

Window 10 Tips & Tricks

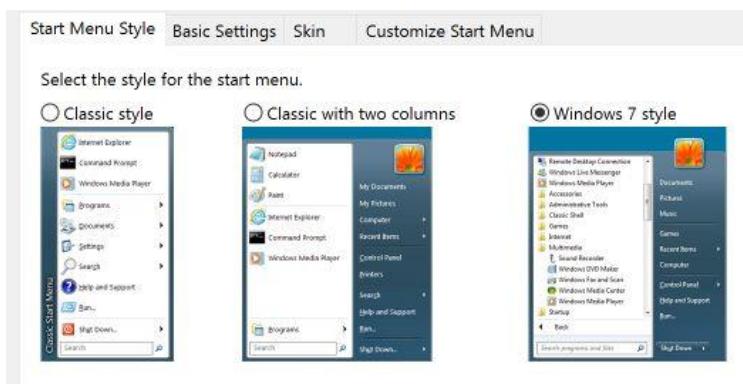
1. Change Start Menu

You can change which Apps have their icons displayed and you can change the size of the icons (tiles). Plus you can change the size of the menu itself.

- a) Find any App, right click it and choose “Pin to Start”. (Remove Apps by right click on the icon and choose “Unpin”)
- b) Right click any icon choose “Resize” and choose size. Has to be done one icon at a time.
- c) Open Start, hover mouse on edge of menu and drag out/up/down

2. Replace Start Menu with Classic Shell

Go to the Internet and look for “ClassicShell”. Download and install it (it's free). It offers a choice of 3 displays: classic (one or two columns) and Win 7 style.



3. Settings

We will be talking a lot in this class about using the Settings. The Settings icon is usually included in the Start Menu, but there is a quick way to access Settings: Hold the Windows-key and tap the letter “i”

4. Desktop Appearance

You can change the picture, the colours and the theme. Right click the Desktop and choose “Personalise”. You can choose a solid colour, a picture from M'Soft, or one of your own; or you can choose a Slideshow. There is even a setting for “light or dark” mode which makes all the programs display with dark background.

5. Change Mouse Options

Open Settings/Devices/Mouse and you can make several simple selections re the mouse. But you can click “Additional Options” and make many more choices.

6. Desktop Tiles

When you install new programs (Apps) they generally put an icon (tile) on the screen. Many people also deliberately put lots of icons on the screen. You can do this by going

to “All Programs”, scroll down to the App you want, and drag it to the desktop. Choose “Create shortcut” and you will now have an icon on the screen.

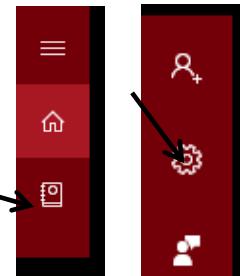
Personally I find that too many tiles on the screen makes things harder for me; I prefer to keep an uncluttered screen.

So I put 6-8 icons on the Taskbar, 6-8 icons on the screen, then I pin another 20 icons to the Start Menu (and I put them in alphabetical order). But you do what suits you.

7. Cortana

This is a Win 10 Help feature – a digital assistant – which is very versatile and can even be controlled by voice commands. By default, she is shown as a search box. But you can reduce this to an icon or turn it off altogether. If you say “Hey, Cortana” she will turn on and you can give commands – You can use it to **set** reminders, get weather forecasts, tell you jokes, send email, find files, search the Internet and so on.

To turn this feature on, click on the Cortana icon, click on the Notebook icon up top left, then click on the settings button down the bottom left. Then make your choices in the window which opens.



Dulcie found a humorous video about the possible problems with voice commands:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwPtcqcqz00>

8. Privacy – Microsoft Account or Local Account

Most people use a Microsoft Account to sign in to their computer. M'soft then uses that account to access all sorts of data and send it back to head office. Most of it is not then used against you specifically, but rather as a statistic. Microsoft uses your data and preferences to personalize your experiences, send you marketing info, and advertise things you might like. (Open your Microsoft email account – Hotmail or live.com – and sign in to access options for managing your privacy settings and data).

If you go to Settings/Accounts you will see your M'soft account and be able to adjust some settings. Personally I like to sign in with a “**Local Account**”. You can create one of these with Administrator privileges: *Control Panel/User-Accounts/Manage-Another-Account*, then “Add a new User” and choose a name and a password. And make it the default log-in person.

While there, you might like to change “User Account Control Settings”. This is the setting that asks you a million times “are you sure you want to do this or that”. Slide the bar from the top mark down to the bottom or close to it.

9. Windows Updates

The default setting is that Windows does it all automatically. This can cause problems if you have limited data on your plan; or you can get update changes that you don't want; or Windows can reboot when you don't want it to. So it can be useful to reduce or control the Windows updates.

Settings/Network-Internet/WiFi/Advanced – Under “Metered Connection” click the “Set as metered”. Then go to “Advanced Options” and select “Notify”. This makes Windows ask you if you want the update and you can make choices.

10. Battery Saver

If you have a laptop, there are a number of settings that can be adjusted that will reduce the battery consumption and so provide you with more available time while not connected to power.

Close unnecessary Apps; unplug unneeded accessories; eject disks; reduce screen brightness (this is a major help to saving battery).

Click the battery icon on Taskbar, then drag the slider to the far left; or click “Battery Settings” in the pop-up window to activate the Win 10 feature which implements several steps as soon as the device is unplugged. It automatically lowers your display's brightness. It aggressively throttles background apps you aren't actively using.

If you seldom unplug the laptop then this facility is not so important.

11. Show Desktop

change App position

There are several neat tricks that will show the Desktop even when you have a bunch of programs open and thus hiding the Desktop.

