Make a Picture File out of Anything on your Screen

If you want to include an image in a document or web-based tool, you sometimes can do it by copying and pasting. However, some tools (Blackboard is one!) won't paste an image from the clipboard; you must first save the image as a file, and then insert it. Here's how you can capture any part of your screen and turn it into a file. Mac instructions are on the left, and Windows instructions on the right.

Mac OS X

It takes just one step to capture anything you see on your Mac desktop into a picture file.

- To capture the entire desktop, press Command-Shift-3. The screen shot will be automatically saved as a PNG file on your desktop.

- To capture a portion of the desktop, press Command-Shift-4. A cross-hair cursor will appear and you can click and drag to select the area you wish to capture. When you release the mouse button, the screen shot will be automatically saved as a PNG file on your desktop

- To capture a specific application window, press Command-Shift-4, then press the Spacebar. The cursor will change to a camera, and you can move it around the screen. As you move the cursor over an application window, the window will be highlighted. The entire window does not need to be visible for you to capture it. When you have the cursor over a window you want to capture, just click the mouse button and the screen shot will be saved as a PNG file on your desktop

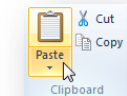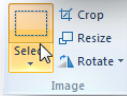The PNG file will be automatically saved to the Desktop.
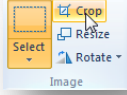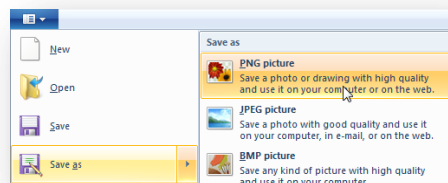
Windows OS

With Windows, you first capture to the clipboard, and then manipulate and save using the Paint application.

First, Capture to the Clipboard

- To capture the entire desktop, press the Print Screen key located to the right of the F12 key at the top of your keyboard.
- To capture the currently selected window, press Alt + Print Screen.

Then, Manipulate and Save

1. Open Paint by clicking the Start button 🌐, clicking All Programs, clicking Accessories, and then clicking Paint.

2. Click the Paste button.

3. On the Home tab, in the Image group, click Select.

4. Click and drag to select the element you want to keep in the picture, and then click Crop.

5. Click the Paint button ▣▾, point to Save as, and then click the picture file type for the cropped picture.

6. Type a new file name in the File name box, and then click Save. (I suggest saving it to the desktop.)