Windows 8 for Beginners

Everything you need to know to get started with Windows 8

Includes tutorials for Windows 8.1

- Set up your PC
- Master the tiles and Desktop
- Secure your data
- Essential apps

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Welcome to Windows 8 for Beginners

There's no doubt that Windows 8 is one of the most radical departures from what you might expect in a Microsoft operating system – especially its tablet-inspired tile-based Start screen. However, despite its new look, Windows 8 still features everything you could need out of your machine, and Windows 8 for Beginners' step-by-step tutorials help you get to grips with the operating system. Whether you want to browse the web with Internet Explorer, check your email in the Mail app or just enjoy a more traditional Windows experience in the Desktop, this bookazine has got you covered. As well as being a productivity workhorse – with apps like Calendar, SkyDrive and the Microsoft Office suite – Windows 8 is also capable of being an exceptional entertainment system, and we check out how you can make the most of its Music, Video and Photo apps. If that's not enough, we finish by looking at 100 of the best apps you can download from the Windows App Store.

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Windows 8 for Beginners

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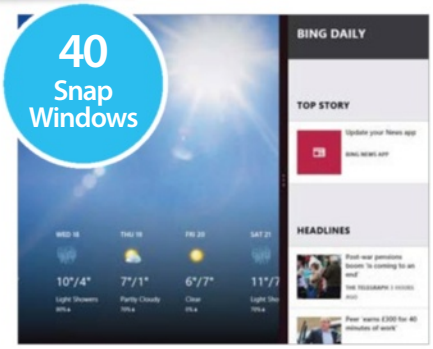

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Ultimate guide

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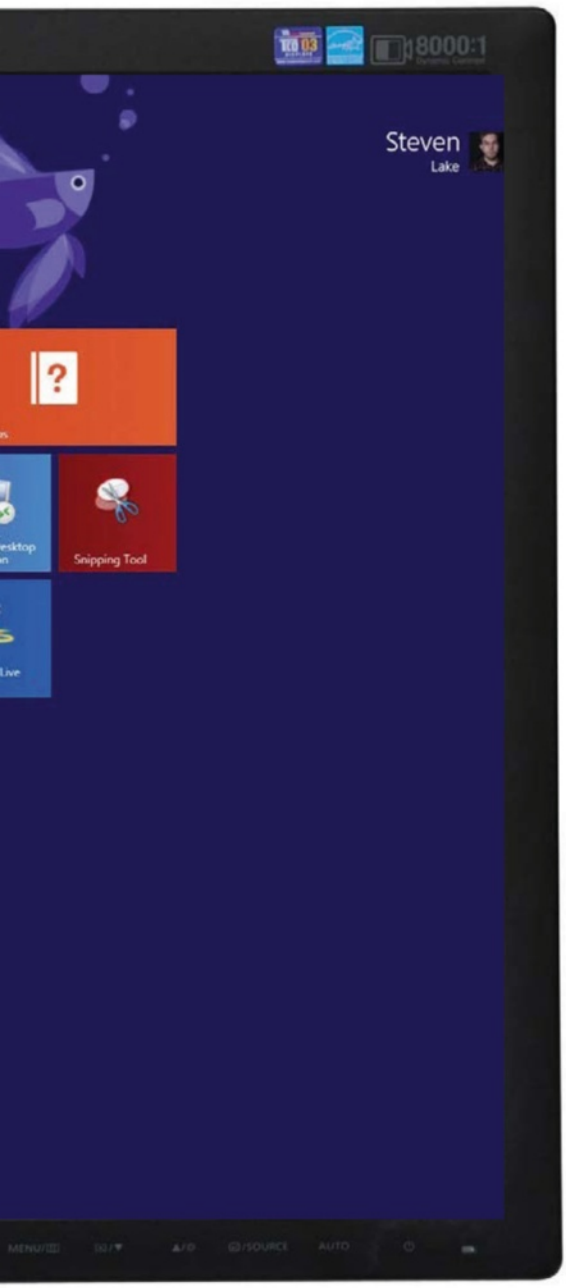

The ultimate guide to Windows 8

Taking you through everything you need to get started on your PC

Windows 8 is a big change from any previous Windows operating system. Whether you're a devout Windows user or new to the operating system, the latest and greatest update to the Windows series is here to change the way that you use a desktop computer. The joy in using Windows 8 comes from the fact that it's the most streamlined Windows experience yet, simplifying where things need to be simplified and making the whole user experience a much friendlier one. However, frustration may come to users for that exact same reason. If you're updating from Windows 7 then you may find yourself utterly lost and confused with the new tiles layout, the lack of

> "Windows 8 makes the whole user experience much friendlier"

a Start button (although that has been reinstated in the Windows 8.1 update) and what appears to be an entirely new interface. Of course, if you stick with it then this confusion will quickly pass as you get to grips with just how easy to use Windows 8 can be. In this detailed feature you'll see just how much you can achieve with Windows 8, from streaming your favourite TV shows to completely personalising your machine for your exact wants and needs – and whatever those are, Windows 8 has something for you.

