

Decluttering Your Desktop

No, I'm not talking about the top of your actual desk--call Merry Maids if you're having a hard time keeping up with that.

I'm talking about your Vista desktop. If you're like me, you spend a lot of time finding just the right picture for your desktop. Fine art. A photo of your loved ones. And my personal favorite - Fido (or whatever you named your pet).



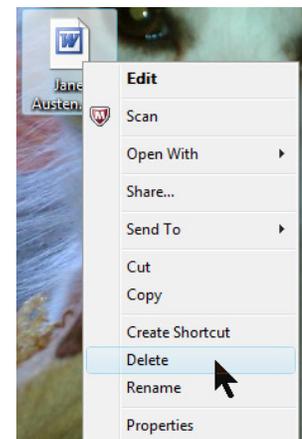
Then you get involved in a project and start saving files to the desktop because that's just easier to get to than burying them in some hierarchal subdirectory. Or you download a new software program and all of a sudden you've got five new shortcuts on your desktop when you have no idea what they are and sure as heck don't need quick access to them. Soon you'll be lucky you can even see your desktop.

I have three answers to your problem: Simple, Quick, and Slick.

SIMPLE

Delete those puppies. Come on, you don't really need that book report from English 101--you got a D on it anyway. It's easy. Right click on it and pick Delete. You can do it!

If you want to be able to throw it in your professor's face when you finally become a famous author, move it to a folder in My Documents instead. Rather than clicking Delete, select Cut, then open Windows Explorer, create a folder named In Your Face and paste it there.

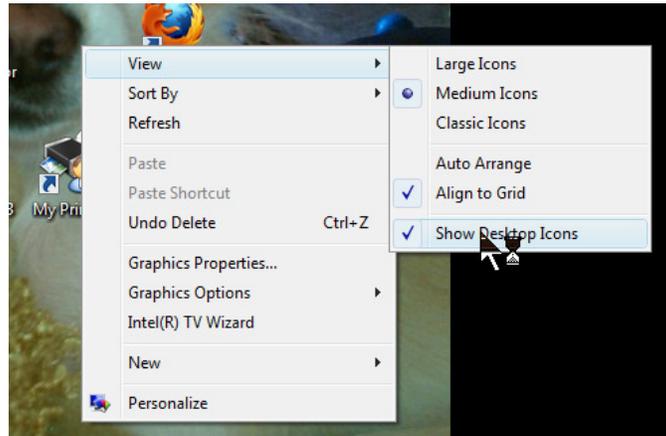


If you're worried you might delete an important program, don't be. First of all, I can't think of any important program that is going to install itself directly to your desktop. Those guys like to hide deep under your Program Files where it's safe. Secondly, unless you deliberately saved the file there yourself, I'd be willing to bet that almost all of those icons have a little curvy arrow on them. Am I right? That means they are just a shortcut to a program. If you delete a shortcut, you don't delete the program--you can still start it by going to your Start Menu and finding the program folder. Also, don't forget--everything you delete just goes to your Recycle Bin anyway so you can restore it later if you need to.

QUICK

Simple is pretty simple, but if you've had your computer a long time, it's kind of a pain, isn't it? So you might want to go straight to the Quick solution. Right click on an

uncluttered portion of your desktop (if you can find one!) Scroll over to the right, and unclick Show Desktop Icons.



Wait, what? They all disappeared, you say? But isn't that what you wanted?

If not, no fear, you can reverse the process anytime you want, although that still leaves you with the problem of all that clutter.

SLICK

You knew I had a solution, didn't you? You can have your uncluttered desktop and easy access to your icons, too. Just add your Desktop to the Taskbar at the bottom of your screen.

Right click on the Taskbar, scroll up to Toolbars and then over to select Desktop. Now look off to the right. Why does that say Desktop there? Click on the double arrow and, pop, all your crazy icons, even that book report you just couldn't get rid of, line up above the cursor for you to pick and choose as you will. Desktop convenience at your fingertips, without poking Fido in the eye with a single icon.

