AUTOMATION IS DOCUMENTATION

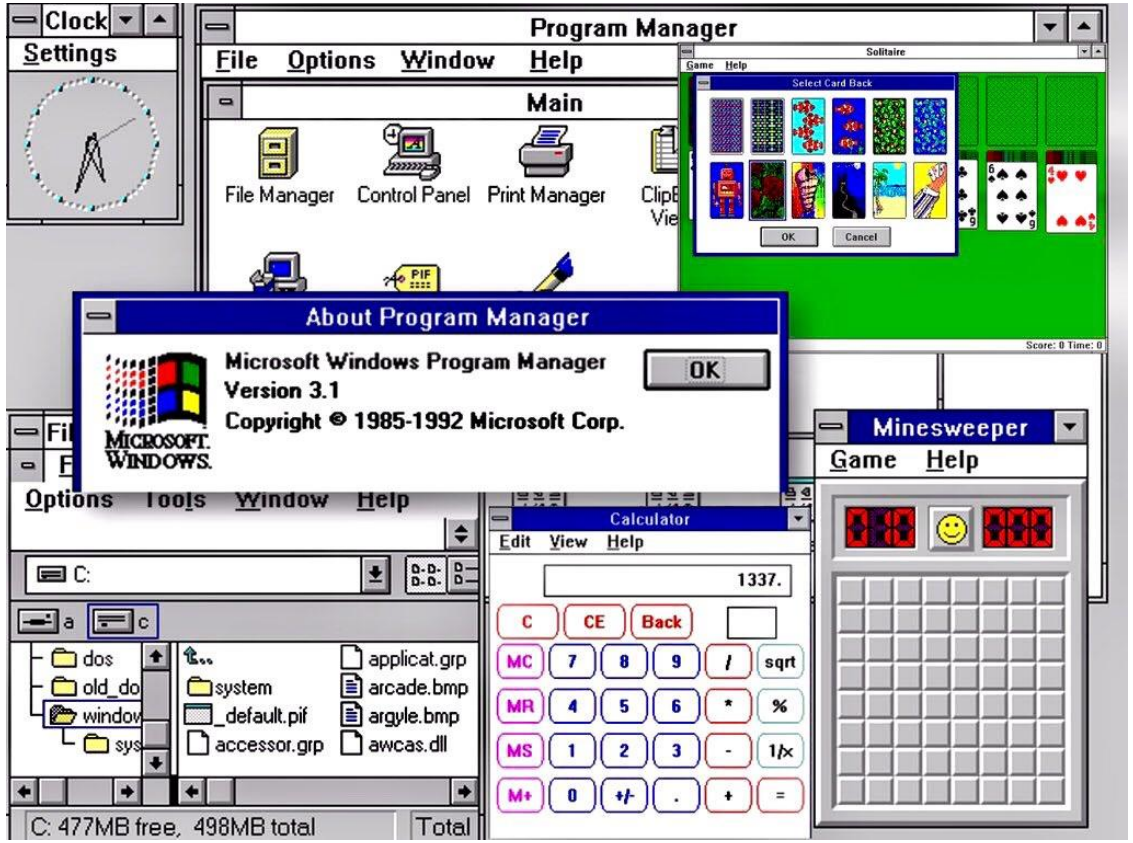
FUNCTIONAL DOCUMENTATION OF HUMAN-MACHINE INTERACTION FOR FUTURE SOFTWARE RE-USE

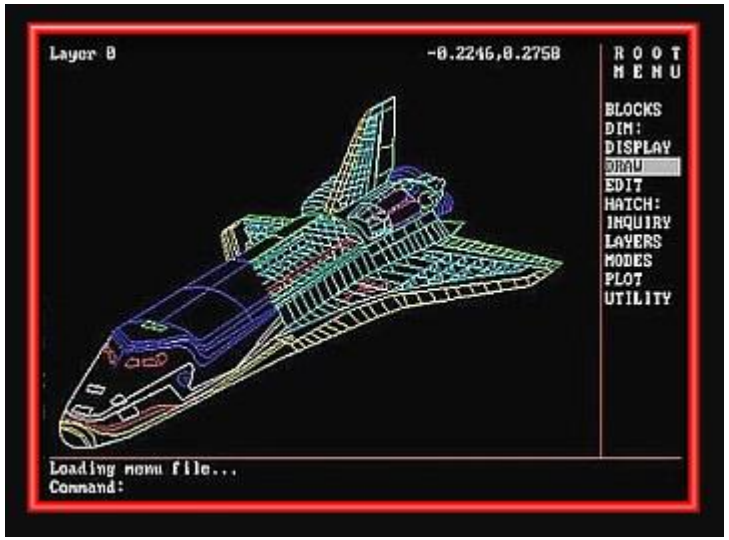
ABOUT MYSELF

- Jurek Oberhauser
- Software Developer (and part time researcher) as part of the EaaSI project
- Graduated in Computer Science in October 2021 at the University of Freiburg
- Studied in Edinburgh for one semester

- IDCC 2022 is my first conference!

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO OPERATE THIS?





???

Preserve operational knowledge through automation of user interactions

AUTOMATING USER INTERACTIONS

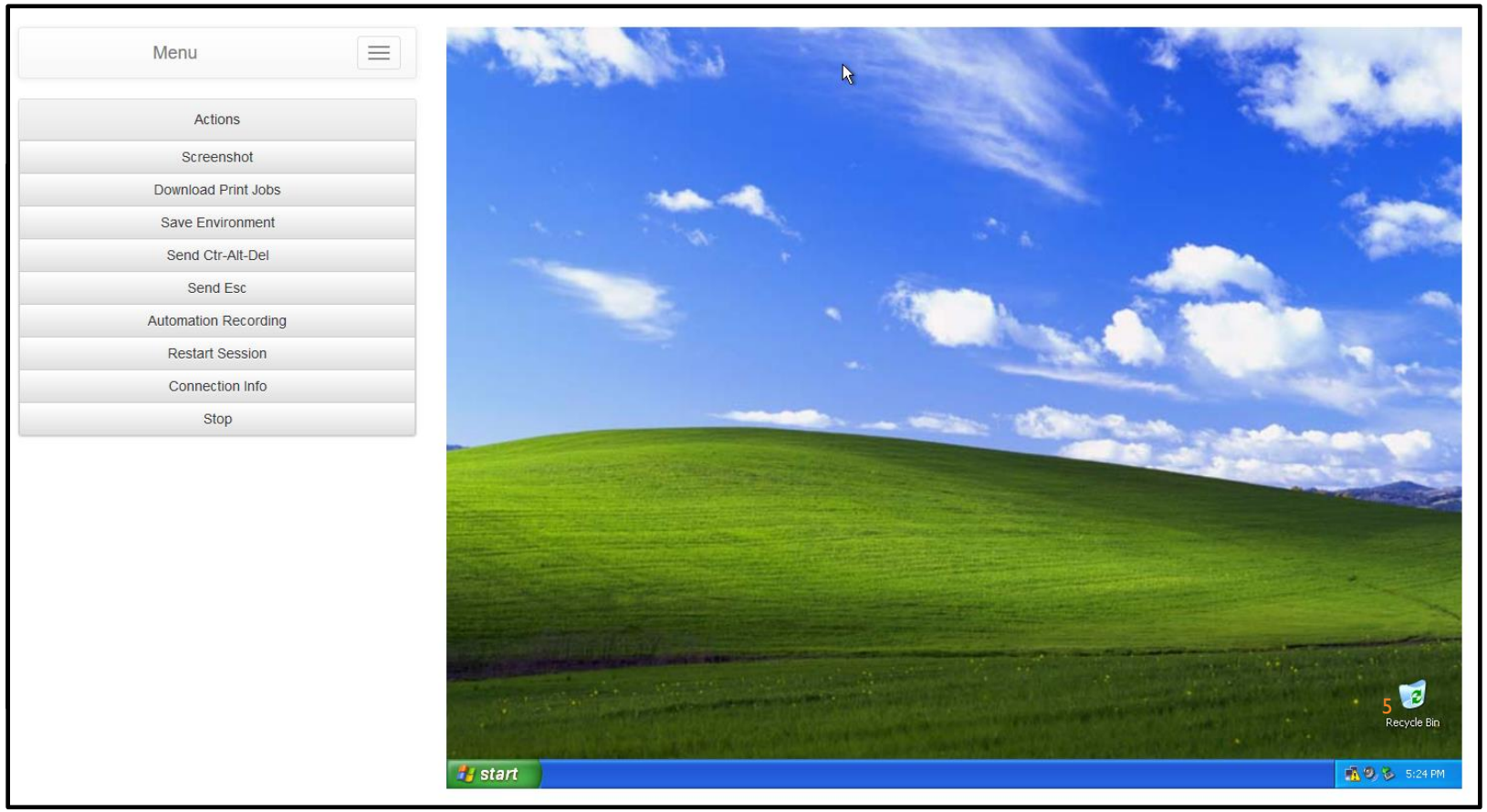
- Overall goal: Software preservation → Software re-use
- Preserve software (using emulation) & Operational knowledge
- Focusing on manual interaction only: Reduced utility of software re-use, does not scale
- Batch processing: Extend the utility of preserved software

- Automation of user interactions allows us to:
  1. Use Software without *using* software
  2. Document software usage patterns
  3. Scale

How can we integrate automation with emulation?

EMULATION-AS-A-SERVICE (EAAS)

- Web-based emulation framework
- Emulation environments
- Access everything in a browser



APPROACH

Overall Goal: Create, describe or capture interactions between humans and computers
Replay interactions in emulation environments

Internal Automation

Approach 1: Interact with software/OS interfaces

Use scripting languages to automate software

External Automation

Approach 2: Interact with **visible** elements of the software's user interface

One example implementation per approach

APPROACH 1: SOFTWARE/OS INTERFACES

- *Internal* Automation: Executed **in** the target system (OS + automation software)
- Need to setup system with the purpose of automation (can't just execute in any existing environment)
- Many options (macro recorder, automation tools, etc.)
- Tool needs to be well documented
- Tasks can be generated or modified outside the emulation environment (*inject* before execution)
- System provides "guarantees" about the outcome of the automation task: Deterministic

APPROACH 1: REUSABILITY?

- Automation script = certain knowledge/documentation: 1. Text (script) form, 2. Executable form
  → apply to similar use-cases → efficient re-use
- Examples: Autologin, IP/networking config, printer setup, language settings, basic OS settings, run a software, open a file, save a file, copy-paste, etc.
- "Mix-and-match" for more complex workflows
- Eventually AI can use library to automatically setup tasks

APPROACH 1: SOFTWARE/OS INTERFACES

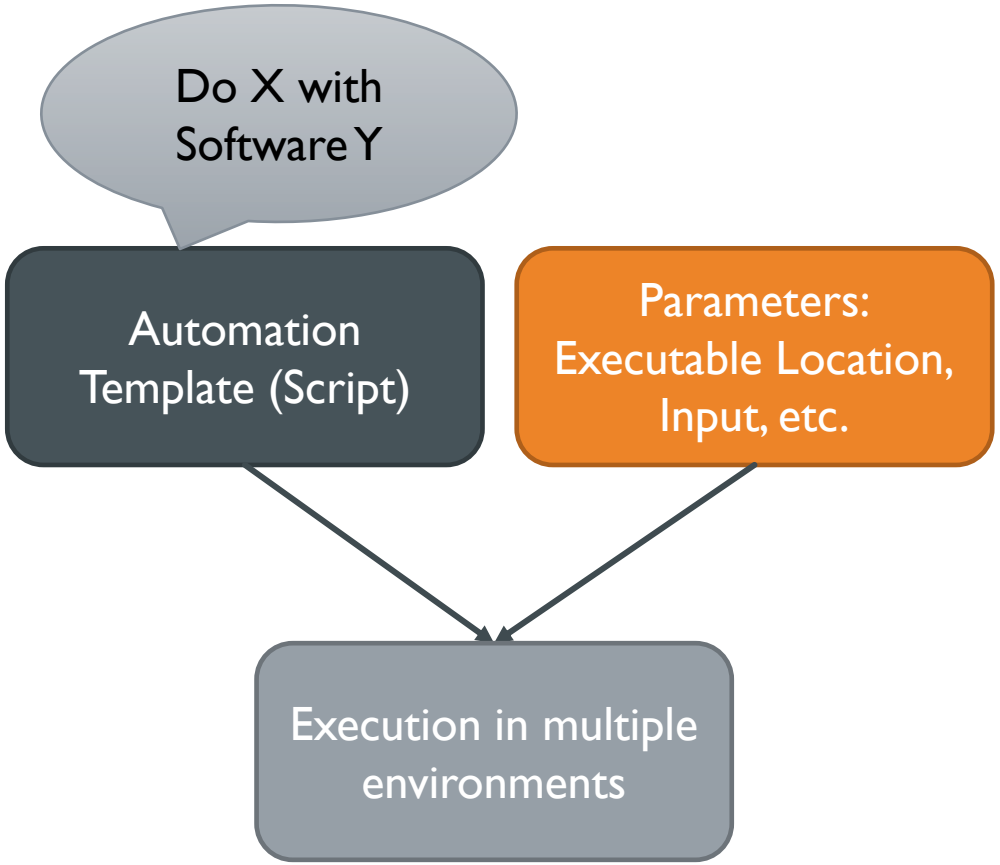
- Example Implementation: AutoHotKey
- Automation scripts for specified tasks
- Windows only (95-11)
- Other OS would require a similar solution

- Can we use the same script for different software (albeit with similar features)?

```
17  prog = %1%
18  fileInput = %2%
19  storeDirectory = %3%
20  saveExport = %4%
21
22  WriteLog("Got inputs:" prog . " " . fileInput . " " . storeDirectory . " " . saveExport)
23
24  SLEEP_TIMER = 1200
25
26  IfInString, fileInput, :\
27  {
28      WriteLog("Input was given as absolut path: " .  fileInput)
29  }
30  else{
31      fileInput = %A_ScriptDir%\%fileInput%
32      WriteLog("Input was given as relative path. WorkingDir will be appended: " . fileInput)
33  }
34
35  SplitPath, fileInput,,dir,,baseName
36
37  ; TODO do this (for input
38  if(!(storeDirectory="")){
39
40      IfNotExist, %3%
41          FileCreateDir, %3%
42
43      StringRight, toCheck, storeDirectory, 1
44
45      if(!(toCheck="\")){
46      storeDirectory := storeDirectory . "\"
47      }
48
49      newName :=  storeDirectory . baseName
50  }
51  else{
52      newName := baseName
53  }
54
55
56  #Include ../lib/checkActiveWindows_activeId.ahk
57
58  #Include ../lib/openFile.ahk
59  openFile(fileInput, activeId, SLEEP_TIMER)
60
```

APPROACH 1: AUTOMATION TEMPLATING

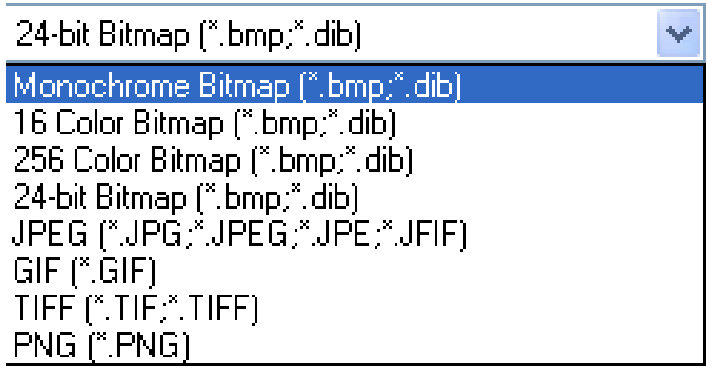
- 1 Task
- Targets different software
- Can be executed in multiple environments



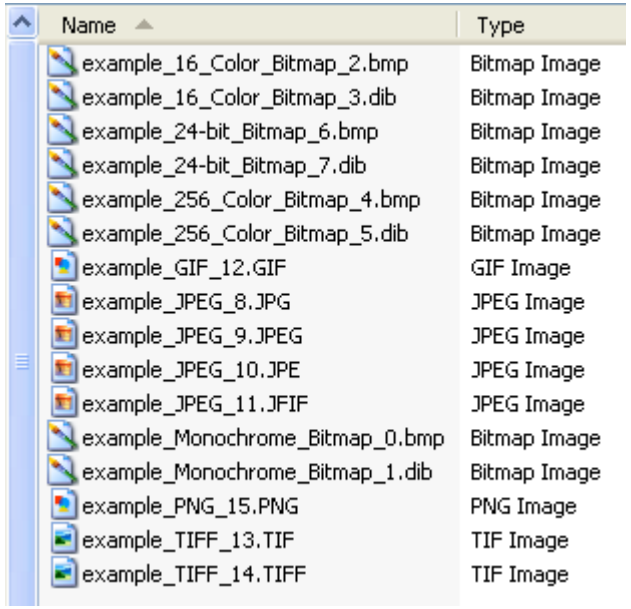
APPROACH 1: EXAMPLES

- **File Creation:** Create all possible output files (one of each file type)
- **File Type Information:** Store all possible output file types in a text file
- **File Migration:** "Migrate" input files to a specified file type

MS Paint 'Save As' Menu



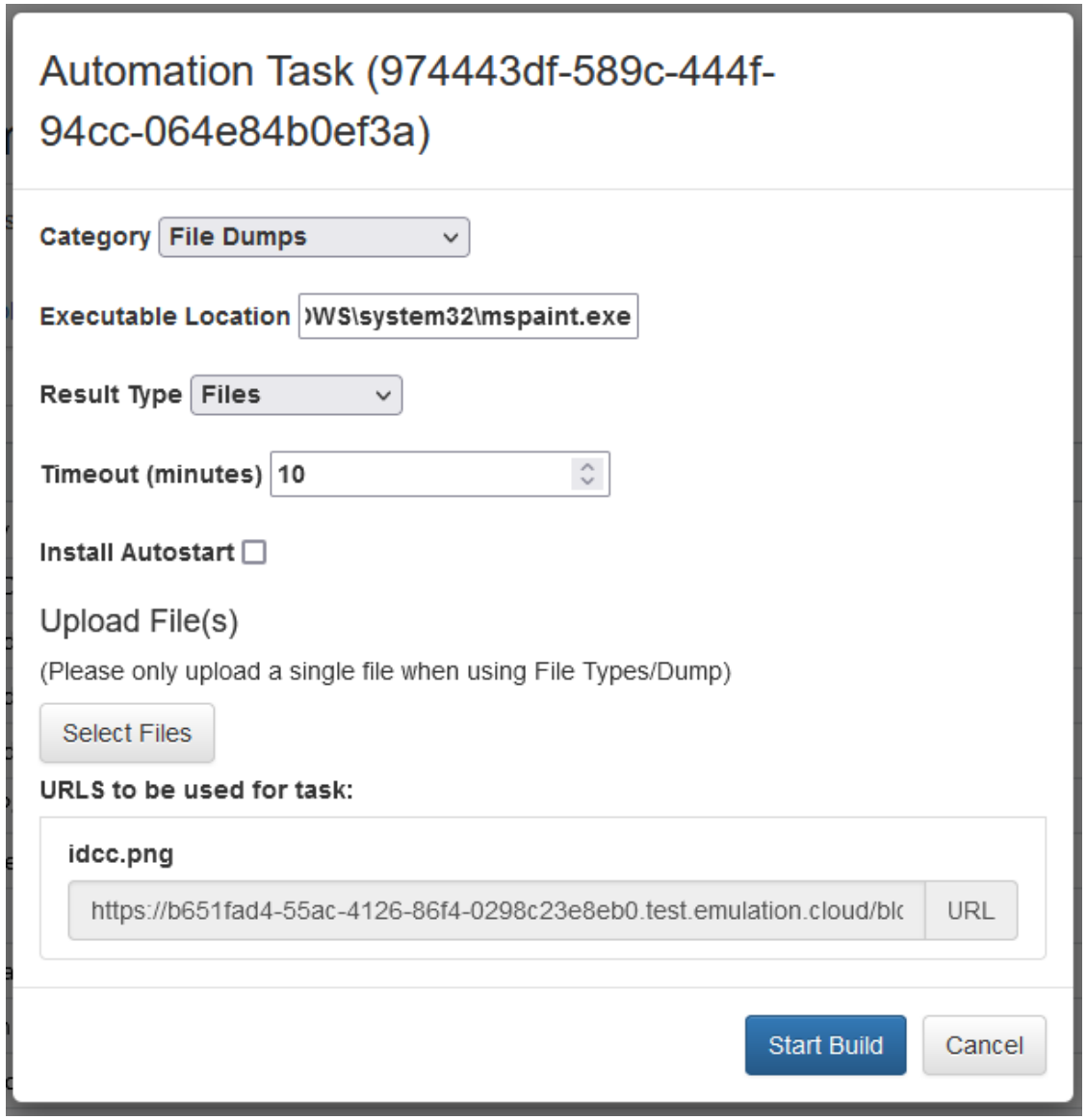
File Creation:



File Type Information:

all_file_types.txt

Monochrome Bitmap (*.bmp;*.dib)
16 Color Bitmap (*.bmp;*.dib)
256 Color Bitmap (*.bmp;*.dib)
24-bit Bitmap (*.bmp;*.dib)
JPEG (*.JPG;*.JPEG;*.JPE;*.JFIF)
GIF (*.GIF)
TIFF (*.TIF;*.TIFF)
PNG (*.PNG)



EXAMPLE: WINDOWS XP + MS PAINT

EaaS Environment

Win XP 32 Bit
+ MS Paint

Installed Software
MS Paint
Autostart Software

Metadata/Parameters
Environment ID: 0dea922c-3e38-4a36…
Executable Location: C:\WINDOWS\system32\mspaint.exe

Script
(Automation Template)
File Creation, etc.

Autogenerate ISO

Set ISO in CD-ROM Drive

Start Environment

Autostart Software starts Script

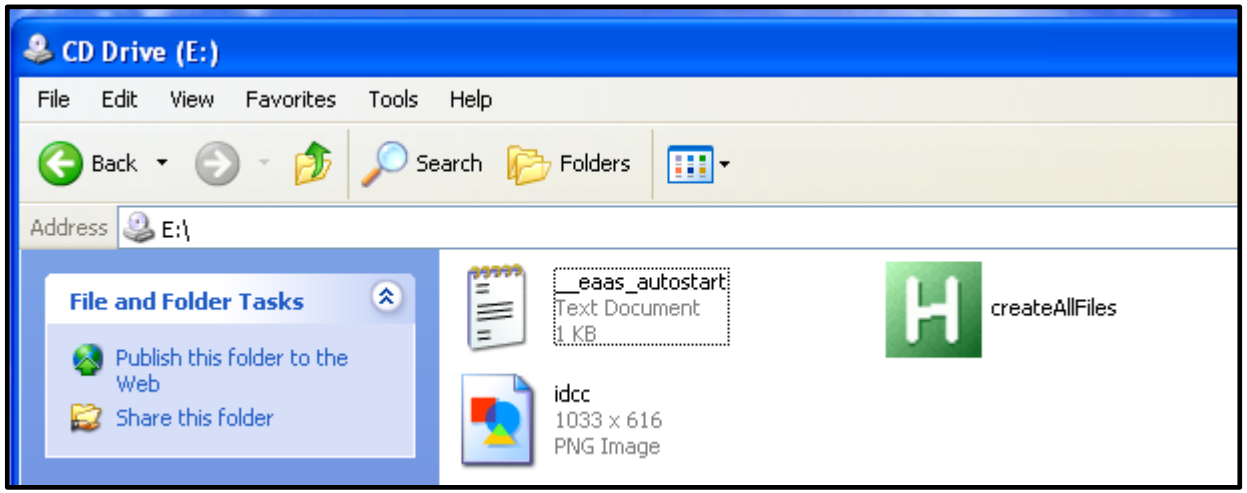
Wait for OS Shutdown

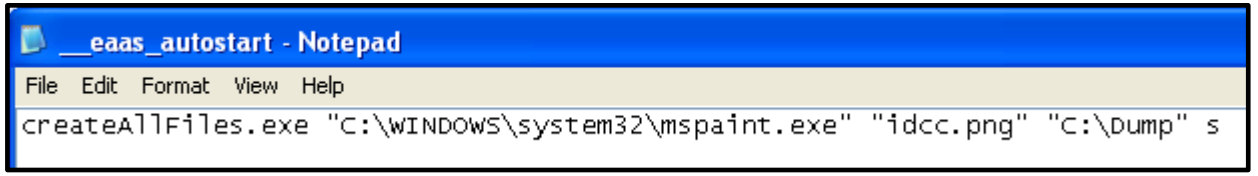
Result

New Environment

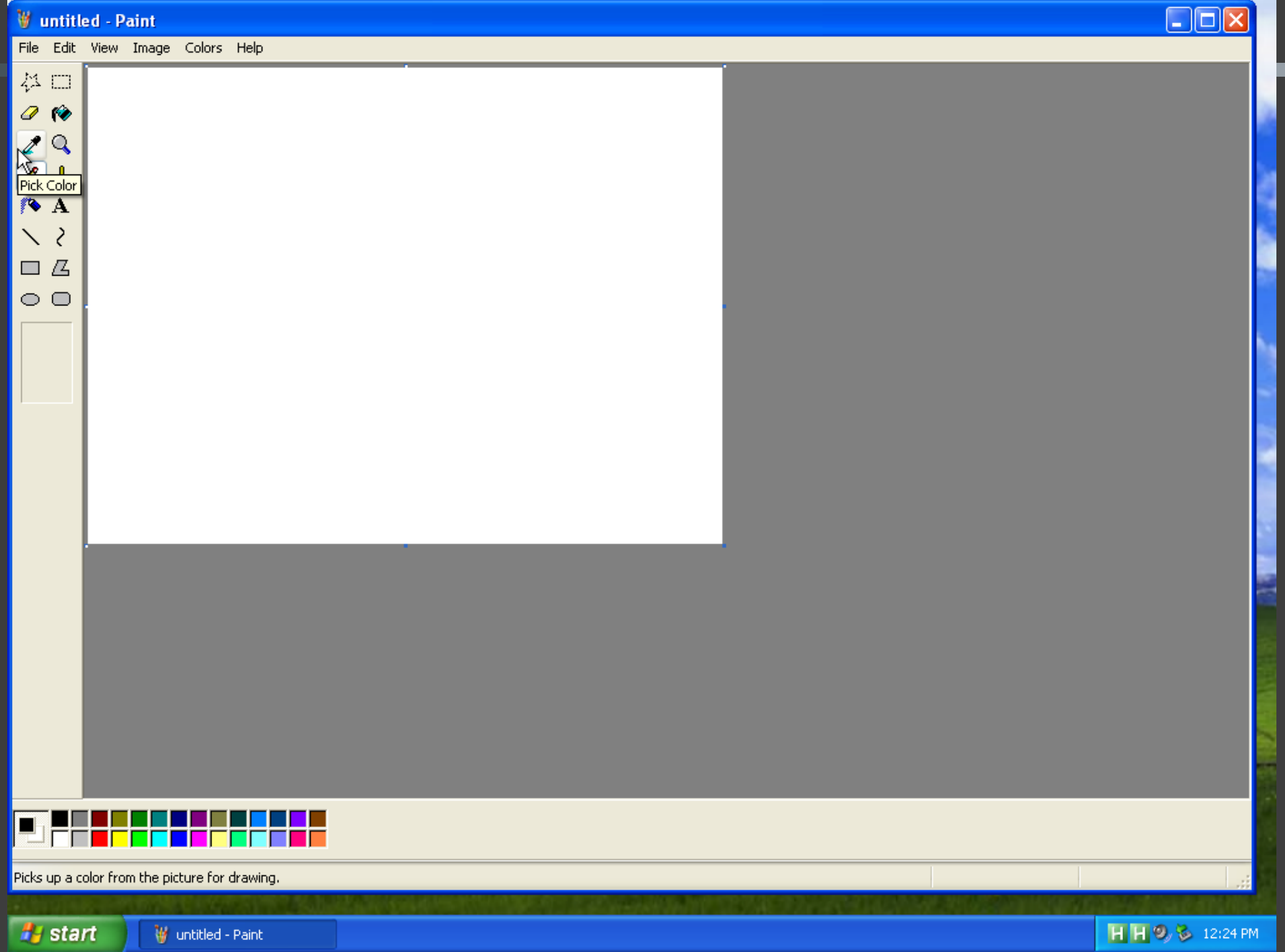
File Output

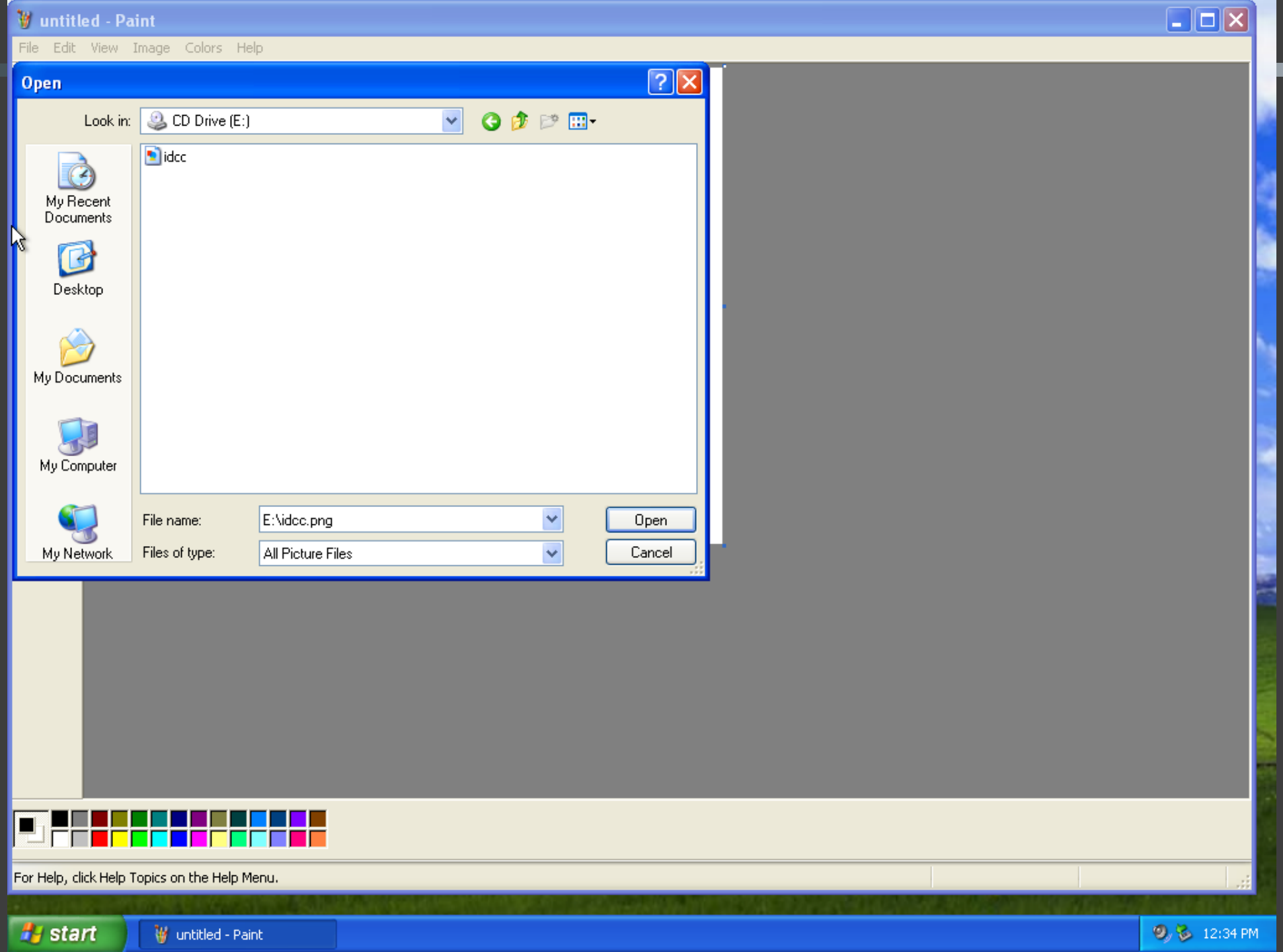
EXAMPLE

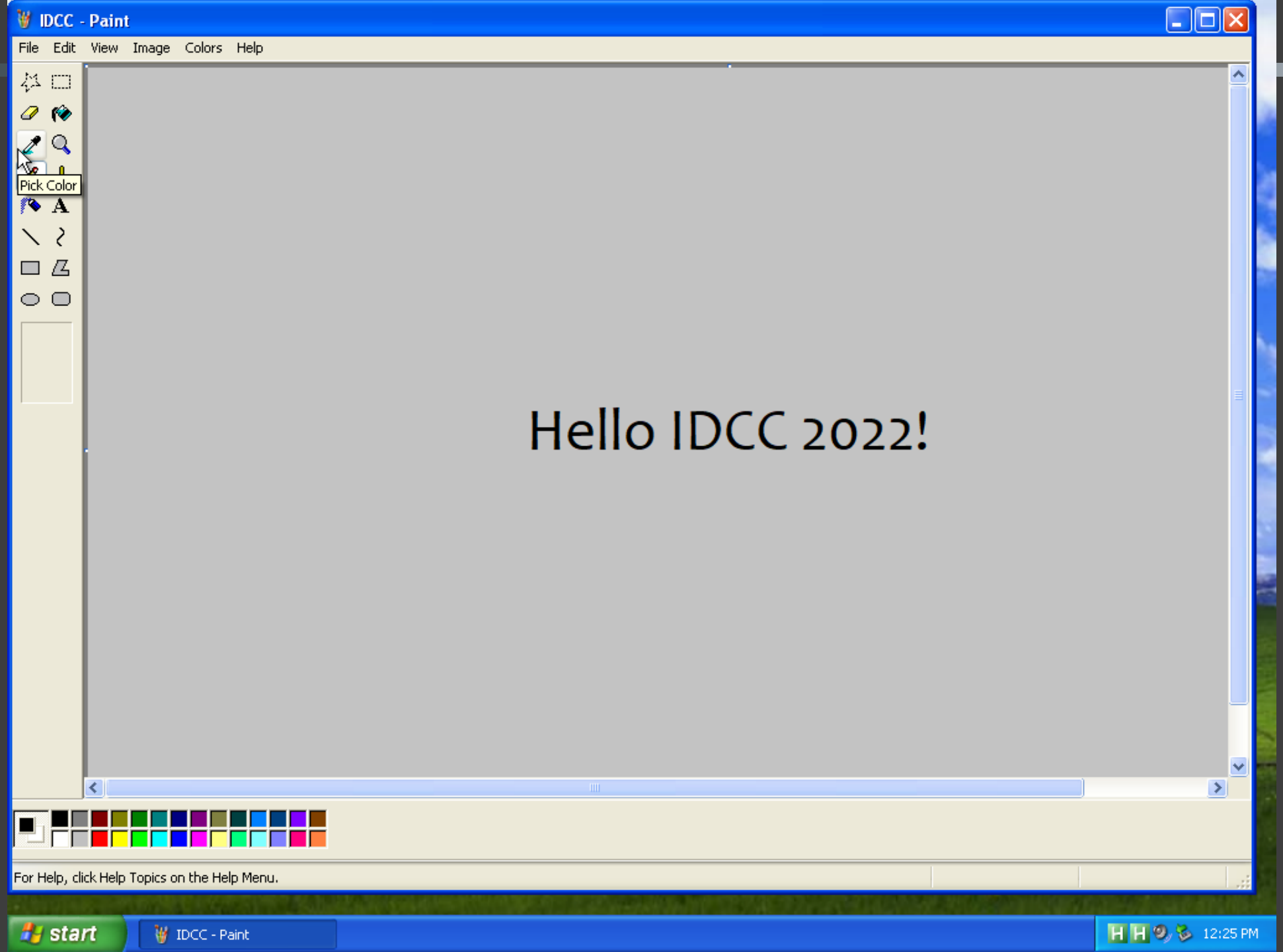

CD Drive (E:)
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Back
Search
Folders
Address E:\
File and Folder Tasks
Publish this folder to the Web
Share this folder
__eaas_autostart
Text Document
1 KB
createAllFiles
idcc
1033 x 616
PNG Image

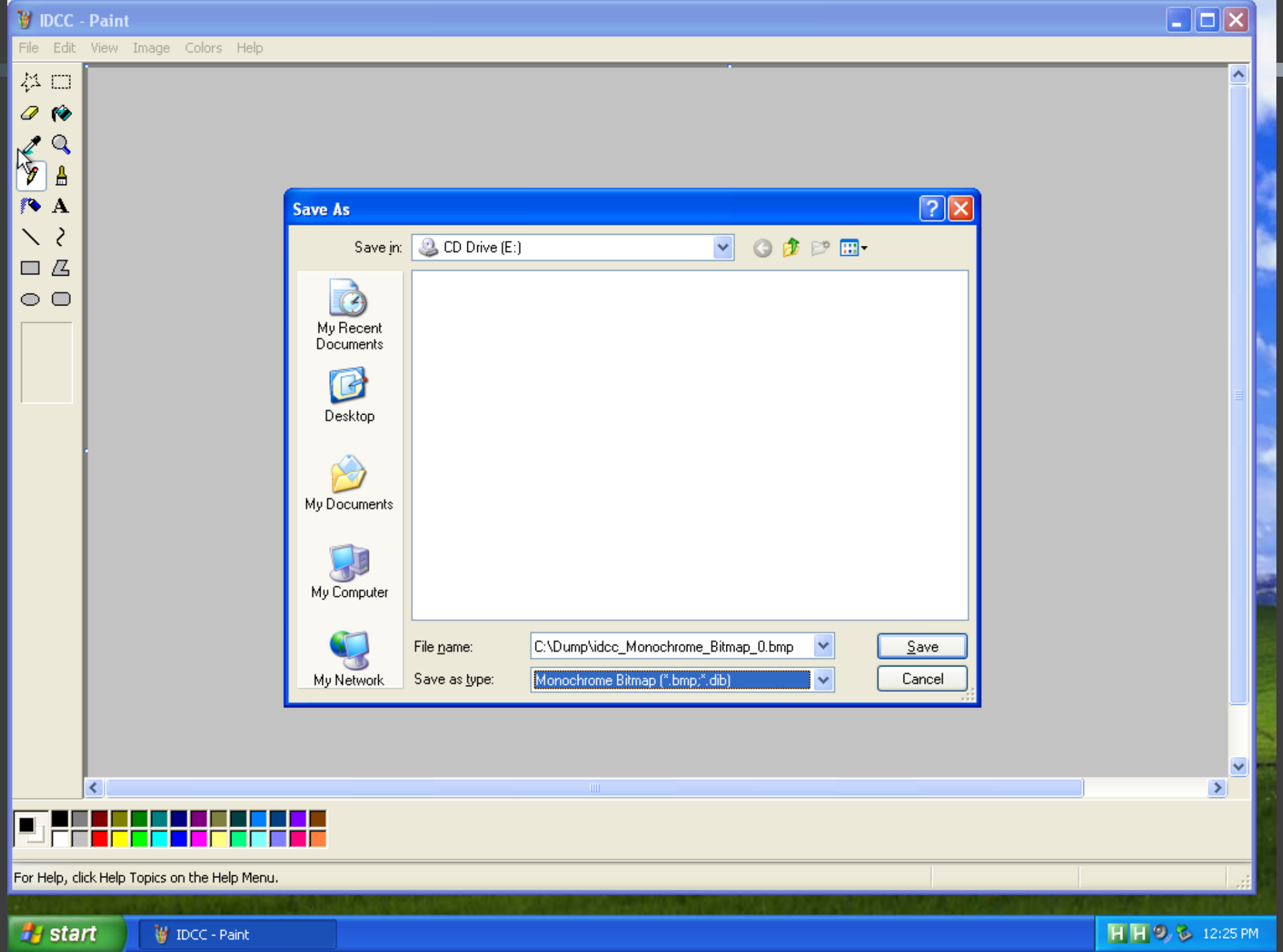

__eaas_autostart - Notepad
File Edit Format View Help
createAllFiles.exe "C:\WINDOWS\system32\mspaint.exe" "idcc.png" "C:\Dump" s

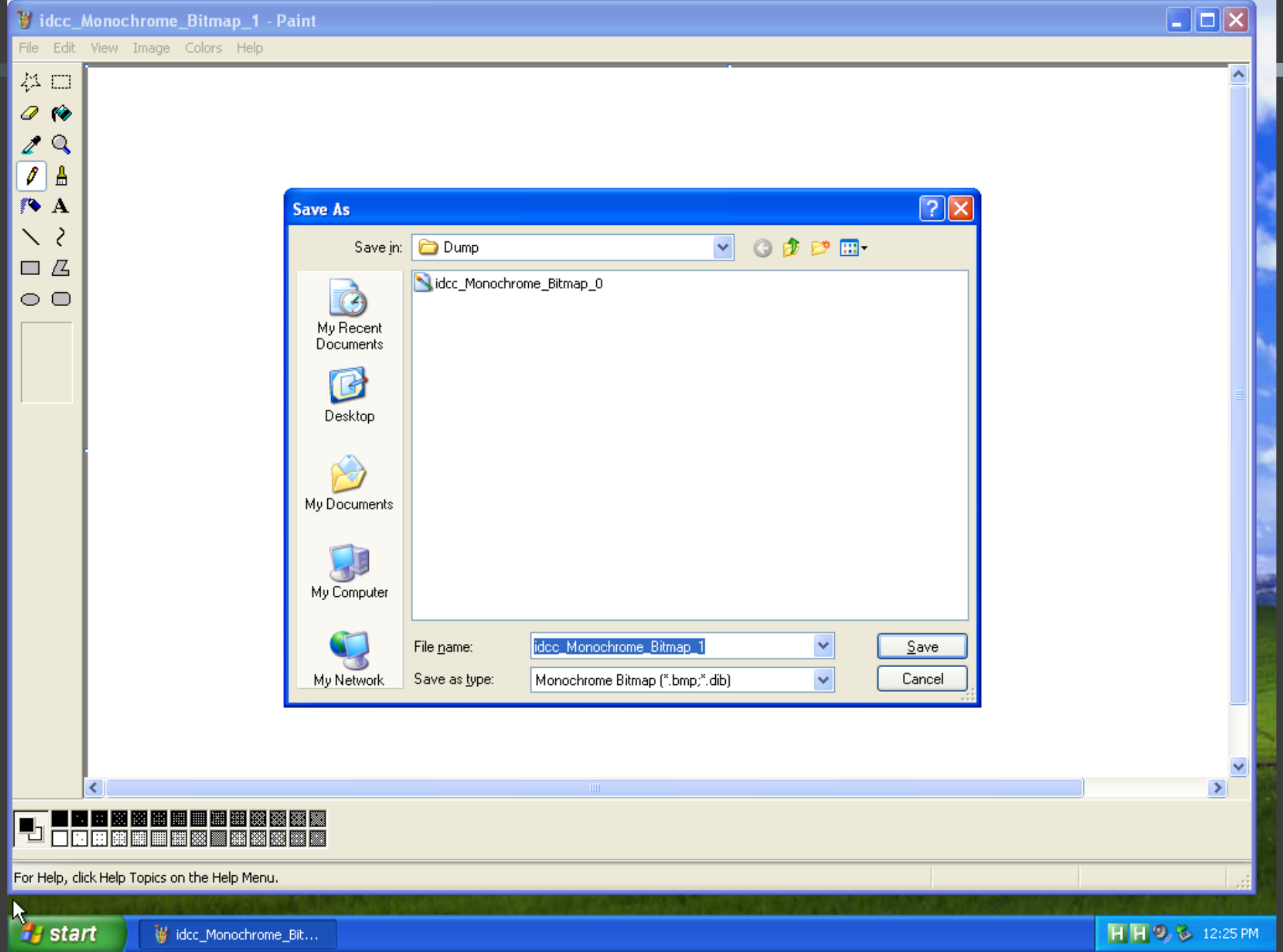

Recycle Bin
start
12:11 PM

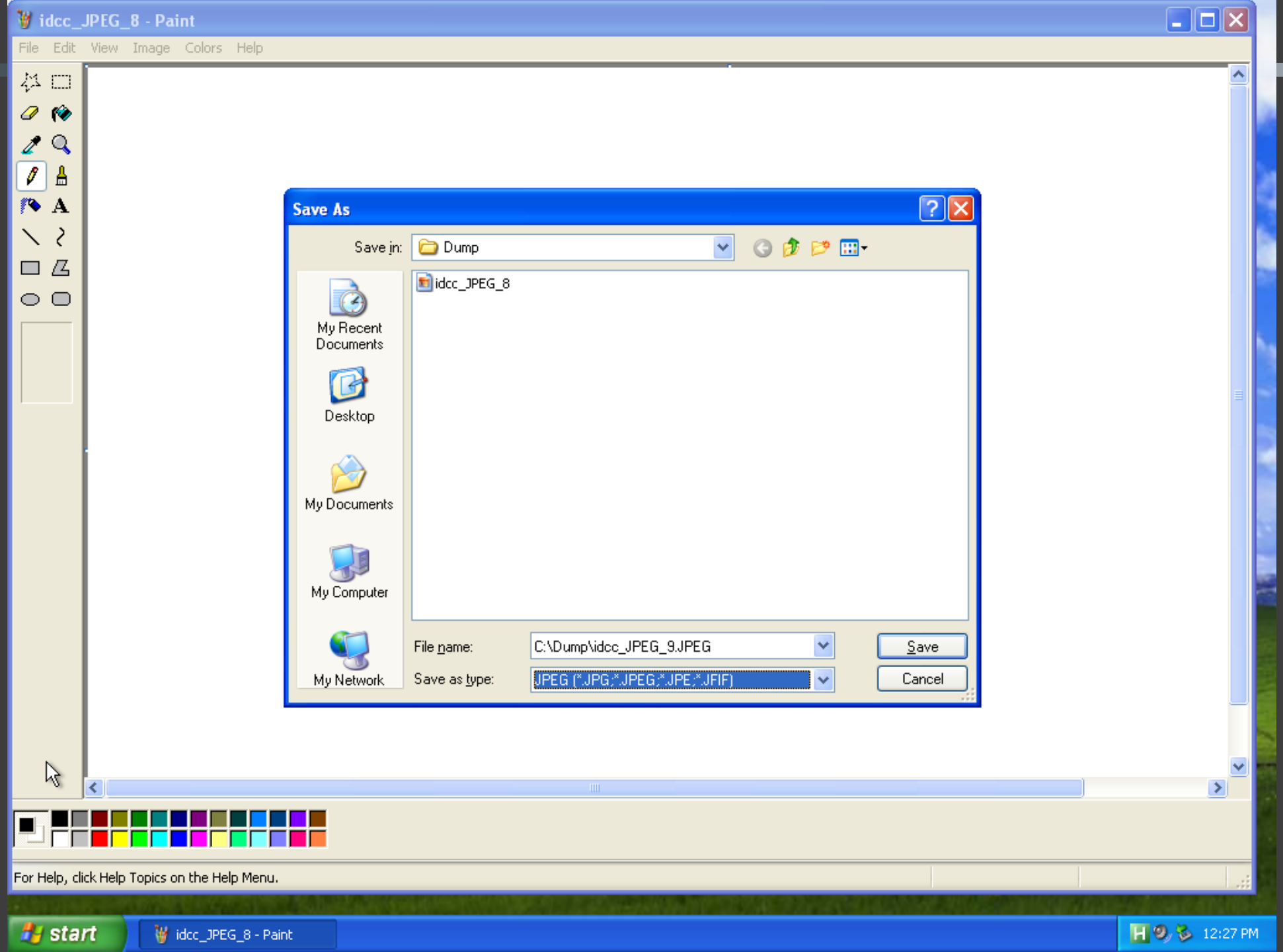

untitled - Paint
File Edit View Image Colors Help
Pick Color
Picks up a color from the picture for drawing.
start
untitled - Paint
12:24 PM

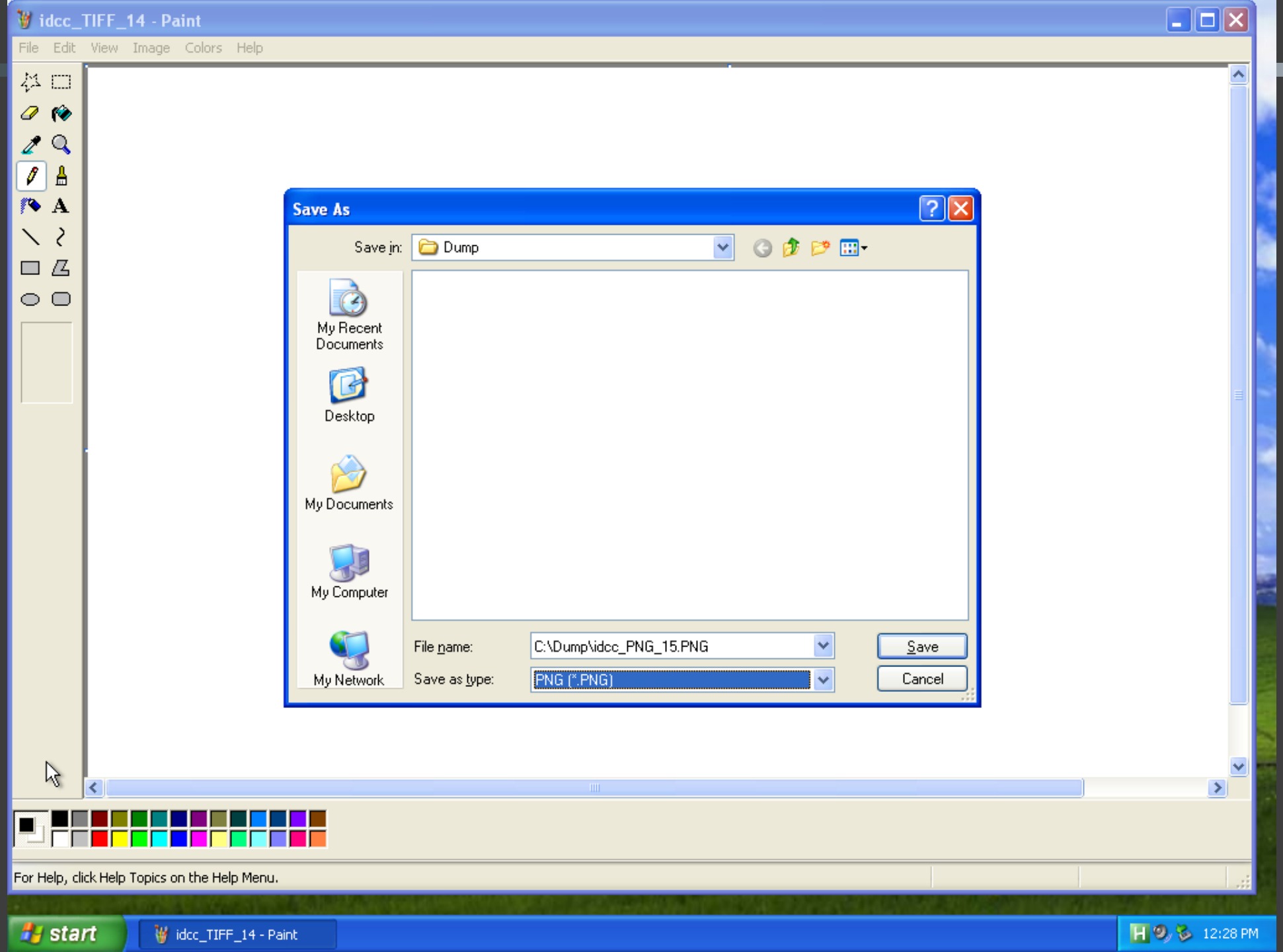

untitled - Paint
File Edit View Image Colors Help
Open
Look in: CD Drive (E:)
idcc
My Recent Documents
Desktop
My Documents
My Computer
My Network
File name: E:\idcc.png
Files of type: All Picture Files
Open
Cancel
For Help, click Help Topics on the Help Menu.
start
untitled - Paint
12:34 PM

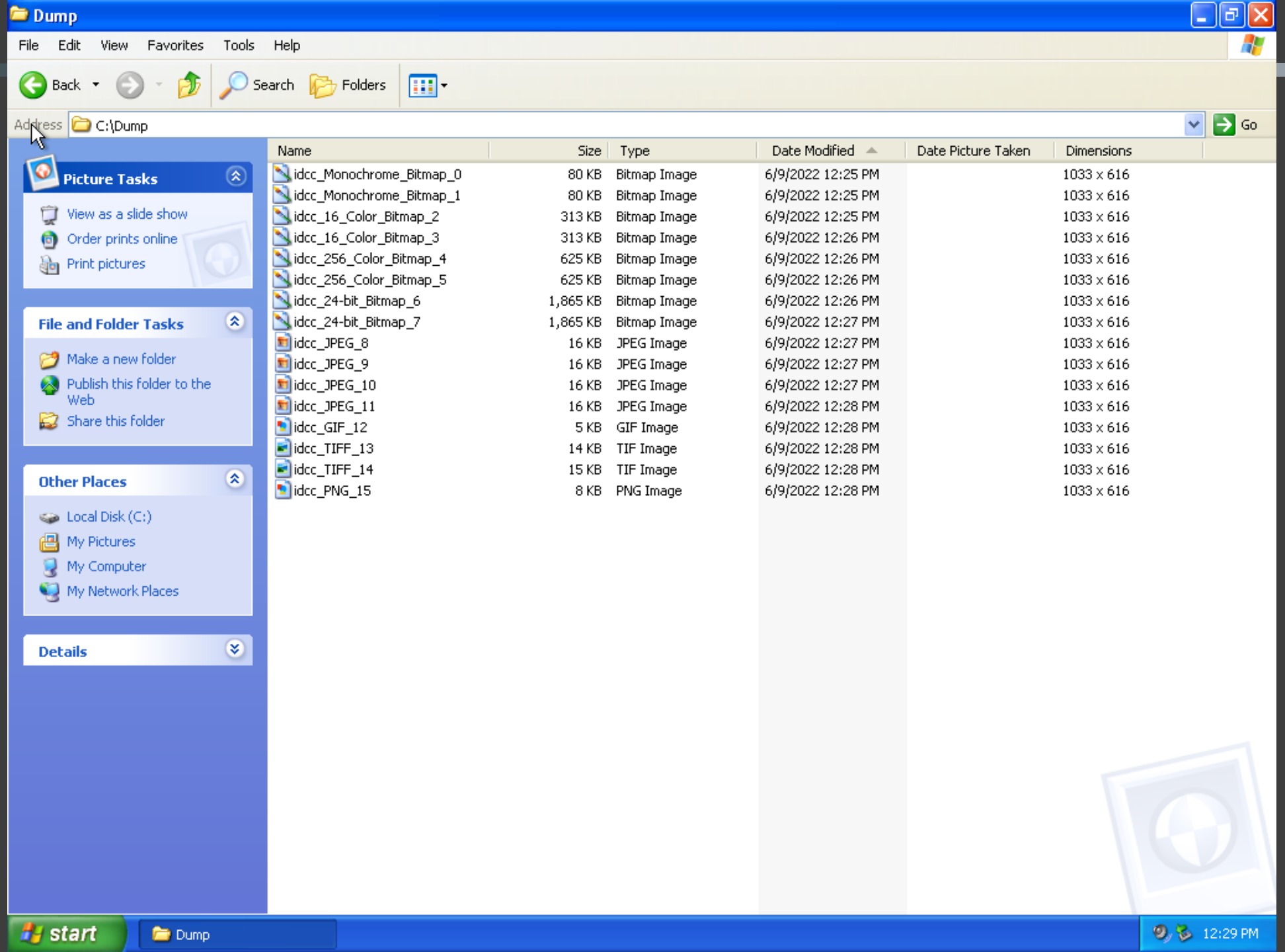

IDCC - Paint
File Edit View Image Colors Help
Pick Color
Hello IDCC 2022!
For Help, click Help Topics on the Help Menu.
start
IDCC - Paint
12:25 PM


IDCC - Paint
File Edit View Image Colors Help
Save As
Save in:
CD Drive (E:)
My Recent Documents
Desktop
My Documents
My Computer
My Network
File name:
C:\Dump\idcc_Monochrome_Bitmap_0.bmp
Save as type:
Monochrome Bitmap (*.bmp;*.dib)
Save
Cancel
For Help, click Help Topics on the Help Menu.
start
IDCC - Paint
12:25 PM


idcc_Monochrome_Bitmap_1 - Paint
File Edit View Image Colors Help
Save As
Save in: Dump
idcc_Monochrome_Bitmap_0
My Recent Documents
Desktop
My Documents
My Computer
My Network
File name: idcc_Monochrome_Bitmap_1
Save as type: Monochrome Bitmap (*.bmp;*.dib)
Save
Cancel
For Help, click Help Topics on the Help Menu.
start
idcc_Monochrome_Bit...
12:25 PM


idcc_JPEG_8 - Paint
File Edit View Image Colors Help
Save As
Save in: Dump
idcc_JPEG_8
My Recent Documents
Desktop
My Documents
My Computer
My Network
File name: C:\Dump\idcc_JPEG_9.JPEG
Save as type: JPEG (*.JPG;*.JPEG;*.JPE;*.JFIF)
Save
Cancel
For Help, click Help Topics on the Help Menu.
start
idcc_JPEG_8 - Paint
12:27 PM


idcc_TIFF_14 - Paint
File Edit View Image Colors Help
Save As
Save in: Dump
My Recent Documents
Desktop
My Documents
My Computer
My Network
File name: C:\Dump\idcc_PNG_15.PNG
Save as type: PNG (*.PNG)
Save
Cancel
For Help, click Help Topics on the Help Menu.
start
idcc_TIFF_14 - Paint
12:28 PM

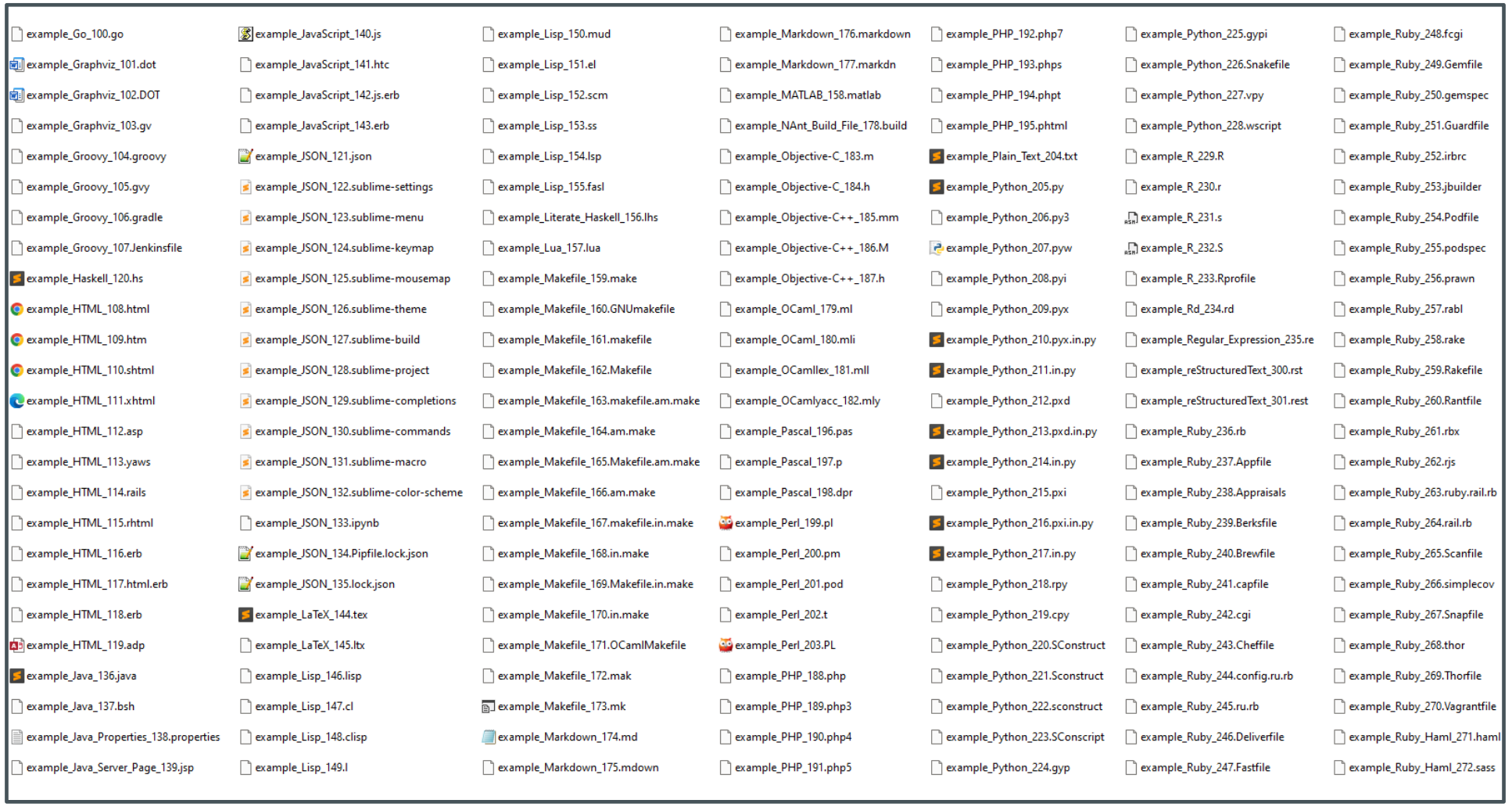

Dump
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Back Search Folders
Address C:\Dump
Go
Picture Tasks
View as a slide show
Order prints online
Print pictures
File and Folder Tasks
Make a new folder
Publish this folder to the Web
Share this folder
Other Places
Local Disk (C:)
My Pictures
My Computer
My Network Places
Details
Name Size Type Date Modified Date Picture Taken Dimensions
idcc_Monochrome_Bitmap_0 80 KB Bitmap Image 6/9/2022 12:25 PM 1033 x 616
idcc_Monochrome_Bitmap_1 80 KB Bitmap Image 6/9/2022 12:25 PM 1033 x 616
idcc_16_Color_Bitmap_2 313 KB Bitmap Image 6/9/2022 12:25 PM 1033 x 616
idcc_16_Color_Bitmap_3 313 KB Bitmap Image 6/9/2022 12:26 PM 1033 x 616
idcc_256_Color_Bitmap_4 625 KB Bitmap Image 6/9/2022 12:26 PM 1033 x 616
idcc_256_Color_Bitmap_5 625 KB Bitmap Image 6/9/2022 12:26 PM 1033 x 616
idcc_24-bit_Bitmap_6 1,865 KB Bitmap Image 6/9/2022 12:26 PM 1033 x 616
idcc_24-bit_Bitmap_7 1,865 KB Bitmap Image 6/9/2022 12:27 PM 1033 x 616
idcc_JPEG_8 16 KB JPEG Image 6/9/2022 12:27 PM 1033 x 616
idcc_JPEG_9 16 KB JPEG Image 6/9/2022 12:27 PM 1033 x 616
idcc_JPEG_10 16 KB JPEG Image 6/9/2022 12:27 PM 1033 x 616
idcc_JPEG_11 16 KB JPEG Image 6/9/2022 12:28 PM 1033 x 616
idcc_GIF_12 5 KB GIF Image 6/9/2022 12:28 PM 1033 x 616
idcc_TIFF_13 14 KB TIF Image 6/9/2022 12:28 PM 1033 x 616
idcc_TIFF_14 15 KB TIF Image 6/9/2022 12:28 PM 1033 x 616
idcc_PNG_15 8 KB PNG Image 6/9/2022 12:28 PM 1033 x 616
start
Dump
12:29 PM

main ▾ File-Format-Information / C_WINDOWS_system32_mspaint.exe / os_windows_xp_32bit / **Dump** / Go to file

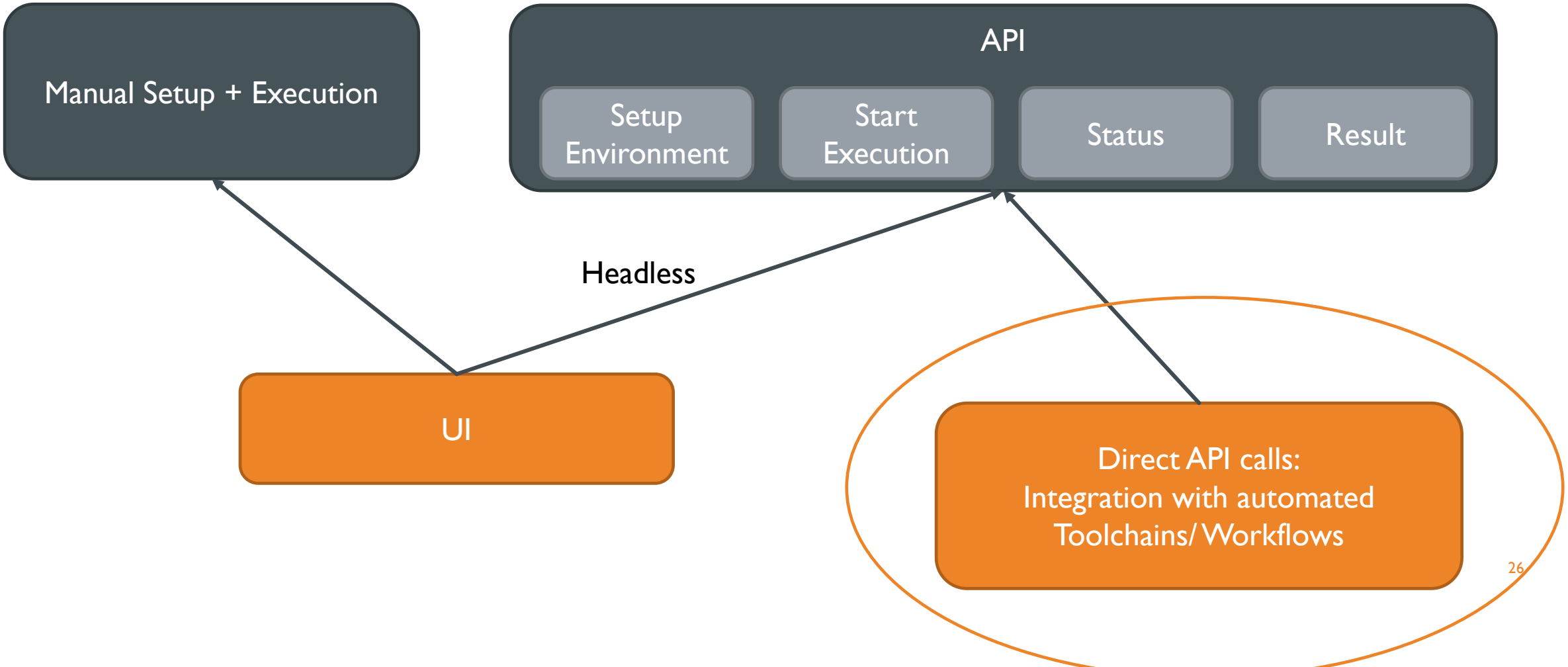
root Test commit 6744002 29 days ago History

..		
input_16_Color_Bitmap_2.bmp	Test commit	29 days ago
input_16_Color_Bitmap_3.dib	Test commit	29 days ago
input_256_Color_Bitmap_4.bmp	Test commit	29 days ago
input_256_Color_Bitmap_5.dib	Test commit	29 days ago
input_GIF_12.GIF	Test commit	29 days ago
input_JPEG_10.JPE	Test commit	29 days ago
input_JPEG_11.JFIF	Test commit	29 days ago
input_JPEG_8.JPG	Test commit	29 days ago
input_JPEG_9.JPEG	Test commit	29 days ago
input_Monochrome_Bitmap_0.bmp	Test commit	29 days ago
input_Monochrome_Bitmap_1.dib	Test commit	29 days ago
input_PNG_15.PNG	Test commit	29 days ago
input_TIFF_13.TIF	Test commit	29 days ago
input_TIFF_14.TIFF	Test commit	29 days ago
input_bit_Bitmap_6.bmp	Test commit	29 days ago
input_bit_Bitmap_7.dib	Test commit	29 days ago

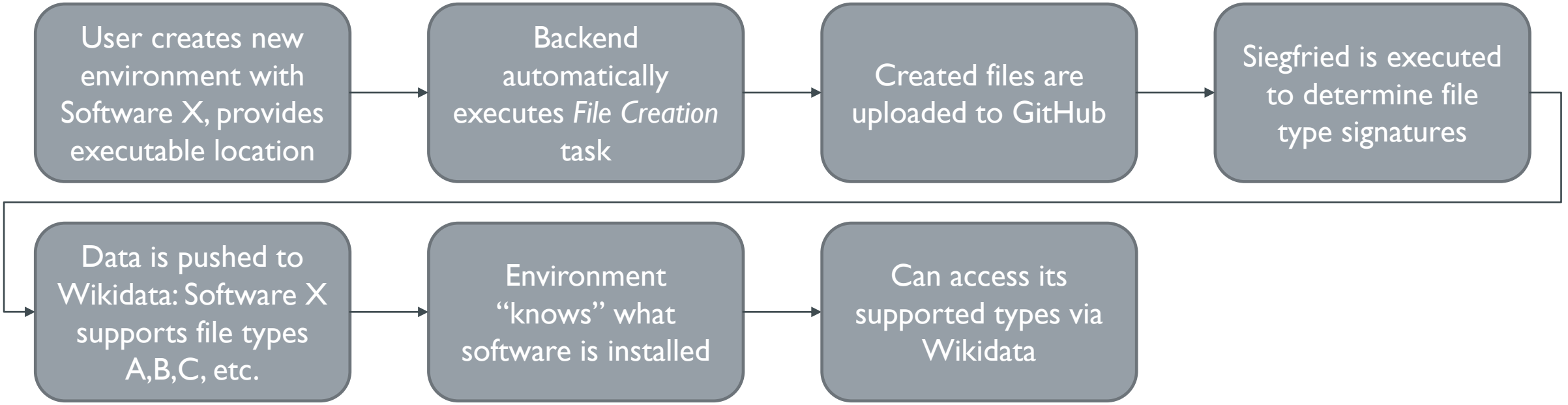
TEXT EDITORS CAN CREATE ~300 FILES!



INTEGRATION OVERVIEW

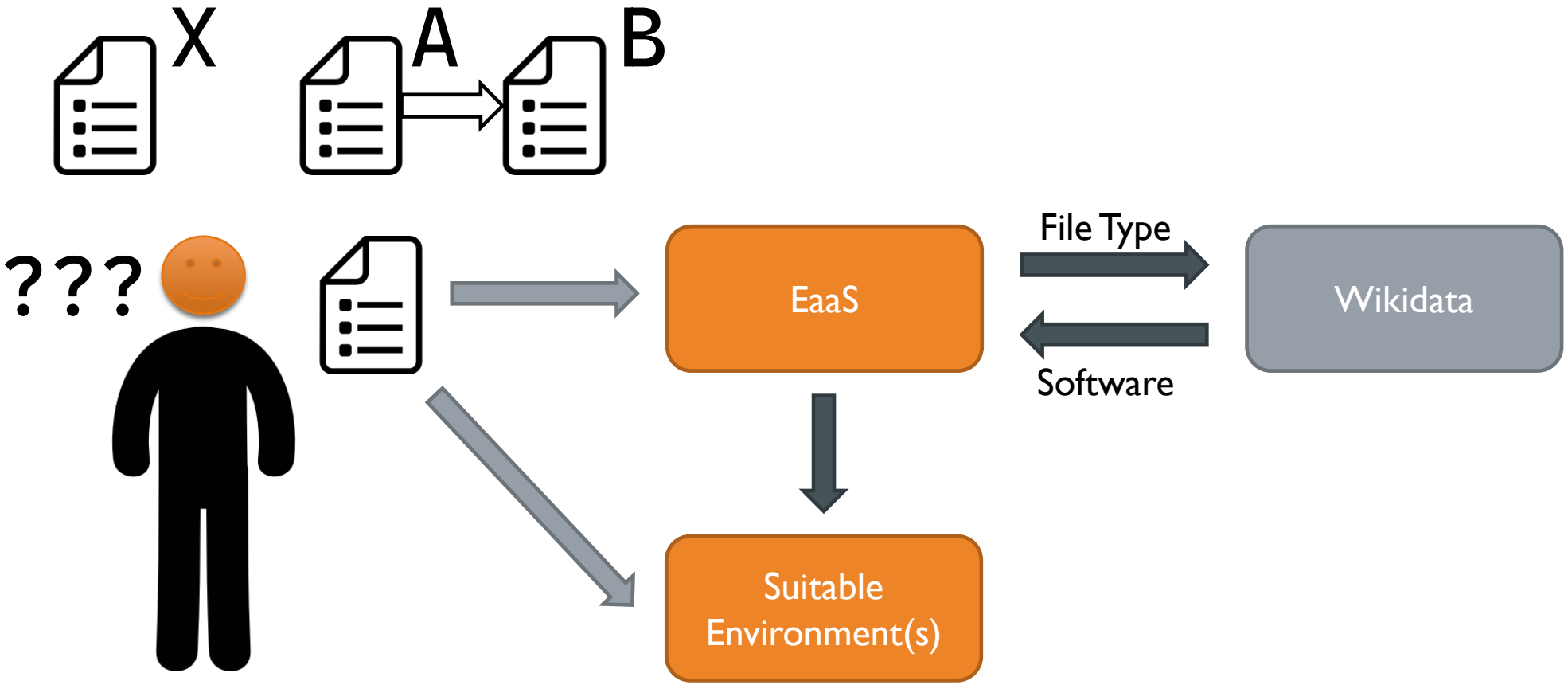


USE-CASE: FILE CREATION



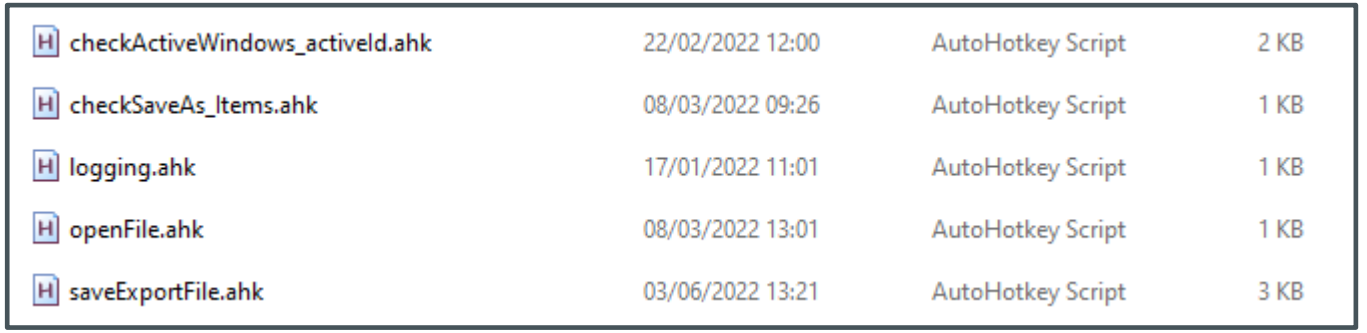
Environment knows what it is capable of
→ Improves usability

USE-CASE EXAMPLE



RESULTS

- Automate a task for multiple software
- Mix-Match/Re-use



checkActiveWindows_activeId.ahk	22/02/2022 12:00	AutoHotkey Script	2 KB
checkSaveAs_Items.ahk	08/03/2022 09:26	AutoHotkey Script	1 KB
logging.ahk	17/01/2022 11:01	AutoHotkey Script	1 KB
openFile.ahk	08/03/2022 13:01	AutoHotkey Script	1 KB
saveExportFile.ahk	03/06/2022 13:21	AutoHotkey Script	3 KB

- Requires software to support certain interfaces. Microsoft Office e.g., does not use *normal* menus!
- Is AHK the best solution? We don't know!

APPROACH 2: AUTOMATION RECORDING

- *External* Automation
- No knowledge/Independent of the Software or OS
- Mimics human inputs → Recordable!
- Abstract view of the interaction = Documentation

APPROACH 2: REUSABILITY?

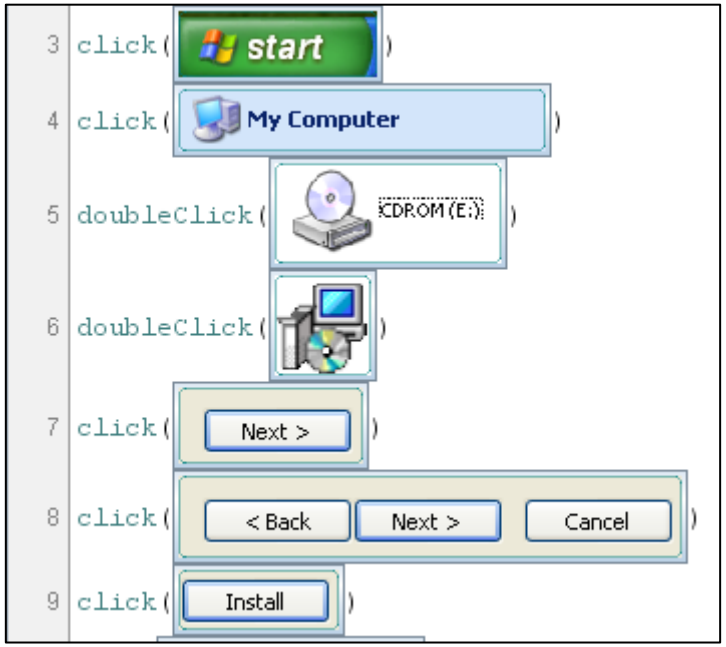
- Preconditions not 100% visually manageable – not possible to fully automate everything
- System is potentially imperfect → we can use this: Semi-automated assisted replay
- Previously recorded steps are executed until:
  1. Error appears
  2. User input is required
- System takes control afterwards

Loop until done

- Optimally: Annotations/Help for the user, explicit documentation
- Batch processing possible with human support (only interacts where necessary)
- Eventually, AI (again ☺)

APPROACH 2: AUTOMATION RECORDING

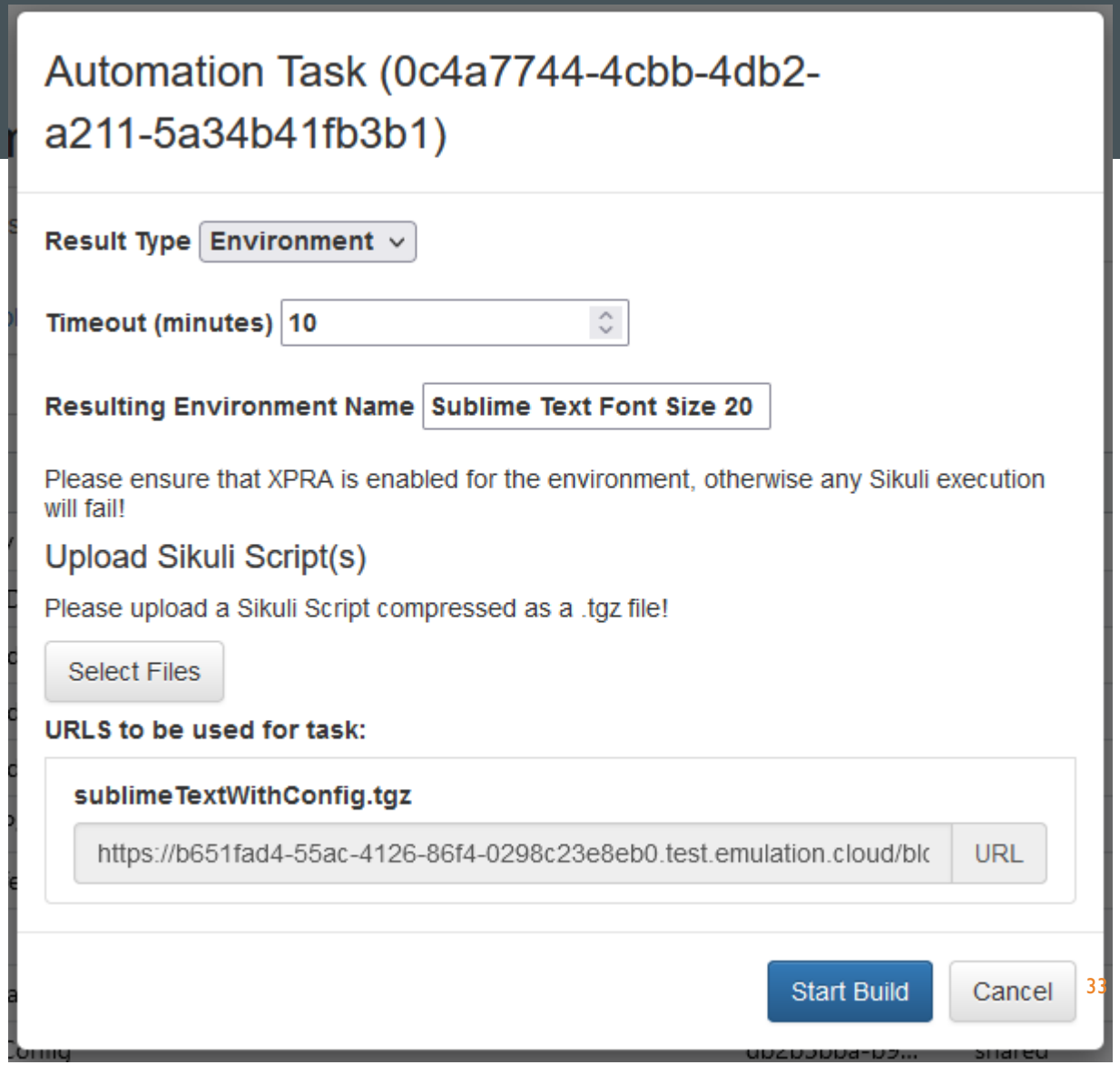
- Example Implementation: SikuliX[1]

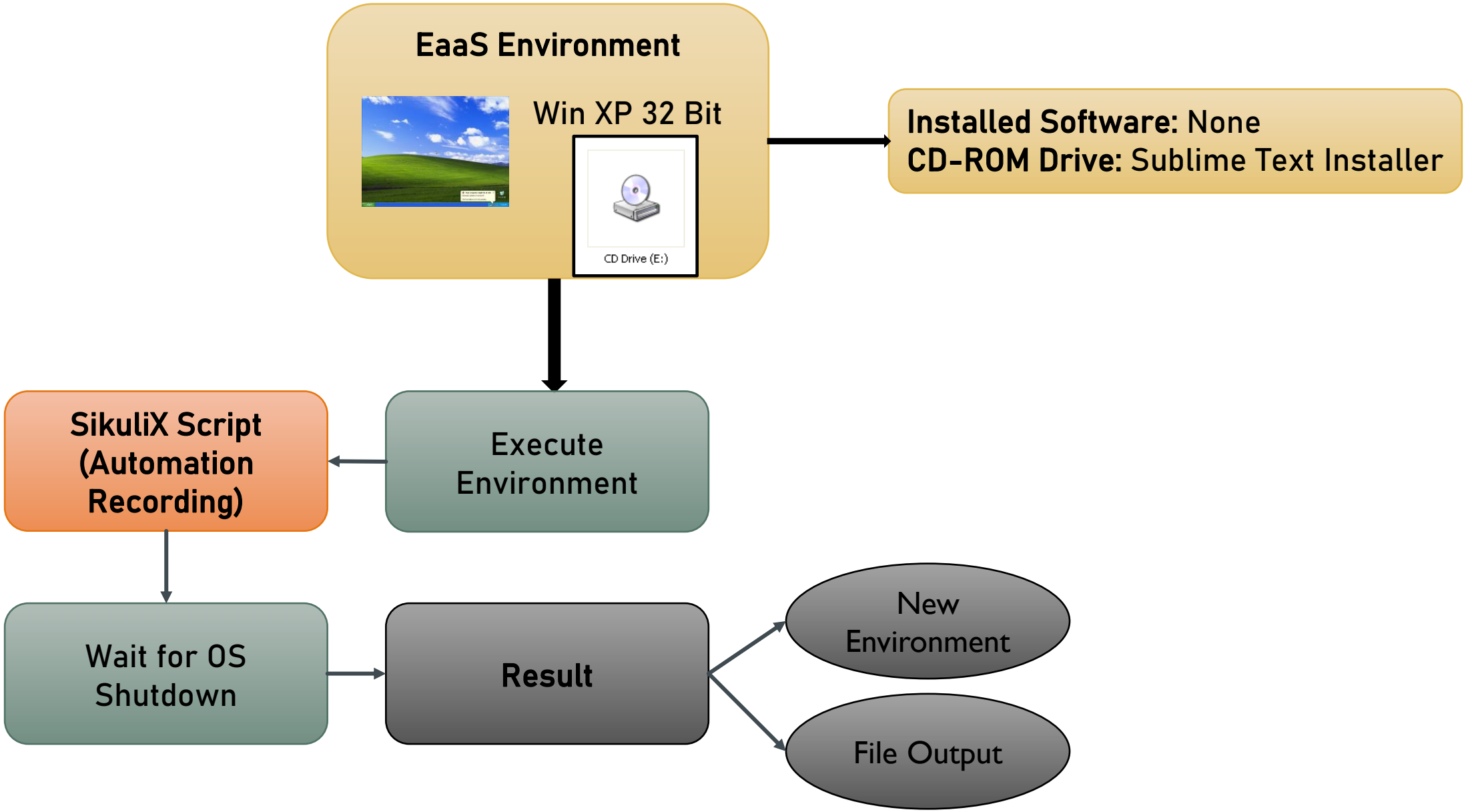


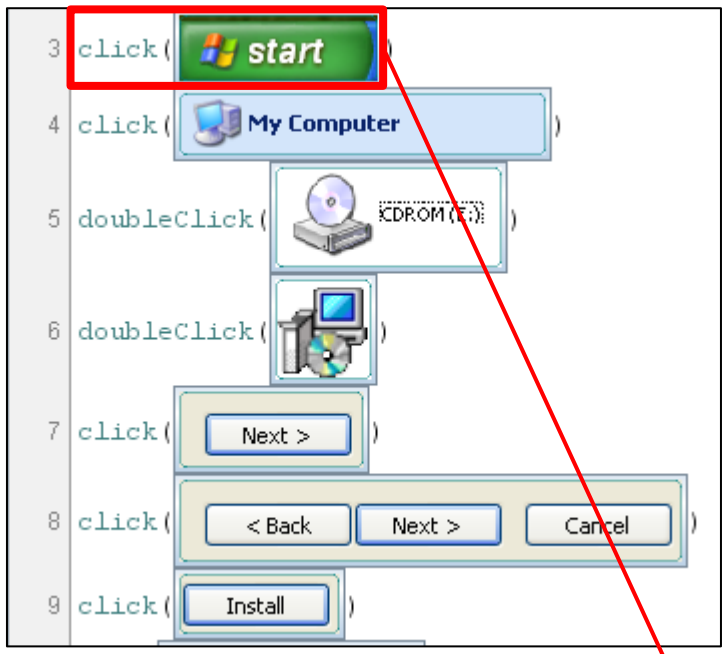
[1] http://sikulix.com/

EXAMPLE

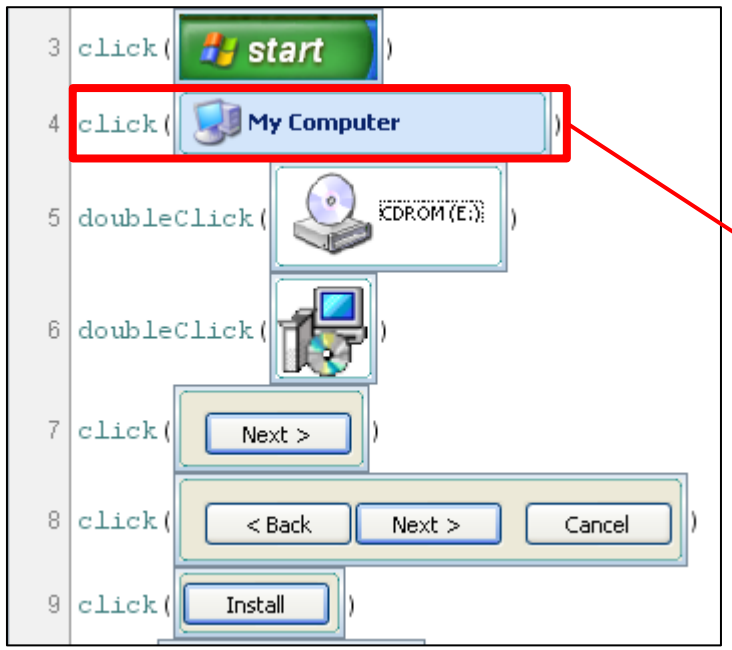
- Empty Windows XP environment
- ISO with Sublime text installer in CD-ROM drive
- Script to install and configure font size

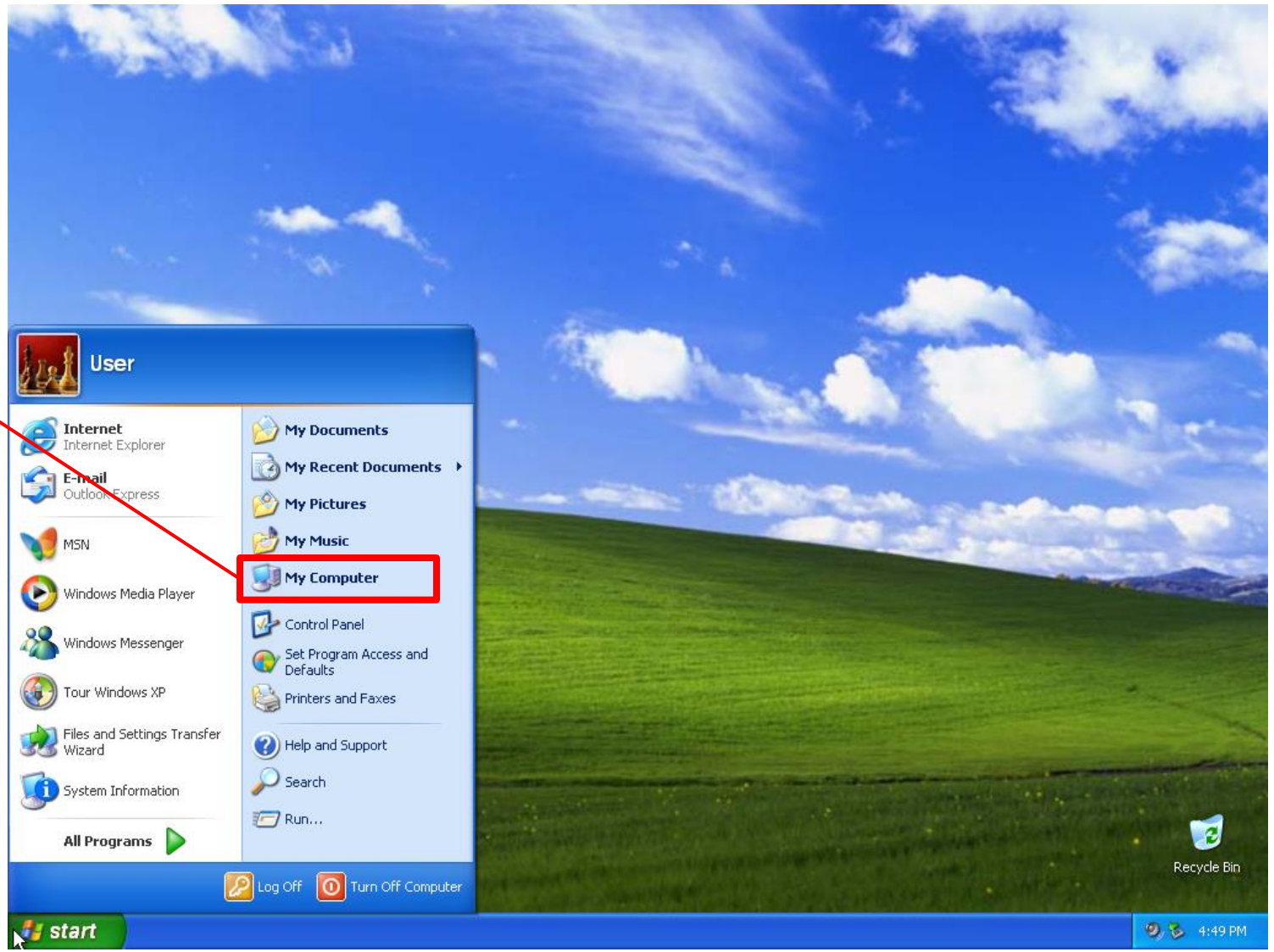


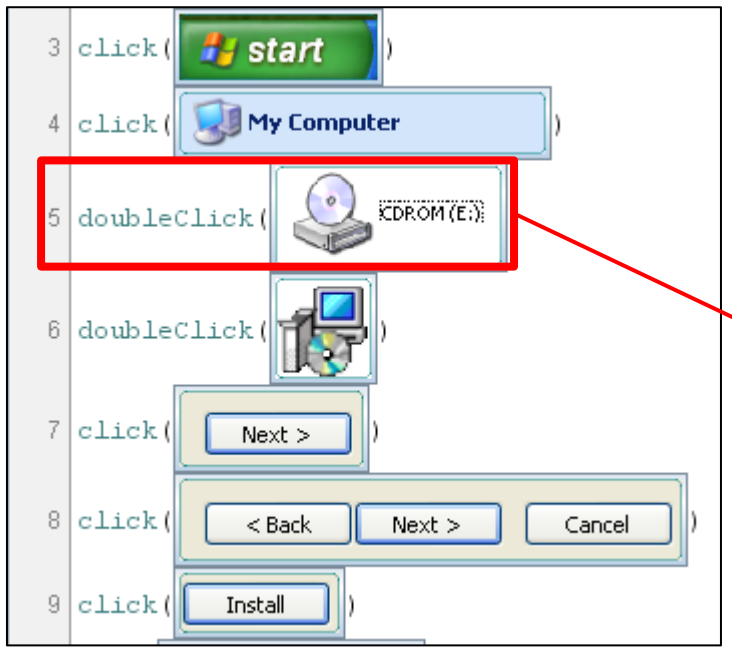

EaaS Environment
Win XP 32 Bit
CD Drive (E:)
Installed Software: None
CD-ROM Drive: Sublime Text Installer
Execute Environment
SikuliX Script (Automation Recording)
Wait for OS Shutdown
Result
New Environment
File Output

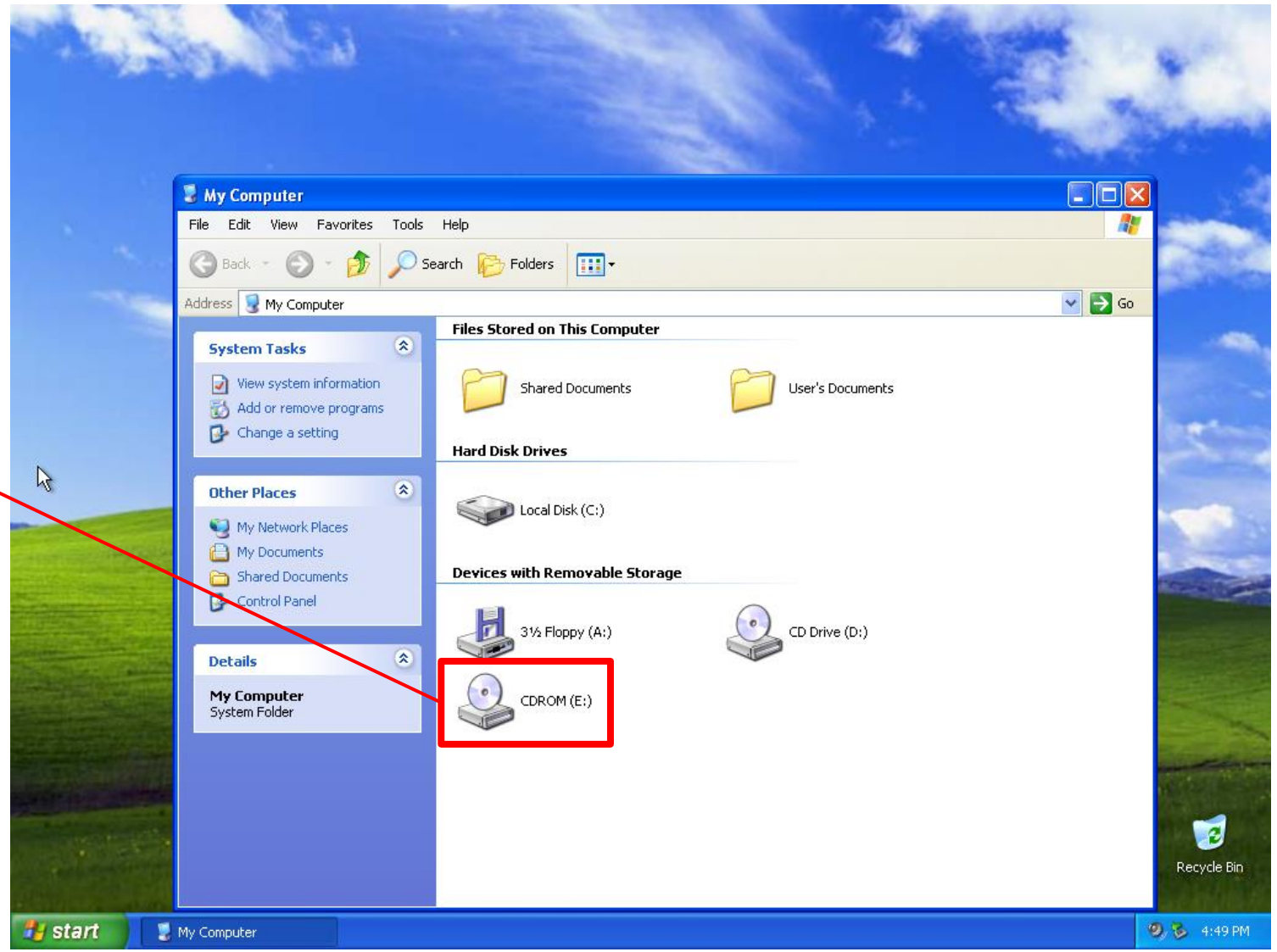

3 click (start)
4 click (My Computer)
5 doubleClick (CDROM (E:))
6 doubleClick ( )
7 click (Next >)
8 click (< Back Next > Cancel)
9 click (Install)

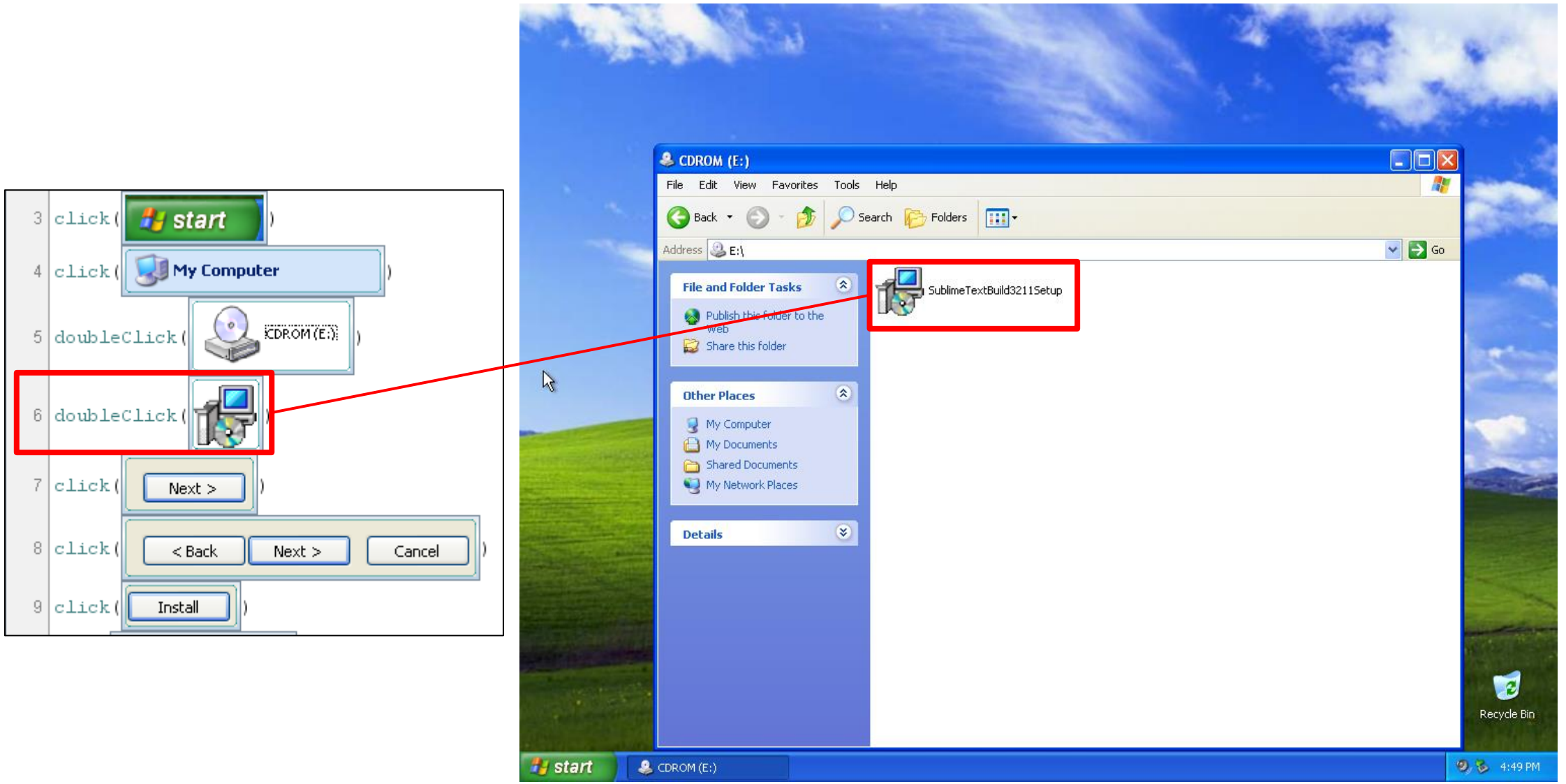

start
Recycle Bin
4:49 PM

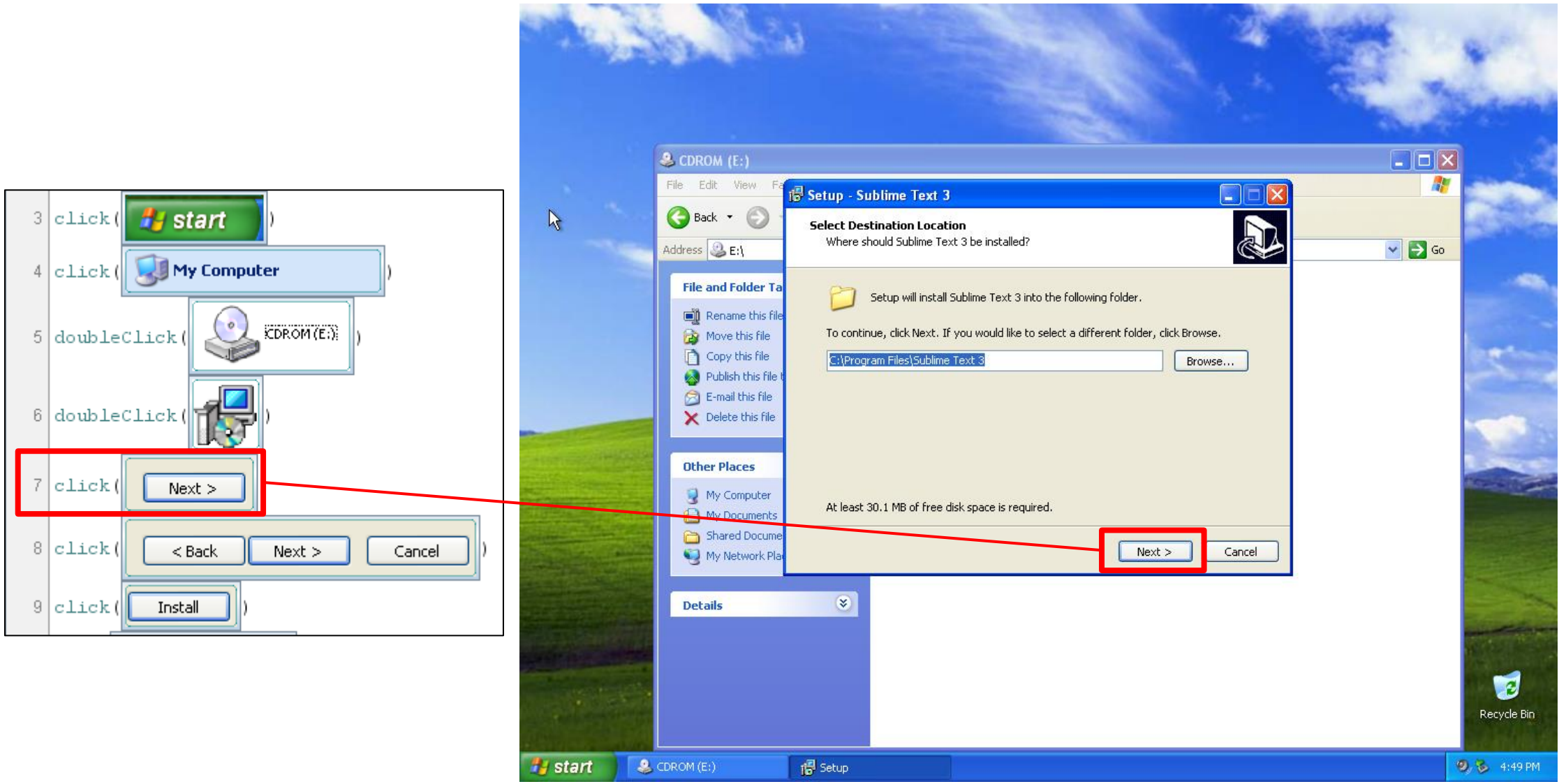

3 click (start)
4 click (My Computer)
5 doubleClick (CDROM (E:))
6 doubleClick ( )
7 click (Next >)
8 click (< Back Next > Cancel)
9 click (Install)

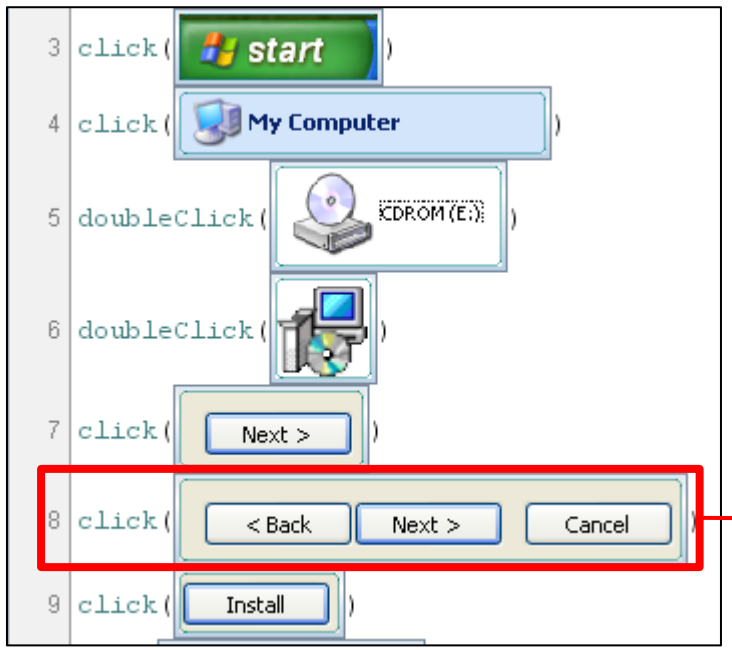

User
Internet
Internet Explorer
E-mail
Outlook Express
MSN
Windows Media Player
Windows Messenger
Tour Windows XP
Files and Settings Transfer Wizard
System Information
All Programs
My Documents
My Recent Documents
My Pictures
My Music
My Computer
Control Panel
Set Program Access and Defaults
Printers and Faxes
Help and Support
Search
Run...
Log Off
Turn Off Computer
start
Recycle Bin
4:49 PM

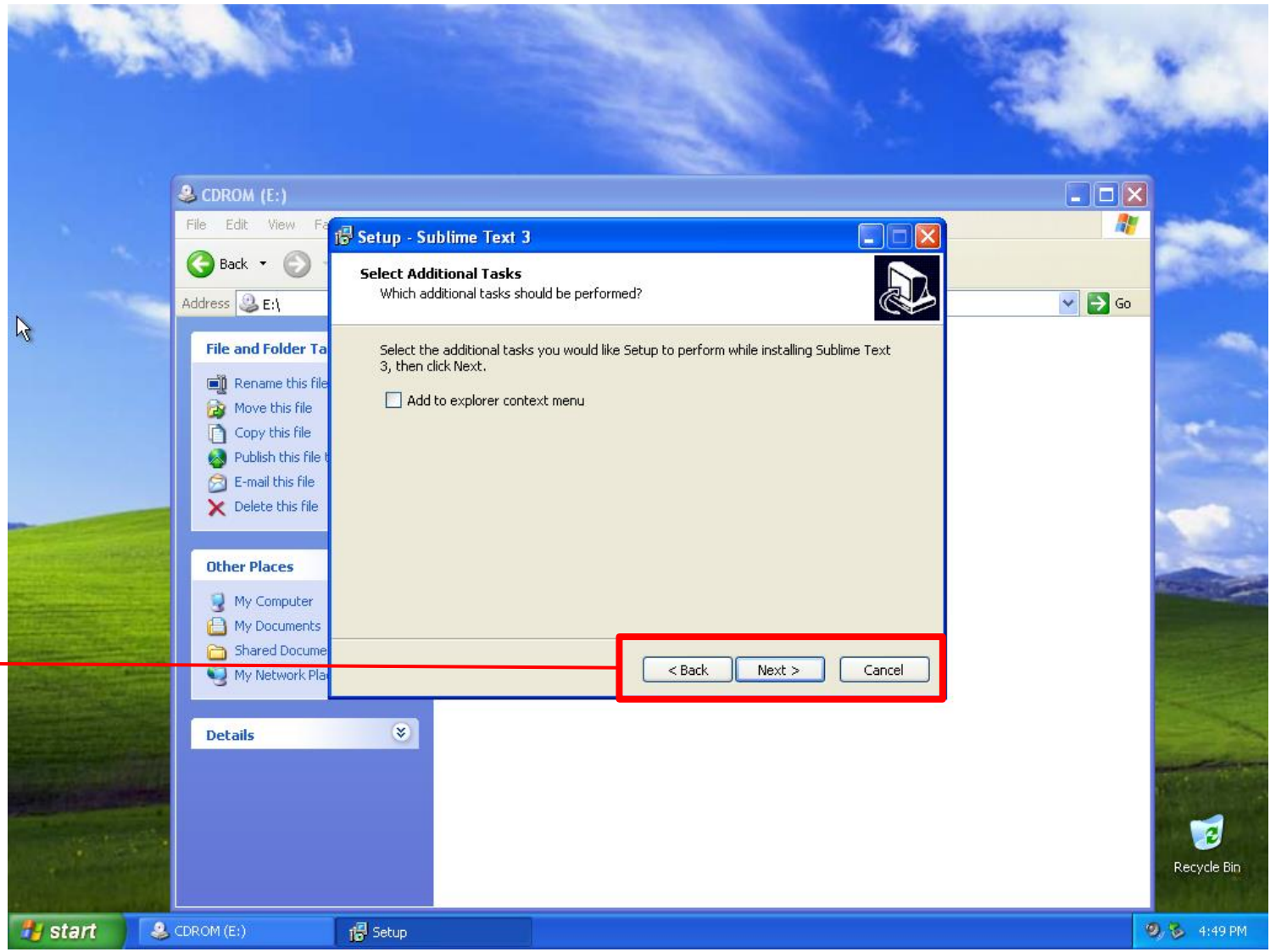

3 click (start)
4 click (My Computer)
5 doubleClick (CDROM (E:))
6 doubleClick ( )
7 click (Next >)
8 click (< Back Next > Cancel)
9 click (Install)

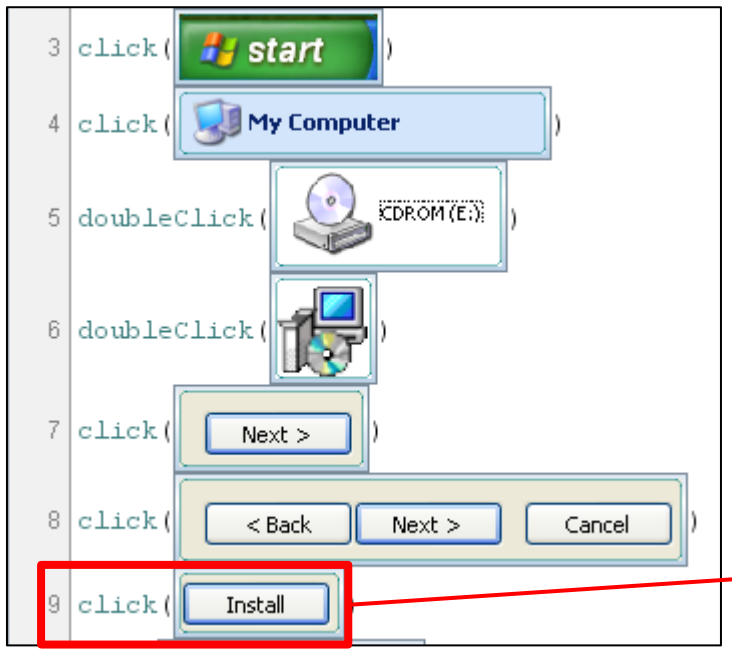

My Computer
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Back Search Folders
Address My Computer
Go
System Tasks
View system information
Add or remove programs
Change a setting
Other Places
My Network Places
My Documents
Shared Documents
Control Panel
Details
My Computer
System Folder
Files Stored on This Computer
Shared Documents
User's Documents
Hard Disk Drives
Local Disk (C:)
Devices with Removable Storage
3½ Floppy (A:)
CD Drive (D:)
CDROM (E:)
Recycle Bin
start
My Computer
4:49 PM

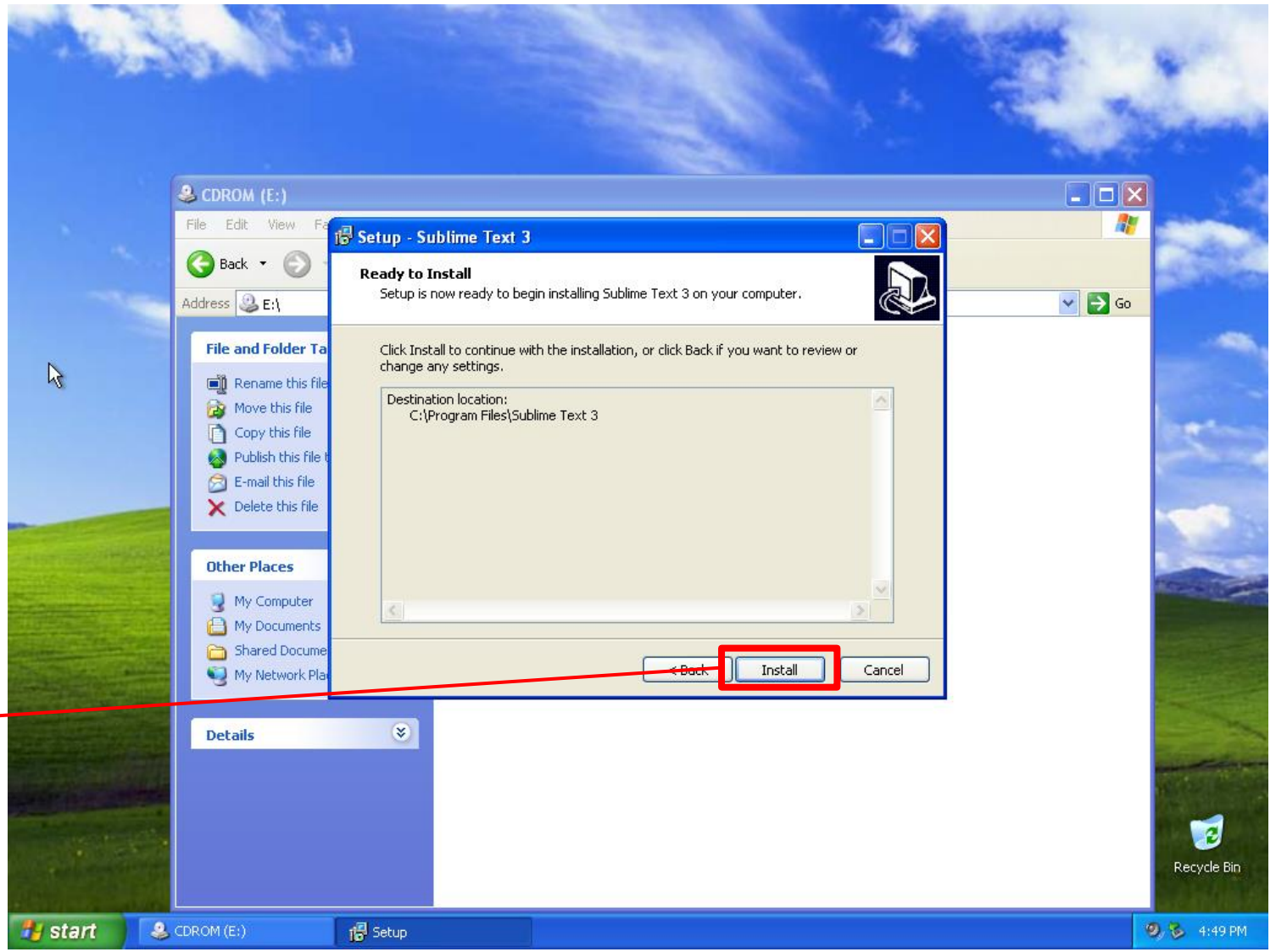

3 click(start)
4 click(My Computer)
5 doubleClick(CDROM (E:))
6 doubleClick( )
7 click(Next >)
8 click(< Back Next > Cancel)
9 click(Install)
CDROM (E:)
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Back Search Folders
Address E:\
Go
File and Folder Tasks
Publish this folder to the Web
Share this folder
Other Places
My Computer
My Documents
Shared Documents
My Network Places
Details
SublimeTextBuild3211Setup
Recycle Bin
start
CDROM (E:)
4:49 PM


3 click(start)
4 click(My Computer)
5 doubleClick(CDROM (E:))
6 doubleClick( )
7 click(Next >)
8 click(< Back Next > Cancel)
9 click(Install)
CDROM (E:)
Setup - Sublime Text 3
Select Destination Location
Where should Sublime Text 3 be installed?
Setup will install Sublime Text 3 into the following folder.
To continue, click Next. If you would like to select a different folder, click Browse.
C:\Program Files\Sublime Text 3
Browse...
At least 30.1 MB of free disk space is required.
Next >
Cancel
File and Folder Ta
Rename this file
Move this file
Copy this file
E-mail this file
Delete this file
Other Places
My Computer
Details
Recycle Bin
start
Setup
4:49 PM

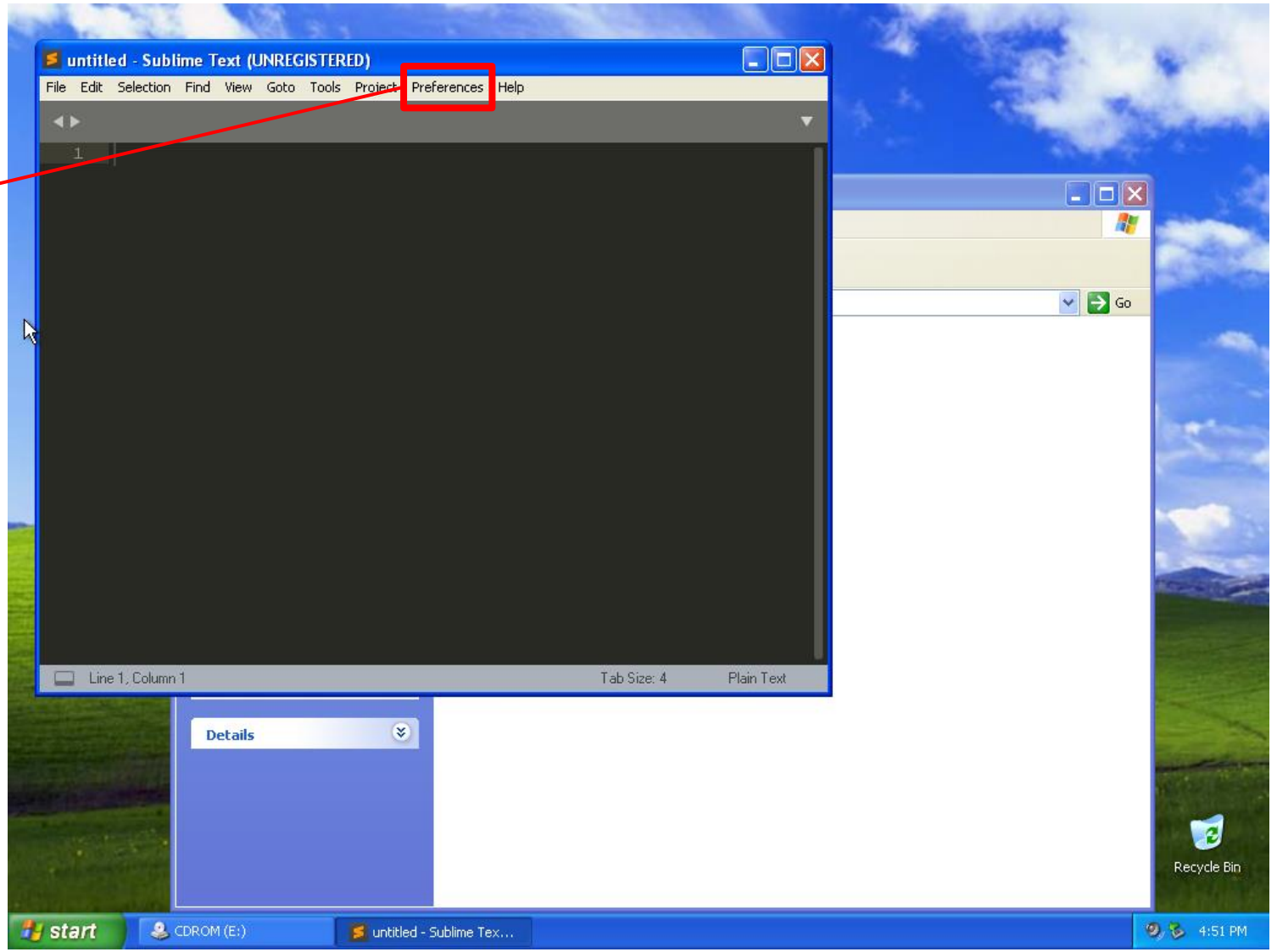

3 click(start)
4 click(My Computer)
5 doubleClick(CDROM (E:))
6 doubleClick( )
7 click(Next >)
8 click(< Back Next > Cancel)
9 click(Install)


CDROM (E:)
File Edit View
Back
Address E:\
Go
File and Folder Ta
Rename this file
Move this file
Copy this file
Publish this file
E-mail this file
Delete this file
Other Places
My Computer
My Documents
Shared Docume
My Network Pla
Details
Setup - Sublime Text 3
Select Additional Tasks
Which additional tasks should be performed?
Select the additional tasks you would like Setup to perform while installing Sublime Text 3, then click Next.
Add to explorer context menu
< Back
Next >
Cancel
Recycle Bin
start
CDROM (E:)
Setup
4:49 PM

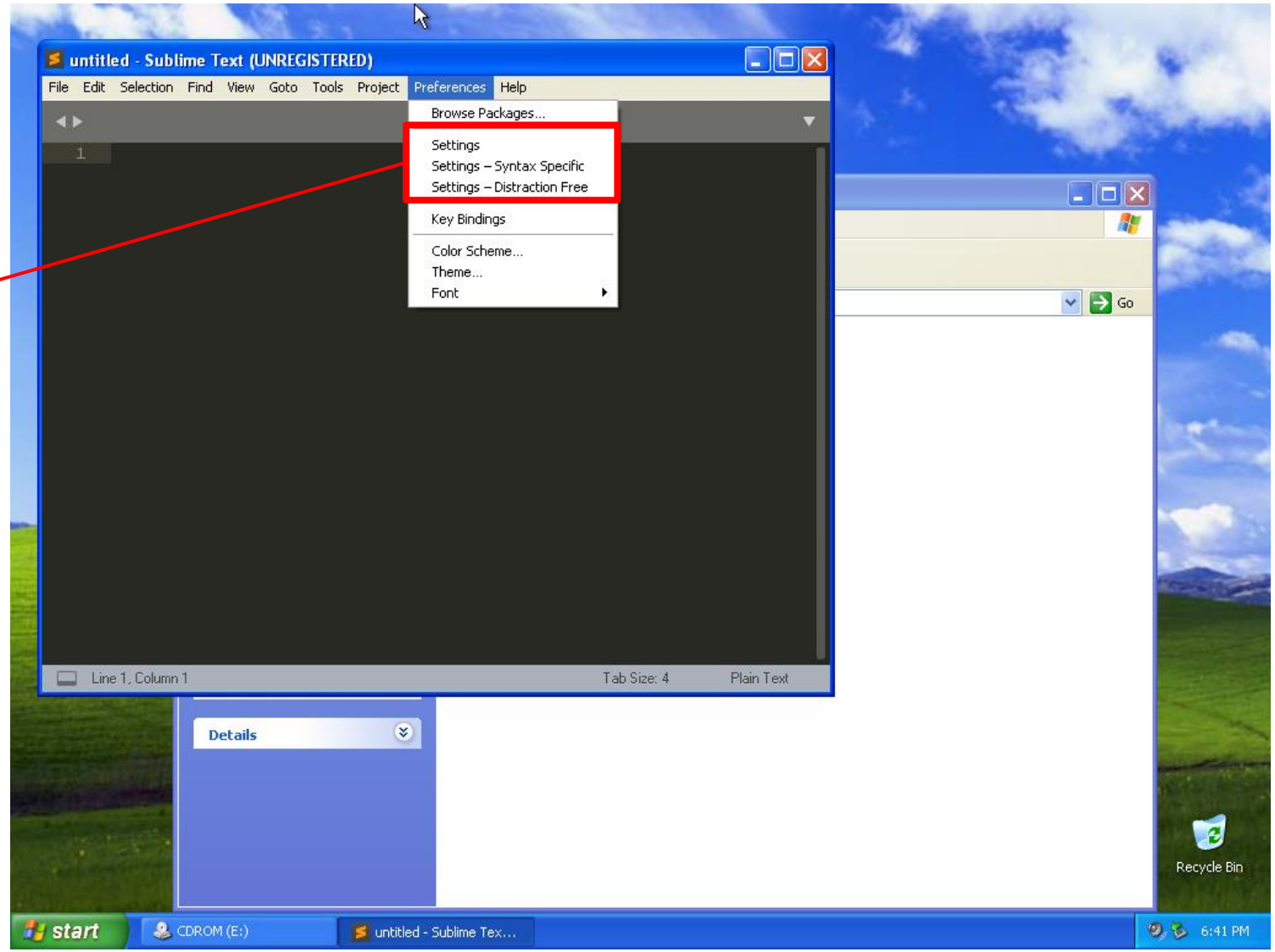

3 click(start)
4 click(My Computer)
5 doubleClick(CDROM (E:))
6 doubleClick( )
7 click(Next >)
8 click(< Back Next > Cancel)
9 click(Install)


CDROM (E:)
File Edit View
Back
Address E:\
Go
File and Folder Ta
Rename this file
Move this file
Copy this file
Publish this file
E-mail this file
Delete this file
Other Places
My Computer
My Documents
Shared Docume
My Network Pla
Details
Setup - Sublime Text 3
Ready to Install
Setup is now ready to begin installing Sublime Text 3 on your computer.
Click Install to continue with the installation, or click Back if you want to review or change any settings.
Destination location:
C:\Program Files\Sublime Text 3
< Back
Install
Cancel
Recycle Bin
start
CDROM (E:)
Setup
4:49 PM

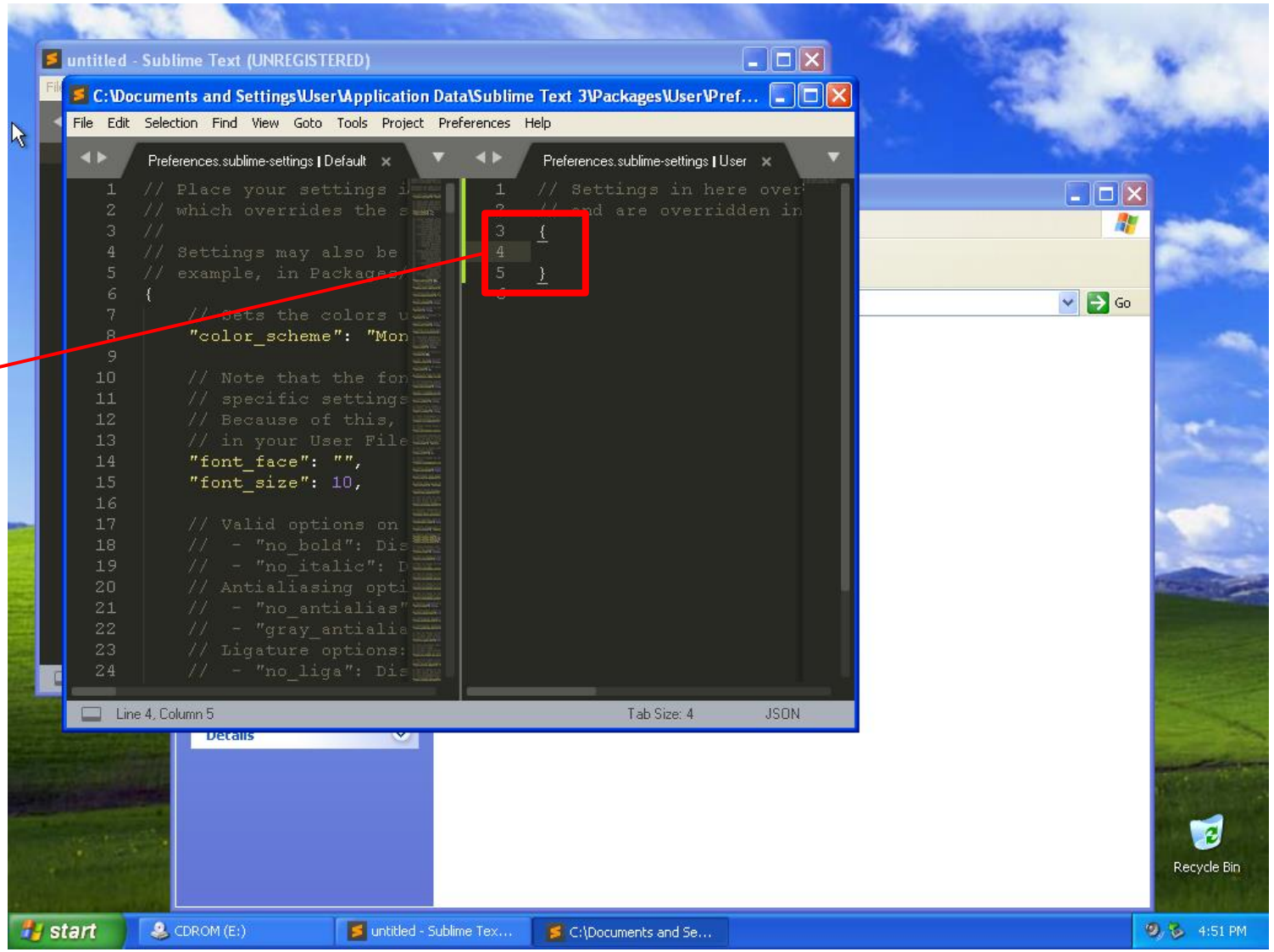
```
15 click(t Preferences )
16 click(Settings
         Settings – Syntax Specific
         Settings – Distraction Free )
17 click(3 {
         4
         5 }  )
18 wait(3)
19 type('"font_size')
20 wait(1)
21 type(Key.RIGHT)
22 type(': 20')
23 type("s", KEY_CTRL)
```



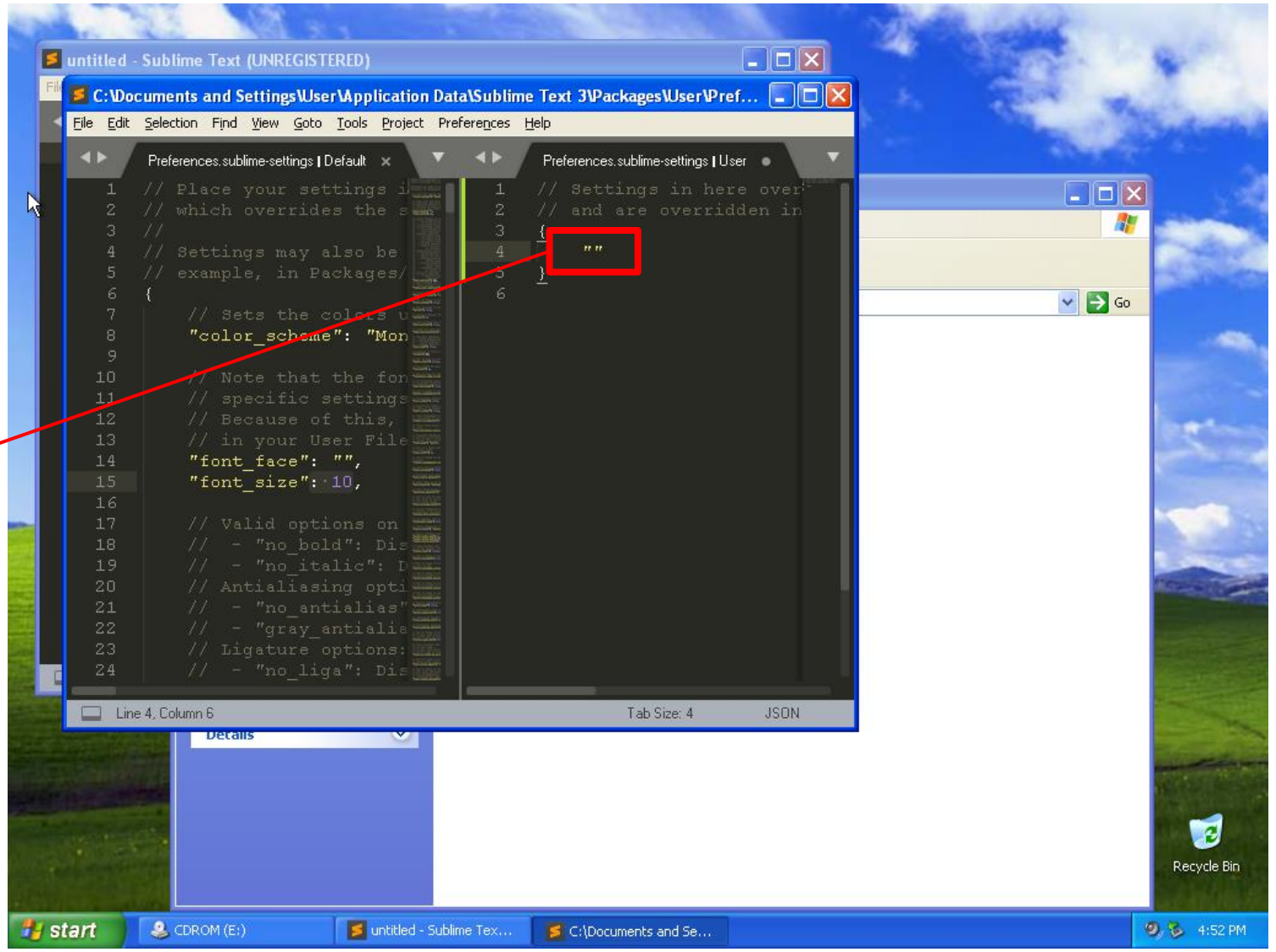
```
15 click(
16 click(
17 click(
18 wait(3)
19 type('"font_size')
20 wait(1)
21 type(Key.RIGHT)
22 type(': 20')
23 type("s", KEY_CTRL)
```



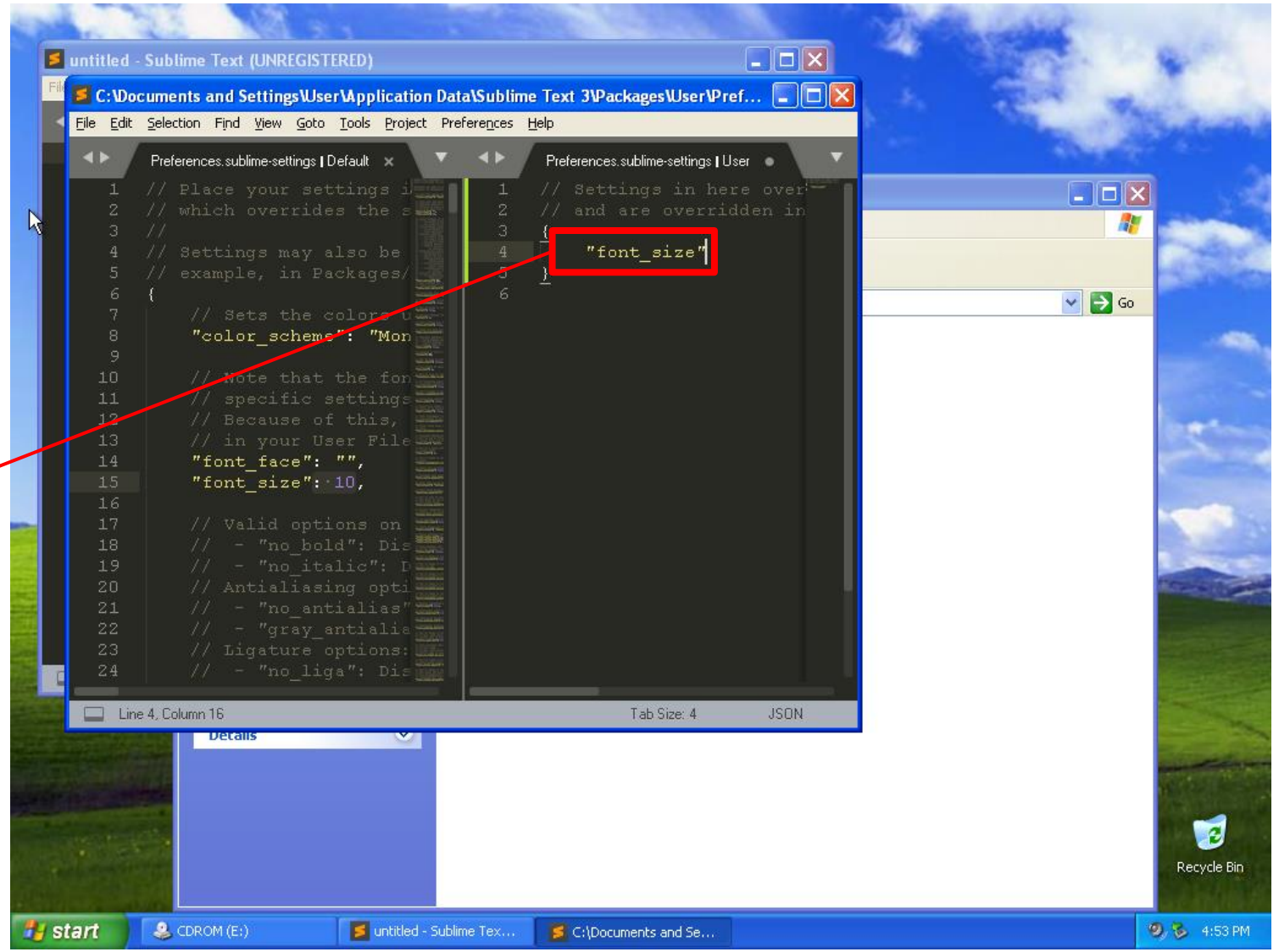
```
15 click(t Preferences )
16 click(                )
17 click(                )
18 wait(3)
19 type('"font_size')
20 wait(1)
21 type(Key.RIGHT)
22 type(': 20')
23 type("s", KEY_CTRL)
```



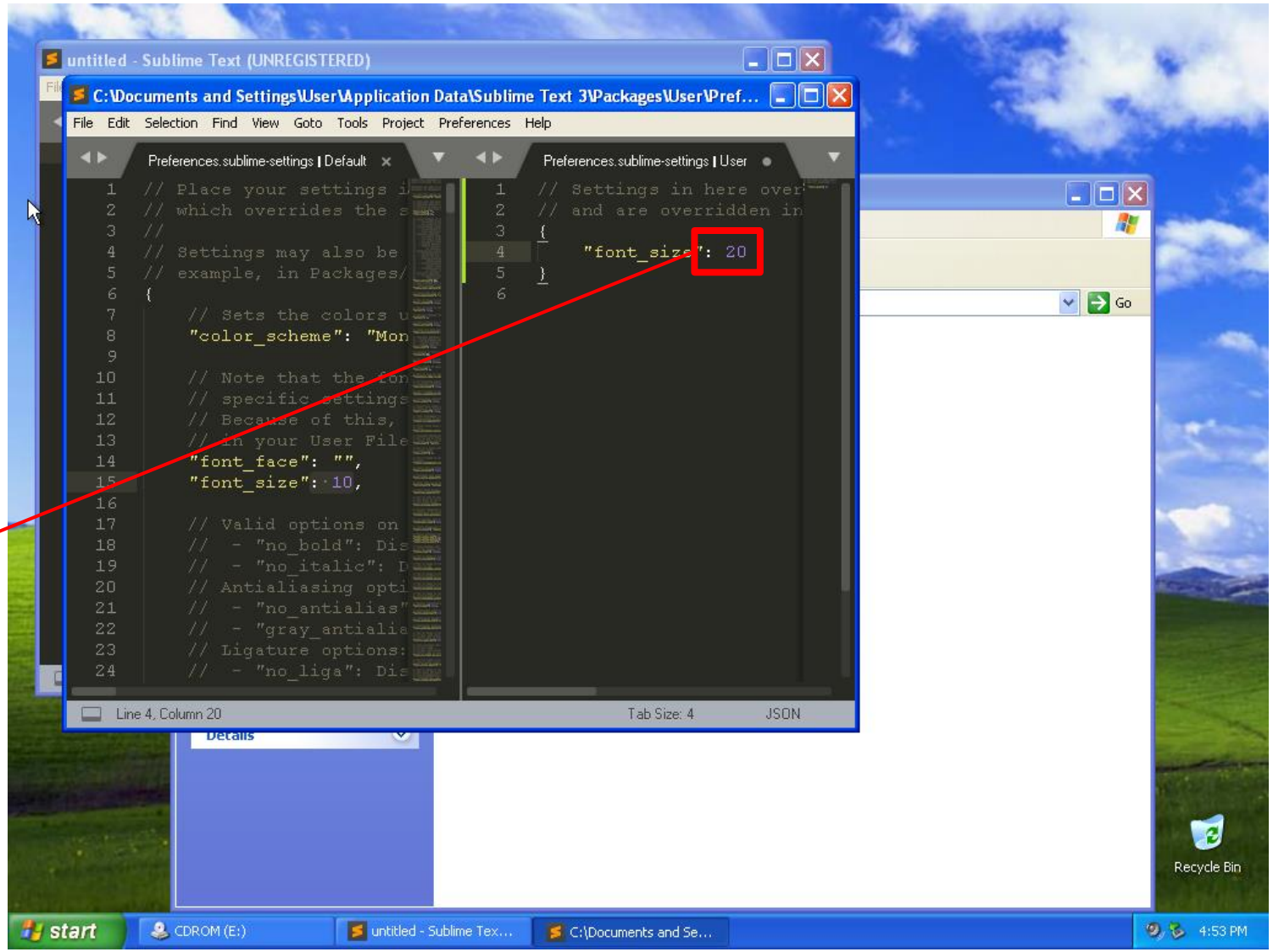
```
15 click(t Preferences )
16 click(  Settings
           Settings – Syntax Specific
           Settings – Distraction Free )
17 click(  3    {
           4
           5    }  )
18 wait(3)
19 type('"font_size')
20 wait(1)
21 type(Key.RIGHT)
22 type(': 20')
23 type("s", KEY_CTRL)
```



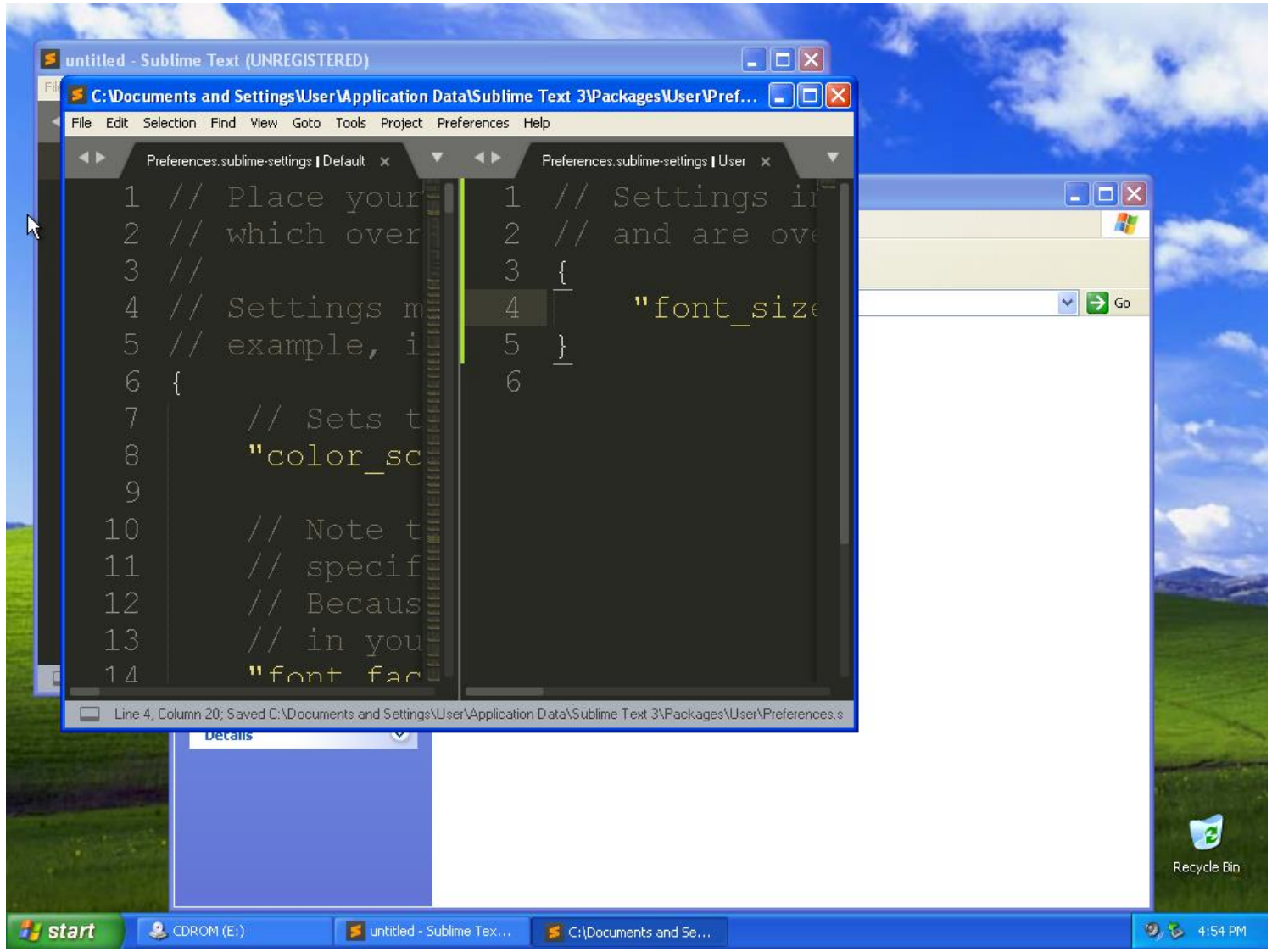
```
15 click(
16 click(
17 click(
18 wait(3)
19 type('"font_size')
20 wait(1)
21 type(Key.RIGHT)
22 type(': 20')
23 type("s", KEY_CTRL)
```

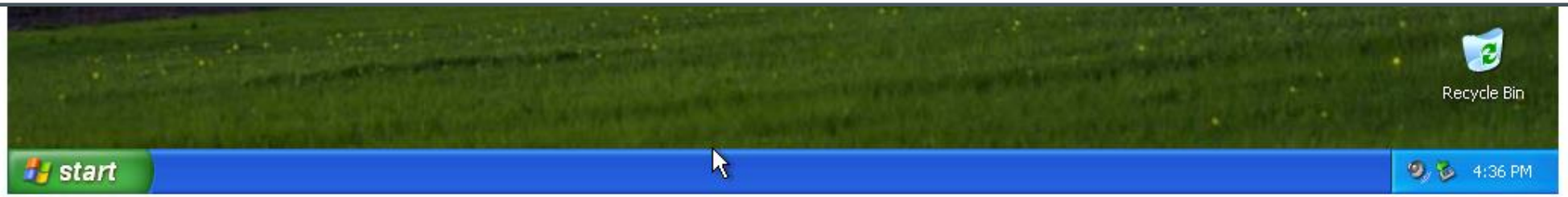


```
15 click(t Preferences )
16 click(  Settings
           Settings – Syntax Specific
           Settings – Distraction Free )
17 click(  {
           }  )
18 wait(3)
19 type('"font_size')
20 wait(1)
21 type(Key.RIGHT)
22 type(': 20')
23 type("s", KEY_CTRL)
```



```
15 click(
16 click(
17 click(
18 wait(3)
19 type('"font_size')
20 wait(1)
21 type(Key.RIGHT)
22 type(': 20')
23 type("s", KEY_CTRL)
```





Automation Recording

Actions

- Screenshot (Sikuli)
- Click (L) | Click (R) | Double Click
- Hover
- Wait
- Sleep
- Type
- Submit
- Execute
- Download
- Upload

Script

Sleep
60 Delete

Click (left)

1 Offset X: 0, Y: 0 Delete

Click (left)

2 Offset X: 0, Y: 0 Delete

Click (left)

3 Offset X: 0, Y: 0 Delete

Images

ID: 0  Delete

ID: 1  Delete

ID: 2  Delete

ID: 3  Delete

RESULTS

- Declaration, description and execution of user interaction
- Documentation of every single step necessary for a task
- Errors are (usually) easy to fix
- Sikuli best solution long-term? Again, we don't know (probably not)!

COMPARISON

Internal Automation

- Interacts via OS/Software interfaces
- Requires Modification of a system
- Automate software that supports OS Interface
- Deterministically know state of task
- Re-Use: Code as documentation, "Match-and-Mix"

External Automation

- Mimics human interaction
- External, can be applied to any existing system
- Any software
- Not deterministic, need to allow fail rate
- Re-Use: Suitable for assistance, step-by-step documentation

CONCLUSION

- Different automation approaches with strengths, weaknesses and use-cases
- Automation + Emulation = A step towards long-term re-useability of software
- Automation is Documentation!

Upcoming: Integration into

Thank you for your attention!