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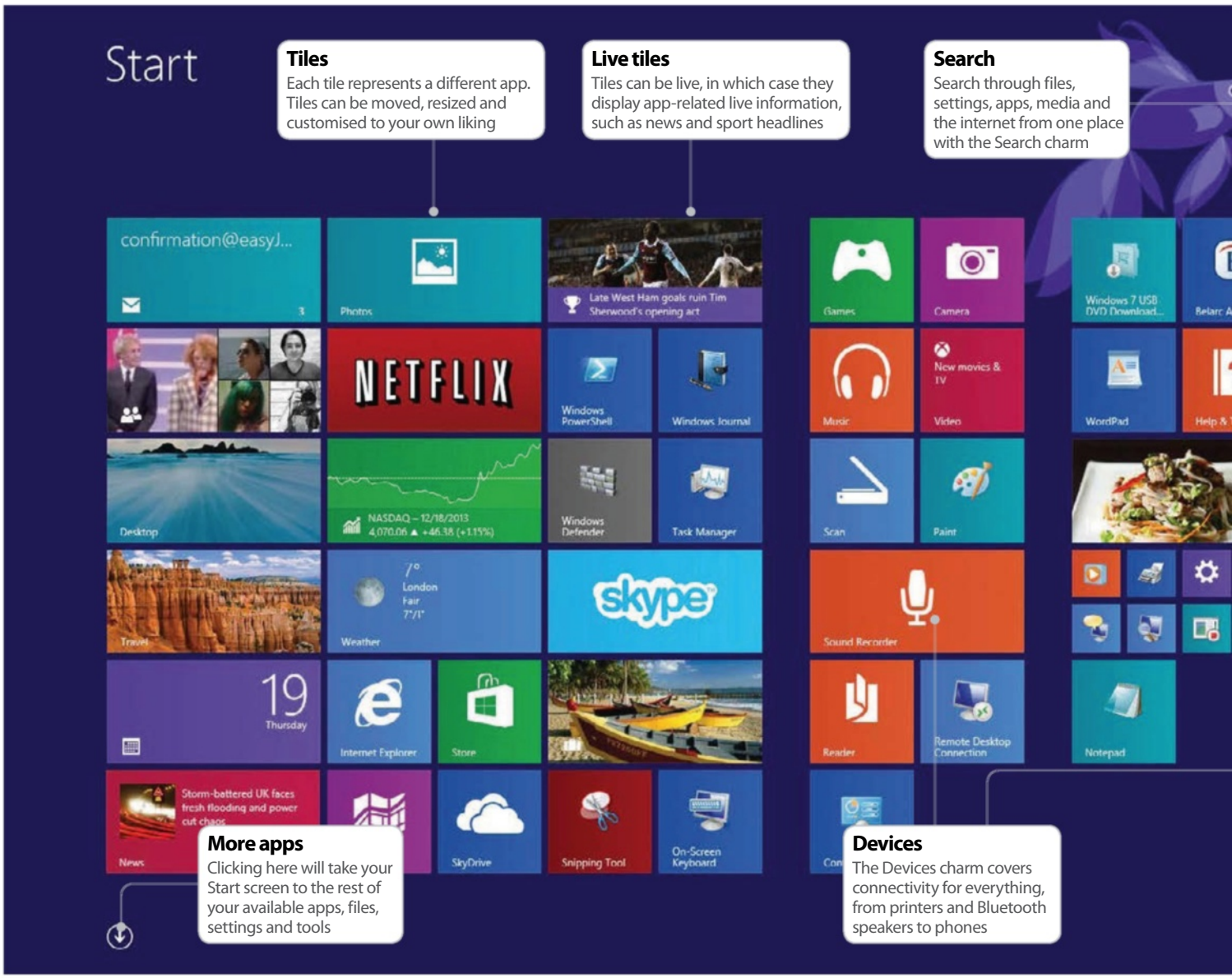

Windows 8

The advantages of the Windows 8 operating system

Windows 8 has been built with the new digital revolution in mind. For a lot of users, your Windows machine won't be the only one you're using. Whether you're listening to music on your smartphone, playing games and getting organised on your tablet, or doing work on the go on a laptop, you can sync all of your information across all of your devices with Windows 8. Microsoft's Xbox One and Xbox 360 are also syncable with your system. The entire Windows interface has been changed around to suit the way that people use their computers and devices nowadays. When booting up your computer, you'll be taken to the Start screen. This contains a series of tiles which will link you to your favourite apps (such as Internet Explorer and Outlook), your settings options and different folders where you might store photos and movies. Live tiles constantly update themselves, presenting up-to-date information on the app they are linked to. For example, Outlook's live tile will tell you how many unread emails you have in your inbox. It is in this new Start screen where you'll begin to see the real advantages of Windows 8. By placing all of your apps and live tiles into one space, the Windows 8 interface takes on the feel of a tablet device. And when you're ready

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to get down to business, you can access the Desktop and use your computer and its more advanced features just as you would with any other Windows OS.

Entertainment

Windows is here to entertain. Whether you want music, TV shows, games or movies, it can all be accessed online using a variety of apps. There are many different options for renting, streaming and purchasing movies and TV. All of the following apps are readily available through the Windows Store, which can be found on your Start screen.

Firstly, there is streaming via third-party services such as Netflix, Flixster and Hulu. Just download one of these apps from the Windows Store, then register an account with them and pay a monthly subscription fee. From there you can stream movies from the app's library any time you want.

The native Windows Video app is a great way to rent or buy movies and TV shows that may not yet be available for streaming. From the Start screen, open the Video app. Here you can browse genres or do a keyword search. Depending on the product, you can either rent or purchase it. All content in the Video app comes with reviews linked to **rottentomatoes.com**, also offering other recommended viewing. If you already have a library of movies downloaded on your Windows PC, Xbox or another device, then it's no trouble for you to be able to access and stream them via Windows 8. Within the Video app, you can locate all of your stored videos and play them. To stream videos from another device, all you have to do is sync the device with Windows 8. You can do this from the 'Change PC settings' menu by selecting PC and devices>Devices. As long as your device can be discovered, it can be synced and streamed from with Windows. The Xbox Video app has also been released for Windows phones, so you can stream any content purchased via the Xbox Video store on a Windows phone. It's also worth checking out the Windows Store for other video apps like Vimeo and YouTube.

"There are many options for renting, streaming and purchasing movies"

Browsing

By default, web browsing is done via the Internet Explorer 11 app, which is set up to work with the Bing search engine. A great many websites have been built specifically for Internet Explorer – to see what it can do, check out **www.atari.com/arcade**. As with most things in Windows 8, you don't have to do all of your online browsing through a desktop web browser. Whether you want to check your emails, book a holiday, check up on the stock market or read the latest headlines, Windows 8 provides an app for it, most of which are powered by Bing's search engine. To browse all of the different Bing apps, look them up on your Start screen or click on the downward arrow at the bottom left to reveal all of your apps. Opening the Bing News app, you'll be provided with a headline news story. Like the other Bing apps, you can browse through them by sliding from left to right. Once you've become familiar with the variety of online apps that are Bing-powered, you may find yourself using a web browser less and less to search online for content and using a Bing app instead. The apps are useful since they help to refine your browsing to a certain topic: News, Travel, Sports, Money, etc.

Another way to browse online is by using the Search charm, which can be accessed in your Charms bar. This will search the entirety of your computer and the internet to bring you results. Online results will be presented to you in a digest of information that you can click on to be linked to the site where the information came from. When searching online using the Search charm, you can also specify that you just want image and video results to help better refine your search.

On top of all this, you can also download your favourite web browsers from the Windows Store, such as Chrome, and sync it with the appropriate accounts that you may already hold, such as Gmail.

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Music

If you're a music lover, you'll enjoy access to the millions of tunes available via Xbox Music on your Windows 8 machine, as well as your own personal library of songs which can be streamed from any of your devices.

Although you can access your tracks from the desktop interface and play them in Windows Media Player or iTunes, the most seamless way to play music is through the Xbox Music app, represented by a pair of headphones. There are several ways to listen to music in the app. Firstly, you have your collection. This will consist of any music that you have stored in the Music folder of your computer. Of course, you can allocate other folders in which to import audio too. In your collection you can browse your music by artist, album or song – and see all the album covers.

Next up is Xbox Radio. Here you can search for a favourite artist, then the app will play through an automated playlist of tracks by them along with those by similar artists. You can also create your own radio stations based on artists that you like.

A key feature of the app is the Explore streaming service. With your Xbox account, you can search for and stream millions of tracks. Tracks can then be added to personalised playlists. You can also buy tracks and albums to download to your computer. Although you can stream music for free, you will be limited to ten hours per month unless you subscribe to the premium Xbox Music Pass (£8.99/$9.99 per month), which comes with a great deal of benefits. This service provides advert-free streaming of music and automatic sync between devices.

Top 10 tips

01: Customise tiles

On the Start screen, right-click anywhere, then click Customize at the bottom right of the screen. Now click on any tile that you want to modify. Once a tile is selected, you can use the bottom toolbar to unpin the tile from your Start screen, resize a tile or uninstall the tile's related app. Click and drag on a tile to move it to a different space.

02: Picture passwords

Open the Settings charm and select 'Change PC settings'. Click on Accounts and select 'Sign-in options'. Click Add under 'Picture password'. Here you can import an image from your computer and create a unique gesture that must be applied to the image every time you sign in to gain access to the computer. This tool will give you an even more secure system.

03: Family Safety

If you want to keep family members safe when using Windows 8 and browsing online, or set up restrictions for certain apps, check out Windows 8's new Family Safety settings. From the Start screen, open the Search charm and look for Family Safety. Open Family Safety settings. Select the user you want to allocate web filtering and limits to.

04: Reading Lists

There is so much information available online nowadays that it can be near impossible to keep track of what you want to read. Use the Reading List app to bookmark specific articles you find within any of your apps or while browsing the web. You can then come back to them at a later date and you'll find them neatly organised and ready to be read.

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Windows 8 is a completely customisable operating system. With that in mind, there are plenty of ways to modify your Windows 8 experience. Check out these top tips to become a whiz when using Windows 8

05: Split screen

Once you start using split screens in Windows 8, you won't be able to live without them. View and browse through multiple apps at the same time by holding down ⊞ and tapping the left arrow. Once in split-screen mode, you can adjust the divider by clicking and dragging on it. Press ⊞ and the up arrow to display your open apps.

06: Categorise apps

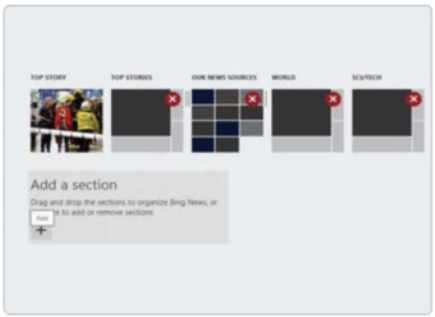
Add some order to your apps. Click and drag a tile to the right of your screen. When a light blue vertical bar appears, let go to create a new group for the app. Right-click and click on Customize to display the titles for all of your categories. Now click on a group name to rename it to something appropriate for the type of apps that it is storing.

