



[Editor's Note: Be sure to also read Beth's follow up to this article. Her Office Toolbar Q&A will provide you with more details. Access it here: [What?? No Office Shortcut Bar for Office 2003?? Q & A](#)]

Yes, it is true. Microsoft removed the Office Shortcut Bar (OSB) from Office 2003.

BUT all is not lost.

There are several free 3rd party alternatives available, and you can install the OSB from a previous version of Office, but for those for those who would rather not install additional software and utilize toolbar functionality already available in Windows then read on!

A Windows toolbar may fit your needs perfectly. I have found a Windows toolbar has more functionality than the OSB, plus it's much easier to customize.

Creating a Windows Toolbar

1. Create a new folder with shortcuts to your applications or shortcuts to folders you commonly use.

If you are already using the OSB you will find Office application shortcuts under \Shortcut Bar\Office in the Office installation path. You can use this folder or copy/move the shortcuts to another folder.

**HINT: I put the shortcuts in a folder called c:\shortcutbar**

IMPORTANT: Only create shortcuts in the folder - do not move folders or applications!

2. Right-click an empty area the Windows task bar and select Toolbars -> New toolbar...

If you can not find an empty area, use the area to the right of the Windows Start button.

3. Select the Browse command, navigate to your shortcuts folder and click OK.

You will see your new toolbar appear in the Windows task bar.

4. Minimize all windows, or click the Show Desktop command in the Quick Launch bar.

5. Drag your new toolbar off the Windows task bar. You can drag it to an edge of your screen if you want your new toolbar docked. **NOTE: Unlock the task bar (right click -> unlock toolbar), otherwise you can't click and drag.**

6. Resize the toolbar if necessary so all shortcuts display on a single row:

**More hints: Right click on the new toolbar at the side, and set the following options:**

- **You should absolutely click "always on top"** This makes sure that the other windows you open don't appear on top of the toolbar. **All windows will open with the "X" just to the left of the new toolbar.**

- **Unclick Tittles**
- **Unclick text**

**You are done.**

Figure 1 - Docked Windows Toolbar

Customizing the Windows Toolbar

Once your toolbar has been created you can utilize various customizations:

- \* To open your shortcut folder to manage shortcuts: Right-click an empty area of the toolbar and select Open Folder .
- \* To remove the text to the right of the icons: Right-click an empty area of the toolbar and deselect Show Text

Figure 2 - Docked toolbar with icon text removed

- \* To keep the toolbar on top of other windows: Right-click an empty are of the toolbar and select Always on Top
- \* To turn on Auto-Hide: Right-click an empty area of the toolbar and select Auto-Hide .
- \* To rearrange the toolbar shortcuts: Drag the shortcut to the desired location:

Figure 3 - Moving a toolbar shortcut

- \* To modify the display icon: Right-click the shortcut and select Properties. Select the Shortcut tab if necessary and click the command Change Icon.

Figure 4 - Shortcut Properties

- \* To modify the tool tip: Right-click the shortcut and on the General tab change the name of the Shortcut.

You may find the Office 2003 shortcuts contain additional text. To workaround this issue, create new shortcuts to application's executable file.

- \* To view large icons: Right-click an empty area of the toolbar and select View | Large Icons

Additional Customizations

Now that you have your toolbar you can easily modify it by dragging new shortcuts directly onto the toolbar.

Note: To create a shortcut right-drag the object and select Create Shortcuts Here. Or if copying an exiting shortcut use Copy Here.

For example if you find a shortcut in your Start menu you would like to see on your toolbar, right-drag it from the Start menu onto your toolbar and select Copy Here.

### Adding Additional Toolbars

You can create additional toolbars for shortcut folders and add them to your main toolbar.

If you resize the toolbar to display only the toolbar title (same name as the folder) it will display vertically when you click the More (>>) command.

The sub toolbar needs to be placed at the beginning or the end of the toolbar to create the menu effect.

### Figure 5 - Toolbar with sub toolbar displayed as menu Drawbacks

As with any feature there are a few drawbacks.

One major drawback I found is if you close the toolbar you lose it. It can be easily recreated from your toolbar folder but you have to go through position, size, on top, etc, all over again.

A second drawback for some is unlike the OSB a Windows toolbar does not support the Auto Fit into Title Bar area option. I missed it at first but I happily traded it for ease in customization.

### Conclusion

I gave up on the OSB long ago due to my virus scanner causing a conflict with the On Top option. I decided my virus scanner was more important (it was a tough choice!) and searched for an alternative. If you are using a previous version of Office, you too, may decide a Windows toolbar is more efficient. Once I found the Windows toolbars I have never looked back!

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Beth's Q&A:

<http://pubs.logicalexpressions.com/Pub0009/LPMArticle.asp?ID=450>

What?? No Office Shortcut Bar for Office 2003?? Q & A  
by Beth Melton, MVP, MOS Master Instructor

Skill rating level 2.

When I wrote the first article on the missing OSB, What?? No Office Shortcut Bar for Office 2003??, I never realized how much feedback I would receive. My thanks to everyone who took the time to rate the article and offer feedback! This article covers answers to feedback questions I have compiled during the last several months.

Q & A Topics

- \* Is there an easier way to create a new toolbar?
- \* What about the special Outlook shortcuts?
- \* What about shortcuts for Open Office Document and New Office Document?
- \* Why can't I drag the new toolbar off the Windows Taskbar?
- \* Do I need to create all of my shortcuts in my shortcut folder?
- \* How do I change the icons for my shortcuts?

Is there an easier way to create a new toolbar?

Absolutely! You can create a new toolbar from any folder simply by dragging the folder to the edge of your Desktop. The key is to make sure you are able to view Desktop in order to create the new toolbar. So if you are using an Exploring window, such as My Computer, make sure it isn't maximized and that you can see the Desktop.

What about the special Outlook shortcuts?

You can create shortcuts for various Outlook tasks such as New Message, New Contact, New Appointment, etc. Here are the steps you need to use to create them:

1. Right-click an empty area of your shortcut folder and select New | Shortcut
2. Click the Browse button and navigate to the folder for Outlook.exe. For Outlook 2003 the path would be similar to the following (quotes included):

"C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office11\OUTLOOK.EXE"

3. Place your cursor at the end of the path, after the closing quote, add a space and one of the following switches depending on which type of shortcut you want to create:

Appointment

/c IPM.Appointment

Contact

/c IPM.Contact

Email

/c IPM.Note

Journal Entry

/c IPM.Activity

Note

/c IPM.StickyNote

Post

/c IPM.Post

Task

/c IPM.Task

For a new email, the Shortcut Target would look something like:

```
"C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office11\OUTLOOK.EXE" /c IPM.Note
```

Figure 1 - New Email Shortcut Properties

Quick Tips:

- If you already have a shortcut to Outlook you may be able to copy the shortcut and simply modify the Target. To determine if this is possible, right-click the shortcut and select Properties. If the Target on the Shortcut tab is enabled and displays the path for Outlook.exe then it can be modified.
- To modify the icon for the Outlook shortcut see [How do I change the icons for my shortcuts?](#) What about shortcuts for Open Office Document and New Office Document?

You should be able to find the Open Office Document and New Office Document shortcuts on your Start Menu. If they have been removed then use the Windows Search utility to locate them. Once found you can right-drag them from the Search results to your toolbar and select Copy Here when prompted.

If you are still unable to find them:

1. Open the Help menu in any Office application
2. Select Detect and Repair
3. Make sure the Restore my shortcuts while repairing option is selected
4. Click Start to begin

## Figure 2 - Detect and Repair Dialog box

Why can't I drag the new toolbar off the Windows Taskbar?

Chances are you have the Windows Taskbar locked. To unlock the Windows Taskbar:

1. Right-click an empty area of the taskbar and if Lock the taskbar has a check mark next to it, select the command again to unlock the taskbar.

Do I need to create all of my shortcuts in my shortcut folder?

If you can see your Windows toolbar you can simply drag files and folders to your toolbar to automatically create a shortcut. This includes dragging files and folders from your Open and Save As dialog boxes as well.

Notes

- This does not apply to existing shortcuts such as those found in your Start menu since dragging the shortcut will move the shortcut instead of creating a new one. If in doubt, right-drag the item to your toolbar and select Copy Here or Create Shortcuts Here when prompted.

- You must be using Office XP or higher to drag files from the Open and Save As dialog boxes.

How do I change the icons for my shortcuts?

Modifying the icon used for a shortcut on a Windows toolbar is identical to modifying an icon for any shortcut by using the shortcut's Properties.

For Folder Shortcuts

1. Right-click the shortcut and select Properties
2. Select the Customize tab
3. Click the Change Icon... command found under the Folder icons section
4. Select a new icon from those provided or click the Browse... command and navigate to another file containing icons.

For document or program shortcuts

1. Right-click the shortcut and select Properties
2. Click the Change Icon... command found on the Shortcut tab

3. Select a new icon from those provided or click the Browse... command and navigate to another file containing icons.

Icon resources

- The Office application executable files (\*.exe) and most executables contain icons related to the application or program. For example you can find the icons for your special Outlook shortcuts in Outlook.exe
- Shell32.dll

Figure 3 - Shel32.dll Icons

- Moricons.dll (Most of these are for old DOS programs and most are no longer relevant)
- Use Windows Search and search for \*.ico files
- Obtain an icon extraction utility such as IconFinder

Share your Tips and Tricks

If you have a tip or trick for using a Windows toolbar you would like to share let us know! I would be happy to compile a Tips and Tricks article and pass them along to TechTrax readers.