

Start

Installed ap



Windows 8



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1. What You Need to Know About Windows 8



Back in 1991, Microsoft released their first version of Windows, a mouse-driven graphical user interface that revolutionised the way we use computers, both at home and in the workplace.

Now, in 2012, they hope to stage a new revolution with Windows 8, perhaps Microsoft's most daring release yet. Featuring an unusual tile-based Start screen that's optimized for touchscreen devices, Windows 8 will be available on new computers, laptops and ultrabooks, hybrid tablets and even a new range of Microsoft-branded, iPad-style tablets called Microsoft Surface.

Whichever device you end up running Windows 8 on, you'll need to know a few things. First, how are you going to get the data from your current operating system to the new one? Second, you'll probably be wondering where the famous Microsoft desktop has gone. Finally, you might be wondering just what is going on: why did Microsoft discard the Start menu, and why does its replacement look like it was designed for children?

1.1 Upgrading from Windows XP or Windows Vista/7

Odds are you're moving to Windows 8 either as an upgrade from a previous release or you have purchased a brand new device and want to copy your data across.

If you're upgrading, and you're already using Windows Vista or Windows 7, the new version of Windows offers an Upgrade option. This enables you to manage the transfer of data with little or no trouble – Windows 8 will effectively upgrade the existing OS without damaging your data – although you should backup your vital files anyway, just in case.

If you're upgrading from Windows XP, the process is a little different. Windows 8 cannot upgrade Windows XP in the same way in which it can Windows Vista and 7, in which case you will need to use a more detailed and drawn out process for saving your data and migrating it to the new operating system. Full details on upgrading can be found in Appendix A

1.2 Where's the Desktop Gone?

So you've installed Windows. At least, you thought you installed Windows, but what you see doesn't look at all familiar.

One of the most striking developments in the new version of Windows is the way in which the desktop – the area hosting the Start button, taskbar and icons in previous releases – has been demoted in favour of a new Start screen, complete with tiles that can be clicked or tapped (depending on your hardware) to launch apps and adjust settings.

Have no fear, however – the old Desktop is still available. Indeed, it can be reached by tapping one of the tiles. While viewing the Desktop feels and looks like classic Windows, note that there is no Start button – all tasks related to this feature will need to be performed via the Start screen or by setting up some shortcuts on the Desktop.

1.3 Windows 8 Devices

There are many types of computer hardware capable of running Windows 8.

First and foremost is the standard desktop computer. If your PC is capable of running Windows Vista, chances are it will run Windows 8. There are even some older computers stuck on Windows XP that can run Windows 8 effectively!

Similarly, existing laptop computers and ultrabooks will also be able to run Windows 8 – thanks to useful touch-pad gesture apps, Windows 8 might actually be better for smaller systems than Vista or 7 were.

Despite this, Windows 8 is really intended for new devices. The reason for this is simple: the change in focus for the Start screen means that fingers are recommended, if not required. As a result new PCs shipping with Windows 8 will come with touchscreens and/or mice with gesture recognition tools, new Mac OS X-style touchpads will become available and laptops will almost all become hybrid devices, with pivoting touchscreen displays.

Microsoft aren't entirely playing nice with their traditional partners, the hardware makers – they've announced the release of a new tablet, Microsoft Surface, which will come in two flavours. That's a big step for a company that doesn't usually make hardware.

Windows 8 is designed to work on devices powered by a low-power ARM processor (found in typical Android and Apple tablets) as well as typical Intel x86 based processors (which is what most desktop, laptops and ultrabooks today use). Surface is seen as a competitor to Android and iOS tablets, and Windows 8's app store and tile-based interface are a big part of that.

With this in mind, there will be no shortage of suitable computers and tablets to run the new operating system!

It should also be noted that a Windows 8 device powered by an ARM processor will be unable to run legacy Windows software, such as games and older versions of Microsoft Office. That software is Intel-only.

1.4 Metro vs. Desktop

Microsoft's new Start screen is based on the Metro design language that first came to prominence as the user interface of the Windows Phone 7 devices in 2010. During that time, Metro spread to the Xbox 360 and various Microsoft promotional materials.

The square design, strong colours and use of the Segoe UI typeface were until recently known as Metro UI – that's what it was called when Microsoft unveiled the prototype Windows Phone back in early 2010. Since the release of



the Windows 8 Consumer Preview, however, discussions with German retailer Metro AG have resulted in Microsoft dropping the name. They now call Metro “Modern”; but for the purposes of this guide we’ll continue to refer to it by its original name: Metro.

Windows Live, the series of online services, all adopted the new look. The forthcoming Microsoft Office 2013 is heavily indebted to this new look, which combines clear, stark lettering (a variation of the Segoe font) with noticeable colours, sharp lines and a vibrant, “living” collection of tiles that are capable of displaying in-app data, much like widgets on an Android device or the desktop gadgets in Windows Vista and 7.

But what does this all mean for the traditional Windows Desktop?

Well, in the short term, nothing. There remains plenty of compatible applications, games and utilities for Windows 8, most of which rely on the traditional desktop. For users that prefer the Metro interface, meanwhile, there will be a great number of apps and games available via the Windows 8 Store that have been designed to run in the new Start screen.

Clearly Microsoft is hoping to keep everybody – PC and tablet users alike – happy!

1.5 The Touchscreen Controversy

We’re not going to take sides. However, you will probably be aware that there is a large amount of opposition from computer users against the inclusion of the tile based user interface in a desktop operating system.

Complaints come in all flavours. Some have compared the interface to the bright colours of an early AOL home page, while others recognise that the tiles and touchscreen are useful but jarring when used alongside the traditional desktop. There is also the lack of actual windows in this new version of Windows (certainly as far as the Start screen is concerned) and some have complained that the addition of the Metro user interface is little more than a UI overlay, similar to how HTC modded Windows Mobile 6 devices with TouchFLO.

The fact is, Windows 8 is here and a lot of people are going to be using it on new computers, whether they are desktops, laptops or tablets.

So, let’s get started!

2. The Windows 8 User Interface

The major difference between Windows 8 and previous releases – the tile-based UI – means that you will need to spend a bit of time getting used to the Start screen. No longer will you need to click a Start button and browse the Programs list, or use the search function – at least not the way you're used to. Instead you will need to find a new way in which to perform tasks that have become ingrained, hard wired into your brain.

2.1 Understanding Metro

Probably the best route to understanding how to use Windows 8 is to forget that you're using Windows at all. There are various ways in which you can interact with the system, but few of them require you to click and drag, open properties or make any adjustments to the layout of the Start screen (although this is possible).

Gaining familiarity with the tiles and the navigation is important, as is being aware of the “charms” – a hidden array of menu items. You'll need to move your mouse pointer to (or tap) the top or bottom right of your Windows 8 display to reveal the Charm Bar. If you are using a device with a keyboard, pressing WIN+C will also open the Charm Bar.



Appearing on the right-hand side of the screen, the Charm Bar reveals provides other features and functions:

- **Search** – like the Windows 7 Start menu, simply type to find what you're looking for. When an app is open, Search will focus on that software rather than the computer itself. For a full computer search, use the tool from the Start screen. Note also that you can commence a search from the Start screen by simply typing – the Search tool will open as a result. Also note that Search can be used to find Desktop-based Windows items.
- **Share** – apps with sharing permissions can be used to share information such as links. Note that this cannot be used in desktop mode, only via the Metro browser.
- **Start** – this is yet another option to open the Start screen, along with the menu in the lower-left corner, or by pressing the Windows key on a hardware keyboard.
- **Devices** – settings for peripherals such as second/external monitors can be adjusted.
- **Settings** - Audio, Brightness, Wi-Fi, Power, Notifications and Language are all accessed from here. The **More PC Settings** link will enable you to access more options in the control panel. The Settings option will display settings for individual apps while they are active.

These options are displayed Metro-style. On the left side of your display, the date, time and battery and wireless networking information will also be displayed.

Note that many apps (native and third party) will have their own context menus. These menus can be accessed by right-clicking with the mouse.

2.2 Navigating

With three clear paths to returning to the Start menu, navigating through Windows 8 should become far simpler.

Depending on your device, you will have three methods. For tablet users, the use of fingers will allow you to swipe left and right, zoom and tap. For laptop or desktop computers, the mouse and keyboard (or perhaps a touchpad for detecting gestures) will enable you to find your way around Windows 8. Chapter 3 “Mouse, Keyboard or Fingers?” deals with this in more detail.

Rather than worry about navigation at this stage, however, simply be aware that the Start screen and Charm Bar are the key to getting from A to B in Windows 8. As you progress through this guide you should be able to build up a picture of how simple it is to find your way around Windows 8.

2.3 Tiles and Live Tiles

On the Start screen you will find two types of tile. First, you'll notice the static tiles, such as those for the Desktop or Internet Explorer – these are like old fashioned desktop icons.

More crucially to Windows 8 and what Microsoft are doing with their new operating system are the live tiles, squares and rectangles that display vital information such as the subjects of new email messages, financial information, the latest weather, news feeds, and other information that an app might display without you having to resort to opening it.



This feature makes using Windows 8 quite pleasing. Similar to the widgets of Android 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich and later (but more closely related to the tiles of Windows Phone) live tiles are time-saving devices that seem to bring your tablet or computer to life – hence the name!

2.4 What If I Don't Like Metro?

The development and release of Windows 8 has been littered with controversy, with many commentators and potential users dismissing the inclusion of what they regard as a mobile user interface.

If you've followed some of the examples for Windows 8 operation so far, you should have seen that the UI is pretty useful for basic computing tasks. However, the inclusion of a classic-style Windows Desktop illustrates that Microsoft is aware that many users won't be ready to move away from multiple windows and easy multi-tasking just yet. Like the relegation of MS-DOS to an alternative start-up option or command line interface within Windows 95 and 98, access to the Desktop is still possible – merely not emphasized.



The best way of doing this is to click the Desktop tile, but if you really don't like the modern user interface in Windows 8, how do you prevent it from loading up when you start your computer? The simplest way to head to the Desktop is to drag the tile (left click or tap, hold and drag) into the top-left position on the Start screen. All you then need to do is tap **Enter** when Windows 8 boots up and you'll be in Desktop mode.

Other methods worked during the “preview” of Windows 8, but reportedly will not work with the final version. New hacks might show up, but hacks that previously worked no longer have any effect...

3. Mouse, Keyboard or Fingers?

As discussed, there are three ways that you can interact with a Windows 8 computer – it all depends on which device type you have.

Should you be using a tablet such as the Microsoft Surface, for instance, then you'll have the advantage of a keyboard, but most of the interaction with your computer will be via your fingers. The same might be true of a convertible laptop-cum-tablet and of any other hybrid you can get your hands on.

For standard laptops, there may be finger gestures available via the touchpad, while desktop users will be almost exclusively restricted to the keyboard and mouse.

Finding your way around Windows 8 is easy once you know how – it's all about intuition...

3.1 Navigation with the Keyboard

How do you control a tile-based user interface with a keyboard?

Simple – use the arrow keys! While it isn't ideal, if you're stuck using just a keyboard with Windows 8, you can find your way through the various apps – and importantly, to the Desktop – using the arrow keys, Page Up/Page Down and the Enter key. You'll know which Start screen apps are selected thanks to the white border.

Naturally, you can use the keyboard and tab key to find your way through forms, while typing a search term from the Start screen will automatically open the Search tool.

The key to fast navigation through Windows 8 using a keyboard and mouse is the Windows key – you'll find that you rely on this quite often.



As with previous versions of the operating system, there are various keyboard combinations that can be used as shortcuts in Windows 8.

- **Win** – toggles between Start screen and (classic) Windows desktop
- **Win + B** – Switch to the (classic) Windows desktop, select the tray notification area
- **Win + C** – Display Charm Bar
- **Win + D** – Open classic Windows desktop
- **Win + E** – Opens Windows Explorer with Computer view displayed
- **Win + F** – Metro File browser and search tool
- **Win + H** – If an app can “share” this will open the Share panel
- **Win + I** – Displays Settings panel; this is contextual, enabling a change of settings for the current app, as well as changing volume, selecting wireless networks, adjusting the brightness and shutting down the computer
- **Win + J** – Switches between snapped Metro applications
- **Win + K** – Open Devices panel (alters display output options)

- **Win + L** – Locks PC
- **Win + M** – In desktop view, this minimizes all Windows
- **Win + O** – For tablets and convertibles/hybrids this locks the device orientation
- **Win + P** – Choose between available display devices
- **Win + Q** – Opens Apps screen and search tool
- **Win + R** – Jumps to the classic desktop and displays Run box
- **Win + U** – Switch to the (classic) Windows desktop and launch the Ease of Access Center
- **Win + V** – Cycles through toasts
- **Win + W** – Displays Windows 8 Settings screen with search tool
- **Win + X** – Opens Start menu (more on that later...)
- **Win + Y** – Gives a temporary peek at the desktop
- **Win + Z** – Opens the App Bar for the current Metro application
- **Win + Page Up / Down** – Moves tiles to the left / right
- **Win + Tab** – Opens the Metro application switcher menu, switches between applications
- **Win + , (comma)** – Aero Peek at the desktop
- **Win + . (period)** – Snaps the current Metro application to one side of the screen (Right side)
- **Win + Shift + . (period)** – Snaps the current Metro application to the other side of the screen (Left side)
- **Win + Space** – Uses this to switch input language and keyboard layout
- **Win + Shift + V** – Cycles through toasts in reverse order
- **Win + Enter** – Launches Windows Narrator
- **Win + Arrow Keys** – Switches to the classic desktop and enables Aero Snap
- **Ctrl + Shift + Esc** – Launches Task Manager

Note that these keyboard combinations will not work using the on-screen keyboard.

3.2 Using a Mouse

There are obvious advantages to using a mouse. You'll be able to point and click as required, and the device will also allow you to open the Charm Bar as described in the previous section.

Additionally, if your mouse has a scroll wheel (and it should) you can quickly scroll from right to left by rolling it up and down, enabling fast browsing through the Start screen and other features – you'll notice that Windows 8 has a lot of scrolling left and right, rather than up and down (Internet Explorer 10 excepted).