07: Share anything

It can take users a long time to discover how to use the Share charm effectively. The easiest thing to remember is that no matter what app, software or webpage you are on, you can open up the Share charm and select from a variety of sharing options, such as Email or the People app. Different apps will provide different sharing options.

08: Pinning

Pinning is a Windows term for bookmarking an app, document, folder or piece of information to your Start screen, so that it stays there. Most of Windows 8's native apps offer a pinning function. For example, if you find a holiday destination in the Bing Travel app that you want to view later, just right-click and select 'Pin to Start', thereby creating a tile for what you've just pinned.



09: Customise your native apps

All of the pre-installed Bing apps on your Windows machine can be customised to present you with the content that interests you most. Within a Bing app, right-click and select Customize. As an example, in the Bing News app you can select different categories of news that you want fed to your app and its Start screen tile.

10: Connect with apps

It may seem like an obvious suggestion, but a lot of the sites that you'll be accessing through a web browser have their own apps available in the Windows Store. Hugely popular websites like Netflix and Facebook have their own apps, as well as widely used software such as Skype. Browse the Store to find your favourite sites and software in app form.

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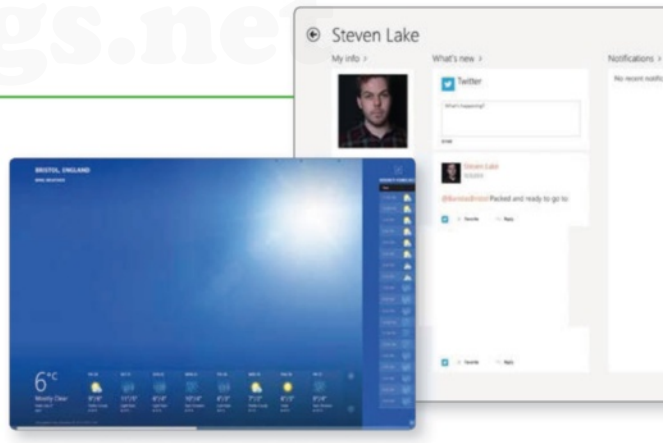
The apps

Start browsing, working, communicating and organising with the new Windows 8 native apps



Mail
Sync multiple mail accounts with Outlook's Mail app so you can receive all of your emails in one easy-to-access place

Internet Explorer
Browse, work and play by utilising Internet Explorer's fastest and most adept browser to date, in collaboration with Bing

Weather
Check up on weather that's local to you or from anywhere across the globe with Bing's incredibly intuitive Weather app

Store
Choose from the thousands of apps within the Windows Store and install them straight to your Start screen

Video
Purchase, rent and stream all of your favourite movies and TV shows with the click of a button using the Video app

People
Connect to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and all your favourite social networks, aggregating all your contacts in one app

Desktop
Access the Desktop app to browse through all of your computer's files, documents, media and software

Maps
Navigate the world, get directions to your favourite restaurant or set up home and favourite locations with the Maps app

Music
Import stored music files, listen to the radio or stream and purchase new tunes that can be shared across all your devices

SkyDrive
Store all your files, documents and media in the cloud with Windows 8's SkyDrive app, making them accessible from anywhere

Photo & Video

If you've got a large collection of photos and videos stored on your Windows 8 machine then it's worth downloading the Windows Essentials software package, which includes Photo Gallery and Movie Maker.

Photo Gallery can automatically import and organise your entire library of images. From there you can begin to manage your photos by grouping them into albums, which can be easily shared. Photo Gallery comes with its own image-editing tools – such as red-eye remover, colour adjust and retouch options – and some specialist tools. You can combine multiple images to create custom panoramas as well as use the Photo Fuse function to merge two photos together. Say you took a family photo but someone is blinking in the image; you can simply fuse together another photograph where they aren't. None of these tools require an in-depth knowledge of photo editing. As long as you know what you want then Photo Gallery can do it for you. You can also create amazing slideshows which can be shared online, letting you exhibit your images to a soundtrack of your choice.

If you're interested in video editing then check out Windows Essentials' Movie Maker software. Windows Movie Maker enables you to import all of your home movies and edit them together. Much like Photo Gallery, you can add colour effects to your clips and improve the overall look of them. On top of this, you can add titles and captions to your movies as well as transitions. You can also include a soundtrack to your finished film, then export it in a variety of formats. Videos can be shared via Facebook, YouTube and many other social networks and cloud services, so you can share your creations with others easily.

Check out the Windows Store for more video, photo, illustration and design apps. Adobe has released a series of multimedia apps for free in the Store, which are great for more advanced photo and video editing.

