## **QUICK TASK FOR JAWS:** CUSTOMIZING THE WINDOWS 7 TASKBAR

### Background

In the default configuration, the Taskbar is located at the bottom of your screen to the right of the Start Button. Unlike the Desktop, which hides behind your open applications, the Taskbar stays on top and remains visible. You can opt to change the position and visibility of the Taskbar through customization.

You may customize the appearance of your Taskbar to determine how your application icons display and how they group together when you have opened more than one item in the application.

When you press **ALT + TAB** to rotate through your open applications, only active windows display in the rotation. If you have multiple items open in the same application (for example, three Word documents), all items are included in the rotation.

When you move through the Taskbar by pressing the **arrow** keys or by holding the **Windows Key** and tapping the letter **T**, both active applications and applications that are pinned to the Taskbar, even if they are not active, are included in the list.

### Taskbar and Start Menu Properties Dialog Box

#### Taskbar Properties

You may customize the appearance of your Taskbar to determine how your application icons are displayed and how they group together when you have more than one item open in the application. JAWS reads the items differently depending on the setting you choose.

To set the Taskbar properties, press the **WINDOWS KEY**, or **CONTROL + ESCAPE**, followed by **ESCAPE** to move your focus to the Start button. Press the **APPLICATIONS KEY** to open the context menu, **DOWN ARROW** to select **Properties**, and then press **Enter**. This opens the **Taskbar and Start Menu Properties** dialog box.

Press **CONTROL + TAB** until you are on the **Taskbar** page of the dialog box.

Use the **Tab** key to move between the fields. Press **Spacebar** to check or uncheck the checkboxes. Use the **Up** and **Down Arrow** keys to move through the combo boxes.

**Taskbar appearance:**

* **Lock the taskbar**: Check the checkbox; this is the default setting. Locking the taskbar keeps you from inadvertently resizing it.
* **Auto-hide the taskbar**: Uncheck the checkbox; this is the default setting. If you Auto-hide the taskbar, you can only see it by using your mouse to point to the place where you last saw it.
* **Use small icons**: Uncheck the checkbox; this is the default setting.
* **Taskbar location on screen**: Select **Bottom** from the choices in the combo box; this is the default setting. The other choices are **Left**, **Right**, and **Top**.
* **Taskbar buttons**: Select **Always combine, hide labels** from the choices in the combo box. This is the default setting. The other choices are **Combine when taskbar is full** and **Never combine**.

**Notification area, Customize button:** Pressing **Spacebar** or **Enter** on this button opens the **Notification Area Icons** portion of the Control Panel, allowing you to select which icons and notifications appear on the Taskbar. Your focus is on the **OK** button when you open this window.

* **Always show all icons and notifications on the taskbar**: Press **Shift + Tab** to move to this checkbox. Press **spacebar** to check the checkbox. As a JAWS user, you always want all icons in the notification area, also known as the System Tray, to be visible. Press **Tab** to move to the **OK** button. Press **Enter** to save your changes and return to the **Taskbar and Start Menu Properties** dialog box.

The notification area is located on the right side of the Taskbar by default. It contains program icons that provide status and notifications about things like incoming email, updates, and network connectivity. If your focus is on the Taskbar, press **Tab** to move to the notification area. JAWS identifies the notification area as the "**System Tray**." Use your **arrow** keys to move through the items in the notification area.

As a JAWS user, an easier way to access the items in the System Tray is to press **Insert + F11**. This keystroke opens the **Select a System Tray Icon** dialog box.

**OK button**: After you have made your changes to the Taskbar appearance and customized your notification area, **Tab** to the **OK** button and press **Enter** to save your changes.

#### Taskbar buttons, further discussion

If your Taskbar buttons are set to **Always combine, hide labels**, which is the default setting in Windows 7, each program in the Taskbar appears as a single icon without a text label. This is true no matter how many items are open in the application.

If your Taskbar buttons are set to **Combine when taskbar is full**, each item is an individual, labeled icon. When the Taskbar gets crowded, programs with multiple open items collapse into a single icon.

If your Taskbar buttons are set to **Never combine**, icons never collapse into a single program icon. As more windows open, the icons just get smaller, and smaller, and eventually they will scroll.

Depending on whether the application is active and whether a single item or multiple items are open in the application, JAWS reads the icons differently.

* If the program is pinned to the Taskbar, but not active, as you press **Windows Key + T** to cycle through the Taskbar or use the **ARROW KEYS** to move through the Taskbar, JAWS announces the program name, followed by the word, "**Button**." For example, the Internet Explorer icon is typically pinned to the Taskbar. If Internet Explorer is not open, JAWS says, "**Internet Explorer button**." Press **Spacebar** or **enter** to activate the program.
* If a single item is associated with the icon, JAWS announces the program name, sometimes preceded by the name of a particular document or item, and followed by the words, "**Button menu**." For example, if the **SSA Intranet** homepage was open when you moved to the Internet Explorer icon on the Taskbar, JAWS would say, "**SSA Intranet, The Official Agency Portal, Windows Internet Explorer button menu**." Press **Spacebar** or **Enter** to move focus to the item.
* If multiple items are associated with the icon, JAWS announces the program name followed by the words, "**Button menu**." For example, if the **SSA Intranet** homepage and the **OL – Employees with Disabilities** homepage were open, when you moved to the Internet Explorer icon on the Taskbar, JAWS would say, "**Windows Internet Explorer button menu**."

Press **Spacebar** or **Enter** to move focus to the Task Switcher list box. This feature is active if more than one item is open in the application. **Down arrow** through the open items in the list box. Press **Spacebar** or **Enter** to move focus to the item. Press **ESCAPE** to exit the Task Switcher list box and return to the Taskbar.