First: down near the clock is a tiny sliver of Taskbar, which if you click will minimise all open programs. A second click will restore all those programs.

Second: Grab the top of one window and shake it. This will minimise all programs except the one you shook. Shake it again to restore the other windows.

Third: When a program is using all or most of the screen, if you hold the Windows-key and tap any of the arrows (up-down-left-right) the program will snap to one section of the screen – right, left, $\frac{1}{4}$ of screen (in any of the four corners).

12. Default Apps

Windows automatically sets some Apps to be the default for various operations or opening file types. Eg. “pdf” files will normally be opened by Adobe Acrobat Reader. Internet links will open in “Edge” and “Bing” will be the default Search engine.

You can change lots of these defaults via Control-Panel/Default-Programs. There are several methods to achieve this but the simplest is “default programs” rather than “file type”.

Sometimes if you right-click an item or file and choose “Open with..” Windows will make a suggestion which you can override and also say “always use”.

Two programs which I highly recommend are “**VLC**” for videos, and “**Foxit Reader**” for PDF files. I deleted Adobe Acrobat Reader from my PC. If you choose to buy the Foxit **Phantom** version, you can **EDIT** PDF documents. (In class I opened the 30-day trial version of Phantom). But the ordinary Reader cannot edit. Sometimes it will allow you to **ADD** a line of text, but not edit existing text. Phantom can save as Word docs, but Reader cannot.

13. Fast Start-up

This is a Win 10 feature that is similar to “hibernate”. It is generally turned on by default. It can be accessed via Control-Panel/Power-Options/Choose-what-power buttons do. One problem with it, is that it generally will not let you “shut down” your computer, so that if you have new settings to be applied you must select “restart”.

“**Sleep**” maintains all your open programs, & your log-in, but turns off your screen and runs on reduced power. It is like “standby”.

“**Hibernate**” is a deeper version of sleep, which maintains all your open documents and programs but takes everything out of RAM and holds it all on the Hard Disk. It takes longer to resume and it uses almost zero power. It was designed for laptops but seems to work with Desktops as well..

14. Snipping Tool vs Snip-Sketch

Snip & Sketch is the newer version of the Snipping Tool and it allows slightly more manipulation of the results, including drawing lines on the pic. When you use it, the result goes straight to the Clipboard rather than opening a window, which is what the Tool does.

Both these functions allow you to take a snapshot of any part of the screen, regardless of what program is in focus. You can take a snap of a tiny icon, or part of the text on a site, or simply take part of a photo on the screen. Snipping Tool is generally pinned to the Start Menu, or if not, you can do that. Snip & Sketch can be opened by Win-key +shift+S; or you can type it into the search box and then right-click it and “Pin” it.

15. One-Drive

This is the Cloud storage location of Microsoft. They try to get you to use it by default and put everything of importance up there. Then they have you under their control. They also keep trying to sync all your devices with it. This gives them immense power.

I suggest that you do not need to use it, or at least be selective in how and what you put there. You can stop using it and you can stop it from starting at Start-up. You can also delete it from Explorer.

<https://www.techadvisor.co.uk/how-to/windows/remove-onedrive-3664769/>

16. Quick Access

This is another effort by M'Soft to “help” you. It can be confusing for those less experienced and it is certainly not necessary. You can stop using it completely if you wish.

Open Explorer (File Manager), click the “view” tab; click on “Options” in the ribbon, then “change folder& search options”; in the top line change “Open File Explorer” from “Quick Access” to “This PC”. Also untick the two items at the bottom.

Then click on the Search tab, and untick the top item for Indexes. Choose OK.
Then on the Ribbon, tick “File Name Extensions”.

17. Windows Tips

Windows by default throws up tips for you to improve your enjoyment of using

Windows. But these can become a nuisance and intrusive. If that happens you can turn off the tips: Settings/System/Notifications/turn off tips.

18. System Restore

It is useful to create a restore point occasionally so that if something goes wrong you can restore Windows without losing all your data.

Control-Panel/System/System-Protection/Create

19. System Backup

Windows has its own methods for making a system backup. But I recommend using some of the proprietary software available.

System backup is an entirely different thing to system restore. You will use some special software and tell it to create an exact copy of Windows with all the Apps/folders/data files. The backup must be on a separate drive, possibly an external one. Should the occasion arise, you can then restore your entire system to the way it was on this date. There are three programs which I suggest are suitable:

EaseUs Todo Backup; Macrium Reflect; Veeam. I believe that all 3 are free.

20. Internet Choices

If you have accepted the default version of Win 10 then you will be using "Edge" to access the internet and 'Bing' will be your search engine. I suggest that you change both these.

Edge is only about 70% as efficient as Chrome, so it would be sensible to download and install Chrome and make it the default.

Bing is heavily biased to M'Soft and is only 50% as good as Google. So I recommend that you go to the Settings of Chrome & "Manage Search Engines" and remove Bing.

21. System Clean-up

Many windows users who are not experts do not realise that Windows and all your Apps can become bloated and slow down your system or even cause major problems. So it is wise to periodically do a full clean out. Windows has its own methods of doing this but they tend to be cumbersome and time-consuming.

So here are two free programs that can keep your system running efficiently.

Advanced System Care <https://www.iobit.com/en/recommend/ascfree.php?r> I use this program and it does a great job. But it tries to make you buy the commercial version and also offers allied programs which they make. It also conflicts with MBAM for some reason but you can get around the problem.

Iolo System Mechanic <http://tinyurl.com/y6bzp2lu> I have not used this but it is highly recommended. (I trust that it IS free as it talks about a 30 day trial??)