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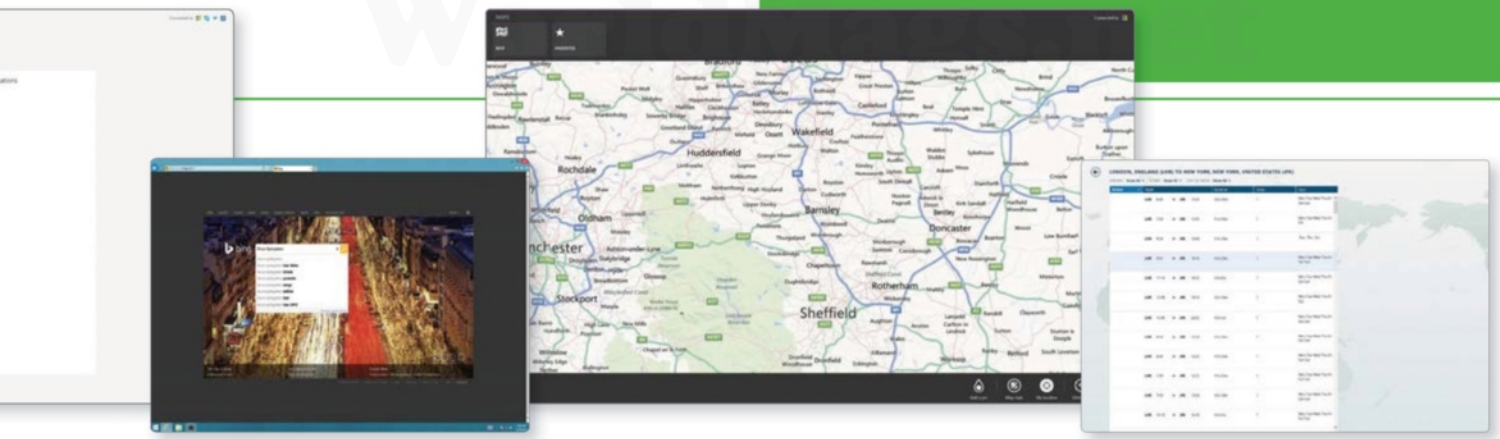

Games
Whether you want to play *Assassin's Creed IV* or *Angry Birds*, start gaming on your Windows machine with the Games app

Camera
Record personal messages, create a video blog or take photos and add wild effects with the Windows Camera app

Calendar
Save dates, sync calendars, set up date alerts, create events and invite relevant contacts to them with the Calendar app

Photos
Access all of your photos in the Photos app, creating albums for organising, editing and tagging your favourite images

Sports
Check up on the latest football scores and find out the latest sports news in your area or globally with the Sports app

Travel
Plan your perfect getaway anywhere in the world. Find hotels, local attractions and flights to your favourite destinations

News
Set up your own custom news feed from various sources to receive the headlines that matter to you with the Bing News app

Finance
Manage your finances, set up saving plans, check the stock market and stay up to date with all the changes in the market

Gaming

As with music and videos, gaming comes under the umbrella of Xbox on your Windows machine. This keeps all of your games in one single location. Opening up the Games app from the Start screen, you'll be connected to all of the available games in the Windows Store, ready to download. The array of games is ever expanding and offers you a great selection, from blockbuster releases such as *Halo Spartan Assault* (a Microsoft exclusive) to educational titles. By getting away from the traditional desktop interface, Windows has made the installation of games easier than ever. When downloading a game onto your PC, you won't have to worry about locating the file, downloading it to your desktop, then executing and installing it, hoping that the installation will complete successfully and allow you to get playing. With the Windows Store app you simply browse the selection of games, then click Buy/Install and the game and all the necessary files will be downloaded and installed automatically. The game will then be added as a tile on your Start screen.

Although there is a huge selection of games available through the Games and Windows Store apps, you won't find everything there, and of course you can still return to the desktop interface to browse for and download games in the traditional way.

Gaming is absolutely one of Windows 8's biggest strengths. The system is able to flawlessly install and run some of the most processor-intensive titles available – naturally, that depends on the specs of your machine. Before purchasing any game through the Windows Store, you will be able to compare the game's required specs with your own machine's – any games that are not compatible with your computer will not appear as results within the Windows Store.

For all of the changes that have come with Windows 8, gaming has only gone in two directions: bigger and better.

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Office

Office 365 is Microsoft's flagship product for word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, email and money management. It can be purchased in different three packages: Office Home and Student, Office Home and Business, and Office Professional. You can also buy the apps individually: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, OneNote, Access and Publisher.

One of the most important updates to come with Office 365 is its cloud services. Office will link itself with your SkyDrive account (Windows 8's cloud storage service). By doing this you will always be able to access the most up-to-date version of any document that you have been working on.

Alongside this, Microsoft is offering users a cloud-based Office subscription service called Home Premium. This enables you to install Office software onto multiple machines and have your documents constantly backed up in the cloud. Perhaps the most useful function is that you can log into a web browser version of any of the Office apps from any computer. So no matter where you are, you will be able to edit and save your documents online. It's certainly a change in direction to have users subscribe to use Office rather than buy it outright, and at first glance you might think that it's going to cost you more money to subscribe. However, if you were to fully utilise your Office 365 Home Premium subscription and install it on five devices, paying £7.99/$9.99 a month, you may find that a more financially viable option than paying up to £500/$700 for five individual copies of Office 2013. Microsoft is offering a free Office 365 Home or Business trial at **office.microsoft.com**.

Shortcut tips

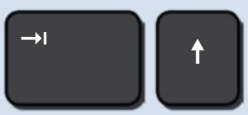
There are hundreds of shortcuts set up for use on your Windows 8 machine – of course you could try every single combination of commands on your keyboard to find out what they are but that will take some time! A quick tip for working with shortcuts and remembering what they are is that a lot of the time a shortcut will begin with either the ⊞ (Windows) Key, Ctrl Key or the Alt Key.

From there, depending on the command you are trying to perform, often the first letter of that command is going to be the key that you'll need to press. For example, if you want to highlight All the text in a window hit Ctrl+A; if you want to Copy your selection hit Ctrl+C. However, this isn't always the case, so here are 20 shortcuts to speed up the way you use Windows 8.

"A lot of the time a shortcut will begin with the Windows Key, Ctrl or Alt"

⊞ + Enter

Turn on Narrator. The Narrator function will narrate any actions that you perform within Windows 8.



Tab + Arrow Keys

Navigate around your Start Screen. Use the arrow keys to switch between tiles. Hit Enter to open apps.

⊞ + C

Open the Charms Menu. This shortcut will open up your Charms menu without the need to use your mouse.

⊞ + I

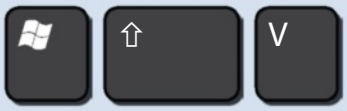
Quickly open up your settings Charm. You can close the Charm with the same shortcut.

⊞ + U

Open the Ease of Access Centre. When doing this the narrator tool will turn itself on automatically.

⊞ + F1

Open Windows Help and Support. Quickly troubleshoot any problems you're having running Windows 8.



⊞ + Shift + V

Cycle through notifications in reverse. This shortcut will reverse the order of your notifications.

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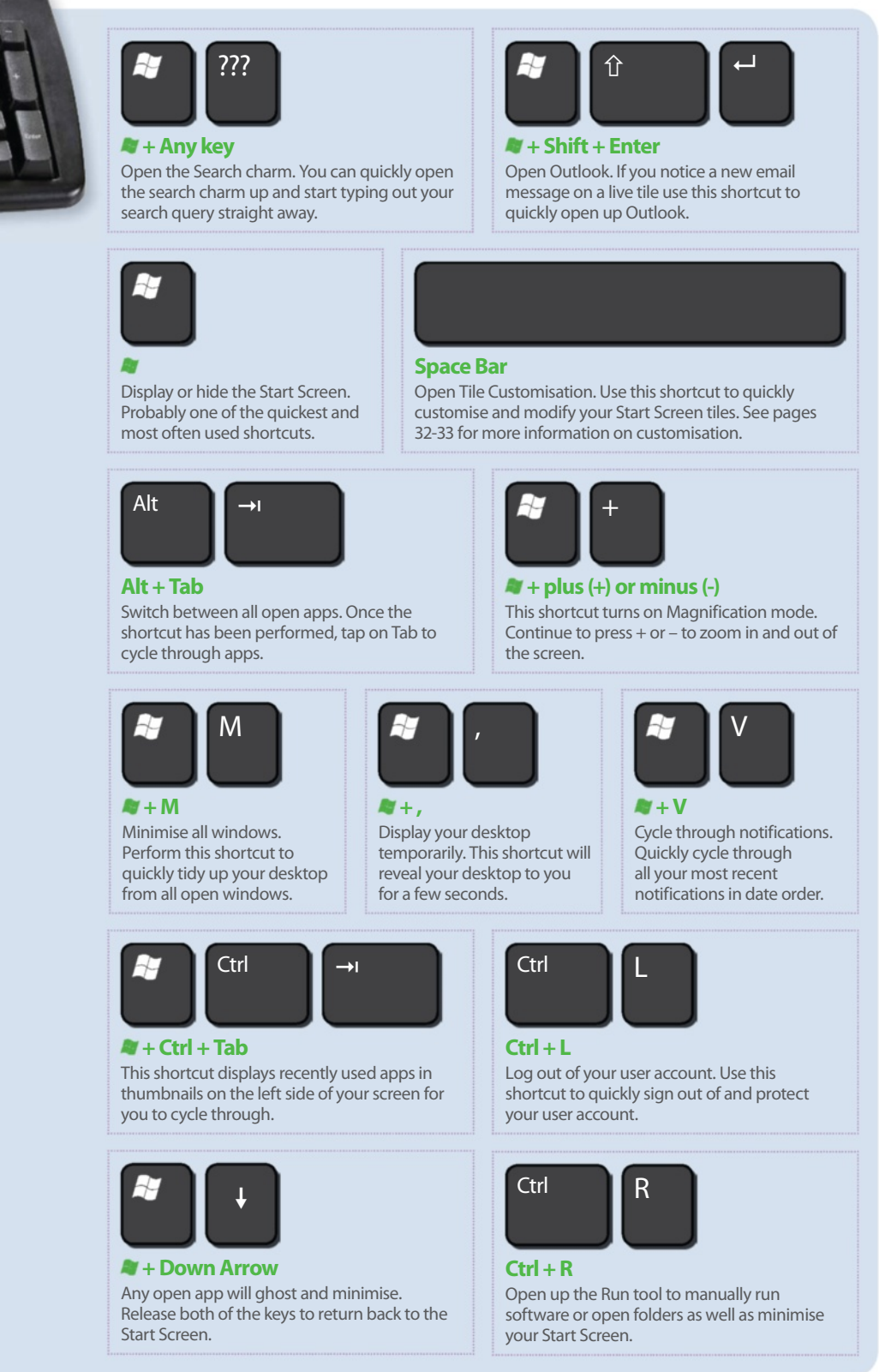

Security

With all of the information that's stored on your Windows machine, you'll want it to be as secure as possible. Rather than worrying about having to download third-party virus protection software, you can depend on the new Windows Defender app to keep harmful things away from your computer. Windows Defender is a pre-installed app that can be set up to scan your computer for any potentially harmful items.

Since spyware can be installed onto your computer without you even realising, it's really important that Windows Defender is always running. If something does make its way onto your machine, Defender will quickly quarantine it to prevent it doing any harm; you can then remove it from your system.

Another necessity for security is your Windows Firewall. Windows 8 provides you with a completely customisable firewall that will allow the apps and websites you trust to connect with your computer, while keeping out the ones that you don't. With its notification system, the Firewall tool will keep you up to date with any suspicious activity that is occurring when running certain apps or visiting untrusted websites.

The Windows SmartScreen function is another way to protect yourself from malware. As soon as Windows sees that the user is running an app or visiting a website that it doesn't recognise, it will send out a warning notification to make you aware of the risks that the app or site may pose.

As well as keeping things out of your PC, it's important to protect the people using it. If you have multiple user accounts, as an admin user you can set up a number of different restrictions for other users. Whether you want to keep your files safe from other users, or restrict the way a user browses the web or runs apps, all this can be done via Windows 8's administration and Family Safety settings.

With more personal information than ever before stored on your machine, Windows 8 does an amazing job of protecting the files, data, passwords and user information that is most important to you, helping you stay as safe as possible all of the time.

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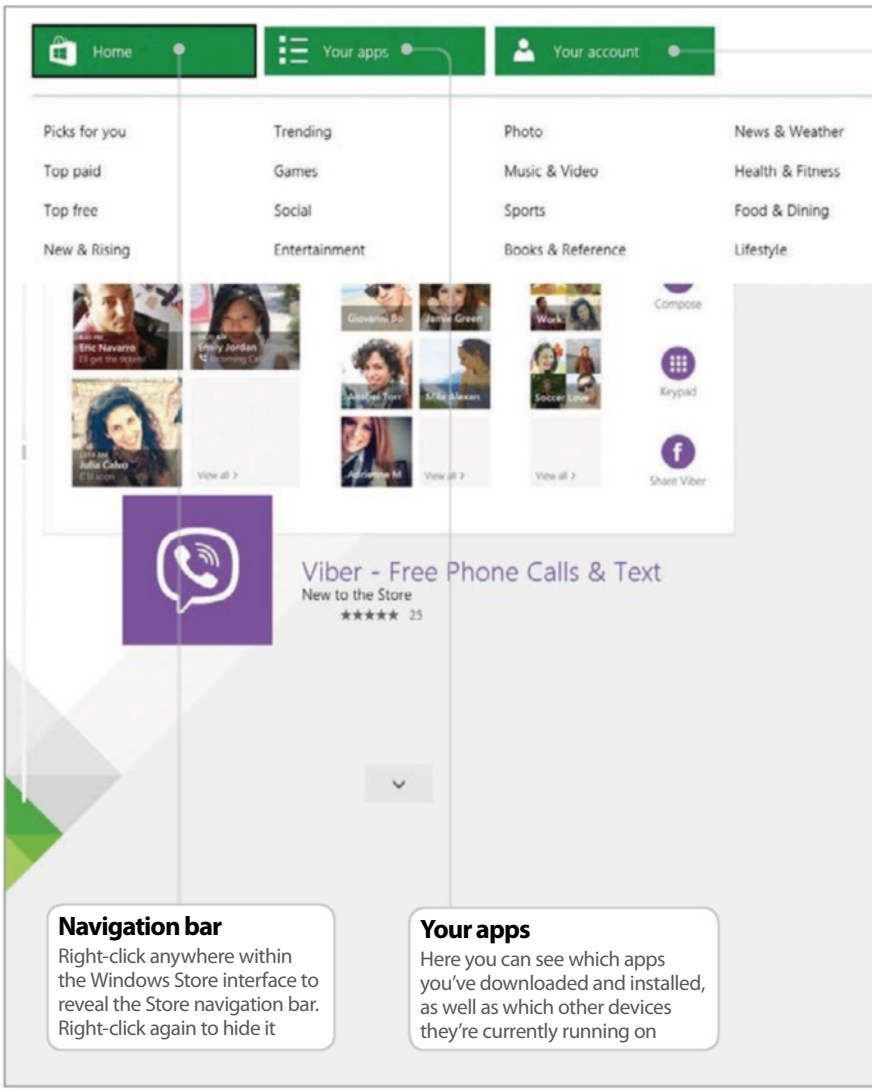
Windows Store

The Windows Store is the number-one location for apps of any kind

The Windows Store is your primary source for apps, with over 200,000 currently available for download. Apps in Windows haven't completely replaced standard software, they're just an easier, cleaner way to add functionality to your computer. The biggest benefit of the Windows Store is the speed with which you can locate, read about and download an app, then have it up and running from your Start screen in seconds. By either searching or browsing, you can find a plethora of different apps covering communication, education, media, gaming, photo editing, movie making and much more. Once you've purchased an app, it can be downloaded on up to five separate devices, whether that be a Windows PC or smartphone. All you have to do is log in with your Microsoft account, access the Windows Store to see any apps you've already purchased, then download them for that machine/device.

The Windows Store has a very transparent approach to reviews and user feedback. Everything can be reviewed by a user, as long as they themselves have purchased that app. This means you can get a good idea as to whether an app is for you before buying it. From an app's information page, you can also view similar apps and other apps made by the same developer. A great starting point if you're new to the Windows Store is to search out app versions of software you're already familiar with, such as Microsoft Office, Skype or Google Chrome.

Check out the quick tips here to start downloading apps in the perfectly executed Windows Store.



