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## Choosing your Preferred Colours in Windows

Some people will occasionally find certain text and background combinations difficult to read, while others prefer to always have a certain colour combination (white text on a black background, for example). In either case it is easy to impose your own colour preferences in Windows.

Colour changes will be reflected in every part of Windows (including menus, dialog boxes, Notepad and Windows Explorer etc). They will also be reflected in the menus, dialog boxes and some other areas of many of your programs as well.

This skillsheet shows you how to choose your preferred text and background colours in all areas of Windows and some parts of your programs

This skillsheet is for Windows XP. Similar features are available in other versions of Windows. Please see our website at [www.abilitynet.org.uk/myway](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk/myway) or consult the Help facility in your version of Windows.

### To Choose Your Preferred Colours

- Open the **Start menu** by clicking on the **Start** button or by pressing the **Windows logo** key (located between the **Ctrl** and **Alt** keys) - or **Ctrl + Esc**.
- Click on **Control Panel** or press the letter **C** on the keyboard.
- Double click on **Display** or press the **D** key repeatedly until **Display** is highlighted and then press **Enter**.
- Click on the **Appearance** tab or press **Control + Tab** until the **Appearance** tab is at the front. This page contains a snapshot of a sample Windows screen and below this are 3 drop down menus listing the Windows and buttons style (XP or classic), the currently selected colour scheme and the font size (See Fig. 1).

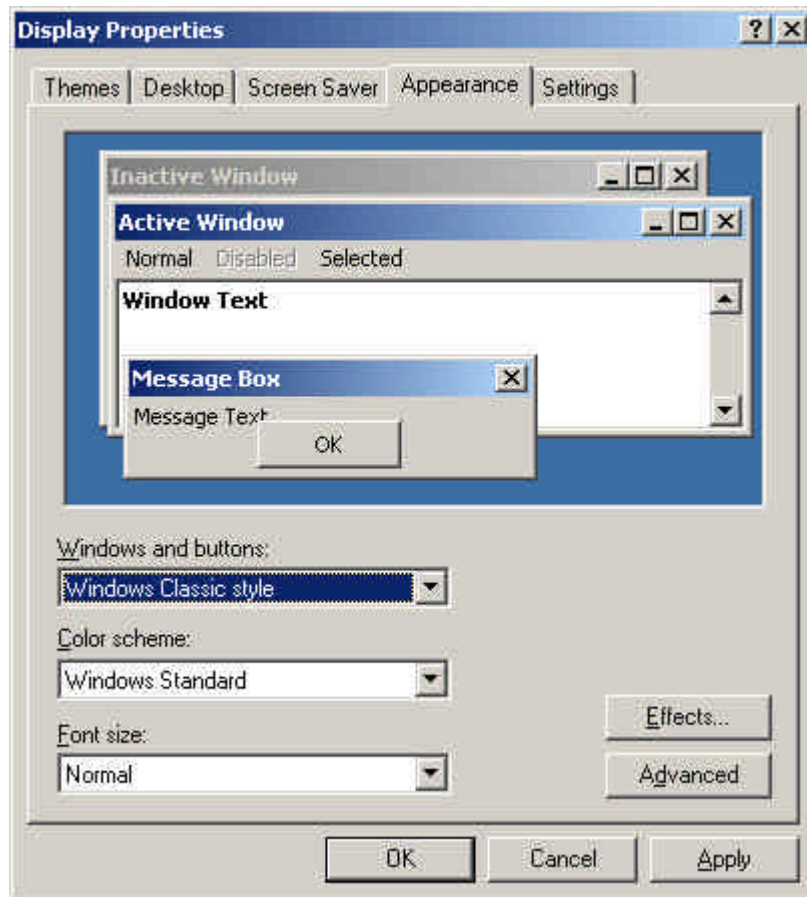


Fig. 1

- Click in the **color scheme** dropdown box, or press **Alt + C** to jump there. Use the mouse or the **up and down arrow keys** to browse through the list and click on the scheme you want, or press **Enter**, to select a scheme to use. Click **OK** or press **Enter** to exit the display properties dialog box.

## Advanced Options

In order to fully use this feature you must have your **Windows and buttons** setting on **Windows Classic**.

From this window you can select each screen element and tune it to your exact requirement. You can either select the element you want from the interactive preview area at the top, or select it from the drop down **item menu**.

When you select an element, the editable options become highlighted to the right and the options which are unavailable are greyed out. For most options you can change the font type, size, style, foreground and background colours (see Fig. 2). See below for instructions on how to change items individually.

