Intermediate Computing

This class isn't designed to teach any one specific skill or program. It is intended to pick up where our Computer Basics, Beginners Internet, and Beginners Email classes leave off and to answer some of the most common computer questions library patrons ask. If you have a question about what we're discussing, or about something related, please interrupt to ask it.

Printing Your Handout

If you're reading this, you've probably already started class and gone through the process of opening a document and printing it out. I'll go through it here in the handout just in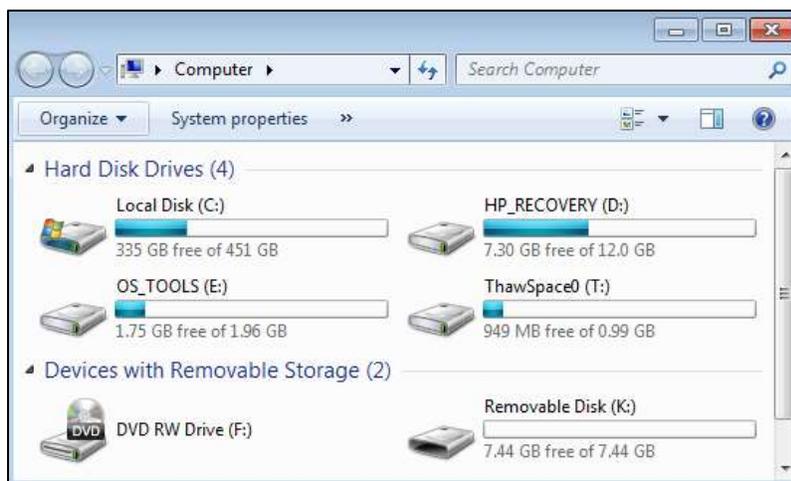 case you need a reminder later. The handout is saved on a zip drive so we'll have to connect the drive to the computer, find the correct file, open it, and print it. To connect the drive you just take off the cap and insert the drive into one of the computer's USB ports (a port is what you call a spot for plugging something into a computer and USB is the name for a common type of plug used for lots of different things).

Usually when you plug in a zip drive or put in a disc Windows will open a window asking what you'd like to do with whatever you've just attached. We could just choose "Open folder to view files," but since some computers are set not to open this menu we'll learn to do the same thing the long way. On the Desktop, double-click on My Computer to open it. My

Computer will almost always be your starting point when you need to find a file or program on your computer. You'll see a list of all the drives your computer contains (your hard drive, a CD drive, and so on), each with the letter your computer's assigned to it. Generally your hard drive will be "C" and other drives will be given sequential letters. Your zip drive will probably be named something like "Removable Drive" and whatever letter is available after all the other drives in your computer. Because different computers will have different numbers of drives the letter assigned to your zip drive will differ between machines. Once you've figured out which drive you want to open, double-click it. If you accidentally open the wrong drive, don't worry. The My Computer window has back and forward buttons just like a web browser. If you've opened the wrong drive or folder you can click the back arrow to back up. If you wanted to open a file on a floppy disk or a CD you'd follow pretty much these same steps: insert the disk or CD, open My Computer, double-click on the drive that has the file you need.
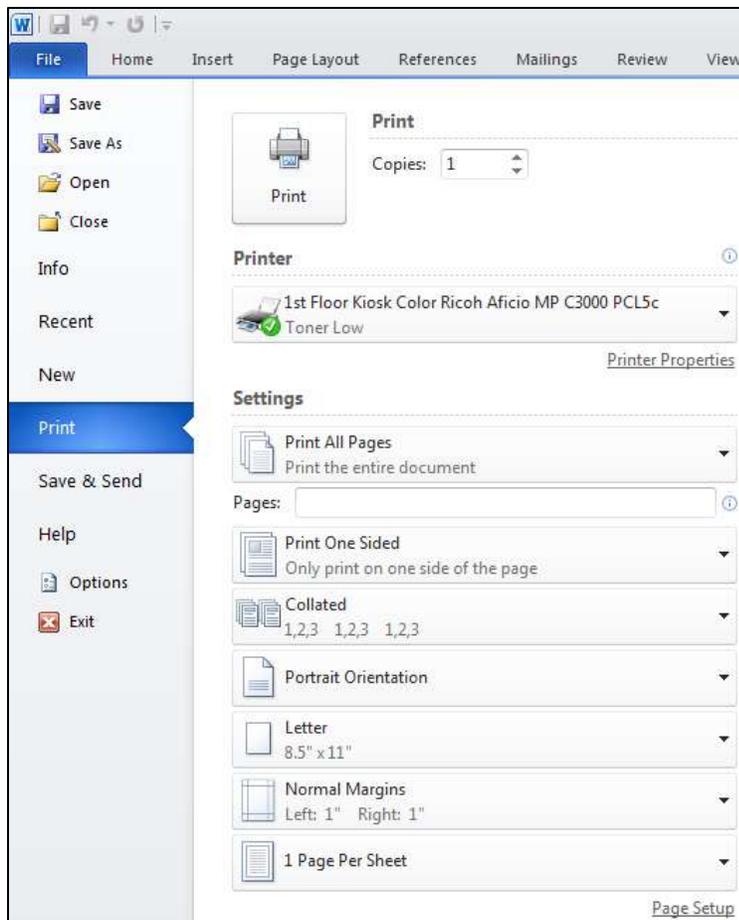
Now that you've found the file you want, all you have to do is double-click it to open it up. The computer can tell that Microsoft Word was used to make the file, so the computer will use Word to open it up. Once the document is open, click the blue File tab in the upper left corner of the window. In the File menu, click Print. This will open a screen with controls for numerous printing options. This screen also contains a print preview, which is important, especially when you're paying to print. It shows your document exactly as it will look when printed, giving you a chance to make sure everything is as you want it. We don't need to worry about all the options on this screen now. Just hit the large square Print button.

