

# A better way to jump

practice

PRO

## from one program to another

Switching between open programs is probably one of the most frequent things we all do as we work on our computers. To do this, most of us use the mouse to select an icon on the Task bar.

There is a faster way.

Remember that using a mouse to switch programs will likely mean taking your hands off the keyboard. Keeping them on the keyboard by using a keyboard shortcut will allow you to more quickly switch between programs. Two keyboard shortcuts allow you to do this.

Alt+Tab will open a small grey pop-up window in the centre of your screen. It has an icon for each program that is open. Hold down the Alt key, and then hit Tab to jump from one icon to the next. A brief description of each icon appears in a text box at the bottom of the pop-up (it is actually the text that appears in the titlebar of the window for that program). Simply release both keys when you get to the program you want.

Alt+Esc will cycle you through all open program windows. Hold down the Alt key, and repeatedly hit Esc to move through the open programs. With this shortcut each program appears on the screen. Simply release the Alt key when you get to the program you want.

You can also use a variation of this to change from one document to another within a single program. For example, to switch between two or more letters that you have open within Word, use Ctrl+F6 to cycle you through all open document windows within any single program. Hold down the Ctrl key, and repeatedly hit F6. Again, release both keys when you get to the document you want. This works on many, but not all Windows programs.



Old habits will die hard. To switch programs you will find yourself reaching for your mouse without thinking about it. To help you remember to use these shortcuts, put a Post-it or other small reminder on the edge of your monitor.

*Dan Pinnington is Director of practicePRO, LAWPRO's risk and change management program. He can be reached at [dan.pinnington@lawpro.ca](mailto:dan.pinnington@lawpro.ca).*