The mouse, of course, comes into its own when using the classic Desktop mode, something that is woefully inadequate for use with the original pointing device, your fingers.

3.3 The Original Pointing Device

Using Windows 8 on the Microsoft Surface, or any of the other tablets capable of running it, is probably the best way to use Windows 8. If you're familiar with Windows Phone, Windows 8 will feel extremely familiar to you on a tablet.

Taps in the top left will scroll through the open applications; taps in the top right will open the Charm Bar. Tapping tiles will launch the related apps, while the Start screen and other Metro items can be scrolled through, left and right. There is also the option to pinch-to-zoom images and webpages, while multiple apps can be displayed on screen at once using the snap feature.

3.3.1 Open the Charm Bar: Swipe from the right

It's easy to open the Charm Bar with your finger – simply drag your finger from the right edge of the display a little to the left. The Search, Share, Devices, and Settings icons along with a shortcut to the Start screen will be displayed.

3.3.2 Switch Apps: Swipe from the left

With multiple apps running, you might need to switch between them. Slide your finger to the right from the left edge, which will enable you to pull another open app into view.

3.3.3 Snap Apps: Swipe slowly from the left

A slower version of the previous gesture will enable you to pull an app from the left and display it side-by-side along with the already displayed app. By default one will fill a quarter of the screen while the other will occupy the rest. This can be adjusted by dragging the black bar separating the two apps.

3.3.4 Show Running Apps: Swipe from left-and-back

Dragging your finger from the left of the display and quickly back again will display a vertical bar with thumbnail images of all currently running apps. These can be opened by tapping; you can return to the Start screen with the last thumbnail, or tap anywhere else on the screen to close the menu.

3.3.5 Close Apps: Pull down from the top

Open apps can be closed by dragging your finger down from the top bezel to about halfway down the screen. The app will shrink to thumbnail size and disappear downwards.

3.3.6 Display Additional Menus: Swipe down

Contextual menus can be displayed by swiping down from the top or up from the bottom of the screen. Only a short swipe is required (otherwise the app will be closed!).

Should you use this gesture on the Start screen, a list of all apps on your Windows 8 device can be viewed.

3.3.7 Select: Swipe down on the tile

Live tiles can be disabled, and most tiles resized and unpinned or even uninstalled by swiping downwards on the tile concerned to reveal the required menu options.

3.3.8 Zoom: Pinch

You've probably heard of "pinch to zoom", an action that became popular following the release of the iPhone. All touch-based operating systems use this to zoom in and out of images, web pages and documents. In Windows 8 you can even zoom away from the Start screen, providing a wider view of all of the tiles.

3.3.9 Move Back and Forth Through Web Pages: Swipe left/right in Internet Explorer

Buttons in the URL menu bar at the foot of the Internet Explorer 10 window (in Metro mode) will enable you to move back and forth through web sites or your history of recently visited pages, but the same results can be acquired by sliding a finger from the left side of the screen to the right in order to go back a page, or right-to-left to move forward. This gesture should start away from the bezel, however, to avoid opening up the Charm Bar or switching apps.



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the makeuseof.com website. It includes the site logo, navigation tabs for 'HOWTO & TIPS', 'BEST OF APPS', 'ASK TECH HELP', 'CHEATS & GUIDES', 'WEBSITES INDEX', and 'GEEKY FUN'. Below the navigation is a search bar with 'Ask' and 'Search' buttons, a 'Register or Login' link, and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and YouTube. The main content area features five article thumbnails: 'Gardenscapes - A Hidden Item Game You Should Try Now [Giveaway]', 'Eating Only Dessert: Why Your Information Diet Is Probably Terrible [Feature]', 'System Mechanic 11: Tune Up Your PC and Boost Performance Instantly [Giveaway]', 'Is Good Software Enough? Visiting Corel To Find Out How Digital Artists Are Born', and 'Samsung ES6500 40-Inch 3D 1000p Smart TV Review and Giveaway'. Below the thumbnails is a 'Latest articles' section with a 'MOST COMMENTED' filter. The featured article is 'How To Set Up Bluetooth in Windows 7, Make PC Discoverable & Add Devices' by Chris Hoffman, dated October 5, 2012. The article text describes Bluetooth as an alternative to wires and lists various uses like connecting phones, mice, and printers. A 'Keep Reading >' link is provided. To the right of the article is a BT advertisement for a 'Free Vision+ box' and an 'Amazing TV for only £4 a month'. Below the advertisement is a subscription form with the text 'Get the best MakeUseOf articles in your email for free. Access Exclusives. Over 400,000 subscribers!' and a 'Subscribe' button.

There is also an on-screen keyboard that will appear whenever you tap into a text entry field – an example would be the search tool, or typing a URL in Internet Explorer.

3.4 Bringing It All Together

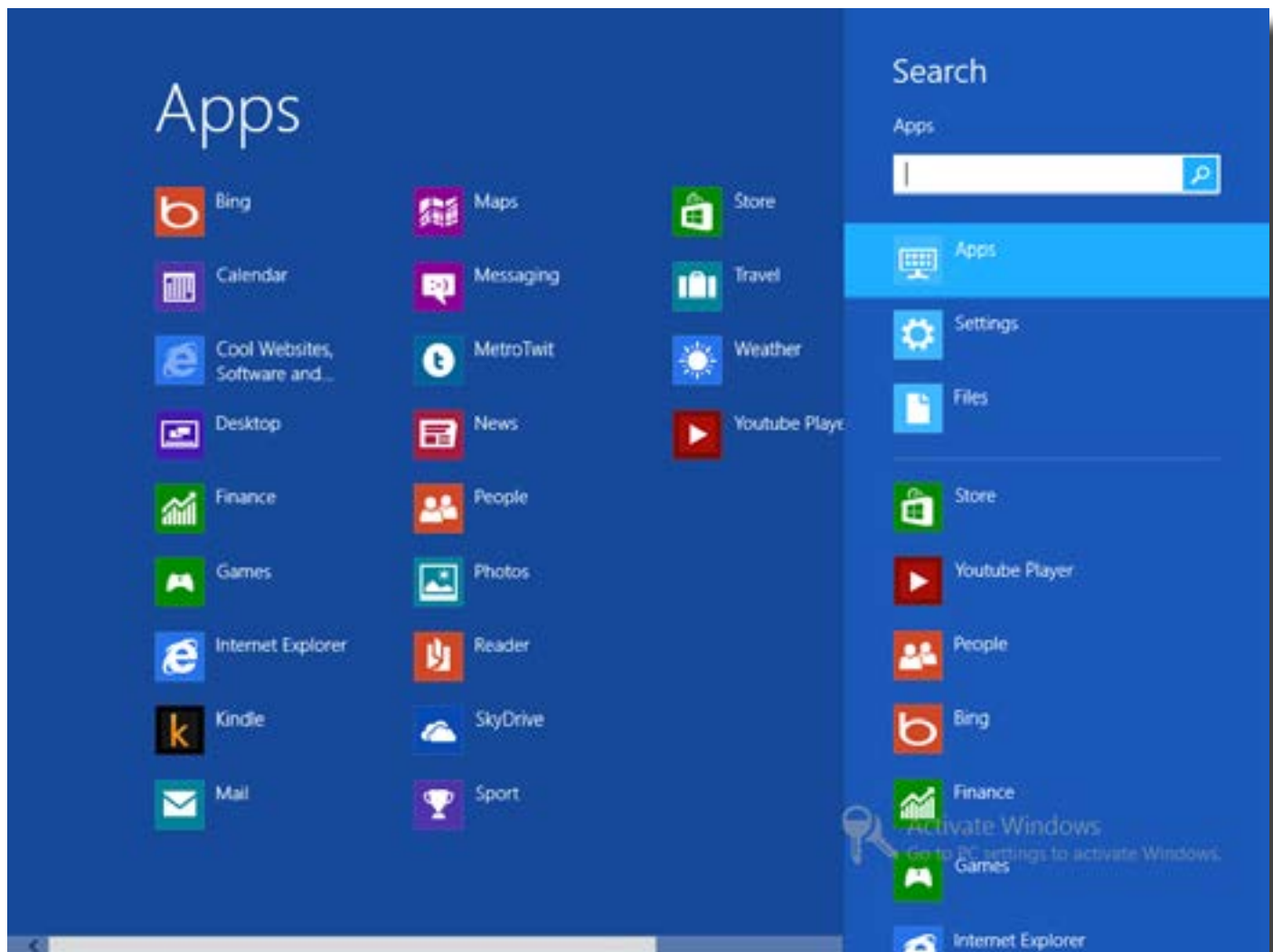
Should you be using a hybrid tablet or a convertible laptop, you will be able to take advantage of fingers, keyboard and mouse. This might be considered to be the ultimate method of interacting with Windows 8, because you get the best of all worlds.

4. Launch and Install Apps, Multitasking

One of the strengths of Windows 8's tile-based user interface is that the applications that are installed can be easily accessed. Another is that adding new apps is a case of tapping the Store tile and finding what you need to use. Multitasking remains a key element of Windows, although in the new-look Windows you'll notice that things have changed somewhat.

Meanwhile, any legacy software – applications and utilities designed initially for older versions of Windows – can be installed via the Desktop.

4.1 Launching Apps



You'll be stuck running applications in Windows 8 without knowing where your favourite applications can be loaded from. To find your applications, open the **Charm Bar** and click or tap **Search**. This will display the search pane on the right with the Apps list taking up most of the screen to the left of this. You'll be able to scroll left and right through the Apps list, while the search function will help you to quickly find the app you're looking for. You'll be able to open an app by tapping or left clicking.

The Apps List can also be opened from the Start screen by right-clicking or long-tapping and selecting **All Apps**.

4.2 Switching Between Applications

As ever, switching between running apps is possible by holding ALT+TAB on your keyboard. This will display the task switcher window in the center of the screen, enabling you to select the open app you wish to use. You might also use the WIN+TAB keyboard combination, which displays a list of open apps to switch between.

If you're not using a mouse and keyboard – that is, you're using a tablet or other touchscreen computer – you'll find that switching between applications is done by swiping left across the display in order to find the app you wish to use. Tapping the top left corner of the display is also an alternative.

A quicker way is often to head back to the Apps List and select the desired application again.

4.3 Closing Apps

One of the difficulties of Windows 8 is that the method used for closing apps isn't obvious. It is very effective, however.

To close an app you will need to use your finger (or mouse pointer) to drag the app down, and discard it. This is done by placing your finger at the top of the display where you should see a small hand icon appear; drag your finger from the top edge of the display to the bottom, where the app will shrink and fade away! The same action can be performed with a mouse.

If you run into problems, you can call on the redesigned Task Manager to get you out of trouble. This will open in Desktop mode, however, but can be used to quickly close unresponsive apps. Note that it isn't optimised for fingers!

5. Photos, Music and Video

As you might expect from a modern operating system that can be found on cutting edge hardware, Windows 8 is fully equipped to allow you to enjoy photos, music and video. These files might be stored locally, on a website or in the cloud – perhaps in your SkyDrive (see chapter 7 for more on this).

Indeed, media can be used to great effect on a Windows 8 device. Using a device with a HDMI-out connector, for instance, photos and videos can be shared on a digital TV, while the addition of useful apps from the Store will enable you to stream content wirelessly around your home.

5.1 Enjoying Photos in Windows 8

If you're using a Windows Live account to sign into your Windows 8 computer, you'll immediately get the benefit of syncing with SkyDrive. This means that all of your uploaded photos will be synchronised with your computer, enabling you to easily browse and open them in Windows 8 (Windows Phone users will find that using SkyDrive as the default upload location will enable fast viewing and editing on their Windows 8 device).

Tapping the Photos tile will open the image browser, from where you will be able to scroll through various directories where you can find photos. They might be stored locally, in your SkyDrive or on social networks such as Facebook and Flickr (again, see chapter 7 for more on social networks and Windows 8).

To open a photo, tap the relevant folder, scroll left-to-right to find the preferred image and tap once again to view. You'll be able to use the pinch-to-zoom gesture to view it in detail (or use the +/- buttons in the lower-right corner on a mouse-controlled interface), while right clicking or long tapping will reveal a context menu. From here you can set the image as a lock screen, upload it to Facebook or view it with the other images in the directory as a slideshow.



5.2 Playing Back Media

Windows 8 doesn't have a specific media player; rather, the playback of media files takes place within the image browser, which means you won't need to launch a separate app.

Browsing for and opening movie clips works in much the same way as for images, with the addition of a play button.

