

Windows: Screen Captures and Snipping

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As the old adage states – a picture is worth a thousand words. When it comes to computers, this statement may be even more relevant. Whether it is to help explain a problem you are experiencing or to share information with others, having the ability to capture what you see on your computer can be extremely helpful. I use the information noted in this article when creating many of my Around Ag articles or other documents/e-mails where an image is the best way to clarify something.

This document details a few different ways to capture what you see on your screen for use in e-mails, Word documents, PowerPoint presentations and just about anywhere else you can think of. The information in this document works with most versions of Windows unless specifically noted.

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Capture The Entire Screen

There are times where it is simplest to capture the entire Windows screen. This captures everything visible on your monitor(s) from the START button, to all open windows and the background wallpaper. Using this method, if you have more than one monitor all of the screens are captured in a single large image. This is most commonly used to send information for technical support, but can be used anytime you would like to show the entire screen on your computer.

1. Organize all of your Windows so that anything you need to show is clearly visible.
 - a. This may mean closing or minimizing windows containing any sensitive information.
2. Press the PRINT SCREEN key on your keyboard.
 - a. This is usually found a few keys to the right of the F12 key at the top of the keyboard.
 - b. It will likely look like nothing happened – this is normal.
3. Open whatever program you want to paste the screen capture into (i.e., Word, an e-mail being composed, etc.).
4. Use your favorite method to PASTE such as the PASTE button, CTRL+V, etc.

You should now see an image of your entire screen pasted into the document or e-mail. If nothing pasted, make sure what you are trying to paste into can accept an image. If replying to an e-mail and nothing is pasted, you may need to compose a new e-mail as some message types do not allow the pasting of images. You can also paste the image into Microsoft Paint (typically found off the START menu / (ALL) PROGRAMS / ACCESSORIES) and then save the image to a file so it can be attached to an e-mail.

Capture Just The Active Window


While capturing an image of the entire desktop can be handy, it can be a pretty large image which may make seeing the important information difficult. In these cases, capturing an image of a single window may work better.

1. Click on the Window you want to capture to ensure it is the *active* window.
2. Press the ALT key and the PRINT SCREEN key on your keyboard at the same time.
 - a. PRINT SCREEN is usually found a few keys to the right of the F12 key at the top of the keyboard.
 - b. It will likely look like nothing happened – this is normal.
3. Open whatever program you want to paste the screen capture into (i.e., Word, an e-mail being composed, etc.).
4. Use your favorite method to PASTE such as the PASTE button, CTRL+V, etc.

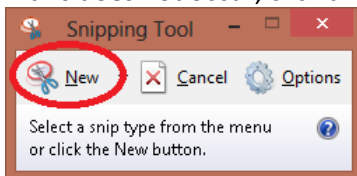
You should now see an image of the single window you selected in step #1. If an image of the wrong window is pasted that means you likely didn't have the correct window selected in step #1, so just try the steps again. If nothing pasted, make sure what you are trying to paste into can accept an image. If replying to an e-mail and nothing is pasted, you may need to compose a new e-mail as some messages do not allow the pasting of images. You can also paste the image into Microsoft Paint (typically found off the START menu / (ALL) PROGRAMS / ACCESSORIES) and then save the image to a file so it can be attached to an e-mail.

Using The Snipping Tool

Starting with Windows Vista the Snipping Tool was added. The Snipping Tool lets you capture anything seen on the screen and *snip* multiple windows or smaller pieces of a single window. Often the Snipping Tool is used to capture images from web pages or PDF documents that are otherwise difficult to work with. Basically, if you can see it, you can snip it using this tool.

The Snipping Tool icon looks like a pair of scissors similar to the following: . This tool may be found on the taskbar to the right of the START button. If it is not there, look for it off the START menu and then under (ALL) PROGRAMS and finally ACCESSORIES.

1. Organize all of your Windows so anything you need to show is clearly visible.
2. Click the Snipping Tool.
3. The screen should *grey* out and the mouse pointer will become crosshairs.
 - a. If this does not occur, click the NEW button in the Snipping Tool.



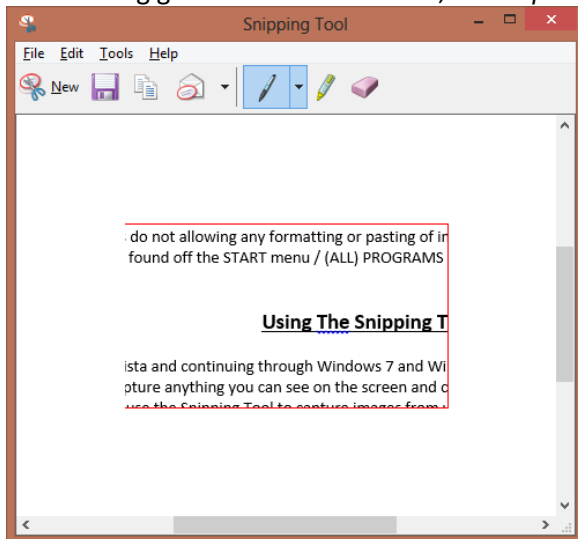
4. Aim the crosshair mouse pointer to the edge of the area to *snip*, then click and hold the left mouse button.
5. While holding the mouse button, drag the mouse so that the area to *snip* is inside the square being created.

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pages do not allowing any formatting or pasting of images.
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Using The Snipping Tool

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6. After letting go of the mouse button, the *snip* will now be visible in the Snipping Tool window.



The *snip* is in the clipboard, so you can PASTE it into an e-mail or document using your favorite method to PASTE such as the PASTE button, CTRL+V, etc. You can also click the SAVE button in the Snipping Tool to save the *snip* as a file.