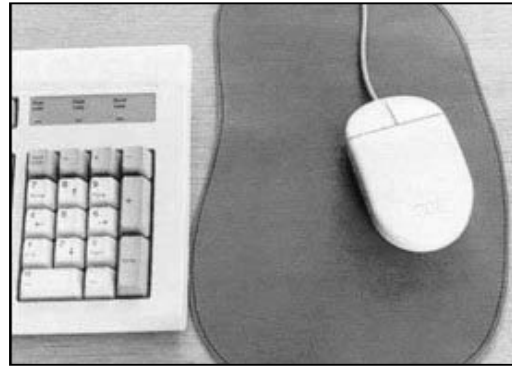


## Using the Mouse

Now that you know how to boot up a computer and how to shut it down, let's work on everything else that happens in between. Learning how to use the computer mouse is an important start to this process.



**Screen Shot #7**

A computer mouse (see Screen Shot #7) is a small plastic device attached to the computer that controls the movement of the pointer you see on the computer screen. It is one of the ways for you to communicate with your computer, including telling it which program you'd like to work with, which character to erase and the email you'd like to read next. Essentially, the mouse is one way for you to inform the computer of your choices.

At the New York Public Library's desktop computers, chances are that you will, or already have been, using the mouse frequently. It's usually located to the right of the keyboard and often looks like what you see in Screen Shot #7.

### ***Seeing the Two Buttons on the Mouse***

Pick up the mouse in your hand and orient the mouse so it looks like the one you see in Screen Shot #7 above. Keeping this orientation, place the mouse back onto a hard surface (like your desk).

Push your finger down near the top, left-hand corner of the mouse. You should hear a soft clicking sound. You've just clicked on the mouse's left button. This action is called a "left-click".

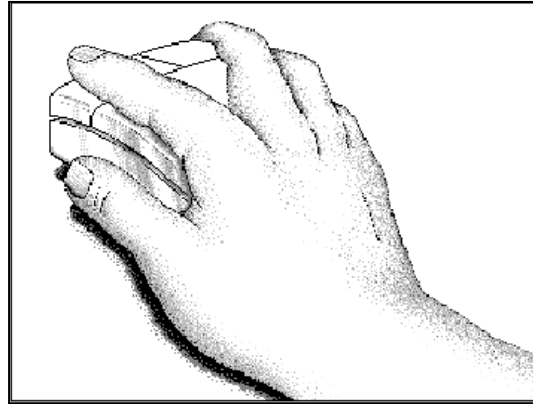
Now, move your pushing finger to the top, right-hand corner of the mouse and push down again. Again, you should hear a soft clicking sound. You've just clicked on the mouse's right button. This action is called a "right-click". A menu will appear on the screen (see Screen Shot #9 on page 11). To get rid of this menu, left-click your mouse on an empty area of the computer screen.

Lift the mouse back up again and make sure you can distinguish between the left-click button and the right-click button.

### ***Holding the Mouse***

You can save yourself a lot of trouble if you learn how to hold the mouse properly. Assuming you are right-handed (see below if you are not):

1. Place your right thumb on the left-hand side of the mouse (see Screen Shot #8)
2. Place your right fourth finger on the right-hand side of the mouse
3. Gently lay your index (second) finger on top of the mouse's left-button. If needed, adjust the position of your hand so that the index finger does not extend beyond the top end of the mouse
4. Gently lay your middle finger on top of the mouse's right-button. If needed, adjust the position of your hand so that the middle finger does not extend beyond the top end of the mouse



**Screen Shot #8**

If you are left-handed, move the mouse to the left of the keyboard and follow the instructions found in the chapter, entitled, "Microsoft Windows 2000", to change the mouse settings to accommodate left-handed users.

## ***Moving the Mouse***

With the mouse lying on a level, clean surface, and holding it like we described above, try moving your mouse to the right and to the left. You'll see the mouse pointer (usually in the shape of an arrow) move right and left on the screen, accordingly.

If the mouse doesn't move smoothly, get a mouse pad (usually, a 6" x 8" rectangular, plastic pad with a foam backing). Place your mouse on the mouse pad and see if that helps the roller ball on the bottom of your mouse roll more smoothly.

Now, try moving the mouse away from and towards you. That will cause the mouse pointer to move to the top and bottom of the screen, respectively.

## **Common Pitfalls when Moving the Mouse**

Learning to use the mouse for the first time isn't easy. Give yourself a chance to practice and try to avoid these common pitfalls:

- ❖ The mouse isn't broken just because it doesn't respond when you wave it around in the air like a magic wand. The mouse just needs to be lying on a flat, smooth surface in order to operate.
- ❖ If you run out of room to move on your mouse pad and can't reach a spot on the screen, try picking up the mouse and placing it back down in the middle of the mouse pad. You'll notice that while the mouse is in the air, the mouse pointer on the screen does not move.
- ❖ A mouse is not like a steering wheel of a car. You should never turn your mouse to the left or to the right with your wrist. Always keep your wrist locked straight.

## ***Clicking the Buttons***

OK. You are doing great! You've already learned how to hold and move the mouse and also where the left and right-click buttons are located.

To complete your understanding of the mouse, let's discuss the function of the left and right-click buttons:

### **Left-click button**

Using the left-click button allows you to make choices and to open computer files and programs. Left-click once if you want to make a choice. Left-click twice (in rapid succession) if your choice involves opening a file or program. If this distinction is not clear to you yet, just remember this rule of thumb:



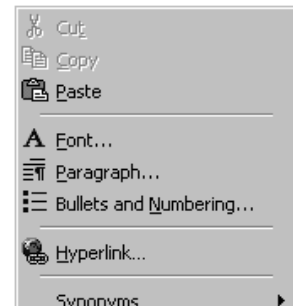
***Always start with clicking once. If nothing happens after a couple of seconds, go back and click two times quickly.***

Here's an example to help you distinguish between the occasions when you need to single or double-click: If you want to create a letter using the Microsoft Word program, you will need to double click with the left-click button in order to open up that program. Later, if you are working in the program and you want to underline a word, you just need to single-click on the underline button (a big "U") found within Microsoft Word.

### **Right-click button**

The right-click button provides you with shortcuts. We encourage you to focus on left-clicking until you've got the fundamentals mastered.

If you're curious, try a single right-click now. A menu of



**Screen Shot #9**

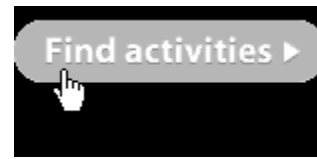
options should appear listing out your choice of shortcuts (if you right-click inside Microsoft Word, you'll see something like Screen Shot #9). Depending on what you are doing on your computer, the menu of shortcut choices changes to adjust for the program or context that you are in. For example, if you are surfing the Internet, you will have one menu of right-click shortcuts whereas if you are typing in Microsoft Word, you will have another menu of right-click shortcuts.

### **Common Pitfalls when Clicking the Mouse**

Try to avoid these common pitfalls when clicking the mouse:

- ❖ Don't click too hard! You don't need to use very much strength when clicking the mouse. Sometimes, our students click so hard that the whole mouse moves off the target they're trying to click on.
- ❖ Don't move the mouse while clicking. You've got to keep your hand steady and solidly in place.

Position your mouse pointer carefully! Make sure the tip of the mouse pointer arrow is on target. When you're on the Internet, your mouse pointer will often change to the shape of a hand (see Screen Shot #10). In such a situation, be sure the index finger (rather than the palm of the hand) is on target. Being precise with your mouse pointer is important for all computer applications.



**Screen Shot #10**