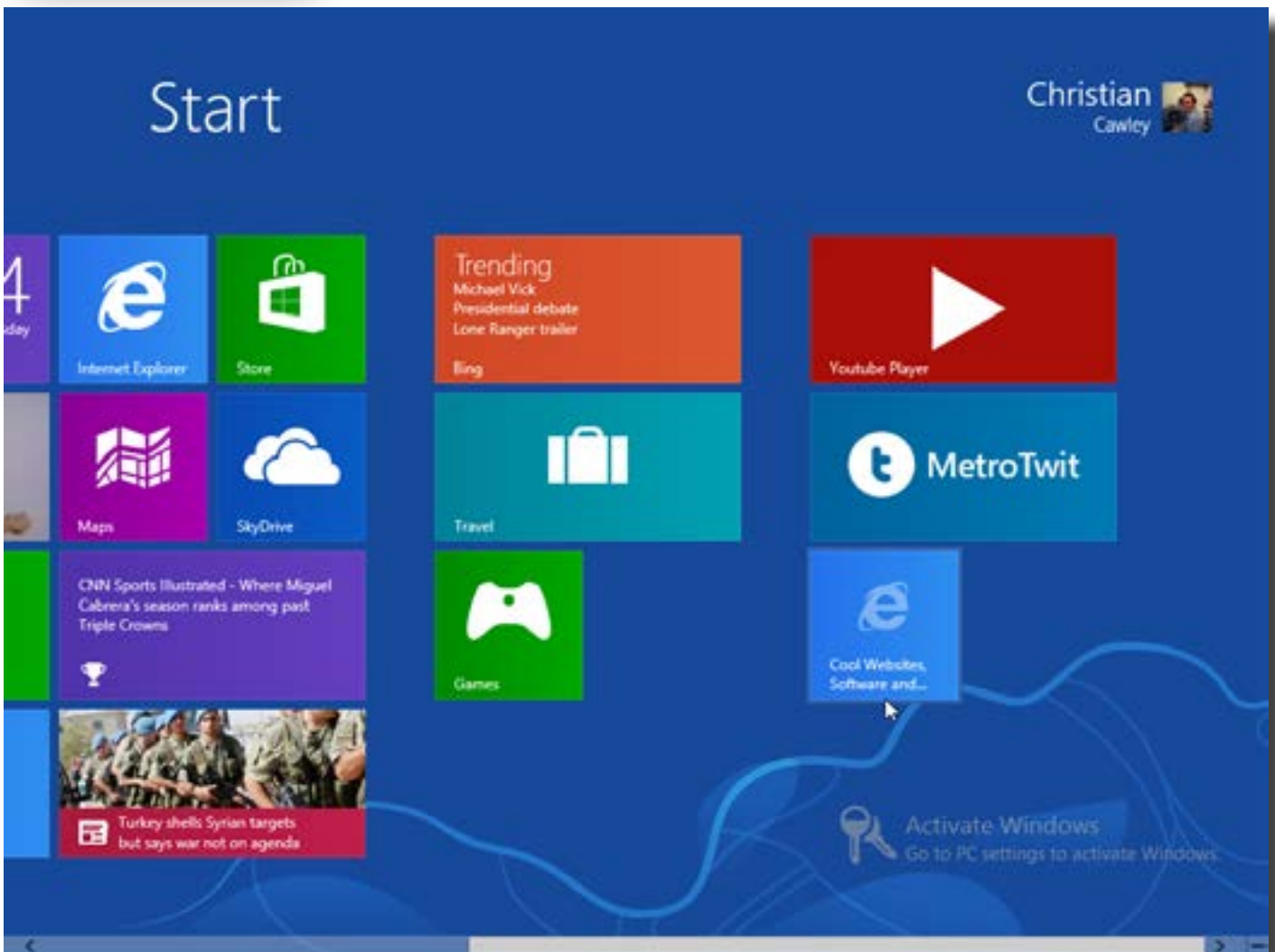
Music, meanwhile, can be opened from the SkyDrive or whatever file browser app you have open. However, all of this might seem academic if you can't get anything to play back.

Windows 8 doesn't ship with any media playback tools, which means that you will need to install one from the store. The reason for this is that Microsoft has removed Windows Media Center from the operating system, making it available only to Windows 8 Professional users as a paid upgrade.

5.3 Streaming Media, Windows 8 Store Alternatives

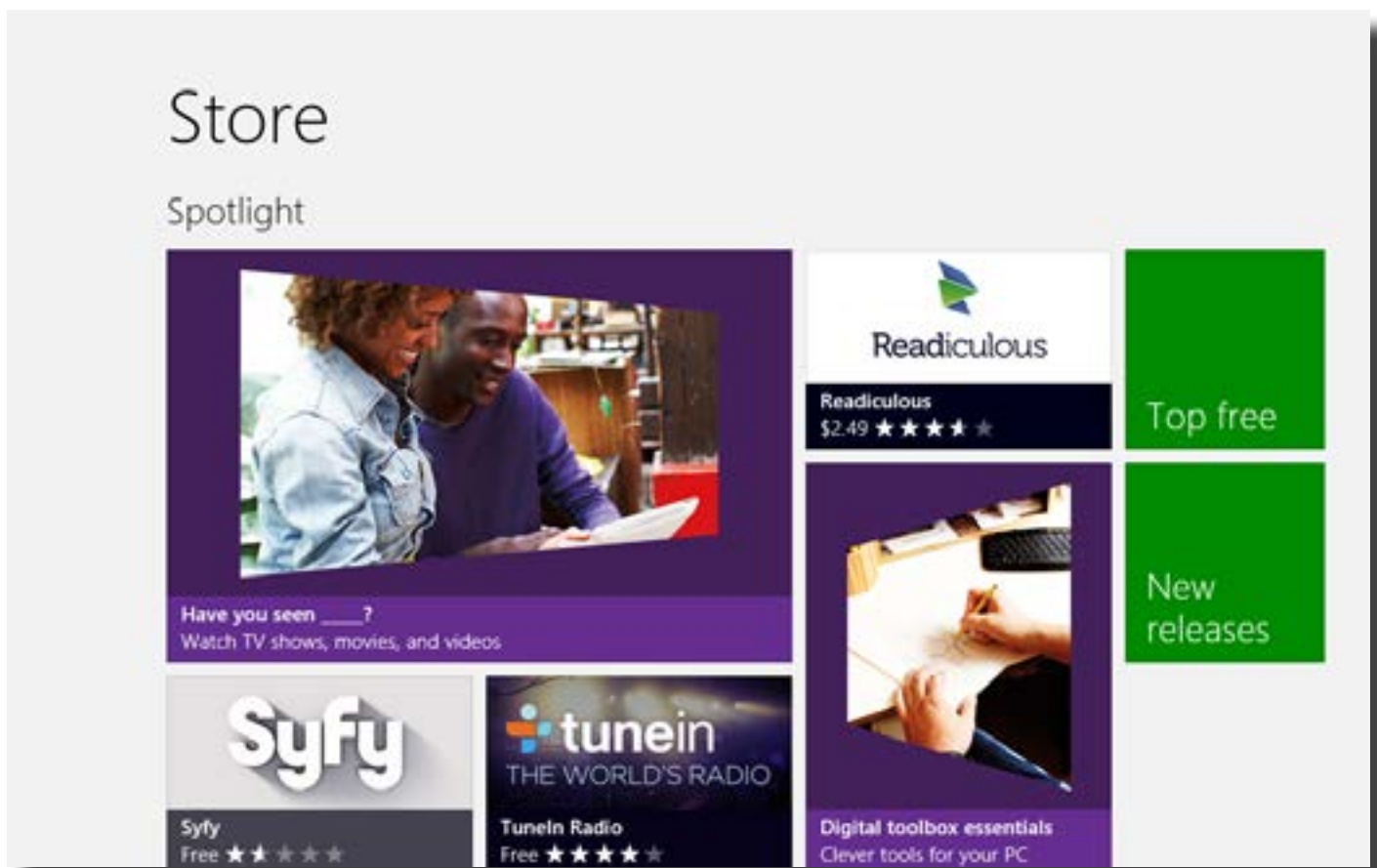
Fortunately there are plenty of options in the Windows 8 Store that you can use as alternatives to the lack of a native multi-function media player.

Most popular among these is Multimedia8, a competent and polished application that is available free. It does what you might expect a native app to do, which is enable you to enjoy media content from any source on your computer or the cloud.



Note that there are other apps that are worth taking a look at, such as YouTube Player or TuneIn Radio. Both provide streamed content from the web.

6. The Windows 8 Store



Available via the appropriately labelled tile, the Store will enable you to install apps, games and utilities for the Metro side of Windows 8.

Although software can be installed through the desktop, the main way to install a new app in Windows 8 is to head to the Store, one of the first icons you will see on the Start screen.

Launching the Store will provide access to a range of free and premium apps and games, similar to the Apple App Store or Google Play on Android. These apps and games have all been designed specifically to work under Windows 8, which means that they will be unavailable via the Desktop mode.

6.1 Use Your Windows Account

Key to your ability to access the Windows 8 Store is your Windows account. This might be a Hotmail account, a Windows Live Messenger account, even an MSDN or Xbox Live account. Either way, you will need to use this to access the store, whether you have setup Windows 8 to use this account as your login or not.

There is a simple reason for this: some apps are free, others are not.

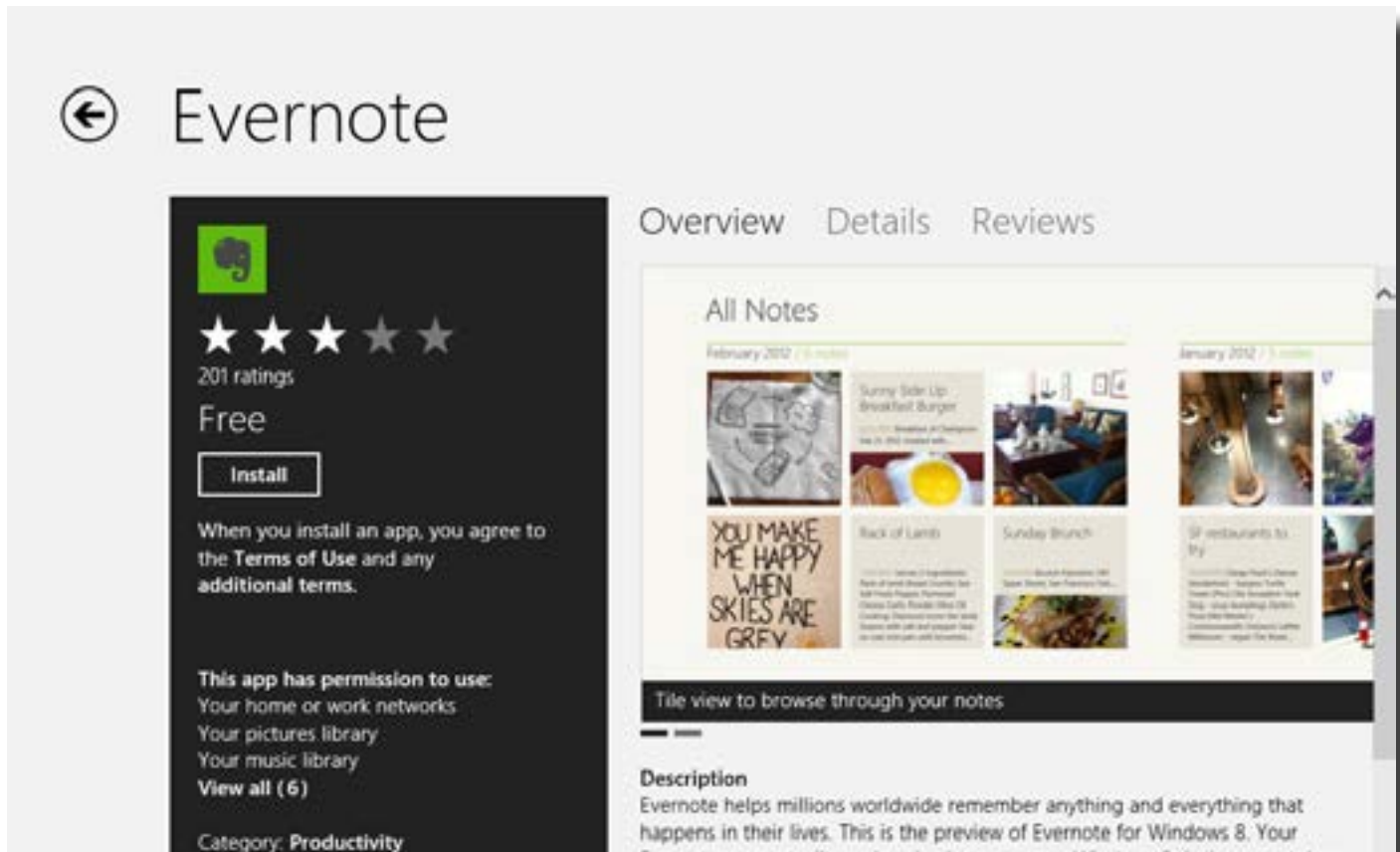
If you wish to purchase an app, you will need to have a credit card attached to your Windows Live account. A credit or debit card can be added to your account via **Settings > PC Settings > Users > More account settings online > Billing**.

Note that if you already have a payment card associated with your account, this will be used unless a new one is added.

6.2 Finding, Reviewing and Buying an App

There are different ways of finding new apps in Windows 8.

First, you might select the Store tile, and take a look at what is on offer in Spotlight. This lists the most interesting new apps, free and paid, while scrolling right will display interesting options from other categories, such as Games, Social apps, Music and Video, Sport, and many more. Each of these options can be opened and browsed, while the search tool will help you find what you're looking for.



Once you tap into the app or game itself, you will find a list of details about the app, such as its reviews star rating, the permissions it requires and recommended minimum age of the user (useful for video games). The Overview screen will provide a summary of the app; Details provides more information, such as detailed permissions and features, while Reviews provides a record of the thoughts of other users of the app. Images from the app are also displayed, which can be scrolled through.

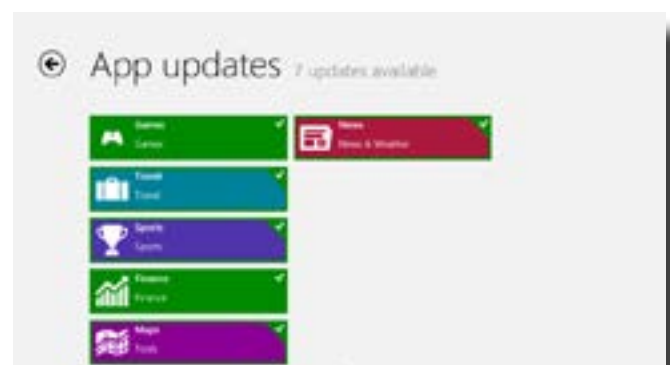
If you have downloaded an app, you will be able to return to its Store screen and leave your opinions and rating via the **Write a Review** link. Doing so is important – this is a new software ecosystem and other Windows 8 users may benefit from your thoughts when choosing an app or game.

Adding a free app to Windows 8 will require you to tap **Install** on the app's description page. If the app in question has a price listed, tap **Buy** instead to proceed with the purchase. Note that some paid apps will offer a **Try** option, with a short trial period for you to use the software.

6.3 Installation Issues and Updating Apps

Problems can occur from time to time when installing an app. Should this happen, you will be able to restart the installation in order to clear the problem and successfully add the software in question to your Windows 8 device.

