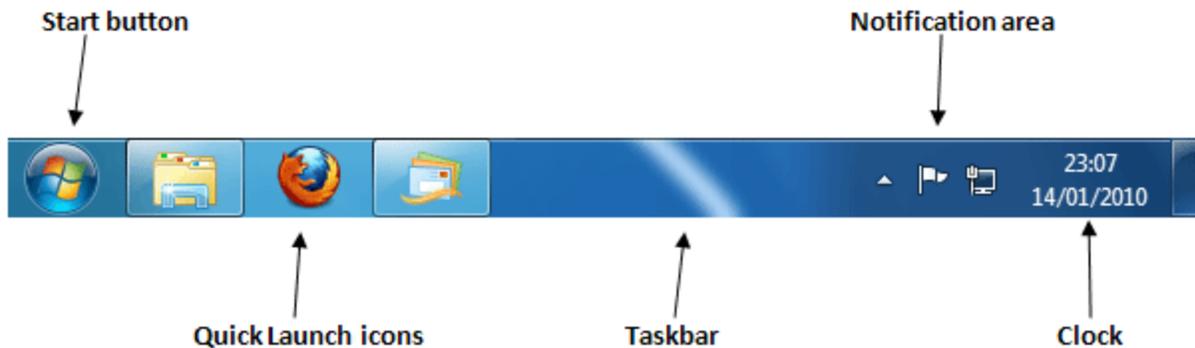The taskbar is the thin strip that runs across the bottom of your screen. It is split into a number of different areas: a round Start button, Quick Launch icons, a notification area, and a clock. All other areas are the Taskbar itself. The image below shows where the different areas are:

The Start button is explained in a section all of its own, as it's probably the most important area of the Taskbar. Click here to go the Start button page:

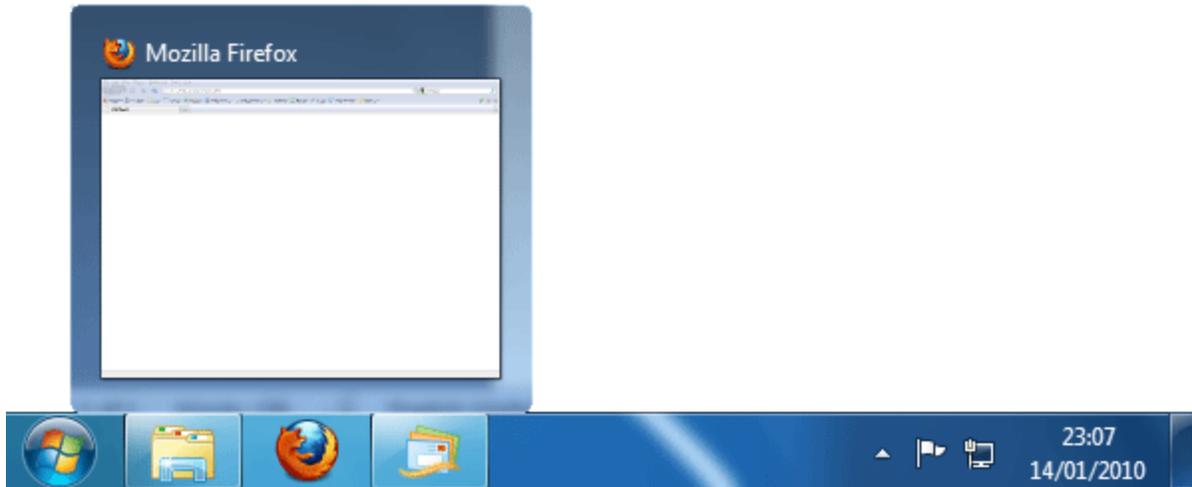The [Windows 7 Start button](#)

There is one more area on the Taskbar, and it's easily overlooked - the Show Desktop button. In the images above, you can just see a narrow rectangle to the right of the clock:

Click this button to minimize all open programs and reveal the desktop.