On most computers you'd be done now, the computer would go ahead and print your document. However, the library has software to make sure everyone pays for and gets what they print. A window will pop up confirming the number of pages you're printing and how much it will cost. If this all looks correct, hit OK. A new window will pop up to tell you that your print job was submitted successfully. Hit OK again. At this point you'll need to go to the Print Release Station (next to the printer near the Internet computers), enter your library card number, select

what you want to print, and insert your money. Your document will come out of the printer next to the Print Release Station.

Once you've got your handout printed you can close Word. The computer may ask if you want to save changes made to the document, just click No to close the program. Since you're done with the zip drive you can disconnect it from the computer. It's very important that you close any document, program, or window using the zip drive before you unplug it. If they computer is trying to access data while you pull the drive out you may lose important information. Once you've got everything closed, just pull the zip drive out of the computer.

Congratulations! You've learned how to insert and remove a zip drive, navigate through folders to find a specific file, open a saved Word document, and print from Word.

Printing from the Internet

A lot of people come to the library to find something on the Internet and print a copy to take with them. This isn't normally a complicated procedure, but some webpages are set up in a way that makes them print strangely.

First, let's look at a page we know will print easily. Double-click the Internet Explorer icon on your computer's desktop to get to the Internet. The first page the computer will load will be the library's website. Once the page has finished loading you can use Print Preview to see what it would look like if you printed a copy of it. In the top left of the window you'll find the word "File." Click on that to open the File Menu. In that menu select Print Preview. This will open a window to show you what the webpage will look like if you print it (like the
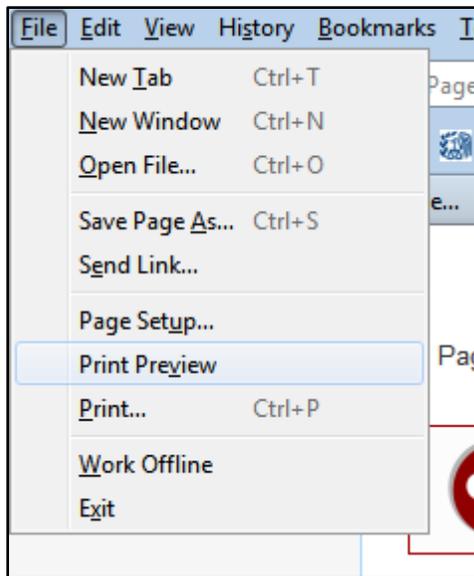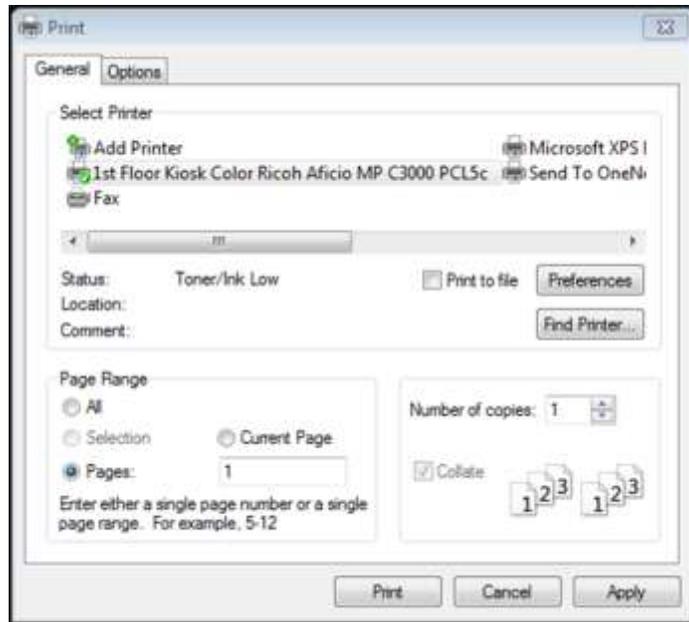
print preview you saw in Word). You'll see that the library page arranges itself nicely on one sheet of paper. If this was something you actually wanted to print you could click the picture of a printer in the top left of the window. From that point the printing process would be just like what you did to print from Word. Since you don't actually want to print this you can click the X at the top right of the window to get back to the Internet.

Next, let's look at a page we know won't print easily. In Internet Explorer click on the address bar, erase the library's web address, and enter www.wikipedia.com. Wikipedia is a free online encyclopedia. We're not using it as an example because it's particularly bad or good at what it does. We're only interested in the fact that it prints messily. Do a Print Preview just like you did on the library's website (go to File and click Print Preview). You'll see that this site prints on several pages with a lot of blank space on each page. If you only wanted one part of this webpage it would be a waste to print all of the pages. However, it's easy to print only parts of a webpage. One option is to print only certain pages of the webpage. From your Print Preview, click the printer icon in the upper left to open a window of printing options. On the left side of this window you'll find a box labeled Page Range. The default selection in this box is All, but you can select Pages and enter the numbers of the pages you want. So if you only want the first page you can enter "1." This option will also let you print a range of pages (like "1-3") or certain numbers (like "1, 3, 7"). After you've selected the pages you want, you can click Print and continue as you did when printing your handout.

While we're looking at the Print Window there are a couple other things for us to note. Just to the right of the Page Range box you'll find a box labeled Copies. This is how you'll control how many copies you print. You'll see a white box with the number 1 in it with small up and down arrows next to the number. You can click the up and down arrows to increase or decrease the number of copies you print. Alternately, you can erase the 1 and replace it with the number of copies you'd like. This box is also where you'll control whether you print in black and white or color. Along the top of the window you'll see your different options for which printer to use. If you select the black and white printer you'll print in black and white. If you select the color printer you'll print in color. If you don't select anything the computer assumes you want black and white. This process of selecting black and white or color is specific to the library computers. If you're on a computer somewhere else this step will differ based on what sort of printer is attached to the computer you're using.

Copy, Cut, and Paste

Another option for printing only part of a webpage is to use copy and paste to make a new copy of the parts you want. You can make this copy in a Microsoft Word, where you'll be able to print a nice, clean version. In fact, copy and paste are useful for all sorts of things. You can use them any time you want to move text,

pictures, or even whole files from one place to another. Copy and Paste are built right into Windows so they'll work in any program.

Let's start by copying some text off of the Wikipedia page we've already got open. We'll copy today's featured article. In order to copy text you need to use highlighting to let the computer know exactly what you want to copy. To highlight, move your pointer to just to the left of the beginning of the article, press and hold the left mouse button, move the point down and to the right to the end of the article, and release the button. Once you've got the entire description highlighted, you're ready to copy it. Move your pointer to the center of the highlighted text and click the right mouse button to open a menu. In this menu, use the left mouse button to select Copy. Everything you had highlighted will be copied to the computer's virtual clipboard. Anything saved on the clipboard remains there until either the computer is turned off or something else gets copied or cut to the clipboard.

Now that we've copied something we need somewhere to paste it. Minimize the Internet Explorer window by clicking the small rectangle in the top right corner of the window. This will keep Internet Explorer open but move it out of the way so you can see the desktop. Double-click the Word icon to open the program. This will automatically open a new blank document. With your pointer somewhere on the blank page, click the right mouse button. In the menu that opens you'll see three icons for Paste Options. Choose the one on the right (the clipboard with a black "A" on it) to paste only text. All the text you copied will appear in your new

Word document. You can paste the same text as many times as you like without re-copying it. Remember that your pasted text will always start where your pointer was when you clicked the right mouse button.

Next, let's try copying and pasting the picture that goes with our article. To do so, we need to get back to Internet Explorer. On the blue bar along the bottom of the screen you'll see a rectangular button for each program we have open. Click the button labeled with the Internet Explorer to get back to the Internet without closing Word. Before we can copy our picture we need to give the mouse a click to get rid of the highlighting on the text. Since we're copying just one picture instead of a block of text we don't need to highlight anything; just right-click on the picture you want to copy to open up the menu then select Copy Image. Switch back to Word and click the right mouse button. This time select the paste option on the left (the clipboard with some red lines and a paintbrush) to keep the picture's original formatting.
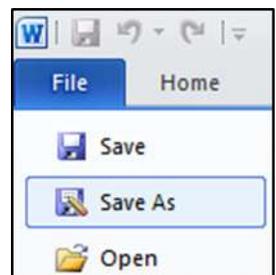
Copying and pasting into Word can be a good way to print a picture from the Internet without getting a lot of other text and things on the page with it.Word also makes it easy to enlarge a picture. Click on the picture you just pasted and a border will appear around it. This border has a small circle at each corner and a small square on each side. You can click and drag any of these points to enlarge the picture. If you grab the picture on a side the image will distort, but if you grab a corner it will enlarge proportionally. However, you'll notice that a picture can only be enlarged so much before the quality suffers.
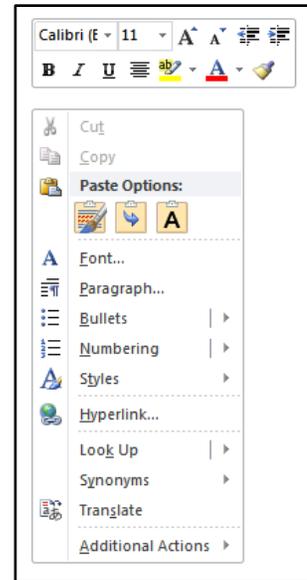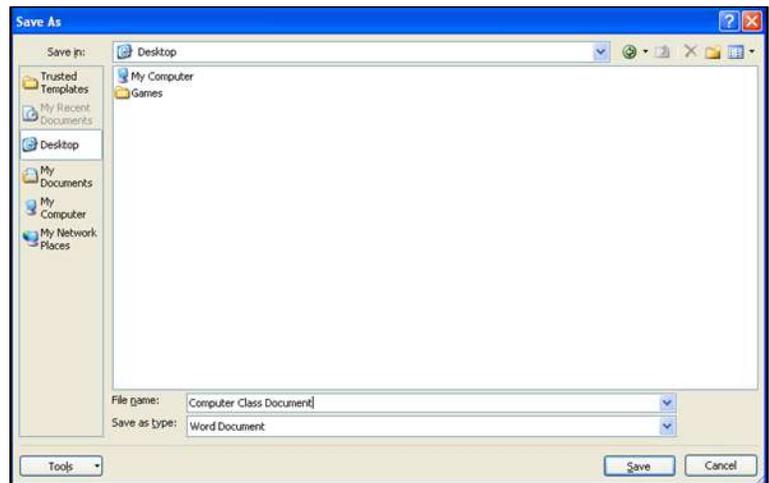
If you're working with a document that you're allowed to change, like a Word document or an email, you can use cut instead of copy. The two functions are nearly identical but while copy duplicates your highlighted text cut removes it. To use cut, highlight what you want, right-click on it, and select Cut from the menu that appears. Your highlighted text will be moved to the clipboard. Now you can paste it just like you did with the text you copied.