You might notice that the Store times out from time to time – if this happens, follow the onscreen instructions to wait before trying again. You'll also notice that the Store will display a notification in the top-right of the screen informing you that apps can be updated. This can be done by right-clicking and selecting **Update > Install**, ensuring that the apps you want updating are selected.



6.4 Don't Forget the Native Apps!

Of course, before you go browsing the Store for an app, make sure what you need isn't already included in Windows 8.

The Start screen provides access to the following apps:

- **Mail** – *provides access to your email accounts.*
- **Internet Explorer** – *allows you to browse the web.*
- **Calendar** – *syncs calendar data with Windows Live and Google.*
- **SkyDrive** – *cloud storage.*
- **People** – *your contacts list, and social networks, in one!*
- **Messaging** – *integrates Windows Live and Facebook (if required) messaging.*
- **Weather** – *uses localization technology to display the weather.*
- **Finance** – *provides finance news.*
- **Photos** – *your photos, saved to your device, SkyDrive other social networks such as Facebook or Flickr.*
- **Maps** – *Bing Maps, providing tools for navigation.*
- **News** – *a news reader, providing news based on your location.*
- **Sport** – *sports news based on your current location and preferences.*
- **Bing** – *the Windows 8 search tool.*
- **Travel** – *find hotels and book flights.*
- **Games** – *add new games to Windows 8, check your Xbox Live Gamerscore.*
- **Reader** – *a PDF and Microsoft XPS format reading tool, saving you the trouble of finding and installing an Adobe PDF reader.*

All of these tools have useful aspects and features that you will be able to make use of in Windows 8.

7. Email, Internet, People and the Cloud

One of the key strengths of Windows 8 and its Metro UI is the integration of services such as SkyDrive and social networks like Facebook into the operating system. Taking a lead from Windows Phone, the OS makes it very easy to add and communicate with your contacts as well as providing access to the cloud.

If you login to another Windows 8 computer with a Windows account, your data and contacts (not to mention your apps) will be ready and waiting for you to use!

In addition, Windows 8 features a new version of the Internet Explorer browser, along with a native email app, something overlooked in Windows 7.

7.1 Internet Explorer: Browsing and Downloading

Upon launching Internet Explorer 10 from the Start screen, you will see a black bar across the foot of the page. This is the navigation bar, repositioned in an ingenious manner to take advantage of the fact that most of us don't bother with the bottom of a web page; even when the required information is displayed, we tend to scroll up in order to see it at the top of the screen!

There are several aspects to Internet Explorer 10, the majority of which can be found in the navigation bar.

7.1.1 Navigating Internet Explorer 10

The new browser in Windows 8 comes in two modes, one for Metro and one for the Desktop. While the latter is quite traditional, the former is a stripped down version that is fast and easy to use.

Upon launching the browser, you will need to enter a website address (URL). This can be done easily upon first launch by tapping into the address section of the navigation bar at the foot of the screen. Later, when pages have loaded and you wish to visit another website, you will be able to open the navigation bar by sliding a finger up from the bottom of the screen (alternatively, if you are using a mouse, right-click to display the menu).



As well as the URL field, you will notice other items on the navigation bar. On the left is the **Back** button, which will take you to the previously visited webpage; on the right of the current website address is **Refresh** button, ideal for reloading pages that might have updated information. Beside this you will find the **Pin site** button. This is used for adding web pages to your Windows 8 Start screen as a shortcut tile, using the **Pin to Start** option; you can add the site to your browser favourites, however, with **Add to favourites**.

Page tools (the spanner icon) offers a choice of **Get app for this site** (greyed out when not applicable), **Find on page** for search a webpage for specific text and **View on the desktop** (more on that below).

Finally, the **Forward** button will take you forward through your list of visited webpages.

7.1.2 Shortcuts and Tabs

In order to make browsing quick and effortless, Windows 8's Internet Explorer 10 browser features a number of useful features.

The first of these is the Pinned/Frequent bar, displayed when you first tap into the address field. This will display a

horizontally-scrolling list of tiles representing your most commonly visited websites and any that you have pinned to the Start screen.

When you visit your first page with Internet Explorer 10, it will offer you the option to “skip ahead” with your browsing, loading subsequent pages while you read the current one. If you activate this choice, the **Forward** button can be used to proceed.

Up at the top of the screen, meanwhile, is the tab management area. This will appear whenever the navigation bar is opened, and display thumbnails of all currently open tabs. These can be closed by tapping the X in the top right corner of the thumbnails; new tabs can be opened by tapping the + symbol. Using the ellipses (...) button will display further options, offering a **New InPrivate tab** for secret browsing and the **Close tabs** command.

7.1.3 Downloading with Internet Explorer 10

Just because you have Windows 8 and its integrated store doesn't mean that you won't be able to download applications, utilities, images, documents, videos and other data from the Internet.

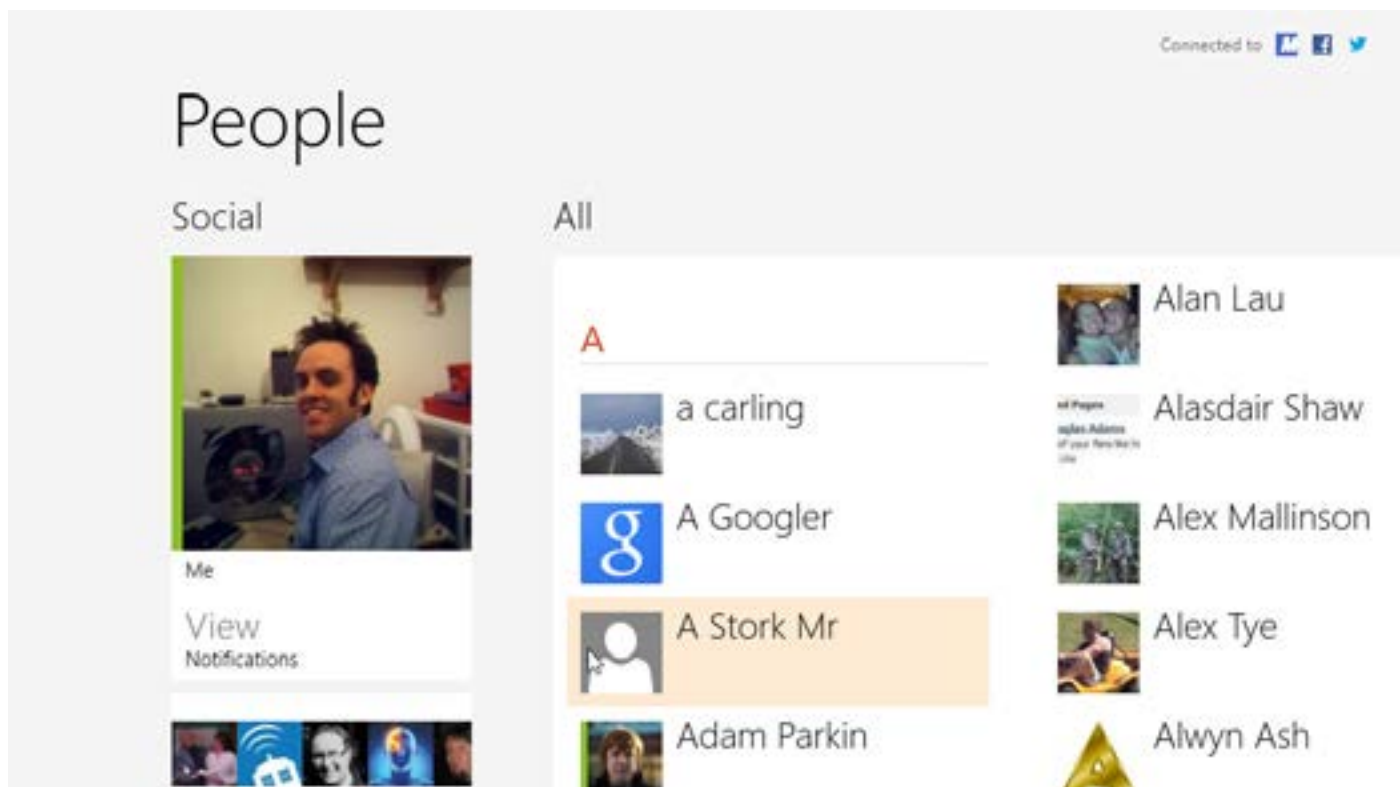
However, the Metro UI might restrict how you use them.

Internet Explorer 10 will enable you to download any data that is linked to, just as any other browser would. For instance, when a link to download a PDF is linked, Internet Explorer will ask if you want to open or save the file. Selecting **Open** will launch the Windows 8 native document reader.

However, a ZIP file or similar data might not be treated in the same way. In this case, you will need to **Save** the file, or else click the **Page tools** icon and select **View** on the desktop. This will launch the classic Desktop view, enabling better flexibility for saving and opening the file concerned. Note that right-clicking or long-tapping an image will enable you to either **Copy** the graphic or **Save to picture library**.

The Desktop version of Internet Explorer is visually similar to Internet Explorer 9, and works much as you would expect with its more traditional user interface.

7.2 Managing People and Social Networks



A key aspect of Windows 8 is providing integration with social networks, particularly Windows Live, Facebook and Twitter.

To this end, the OS has a very useful contacts management system, accessed via the People tile on the Start screen.

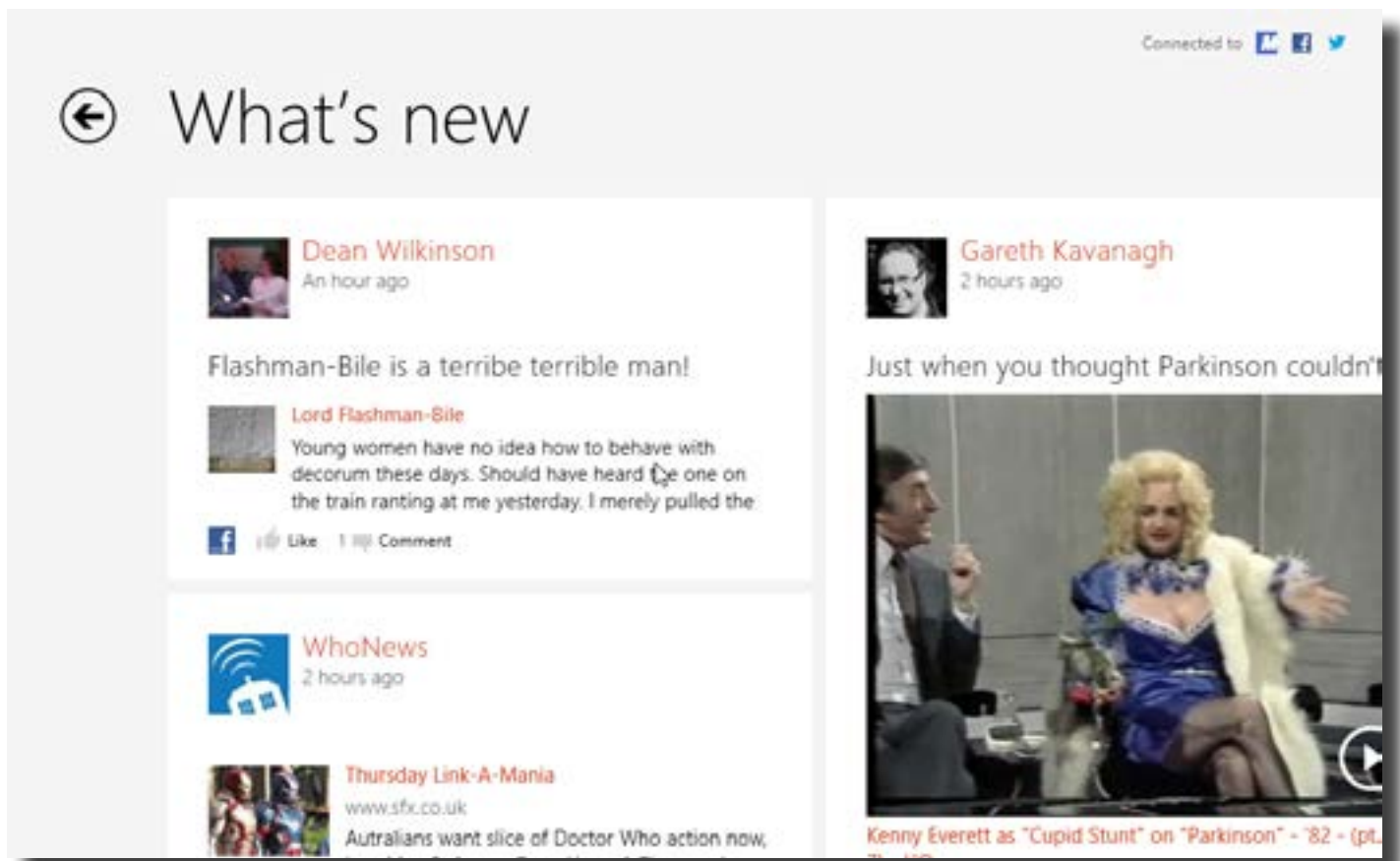
Tapping or clicking in the top-right corner of the People screen will enable you to add a new social network. With **Add an account** you can add accounts from the following services:

- *Hotmail/Outlook*
- *Facebook*
- *Twitter*
- *LinkedIn*
- *Google*

Selecting any of these will require you to add your details so that the People tool can connect and sync contacts and other information. This will involve linking your account to your chosen Windows account.

The end results should be impressive, however – the ability to check social networks and access contacts all in one place, through one centralised people management system! Using the People screen you will be able to email, chat and call your contacts.

7.2.1 Catching Up with Social Networks



With accounts added to your computer, you will be able to quickly, easily and effortlessly interact with Facebook, Twitter and other services without opening your browser.

The initial view in the People screen will display your Windows 8 profile image and clicking this will take you to your profile, where you can update the status of any of your social networks and check any notifications (you can also jump to these via **View** on the main People screen).

If you prefer, however, you can select **What's New**, which will display the latest updates from your contacts across the various social networks that you have integrated with Windows 8.

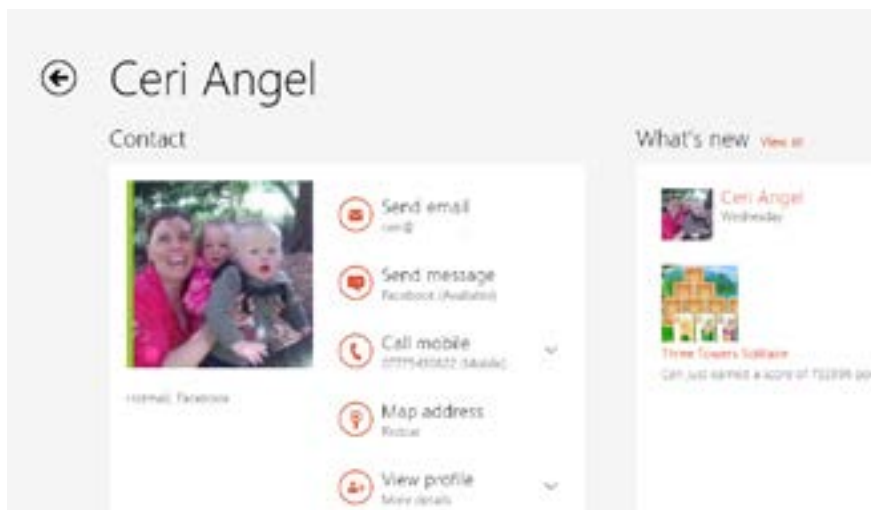
You can, of course, swipe left or scroll to view your contacts list – opening any of these will display any relevant notifications from the individual concerned.

7.2.2 Communicating with Contacts

There are various ways in which you can communicate with your contacts.

Opening the People screen and selecting a contact will display the options available. These options will depend on the information you have for that contact. Finding anyone in the People screen can be speeded up by typing their name on your physical keyboard or opening the search tool from the Charm Bar.

With a contact selected, you will see their contact details, as well as recent activity (viewable by scrolling the page to the right). The contact details can be tapped, enabling you to send an email (see below), send a message through Windows Live or Facebook, or even call them if you have Skype installed.



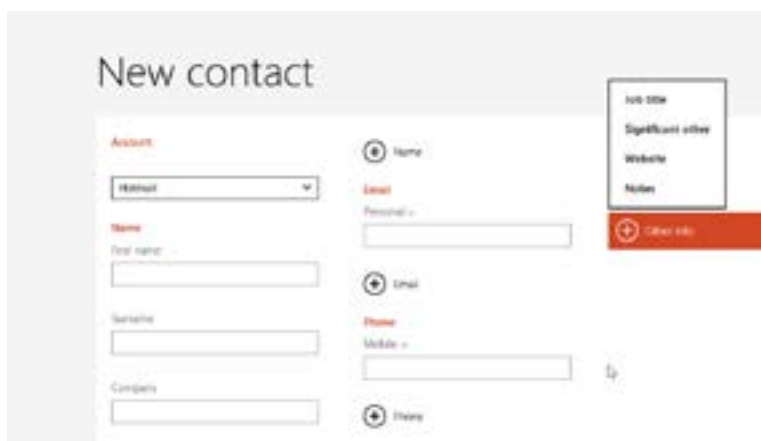
Sending a message will open the Messaging app, a native tool in Windows 8 that can be found on the Start screen. To send a message to the previously selected contact, just fill in the box at the bottom of the screen and tap Enter, perhaps making use of the smiley options to the right of the box. If you prefer to send to a different online contact, select them and type; if you want someone else entirely, tap **New message** and select them from the People list.

As you can see, whatever contact details you have for an individual can be used to launch the appropriate app and get in touch with them!

7.2.3 Adding New People

The People screen has a couple of useful menu options, available by right-clicking or sliding up from the bottom of the screen. The first is to filter the list of contacts so that those that are **Online only** are displayed. The second is **New** – for adding a new contact.

Adding details for a **New contact** first demands that you select which account it should be primarily associated with. Facebook and Twitter are ignored here – you will only be able to add contacts to Hotmail/Outlook or Google.



After inputting the contact's **First name** and **Surname**, you will have the option of listing their **Company** before inputting their **Email** address and **Phone** number. Note that by clicking the chevrons next to these labels you will be able to specify the type of email address or phone number; the + buttons will enable multiple addresses and numbers, so being able to distinguish a home phone number from a mobile will prove useful.

The New contact screen will also hold the individual's **Address** as well as any **Other info** you wish to record, such as their **Job title** or **Website**. Once the details are entered, click **Save**; if for some reason you decide not to add the contact, the **Cancel** button will end the process and return you to the People screen.

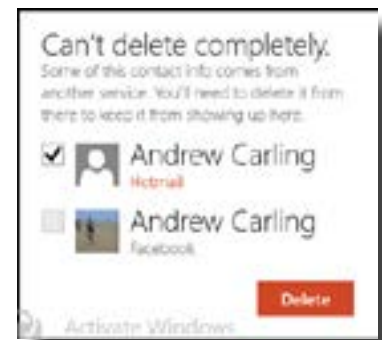
7.2.4 Editing and Linking Your Contacts

One reason for cancelling the addition of a new contact might be the realisation that you already have their details saved in Windows 8. Indeed, you might have their Hotmail email address but want to add their Gmail address. This is easily remedied by opening the original profile and swiping up from the bottom of the display (or right-clicking the

mouse) to show the menu. The **Edit** button can be used here to enter additional or changed details.

Note that you can also use the **Link** button to join a pair of contacts together. This should only be done when they are duplicates of the same person, perhaps imported from the different accounts you have set up on your Windows 8 computer.

You can also use this menu to quickly access a contact without browsing for them using the **Pin to Start** button, or save them as a **Favourite**. If necessary, you can discard a record entirely using the **Delete** option (although this will not necessarily work with linked accounts – further action may be required).



7.3 Emails: Setting Up, Collecting and Sending

With a Microsoft-based account setup as your default account on Windows 8, you can use the Mail app to send and receive messages. Similarly, the Calendar app will connect to and sync with your appointments and engagements.

If you have used a Windows account to sign into Windows 8, your emails should automatically sync if the computer is online. However, if you prefer to use a different account – perhaps one provided by your employer, one associated with your own domain or ISP or a Gmail account – you can do this by displaying the **Charm Bar**, choose **Settings > Accounts > Add an account**. You would also use this menu to edit your existing accounts.

Google, AOL and Yahoo! accounts should be setup automatically by Windows 8, simply by selecting the appropriate option and entering your details. However if your account is associated with your own domain, or you use email from an ISP, select **Other account**. In most cases the email details will be detected and the account added, but in some situations you will need to use the **Show more details** option and add the server name, etc., in order to successfully **Connect**.

With email setup, collecting messages should occur automatically, although you can adjust the mail-checking period, the use of images in emails and the use of a signature and notifications by opening **Settings > Accounts** and selecting the relevant account. Also, you can use the **Remove account** button to discard the account.



Sending an email is easily achieved using the + button in the top right corner. Here you will also find the **Reply** button, which will offer three options: **Reply**, **Reply all** and **Forward**. You will also notice the **Delete** button for removing the currently selected message to Trash.

Whichever method you use to start a new email message, note that you will need to add the address in the left-hand column, along with any **CC** or **BCC** addresses (email addresses for contacts already present in your People list can be bypassed by simply typing the individual's name). You can also set a **Priority** for the message.

To compose your message, complete the **Add a subject** field and click or tap near **Add a message** to write your email. When you're done, tap **Send!**

7.4 Accessing and Browsing SkyDrive

Another useful advantage of signing into Windows 8 with your Windows Live/Hotmail (or other Microsoft login) account is the addition of integrated access to SkyDrive.

Available from the Start screen, SkyDrive will provide browsable access to any documents, photos and other files that you have saved to your computer. Additionally, if you use Office 365, any Word, Excel or PowerPoint files that you have saved can be opened in your browser.

Images in SkyDrive can be browsed and opened on your computer (see 5.1 Enjoying Photos in Windows 8) while data can be downloaded to your device or uploaded.



As with the Start screen, tiles representing files can be right-clicked or down-swiped to select them. The resulting context menu across the foot of the screen will display the options:

- **Clear select** – *deselects the chosen tile.*
- **Download** – *saves the file to your PC.*
- **Delete** – *discards the data from SkyDrive.*
- **Open with** – *allows you to select the app with which to open the file.*
- **Refresh** – *updates the view.*
- **New folder** – *creates a new directory in the SkyDrive.*
- **Upload** – *opens Documents from where you can choose a file to upload..*
- **Details** – *switches the view from thumbnail tiles to a list-style view with more information about files and folders (note that the same information is available when you hover the mouse over the tiles). This can be clicked again to return to the grid-like thumbnail view.*

The SkyDrive is extremely useful, offering at least 5 GB (up to 25 GB free, depending on how long you have had your account) and can be accessed from other devices using apps or a web browser.

8. Tweaking Your Windows 8 Device



Windows 8 looks pretty smart with its colourful Start screen, live tiles and striking background. Of course, if we all liked the same things, the world would be pretty dull, so it is good to know that there are various options available that will enable you to restyle your Windows 8 computer.

The Start screen background and lock screen images can both be adjusted, as can the tile sizes and positions. New apps will be added to the Start screen, but tiles can be deleted; a useful option if the display is looking a bit too busy.

Finally, don't think that all of the tweaks are visual. Determining how your device switches on and off will affect performance, while Windows 8's settings synchronization will enable you to make changes to your device that are then echoed on any other Windows 8 computer you sign into!

8.1 Start Screen and Lock Screen Wallpaper

As long as Windows 8 is activated, you will be able to change the Lock screen and Start screen backgrounds, as well as your Account picture (although note that the latter can be changed from your Windows Live account).

Once activated, open the Charm Bar and select **Settings > More PC Settings > Personalize**. From here, choose **Lock screen**, **Start screen** or **Account picture** in order to make your preferred adjustments.

Several default images are provided for your new Lock screen; you can also **Browse** your computer to find a favourite personal image to use. You'll notice that there is the option to determine which apps have access to display information on the Windows 8 lock screen.

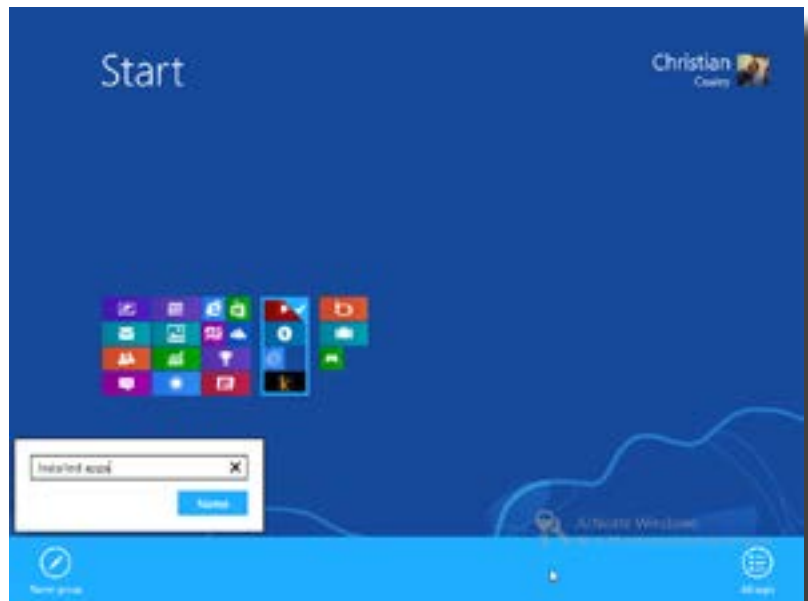
In the Start screen settings, you will be able to select a number of backgrounds and colours, which you can preview. Finally, the Account picture settings allow you to select from previous account pictures or browse your Windows 8 computer or SkyDrive for an alternative.

8.2 Adjusting Tile Size, Moving and Unpinning

The Windows 8 Start screen isn't the most popular in terms of visual design, but by changing the background as above and altering the layout of the tiles, you can at least get it looking functional.

To get started with this, begin by tapping the **–** symbol in the lower-right corner of the Start screen (or pinch an empty area of the display), providing you with an overview of all tiles. This is the **Semantic Zoom**, and will help you to sort out groups of apps and tiles on the Start screen. You should use the Semantic Zoom option when managing the Start screen as it gives you a good overview of what needs to be placed where.

In this view, you can easily tap and drag (or left click and drag) groups of tiles. By selecting a group of tiles, you can use the **Name Group** option to give the tiles a label, which will appear above them on the Start screen.



Tiles can be resized in Metro, by selecting them and selecting **Smaller** or **Larger** from the context menu. Similarly, you might like to rearrange tiles so that they appear to sit together in a neater group. This is done by long-tapping (or left-click and holding) the tile and then dragging it to your preferred position. Once the move has been made, tap to drop the tile (or release the mouse button). Note that there is an alternative way of resizing Windows 8, however.

In **Settings > Change PC Settings > Ease of Access**, use the **Make everything on your screen bigger** switch to display a larger, more detailed version of the Start screen. This depends on your device's display, however.

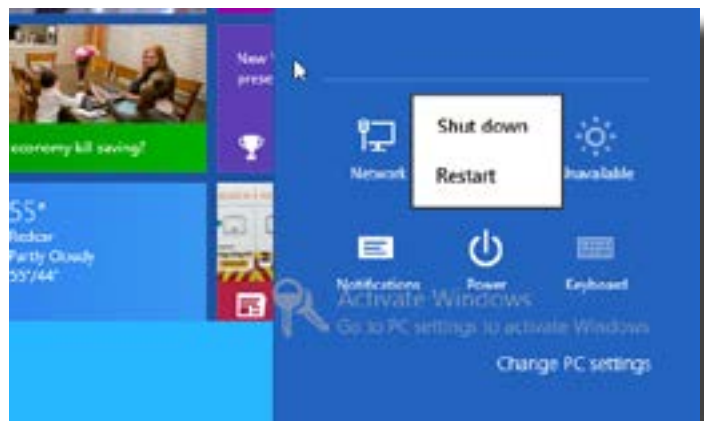
Finally, to uninstall an app, find the item on the Start menu or in the App List, long tap or right click and select **Uninstall** from the context menu striped across the bottom of the display. If you would rather simply ignore an app, you can use the **Unpin** option.