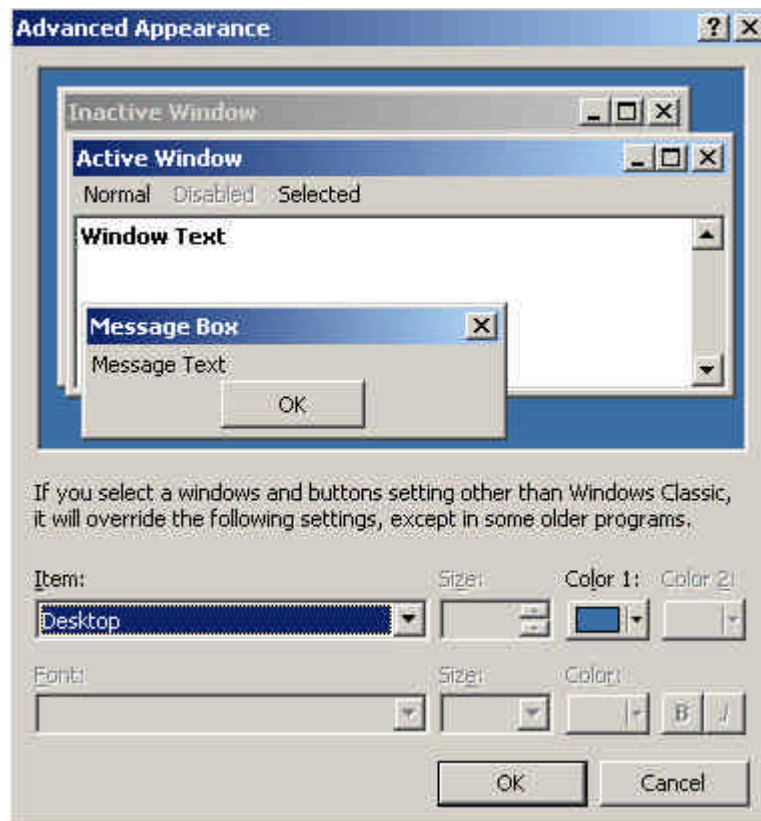


Fig. 2

## Changing Individual Colours

As well as choosing schemes which can change many settings at once, you can change colours individually i.e. desktop colour, window background colour etc.

- Open the **Start menu** by clicking on the **Start** button or by pressing the **Windows logo** key (located between the **Ctrl** and **Alt** keys) - or **Ctrl + Esc**.
- Click on **Control Panel** or press the letter **C** on the keyboard.
- Double click on **Display** or press the **D** key repeatedly until **Display** is highlighted and then press **Enter**. This will bring up the Display Properties dialog box (see Fig. 1).
- Click on the **Appearance** tab or press **Control + Tab** until it is at the front.
- Click in the **Windows and Buttons** box or press **Alt + W**. Use the mouse or the **up and down arrow keys** select the option: **Windows Classic Style** and click on it, or press **Enter** when it is selected.
- Click on **Advanced** or press the **tab** key until Advanced is highlighted and then press **Enter**. This will display the **Advanced Appearance** tab (see Fig. 2).
- Click on the drop down box below the **Item** heading, or press **Alt + I** to jump there.
- Use either the mouse or the **up and down arrow keys** to navigate through the list of items. Each of these items can be modified

individually. As an example, we'll change the menu colour scheme from its usual grey background with black text.

- Move down the list until **Menu** is highlighted and then press **Enter**. Any colour changes you now make will only apply to Menu items throughout Windows.
- Click on the **colour** box to the right of the **Item** drop down box and choose a different colour by clicking on it. Alternatively, press **Alt + L** to select the colour box. Press the **Space bar** to display the colour box (see Fig. 3). Press **Alt + O** to bring up the colour selection dialog box (see Fig. 4). Press **Alt + B** to jump to the **Basic Colours** box. Use the **arrow keys** to choose the colour you want – the highlighter is very feint in this dialog box. When the colour you want is highlighted, press the **space bar** to select it. Press **Enter** to return to the Display properties page.



Fig. 3

- Now you have changed the menu background colour, let's change the text colour on the menus. Make sure that **Menu** is still selected in the **Item** drop down box – if not then repeat the steps above to select it.
- Click on the **second colour** box on this page (directly below the first one we used), and choose a different colour by clicking on it. Alternatively, press **Alt + R** to select the **colour box**. Press the **Space bar** to display the colour box (see Fig. 3). Press **Alt + O** to bring up the colour selection dialog box (see Fig. 4). Press **Alt + B** to jump to the **Basic Colours** box. Use the **arrow keys** to choose the colour you want – the highlighter is very feint in this dialog box. When the colour you want is highlighted, press the **space bar** to select it. Press **Enter** to return to the Display properties page.
- Press **Enter** or click **OK** to return to Windows where you should be able to view your changes.

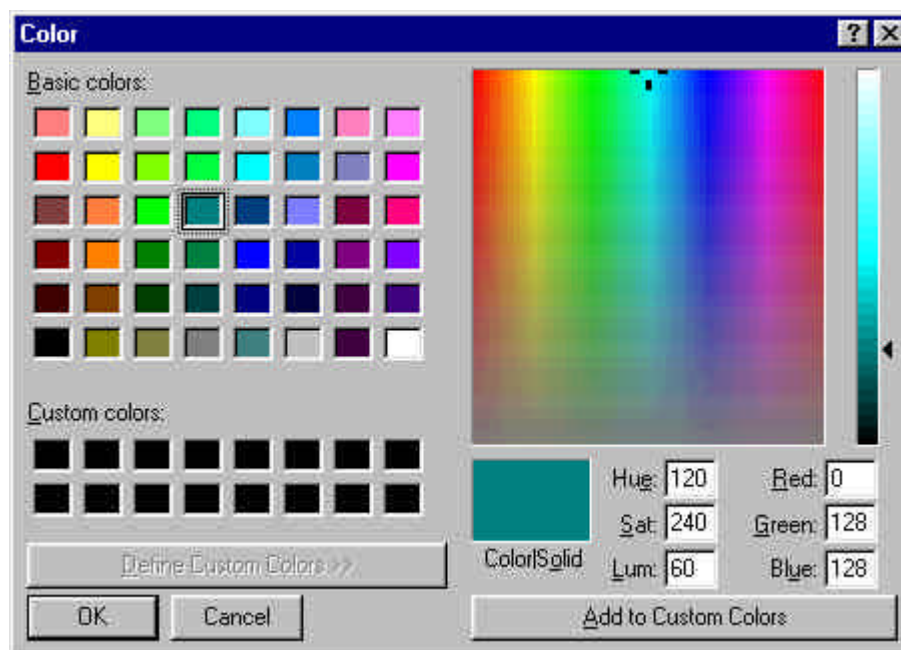


Fig. 4

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