

POWER COMPUTING

Part II - Turbo Charge Your Desktop

Last month, I showed you the basic rules behind fast computer use. Those rules are important enough to bear repeating - so here we go:

#1 The slowest moving part of your computer system isn't your computer.

#2 Mice are slow.

#3 The secret to speed is in the keys.

The secret to speed is in the keys - but *which* keys? That's the big question. This month I'm going to show you how, with a little setup, you can turn **any** key into a power key!

Icon, Icon, on the Wall...

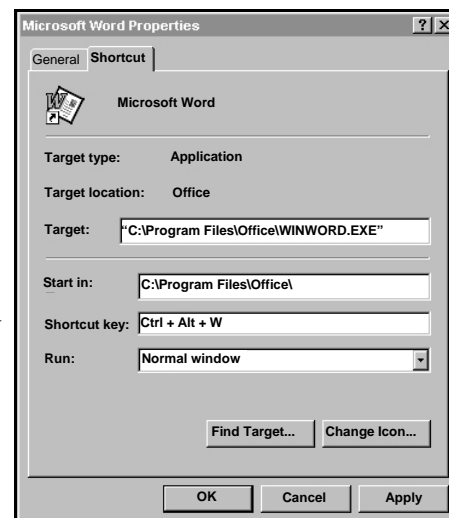
For most Windows users, even the most common tasks require plenty of mouse activity. When I ask a client to show me how they open their favorite or most important program, 90% of the time they grab their mouse and meander across their desktop screen in search of their program icon. In a word, this is SLOW.

Who's the Fastest of Them All?

The repeated mouse travel to locate, open, close and move between programs throughout the day adds up to wasted time and slow computer use. Last month I showed you the fast way to close any program in Windows (Alt+F4), but did you know you can *open* your favorite programs without the mouse? Better yet, you can assign your own keys to your programs!

Show me the Magic!

Hidden inside each desktop icon is a bundle of information, called "Properties". Using your mouse, simply **right click** on your programs desktop icon and a menu will appear. Click on **Properties** and you will see a screen similar to the next picture.



Simply type a single letter ("W" in this case) into the **Shortcut Key** field and click **OK**

The letter you typed will now open your program without using the mouse! To use your new shortcut, simply hold down the **Alt** and **Ctrl** keys and tap the letter you assigned. In this case, **Alt+Ctrl+W** instantly opens Microsoft Word!

Trust me, this is only complicated the first few times, then it's a breeze. You can assign a program to any letter on your keyboard.

Some versions of Windows need to have your icon in the **Start** menu for this to work. Just click and drag your desktop icon onto the **START** button and it will magically appear on your start menu (We'll speed up your start menu next month).

Keyboard shortcuts take a little time to learn, but the reward in speed and control is well worth it. Learn the keys and take control!

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