help you work more smoothly. You can alter:

How long you need to press a key before the keyboard character starts repeating.

The speed at which keyboard characters repeat, which helps you to avoid typing errors.




The rate at which the mouse pointer blinks, which can help its visibility.

### 3. Take shortcuts

Even if you're a whiz with the mouse for Windows 7, Windows Vista or Windows XP, keyboard shortcuts are typically a more efficient way to work. They're called shortcuts because they reduce multiple clicks into one quick press of keys, like hitting a chord on a piano.

Getting to know a few keyboard shortcuts for the things you do all the time, like saving or closing files, can make using your PC much easier and faster.

Here are just a few popular keyboard shortcuts that work for both versions of Windows:

Press this	To do this
Windows logo key 	Open the Start menu
ALT+TAB	Switch between open programs or windows
CTRL+S	Save the current file or document (works in most programs)
CTRL+C	Copy the selected item
CTRL+Z	Undo an action
Windows logo key  +F1	Display Windows Help and Support
ESC	Cancel the current task
Application key 	Open a menu of commands related to a selection in a program. Equivalent to right-clicking the selection.

### 4. Make it easier to press multiple keys

Do you find it difficult to press multiple keys at once? For example, if pressing CTRL+ALT+DEL is an acrobatic feat, you can set up Sticky Keys. With Sticky Keys you can hit one key at a time in a keyboard shortcut. You can even set it to make a noise so you know it's working.

### 5. Find a comfortable keyboard

It might also be time for you to evaluate the ergonomics of your desktop. Microsoft offers a full line of Natural and Comfort Curve ergonomic keyboards to ensure you're comfortable when you're working on your computer. Having the right keyboard can really make a difference!

### Tips for using your keyboard properly:

If a new keyboard isn't in your future, be sure to use your current keyboard properly to avoid soreness or injury to your wrists, hands, and arms. This is particularly important if you use your computer for long periods of time. Here are some general tips to help you avoid problems: Place your keyboard at elbow level, with your upper arms relaxed at your sides.

Center your keyboard in front of you. If your keyboard has a numeric keypad, you can use the spacebar as the centering point.

While typing, use a light touch and keep your wrists straight. When you're not typing, relax your arms and hands.

Take short breaks every 15 to 20 minutes. Type with your hands and wrists floating above the keyboard, so that you can use your whole arm to reach for distant keys instead of stretching your fingers.

Avoid resting your palms or wrists on any type of surface while typing. If your keyboard has a palm rest, use it only during breaks from typing.