

## Printing or Saving Error Messages using Print Screen key

First, understand, the PRINT SCREEN key (PRNT SCR on some) does not actually cause anything be printed, at least not directly. The Print Screen key, located to the right of the Function keys (F1, F2, etc.) when depressed, simply creates (“captures”) an image of the entire computer screen currently being viewed, including any boxes or messages that otherwise disappear quickly. This allows you to paste that image in a document (Paint, Word, etc.), just the way you Paste any previously Copied or Cut item.

However, if you are just concerned with an error message which popped up as a separate window (obviously not one which locked up the computer, as then nothing works any longer), you can “capture” **only** the current active window (the one in front with the bright blue (active) title bar) by **first** holding down the ALT key, and while holding, hit (depress) the PRINT SCREEN key. By doing this, only the error message window is copied. So, to repeat step-by-step:

1. When the error comes up, before doing anything else, hold down the ALT key (next to the Space bar).
2. Keep holding down the ALT key, and press the PRINT SCREEN key. The image is now stored in the clipboard.
3. Next, open Paint (a program which comes with all versions of Windows). Go to Start/Programs/Accessories and click on the word Paint.
4. The PAINT program window opens.
5. Next, go to Edit, and choose Paste. If it says the image is larger than the current bitmap, do you want to enlarge it, say, **YES**.
6. The error message should appear. If the white background was larger than the error message, and you have excess white to the right, you can decrease that by finding the right center (it is marked by a small blue dot), then dragging it closer to the image. Similarly if it was too long.
7. Now you go to File/Save, and save the image to a folder you will remember. You will need to give it a name (such as “Norton AV error”) before you save it.
8. If you wish to print that, File/Print, and the image is printed.

Now you have the image saved and printed, in order to read the error message to someone when asking for help. Perhaps you want to include that image in an e-mail seeking help. If, you wanted to send that image, it is automatically saved as a PNG. You can either send the image as an attachment, or insert it into the email message by pasting.

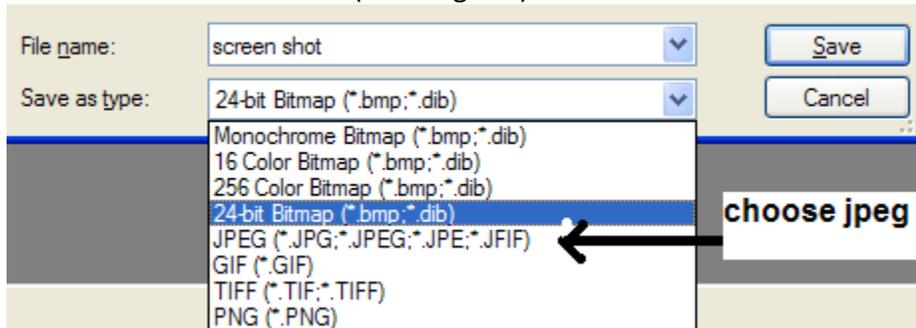
Remember, if you want the entire screen “captured”, just ignore the ALT and otherwise follow the above steps.

Windows 7 and later also includes a small tool labeled **Snipping Tool**, which can be used to capture a portion of the screen by using drag from one corner to the opposite diagonal corner to select the desired portion. It is then automatically copied to the clipboard for pasting into a document. This technique however cannot be used successfully to capture fleeting boxes or messages, as the process of calling up the tool closes those items, similarly to the same problem using the ALT key. Print Screen catches all those fleeting messages (if timed right).

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If you are using an earlier version of Windows, prior to Windows Vista, a screen shot is saved instead as a bitmap, which may be inconvenient for emailing, so if wanting to send that image via e-mail, it must be converted to a format capable of being sent. To do so:

1. Open the image (a .bmp file currently) in Paint (as above, Start/Programs/Accessories/Paint).
2. Go to File/Save As. When the "Save As" window opens, go to the bottom of the window and click on the drop-down arrow to the right of the "Save As type" box. This is just below the "file name" box (see diagram).



3. Choose jpg, jpeg (JPG) or PNG from the menu by clicking on it.
4. Now you can either send as an attachment, or "insert" as a picture from the "Insert menu".