

## How to Cut, Copy and Paste



Almost every computer operating system from the first Windows and Mac computers to iPhones, iPads, and Android devices support the basic, yet powerful functions of cut, copy and paste. Yet it is surprising how many people do not know how to exploit these capabilities. In this month's newsletter, I will provide a basic introduction covering how to use these essential features on a computer (note that how to perform these functions on a touch screen such as a mobile device is not covered in this newsletter).

Use of cut, copy and paste involves 5 simple steps:

- 1) Navigate to the data to be selected
- 2) Select the data
- 3) Either cut to move the selected data or copy to copy the selected data
- 4) Navigate to where you want to put the selected data
- 5) Paste the data

When you cut or copy, the selected data are placed into a special storage area called the clipboard. Typically the clipboard will only hold data from a single cut or copy at a time. Any data that is stored in the clipboard via a cut or copy command will remain there until it is overwritten by another cut or copy command. When you paste the data, the data is not removed from the clipboard and can be pasted over and over as many times as you wish. However, when you shutdown or restart your computer, any data that was being held in the clipboard is erased.

In order to cut or copy text, you must first highlight (select) the text. There are four standard ways of selecting text:

- 1) Use your mouse: Find the location you want to start selecting from and place your mouse cursor there. Then press and hold the left mouse button and drag the cursor to the last character you wish to highlight and then let go. As you drag the mouse you will notice the text area will now be highlighted.
- 2) Use the applications edit menu to select all: Applications that support cut, copy and paste usually contain an edit menu. Under the edit menu will be an option to Select All. When you click on that menu option the entire contents of the file will be highlighted. The same function can be performed by pressing the Control key and then the letter A.

- 3) Right click: Most applications will allow you to right click anywhere in the document and then left click Select All to highlight the entire contents of the file.
- 4) Use your keyboard: by using the arrow keys while holding down the shift key, you can select a range of text. Place your mouse cursor at the location you wish to start highlighting and then press and hold the shift key while you cursor with the keyboard's arrow keys. As long as you are holding down the shift key, as you move the cursor with the arrow keys the data you are moving the cursor over will be highlighted. You can also use the shift key to select a range. Again move the mouse cursor to the location you wish to start highlighting and left click. Then move the cursor to the last location you wish to highlight, press the shift key and then left mouse click again.

Selecting files and folders is very similar to selecting text. Again, there are four ways of selecting files or folders:

- 1) Use your mouse: Multiple files and folders can be selected by dragging the mouse cursor around these files. Left click in an empty space next to a folder and while keeping your left mouse button pressed, drag your mouse to create a square or a rectangle around those files or folders you wish to select. As your drag the mouse, those items contained in the box will be highlighted. When you are done, release the left mouse button.
- 2) Use the applications edit menu to select all: If there is an edit menu in the program you are using to view your files and folders, there will likely be a Select All option. When you click on that menu option all the files in the folder you are viewing will become selected. The same function can be performed by pressing the Control key and then the letter A.
- 3) Use the Shift key: The mouse and the shift key can be used to select a contiguous range of files or folders. Left click once on a file or folder to select it. Then press and hold the shift key and left click the item at the end of the range. All the items between and including the first left click and the last will be selected.
- 4) Use the Control key: The mouse and the control key can be used to select individual items that are not contiguous in a range. Hold down the control key and with that key held down, left mouse click each item you wish to select.

Regardless of the method of selection used, once data has been selected, you can choose to either cut or copy the selected data. There are three ways to cut or copy data:

- 1) You can hold down the Control key and press an X to cut or a C to copy.
- 2) You can right click over any of the selected data and choose Cut or Copy.
- 3) If there is an Edit menu, click on it and choose Cut or Copy.

Once you have cut or copied the selected data, it will be in your clipboard. Move the mouse cursor to the area you wish to place the cut or copied data, and do the following:

- 1) First, if you are dealing with text data, left click where you want the data inserted. If you are dealing with files or folders, skip this step. Then do one of the following:
  - a. You can hold down the Control key and press a V.
  - b. Right click and choose Paste.
  - c. If there is an Edit menu, click on it and choose Paste.

Remember, if you choose cut, then the selected data will be removed from the original location when you paste.

Learning how to use cut, copy and paste will dramatically improve your productivity. Be sure to practice so that you don't inadvertently delete something you really want.

*This newsletter, as well as all past newsletters, can be found on my web site (<http://steve.gimnicher.com>).*