Quick Launch Icons

In the main image above, take a look at the three big icons to the right of the round Start button. These are quick launch icons, meaning you can quickly launch any of the programs you see there. When you hold your mouse over one of the icons, you'll see a small popup rectangle that shows you a preview of any open windows. In the image below, we're holding our mouse over the Firefox icon.
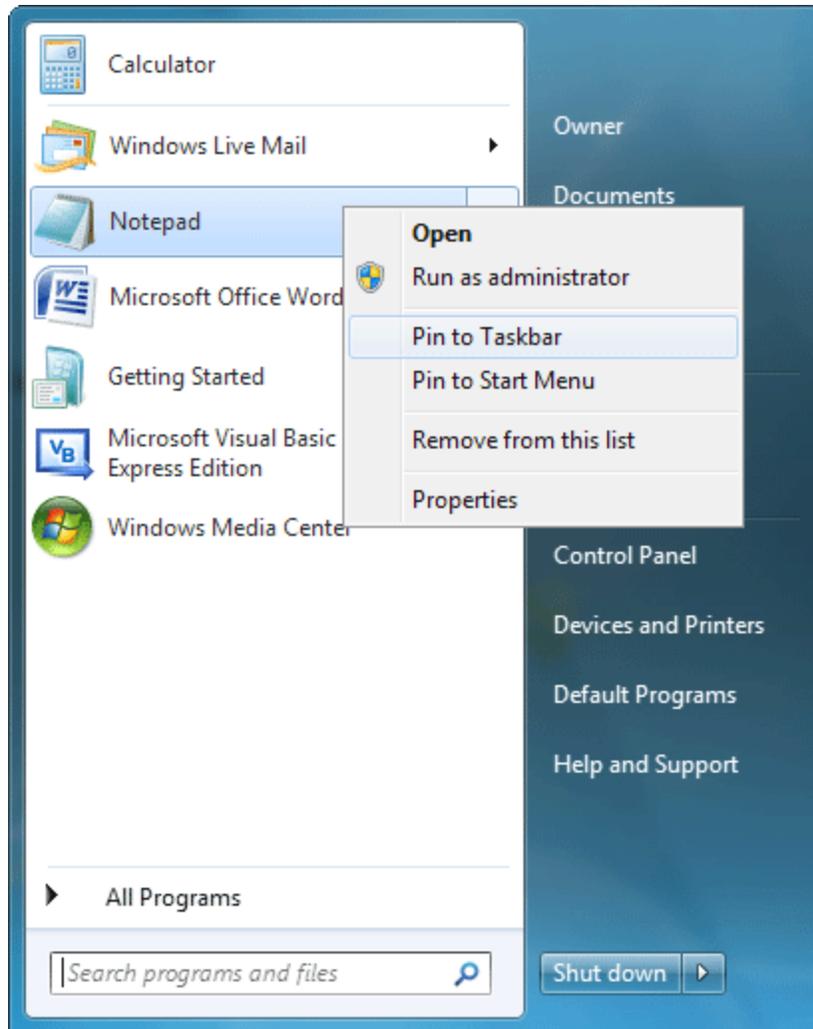
Click on the preview window and it opens the program up in full screen.

There are several ways to add new programs to the Quick Launch area, but Windows 7 makes it a lot easier. Open up a program using the Start menu. When it's open, use the right mouse button to click its icon in the Taskbar. A new menu appears:

In the image above, we have Microsoft Excel open. Right-clicking its icon in the Taskbar gave us the above menu. Once "Pin this program to the taskbar" is clicked with the left mouse button, it will appear permanently in the Quick Launch arrear. If you want to get rid of any Quick Launch programs, the item on the menu will say "Unpin this program from the taskbar" when you right-click.

You can also use the Start menu to add programs to the Quick Launch area. Again, right-click the program you want to add. From the menu, select "Pin to Taskbar". In the image below, we're adding Notepad as a Quick Launch icon:

The result is a new icon in the Quick Launch area: