

# Are you as organized as Bill Gates?

Microsoft chairman Bill Gates uses digital tools to get things done. No surprise there, but are you using any of his top tactics?

**Boost your productivity by adding a monitor.** Gates uses three screens on his desk, synchronized so that he can drag an item from one screen to the next. The left-hand screen holds all e-mail; center screen holds the specific message he's reading or writing; right-hand screen holds a browser.

**Make e-mail time productive with aggressive filtering.** The only messages that reach Gates' inbox are those from people within Microsoft or partner companies, or anyone he has corresponded with in the past. Inbox "rules" and search folders keep his messages organized.

**Centralize to-do's by moving them to your desktop.** Gates uses e-mail flags, his online calendar and desktop folders to track to-do's. "So when I walk up to my desk," he says, "I can focus on the e-mails I've flagged and check the folders that monitor particular projects and particular blogs."

**Gain access to the right information with a collaborative tool.** Gates uses SharePoint by Microsoft, a tool that lets anyone in the company create Web sites for collaboration on specific projects.

"SharePoint puts me in touch with lots of people deep in the organization," he says. "It's like having a super Web site that lets many people edit and discuss: far more than the standard practice of sending e-mails with enclosures."

**Save time hunting for what you need.** Desktop search has "transformed the way I access information on my PC, on servers and on the Internet," says Gates. Instead of plowing through folders, he simply types in a search term, and all the documents and e-mails containing the information pop up.