<p style="text-align:center">Saving and File Management</p>

If the Word document we've been working on was actually something worth keeping we'd want to save it. To do so, click the blue File tab in the top left corner of the window and then, in the menu that opens, on Save As. This will open a window that will let us choose where to save our document, what to call it, and what format to use. The default is to save things to the My Documents folder. This would be a reasonable idea except fo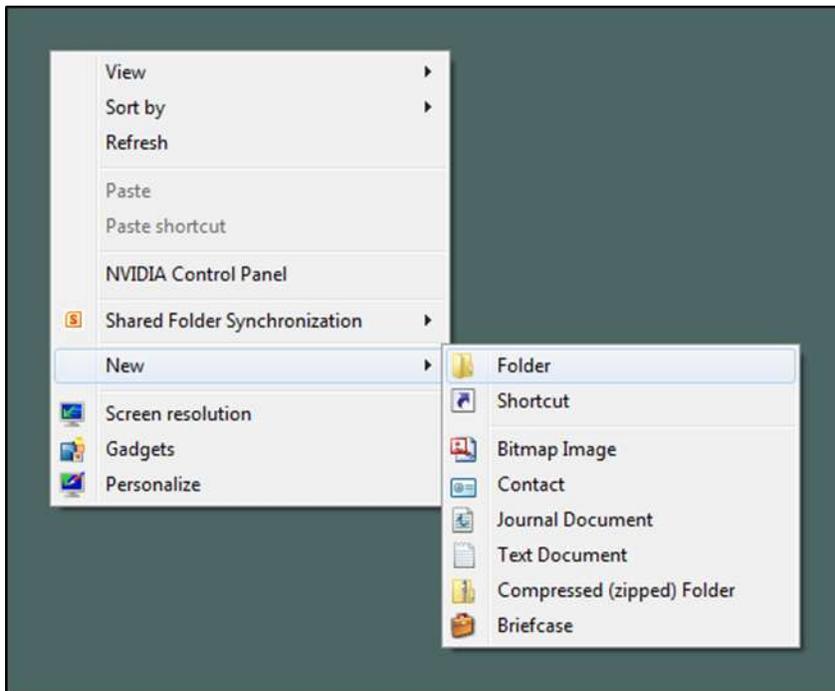r the fact that the library computers are configured in a way that makes the My Documents folder sort of hard to find. Instead, the simplest thing to do is to save your file right on the Desktop. Simply click Desktop from the list on the left side of the Save As window.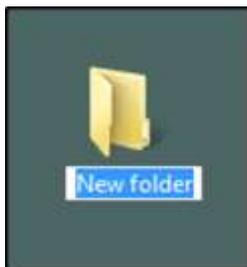 The white bar across the top of the window shows the location you currently have selected. The large white box in the middle of the window shows the other files already in that location. Near the bottom of the window you'll find two white bars. The first is labeled File name. This is where you'll type in the name you want to give the file. Ideally you'll give

it a short name that lets you know what the file is. The second is labeled Save as type. We don't need to worry too much about this box right now, but clicking on it will open a menu with all the formats Word is able to save in. This can be useful if you need to make a file that someone without the latest version of Word will be able to open. Once you've chosen what you need in this window, click Save to save the file.

If you minimize both Word and Internet Explorer so you can see the Desktop you'll see your file has appeared. Of course, if you were going to save a lot of things here you'd want to keep them more organized than just having them all sitting on your desktop. To organize them we can make some folders. If you right-click on the Desktop a menu will appear. In that menu, move your mouse pointer over the word New; a sub-menu will appear next to the first menu. Click on Folder in this sub-menu. A new folder will appear on the Desktop, waiting for you to name it. Type a name for your new folder and hit enter. There are a couple different ways you could move your Word file into your new folder. You could right-click the file to cut it and then right-click the folder to paste. This would paste your file

into the folder. You could also click your file, hold the button down, and drag the file over the folder. When you release the mouse button the file will move into the folder.

If we want to get even more organized you can make more folders inside the folder you just made. Perhaps the first folder is for everything you write but you want to subdivide that into folders for work and home. Double-click on your new folder to open it. A window will pop up showing everything inside your folder (which is just your Word file right now). You can make a folder here just like you did on the Desktop. Right-click on your new folder's window to open the menu, go to New, and then click Folder.

If you move a folder everything in it moves, too. So you can move both of your folders and your Word file all at once simply by moving your first file. Let's save them all to your zip drive. Insert the drive into a USB port. Now double-click My Computer to open it, find the icon for your zip drive, and double-click it (this is all exactly what we did to get to your handout at the start of class). Now that

you've got a window showing what's on your zip drive, click and drag your folder into the zip drive window. The computer will copy the file and everything in it. Now you're ready to remove the zip drive and take everything you've made today with you when you leave the library.