8.3 Battery management, on and off button/features

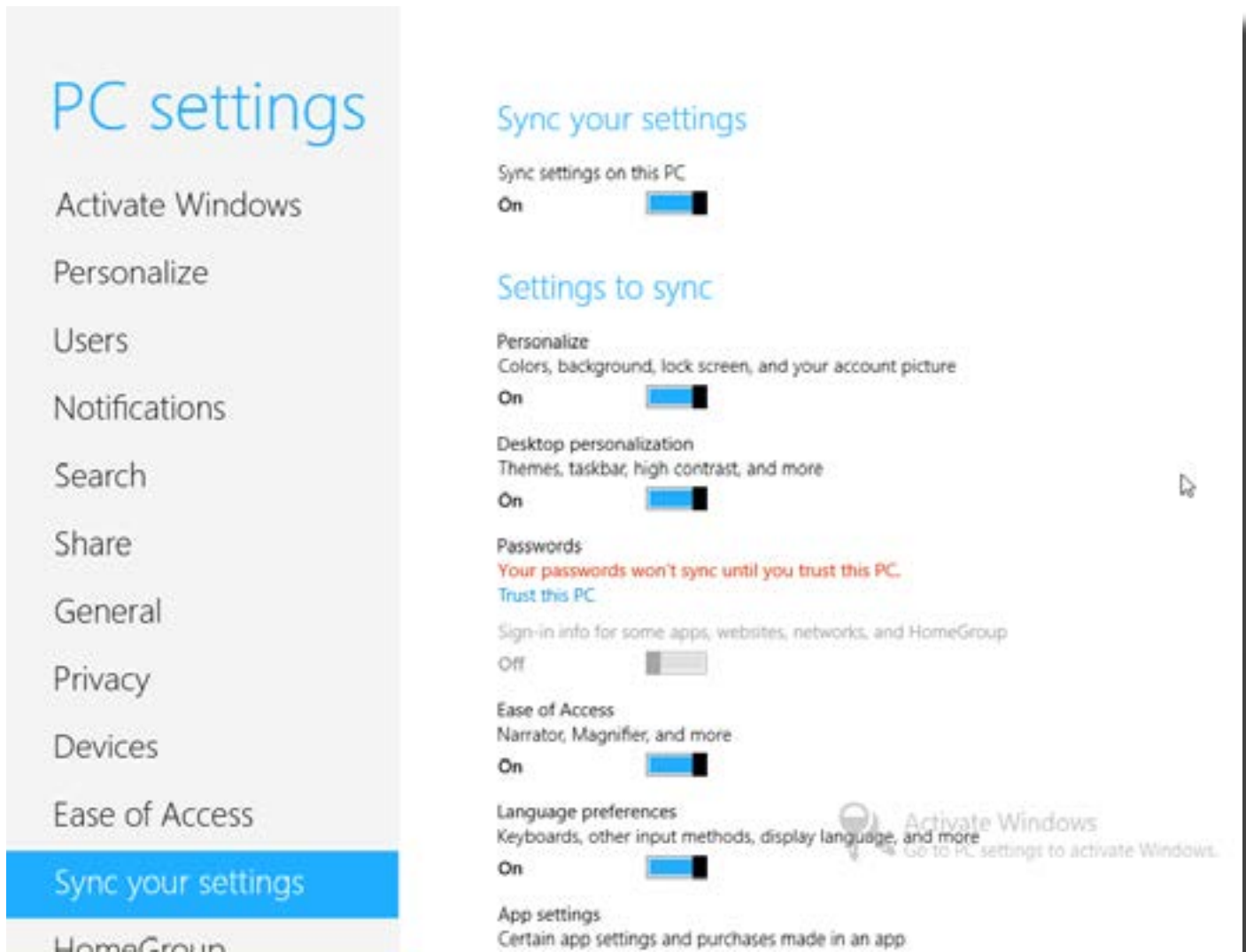
Depending on the type of device you are running Windows 8 on, there are different ways in which you can turn off or restart the hardware.

If you're using a tablet, then the power button is the most obvious choice, as this will instantly place Windows 8 into standby mode. However if you need to completely **Shut down** or perhaps **Restart** the device, this is possible via **Charms > Settings > Power**.

Additional, more detailed power options are available in the classic Desktop. These are little changed from Windows 7, and can be accessed via **WIN+X > Power Options**. Through this screen, you can alter the time for your display to switch off when not being used, while advanced options will enable you to alter power settings for other hardware such as USB devices.



8.4 Windows 8 Sync



One of the key strengths of Windows 8 is its ability to sync your data with your SkyDrive. This goes beyond photos and documents, however – preferences, your background settings and even the apps installed on your tablet, convertible, laptop or desktop computer can all be synced. The result is that apps installed on one computer can be accessed on another that you sign into!

Via **Charms > Settings > More PC Settings > Sync your settings** you can see what settings are currently synced. The master switch is **Sync settings on this PC**, and it is enabled by default. Other sync options include:

- *Personalize and Desktop Personalization options.*
- *Passwords (requires the PC to be “trusted”, which in turn requires activation) and other sign-in info for websites, apps and HomeGroup.*
- *Ease of Access and Language Preferences.*
- *App settings including in-app purchases.*
- *History and favourites from your browser.*
- *File Explorer, mouse and other Windows settings.*
- *Sync settings over metered connections.*

Each of these synchronization options for Windows 8 can be toggled on and off, enabling you to take control of how this data is synced, as well as under what scenario.

9. Windows 8 Security

One of the major complaints aimed at Microsoft over the years has concerned security. While this is something that they have made progress with, it nevertheless falls to the end user to make sure that their computer is secure.

For instance, connecting to a wireless network safely is just one aspect; the choice of whether to choose a local account for your computer or sign in with a Windows account is another. Setting secure passwords and utilizing picture passwords can also help.

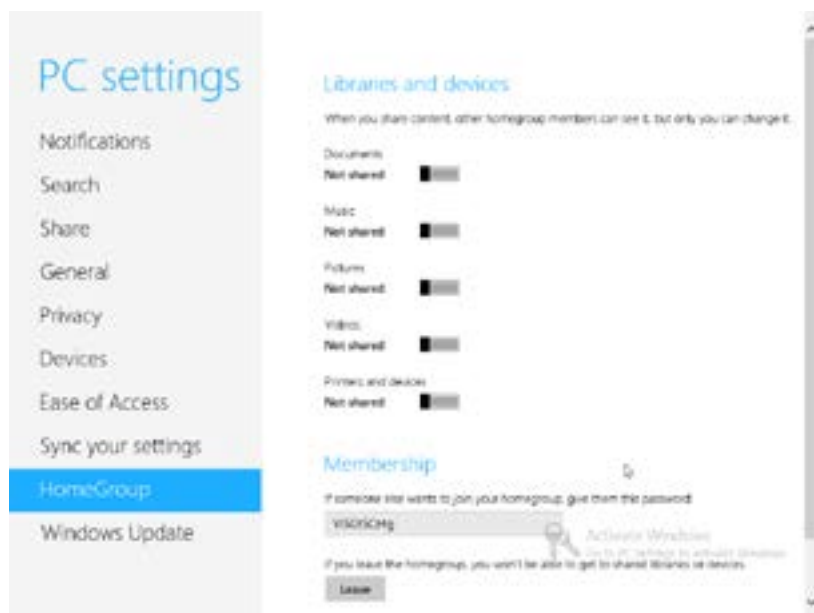
9.1 Networking Windows 8

Before you can do any real work with Windows 8, you will need to be online. During the final stages of the post-installation setup, Windows 8 will attempt to connect to a network, wireless or wired, depending on what connections are detected. You will need to add your password for a wireless connection.

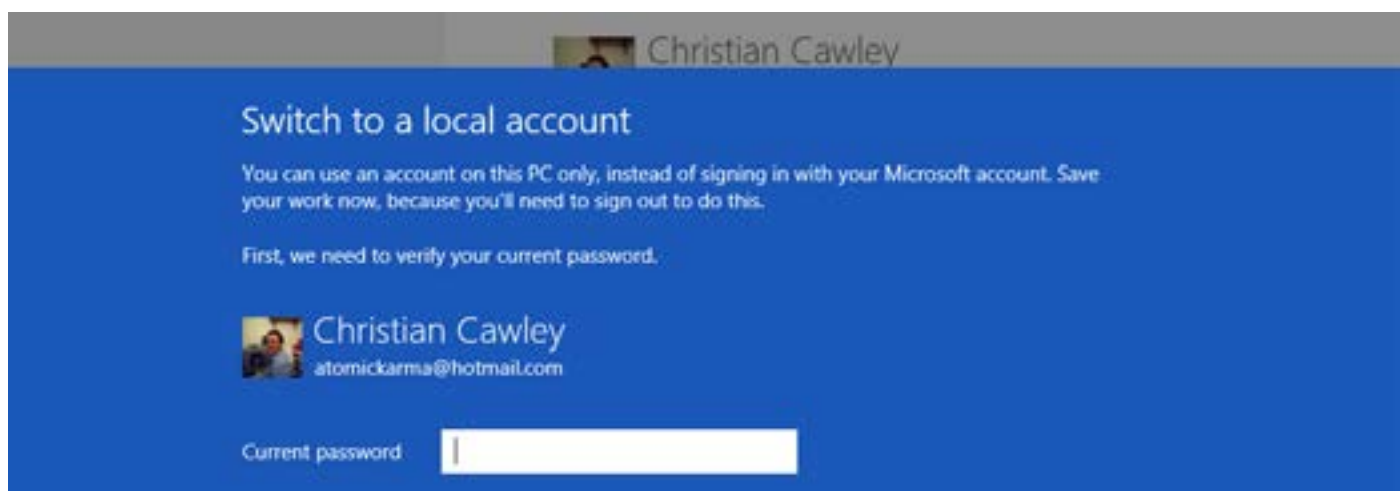
You can confirm the chosen network connection via the **Charm Bar > Settings > Network**; changes, however, will need to be made via the Desktop, using the methods applicable in Windows 7.

Various sharing options are available in Windows 8. Via the **Network** screen, you can toggle sharing on and off by right-clicking/long tapping the appropriate network connection. Two options are available, each appropriate for different scenarios (using the device in a public area and using it at home).

Meanwhile, the HomeGroup option makes sharing within a local network easier than any previous version of Windows has managed to date. The sharing of **Documents**, **Music**, **Pictures**, **Videos** and **Printers and devices** can each be toggled on or off, with a Windows-generated membership key provided for you to share with users of other devices on your network who want to gain access to these folders and devices. Note that this can be instantly disabled by clicking the **Leave** button.



9.2 Local vs. Windows Account



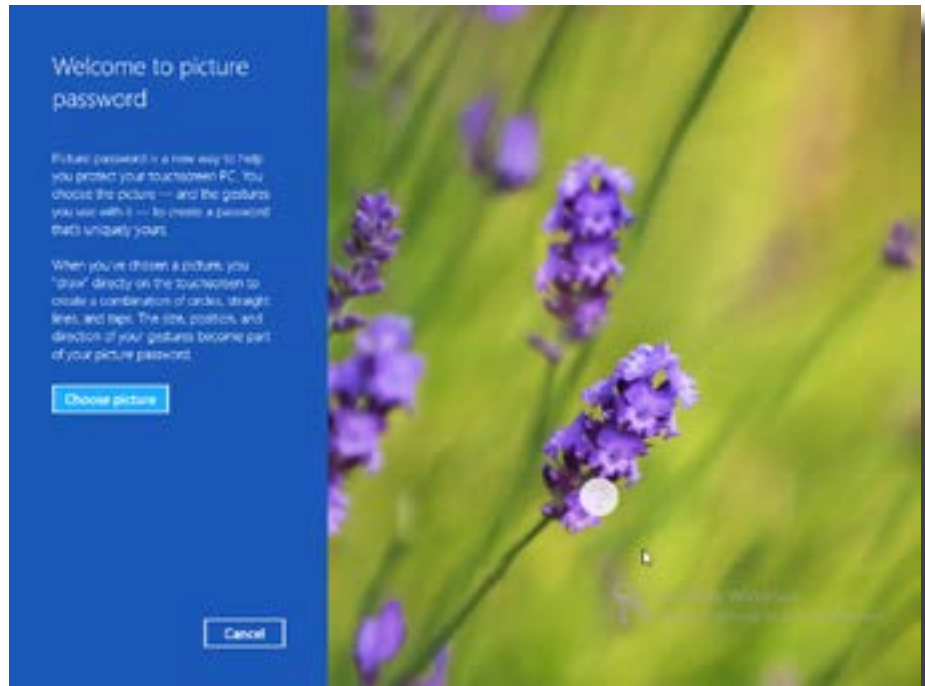
As we've seen, there are considerable advantages to using a Windows account. Your Windows 8 device will be virtually set up with very little interaction from you upon first launch, with emails, contacts and calendar all ready and waiting. Meanwhile, data can be easily saved to the cloud and your account can be used to download apps.

However, you don't have to use a Windows account. Your access to Windows 8 can be managed by setting up a local account. This will not have any of the synced data and backups of apps and passwords for websites as with a Windows account, but it is the better option if you have concerns over cloud computing. A local account can be setup in the post-installation setup, or you can switch to one via **Charm Bar > Settings > More PC Settings > Users > Switch to a local account**. The Users screen will also enable you to **Add a user** if you have a colleague, friend or family member who requires access to the computer.

9.3 Setting Passwords

Windows 8 users will need to use a password to secure and unlock their devices. If a Windows account is in use, then the password will of course be the same. Passwords can be changed in the **Charm Bar > Settings > More PC Settings > Users > Change your password** screen, regardless of whether you are using a Windows account or a local account.

In addition, you can **Create a PIN** number to login to Windows. Intriguingly, Windows 8 offers the ability to **Create a picture password**. This option is really for tablets, and it is a really great idea. First, you need to confirm your current text password, before selecting a picture to use with the password.



The picture password is essentially a combination of image and gesture, so the next stage is to create a gesture comprising lines, circles and taps. Size, direction and position of these gestures will form part of the password, along with the picture. Once you have done this, your Windows 8 tablet will be extremely secure!

9.4 Windows Firewall

Accessing the Windows Firewall means heading “under the bonnet” into the Windows 8 Desktop mode. This can be easily reached either via the search tool or the keyboard shortcut **Ctrl+X > Control Panel > System and security > Windows Firewall**.

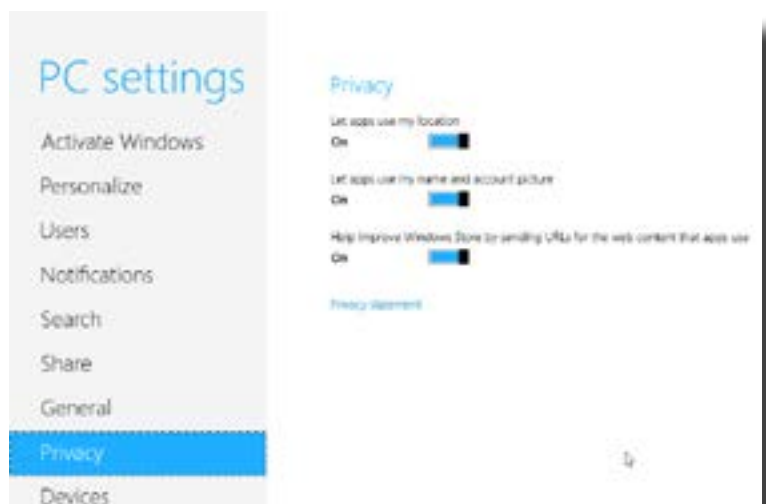
Here you will find tools to turn the firewall on or off (it should be set to on, of course!), as well as configure behaviours for public and private networks. Advanced settings for the Windows Firewall are also accessed here; there is no change in the interface from that seen in Windows 7.

9.5 Windows 8 Privacy Settings

Some privacy settings (beyond those in Internet Explorer 10) are available via **Charm Bar > Settings > Change PC Settings > Privacy**.

These settings determine whether apps can use your current location (detected using wireless networks or perhaps 3G/4G depending on your device – you might even use a tablet with GPS), whether apps can use your name and account picture, and whether your choice of apps should be able to provide assistance to the Windows Store.

You'll also be able to check the Windows 8 Privacy Statement via this screen.



9.6 Privacy Concerns

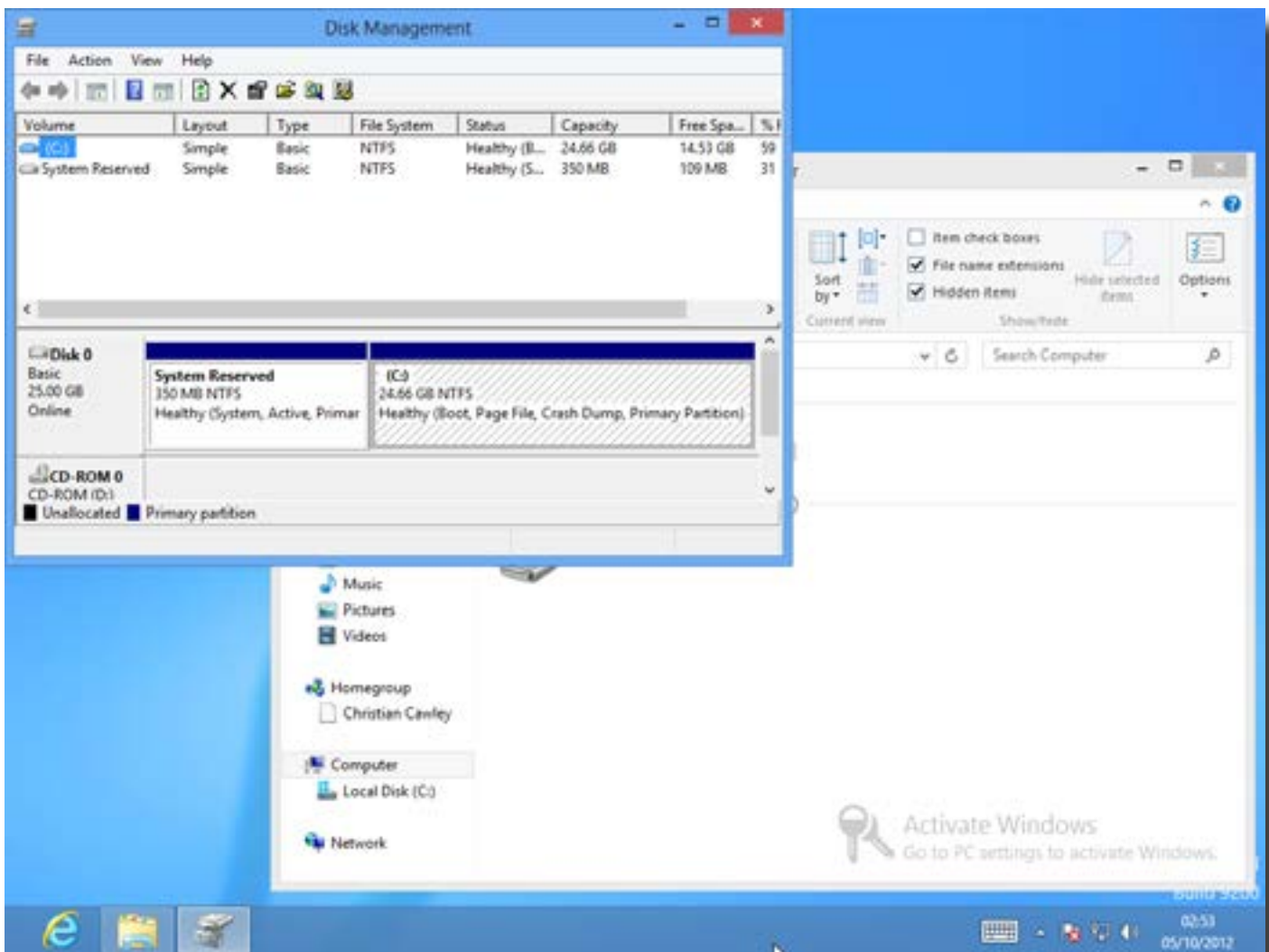
You should be aware that there are some privacy concerns surrounding Windows 8. As Microsoft's first "walled garden" computer platform (other than Xbox 360) there is a feature known as SmartScreen that will monitor every application you download from the web and send details of your choice to Microsoft.

Should the software not be on Microsoft's approved list, a message is displayed informing you that the software "might put your PC at risk". Now, there is a very good reason for providing this information – not all computer users are savvy about online security – however this system can be misused, potentially forcing users to install only Microsoft-approved software through the Store.

Additionally, there are major privacy considerations. If Windows 8 is logging every app you install on your computer, and sending the details to Microsoft as a central data repository, whenever a government requests information about users (or a request is made from court) then things start to get uncomfortable – and that's before we start considering countries with oppressive governments in the midst of political turmoil

It's a big issue for many users, and while only the IP address of the user and the name of the app in question are sent, this remains enough to provide privacy breaching data, particularly if you use a static IP. Information is sent across a secure SSLv3 connection, but there is no indication that this process takes place when Windows 8 is being installed (SmartScreen is mentioned and can be disabled, but again, its purpose is kept under wraps).

10. Desktop Mode and Advanced Settings



As discussed in the intro of this guide, there are two versions of Windows 8, one for traditional x86/x64 processors and another for ARM processors. The latter is more likely to be found on tablet devices, with the former appearing on desktops, notebooks and convertibles.

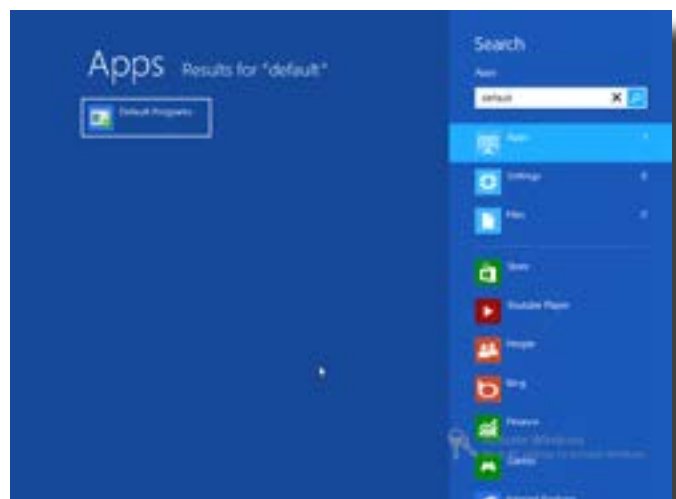
Whichever device type you own, however, there is the question of the Desktop mode, the new version of the traditional Windows user interface that has been relegated to the status of an App in the new Start screen.

Fortunately, it is still quite usable, despite the early misgivings of many users and commentators who got access to the preview releases of Windows 8. While the Start screen has been dropped, its spirit lives on, and you'll be surprised at just how productive you can be in Windows 8!

10.1 Can I Use Desktop Mode Instead of Metro?

In early releases of Windows 8, many users were dismayed to see that the Start menu had been removed from Desktop mode. So they put it back.

Unfortunately, Microsoft seems intent on blocking this ability in the final versions, which means for some that Desktop



mode loses its potency, as the Start menu has long been a popular tool for finding and launching applications. While the Windows 8 search feature can be successfully launched from Desktop mode, it doesn't look quite right.

One problem with preferring to use the Desktop – something that can easily be done by setting it as your first tile in Metro and tapping Enter when your computer boots – is that some apps will open files in Metro rather than in the Desktop.

The best way around this is to open search and type “default programs”. Select the option displayed on the left pane, and use this to control what applications launch when particular files are opened. Like the vast majority of the tools and functions in Desktop mode, this feature has not changed since Windows 7, but it can be used to push Metro to one side while you get on with the job of using Windows 8 productively.

10.2 Using the Desktop

If you've setup the Desktop tile as your first option in Metro, you will find that it is very easy to launch into this alternative, feature-packed view of Windows 8.



It would be thrilling to describe all of the changes in Windows 8, but save the loss of the Start menu in favour of the **WIN+X** key combination (available in both modes), and the removal of some of the more elaborate elements of the Windows 7 user interface, the real changes are taking place deep in the background, with enhancements to security and speed, nothing that will usually be accessed by the average user.

Documents and files can be easily accessed via the Windows Explorer shortcut on the taskbar, while the system tray remains in place on the right. The Control Panel, Device Manager and Task Manager can all be opened with little effort from this single Start menu replacement, and if you're in a rush to get back to Metro mode, **WIN+TAB** or **ALT+TAB** will display the currently open windows.

10.3 Internet Explorer



Internet Explorer 10 has its own Desktop mode, available by launching the application from the traditional blue “e” icon on the Desktop taskbar.

Once open, you will be able to browse the web and access all of the usual history, favourites and privacy settings. In addition to the **Settings > Internet Options** and **Safety** options that can be used to manage privacy (as with previous versions of the browser), websites viewed in the Desktop mode can be added to Metro using the **Settings > Add site to Start Screen** command; meanwhile the **Go to pinned sites** option will return you to the Start screen so that these pinned webpages can be viewed.

Internet Explorer 10 in Desktop mode offers a far more traditional view of the browser than can be found in Metro. Note that history, temporary internet settings and cookies for the Metro-skinned Internet Explorer 10 can be configured and deleted using the tools in the Desktop version.

10.4 Windows Explorer's Ribbon

One of the key changes in Windows 8's Desktop mode is the addition of the ribbon interface (first introduced in Microsoft Office 2007) to Windows Explorer. The file browser has had all of the previously “hidden” properties removed from the old properties-style box and added to the ribbon toolbar.



This means that while you can still move back and forth, up and down through the directory structure of your Windows computer, advanced features such as sharing and how files and folders are viewed are now available via the **Share** and **View** tabs. The end result of these functions remains unchanged from Windows 7, however.

10.5 Running Legacy Applications in the Desktop

As you might have noticed from reading this guide, there have been a few concerns about the Metro user interface, and the use of the Store to install applications. However, as of yet, there are no plans to drop the classic Desktop.

This means that the majority of legacy applications and games you might own (that is, any intended for versions of Windows prior to Windows 8) should install and launch in Desktop mode without much of a problem. Obviously there are going to be some compatibility issues, but these should be death with using compatibility mode, a feature present in Windows since Vista.

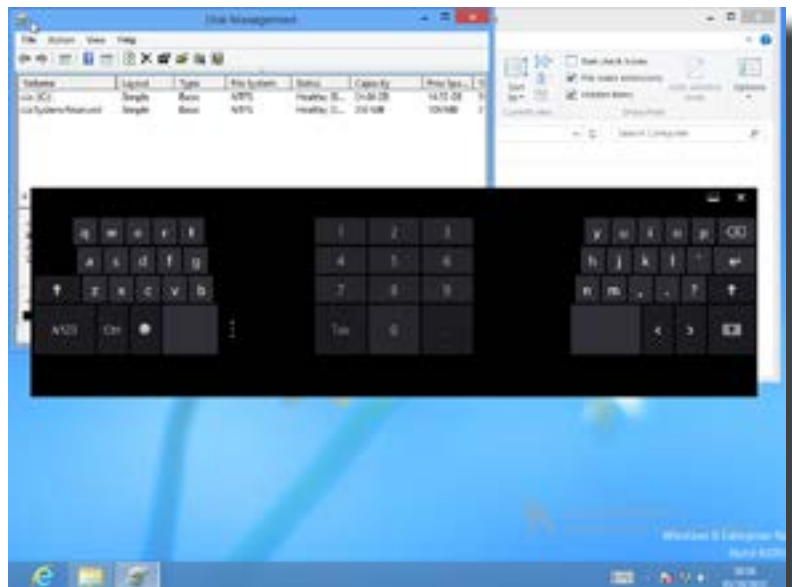
Launching an application installed in Desktop mode will require you to ensure that you have selected the option to add a Desktop shortcut in the installation wizard, however, otherwise you'll need to do a bit of browsing through Windows Explorer to find the executable to launch it! In the absence of a Start menu this is going to be a problem, but not one that cannot be overcome.

Uninstalling software is a task that can be completed in the Programs and Features screen, available via the WIN+X menu.

10.6 On-screen keyboard

In Metro, the on-screen keyboard will appear whenever you need to enter text, either in an email, the web browser or even the search screen.

For Desktop mode, however, this is a little different; the keyboard will require activating, something that is done by first right-clicking the taskbar and selecting **Toolbars**. From here, select **Touch Keyboard**. A new icon will appear on the taskbar beside the system tray. The keyboard can be toggled through three modes: Full-screen (a wide keyboard), Thumb (where the characters are organized in the lower left and lower right corners of the screen for typing by thumb) and Pen (for use with a stylus).



10.7 Take a Screenshot in Windows 8

One of the best improvements on the Windows operating system to date has been added to Windows 8 – the ability to easily capture screen shots. Previously, the process involved pressing the Print Screen key, opening Paint (or any other application capable of handling pasted images), pasting the results, and then saving. In Windows 8, however, the process is far easier.

With the screen displaying the app you want to capture, press **WIN+Print Screen** to capture the image and save it to the Pictures library. This feature also works in Metro and Desktop mode, but as yet there is no way to focus the grab on a particular window.

10.8 Activating Windows 8

Various settings and features will be disabled if Windows 8 isn't activated. Additionally, the legend **Activate Windows – Go to PC settings to activate Windows** is plastered in the bottom-right corner of the display until the operating system is properly "activated".

This means that the device must be connected to the Microsoft servers over the web and the OS verified as legitimate. To do this, you will need to enter the product key. If this option is not given at any point, don't worry – you can force Windows 8 to request the product key and activate.

Do this by tapping **WIN+X** and selecting **Command Prompt (Admin)**. Confirm that you wish to open this window and enter:

slmgr.vbs -ipk [PRODUCT KEY HERE]

Once this is done, type:

slmgr.vbs -ato

When entered, this will activate Windows 8!

11. Troubleshooting Windows 8

From time to time you are likely to run into some problems with Windows 8, or questions over how some features are supposed to run.

If you find that your device is hanging or freezing, at the first instance your initial step should be to restart it. Once this has been done and the problem persists, it is a good idea to remove the software that was running at the time of the issue, as well as check your network connection.

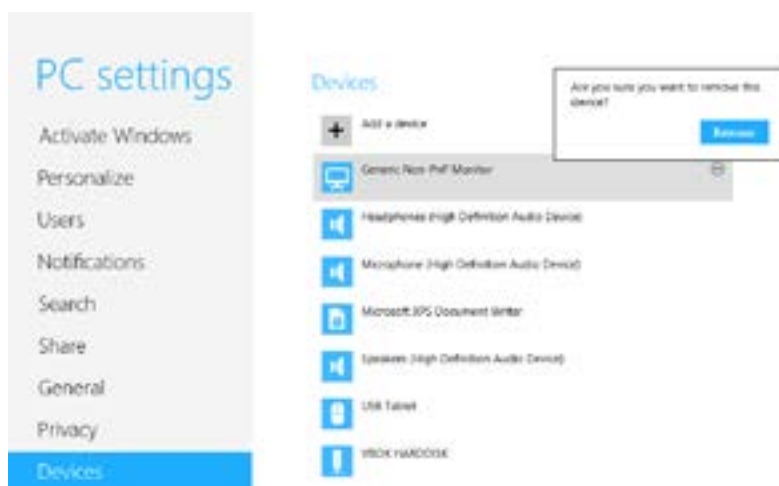
Note that there is potential for network problems to cause Windows 8 to hang, so if you are using a Microsoft account as your login, it might be wiser to switch to a local account if performance is impacted in any significant way.

11.1 Installing new hardware

Like all versions of Windows, the majority of new hardware should either work straight out of the box or with the assistance of drivers from Windows Update.

Via **Charm Bar > Settings > Change PC Settings > Devices** you can **Add a device** and manage the existing hardware connected to your computer. Hardware can be removed by selecting it and clicking the – symbol, and confirming the choice in the subsequent dialogue box.

All in all, adding new hardware is straightforward, and any difficulties can be dealt with by switching to Desktop mode and downloading the driver from the Internet or from a disc.



11.2 Updates and Refreshing Windows 8

As with previous versions, Windows Update is a key element of Windows 8. Improvements, bug fixes, security patches and other enhancements can be delivered to your computer using this feature, which can be prompted via **Charm Bar > Settings > Change PC Settings > Windows Update > Check for updates now**.

By default, this is set to check daily. You can alter how often (if at all) updates are installed in Windows 8 by pressing **WIN+X**, selecting **Control Panel > System and Security > Windows Update > Change Settings**.

Via **Charm Bar > Settings > Change PC Settings > General**, however, you will find some additional options. The first one of interest is **Refresh your PC without affecting your files**, a useful new feature that echoes Mac OS X. Personal files, documents, photos, etc., can all be retained while Windows is refreshed, an extremely useful option for anyone experiencing performance issues.

Meanwhile, if you need to clean your PC, laptop or tablet in order to give or sell it to someone else, you can use the **Remove everything and reinstall Windows options**, which will refresh the OS and remove your personal files and user profiles.

Don't miss the **Advanced start-up** screen either, which appears following a special reboot. **System Restore**, **System Image Recovery** and **Automatic Repair** can all be activated from this screen, while the **Command Prompt** can also be opened. Note that these legacy options are largely unchanged from Windows 7.

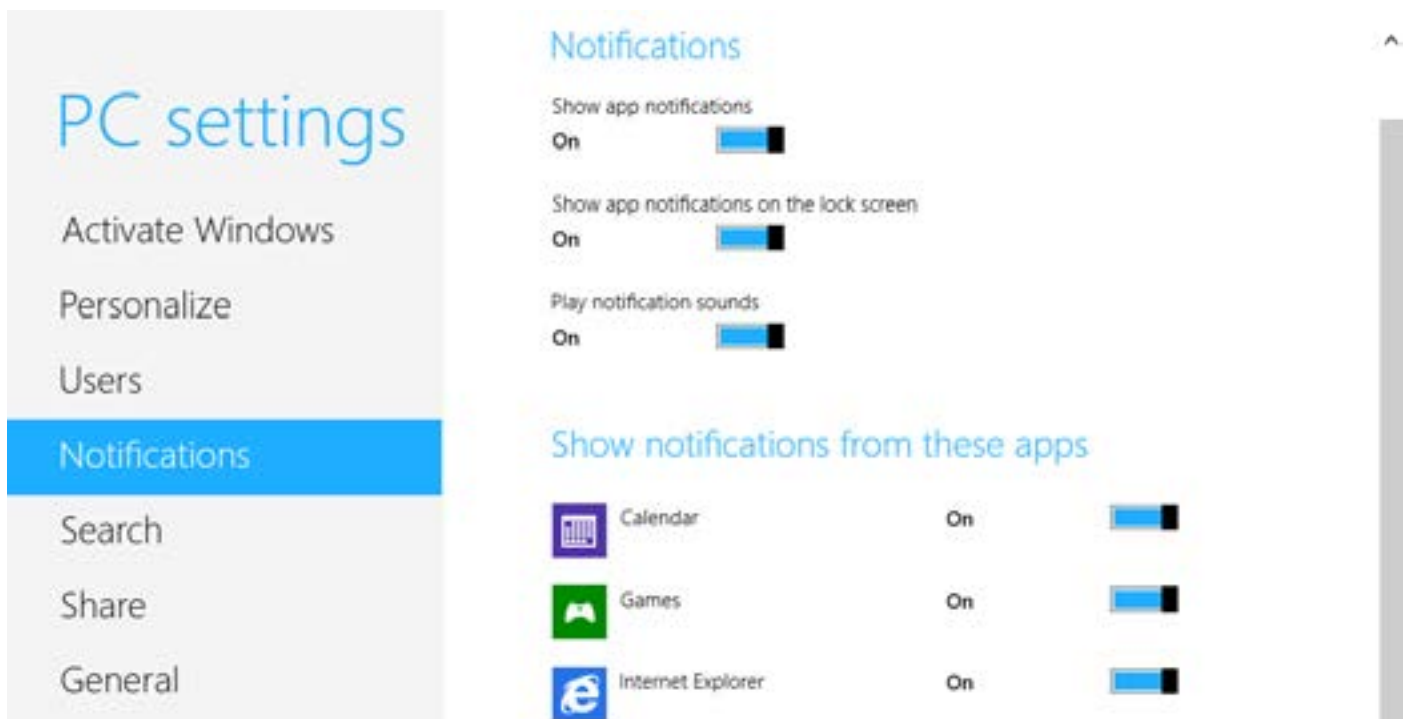
Also available here is the **Start-up Settings** menu, a method for launching in Safe Mode, low-resolution video mode and various other options.

- **Safe Mode** – *Windows 8 starts with a minimal set of drivers and services.*
- **Safe Mode with Networking** – *as above, but with network drivers and services needed to access the Internet or other computers on your network.*

- **Safe Mode with Command Prompt** – rather than the usual Windows 8 interface, a command prompt window will be loaded. Type `Exit` and press `Enter` to leave this view.
- **Enable Boot Logging** – this option creates `ntbtlog.txt`, listing all drivers that are loaded during start-up, useful for advanced troubleshooting.
- **Enable low-resolution video** – this useful option boots Windows 8 with a low 640x480 resolution and minimal refresh rate.
- **Debugging Mode** – boots into advanced troubleshooting mode for access by IT professionals and system administrators.
- **Disable automatic restart on system failure** – this option will prevent Windows 8 automatically restarting if when the OS fails. You should use this option if the computer gets stuck in a reboot loop.
- **Disable Driver Signature Enforcement** – drivers with invalid signatures are blocked from being installed, a useful troubleshooting tool.
- **Disable Early Launch Anti-Malware Driver** – with this option you can launch Windows 8 with the Early Launch Anti-Malware tool disabled.
- **Start Windows Normally** – as expected, this option will boot into Windows 8 as normal.

These can be also reached by pressing `WIN+R` and entering `shutdown /r /o /t 00`.

11.3 Notifications



Appearing in the top-right of all screens in Windows 8, notifications are associated with your favourite apps and services, and can be configured in **Charm Bar > Settings > Change PC Settings > Notifications**. Initially, this can be used to toggle whether any notifications are displayed at all, whether app notifications should be displayed on the app screen, and whether sounds should be played when a new notification is displayed.

Beyond this, apps able to display notifications are displayed; these can be toggled off and on, useful if you feel overwhelmed by endless email updates or messages.

12. Do You Need Windows 8?

A big question on the lips of many computer users is going to be “do I need to upgrade to Windows 8?” and in all honesty, it’s a tough one.

If you’re happy using Windows 7 on a relatively new computer, then there is little real benefit in upgrading to Windows 8 (except in taking advantage of the low upgrade price). Windows 7 “does” the job of being a desktop operating system far better than Windows 8, so unless you’re desperate to stay ahead of the curve, or perhaps wanting to take advantage of your hybrid or convertible laptop’s touchscreen, Windows 8 isn’t necessarily going to offer any real, noticeable improvements – certainly not after you have come to terms with the differences in the user interface.

However, if you’re buying a new computer that is optimised for Windows 8 – specifically an ARM tablet with Windows 8 RT or any of the laptop form factors mentioned above – then you might find that Microsoft’s latest operating system is a pleasant change.

Of course, if you run into difficulties, this guide should provide you with plenty of help!

Appendix

1. On Windows 8 Installation

Installation of Windows 8 from disc is remarkably straightforward. As long as your system hardware meets the minimum requirements, you should have little problem running the installer.

Processor:	1 GHz (with PAE, NX and SSE2 support) either 32-bit or 64-bit
Memory:	1 GB 2 GB
Graphics Card:	DirectX 9 graphics device with WDDM 1.0 or higher driver
Storage:	20 GB

The process is very similar to Windows 7. To begin with, the language preferences are set early on, and after clicking **Install Now**, you will be prompted for the product key, and required to agree to the Microsoft license.

After this, you will need to choose between an upgrade and a custom install. If you're installing from scratch, use the second option; the location for installing the new OS can be set with ease (assuming the device or partition is fast enough).

A green bar will chart the installation's progress, and when almost done you will be prompted to make some personalization choices. Your favoured background colour and a name for your PC should be selected, while you will be given a choice between **Use express settings** and **Customize** when the installer comes to setup automatic updates, personalise apps, enable sharing and more. The second option is better if you prefer to configure these settings yourself.

You will then be prompted to sign into Windows 8, using either a Windows email account or a local account. Either can be created as long as the computer is online. Once this is done, Windows 8 will prepare itself for first use.

2 Upgrading from Previous Windows Versions

2.1 Windows XP

Of course, you might not be installing from scratch. If you already have a fully functioning computer then you will prefer to upgrade your current version of Windows.

Upgrading from Windows Vista and 7 is straightforward; upgrading from Windows XP isn't.

It would be foolish to attempt either type of upgrade without backing up all vital data on your computer, but in the case of Windows XP it really is a case of making an archive, wiping your hard disk drive and then using the steps above for a clean install. Once this has been done, you can manually restore your vital data back to Windows 8 in Desktop mode, where you will be able to access the user libraries (Documents, Pictures, Music, etc.) that were introduced in Vista.

2.2 Windows Vista and Windows 7

It's a little easier installing Windows 8 with onto a Vista/7 computer due in the main to the similarities between the three operating systems.

Again, the steps in Appendix 1 should be followed, but instead of choosing the custom install, select **Upgrade**. However it cannot be repeated enough – backup your data before performing the upgrade, as failures in the installation can happen, something that might leave your computer unable to boot.



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