Download apps

Get an app from the Store in three steps

Payment details

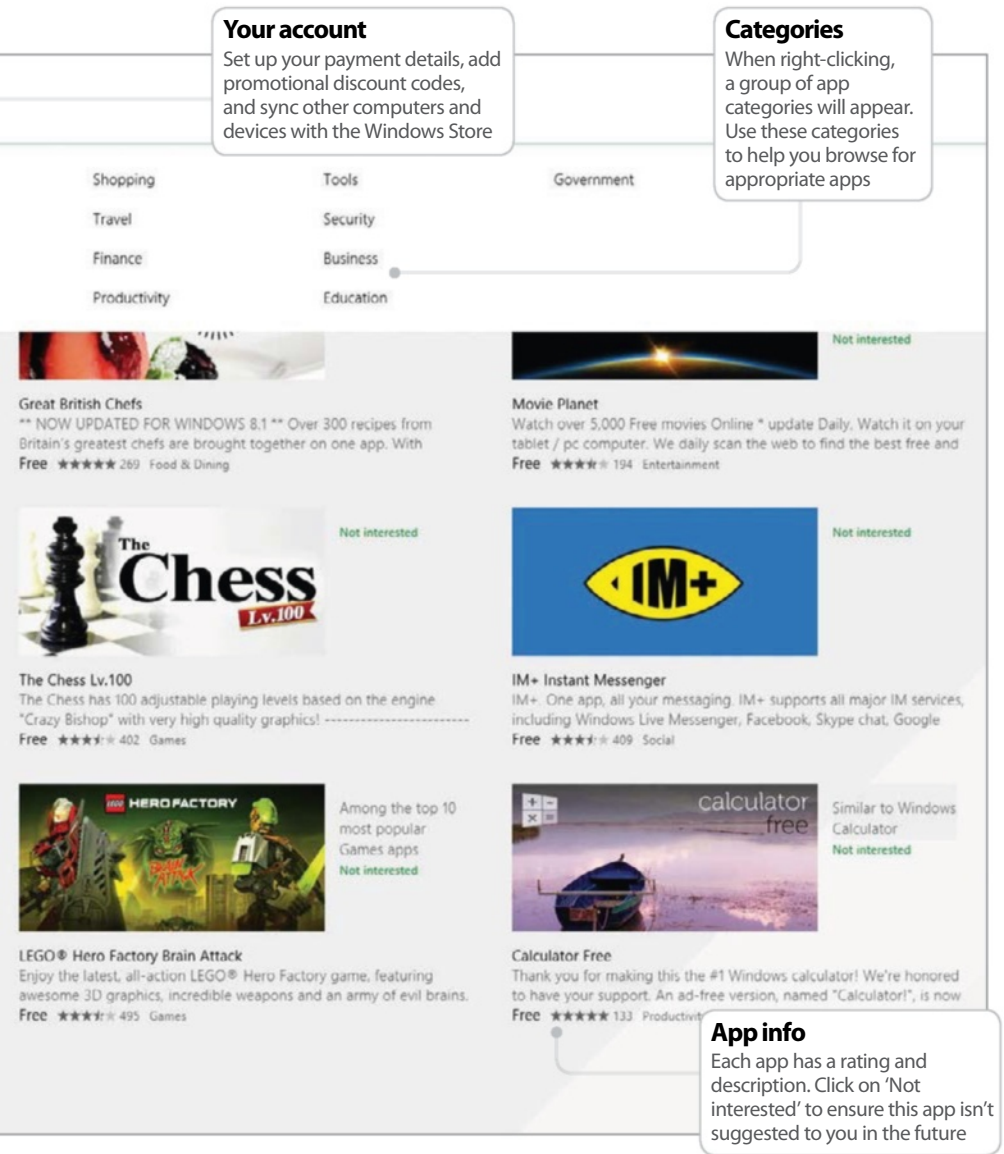
In the Store app, right-click and select 'Your account'. Click 'Add payment method' and add a credit card. Then click Submit.

Find an app

In the Store, search or browse for an app. In its information window, click on Buy. You'll then have to click Confirm to download.

Your app

In the Store, right-click and select 'Your apps'. Here you can review and uninstall any Windows Store purchases or downloads.



Apps to download right now

Three great third-party apps in the Windows Store

Fotor

With an interface that is very similar to that of Windows 8, Fotor is a user-friendly photo editing app packed full of amazing tools.

Price: Free

Google Maps

Navigate the world with Google Maps. This app really shines when multitasking, using it in split-screen mode alongside another app.

Price: Free

Viber

Viber is a communication app that functions in a similar way to Skype, allowing you to chat and call friends and family for free.

Price: Free

Communication

Windows 8 uses the People app to bring all of your contacts and social networks under one umbrella. With the app you can sync your Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Outlook and Exchange accounts, so you can see all your contacts' updates in one place. You can also post on various networks via the app, individually or all at the same time. Within the People app, right-click and select Me from the top navigation menu. From here you can input your login information for your accounts to sync them with the app.

Once you've connected your social networks and email accounts to the People app, all of your contacts from across all of your accounts will be available through it, providing you with one definitive contacts database. The People app takes into account that you may have the same contact stored across two different accounts, so if you find that you have

> "See all your contacts' updates in one place"

one person appearing more than once in the People app's contact list, just select them from the list, right-click and select Link.

The People app is a great way to share content too. When running any of the Bing apps and accessing the Share charm, you'll be able to link what you're looking at to the People app and share it through your synced social networks.

Of course, the staple communication tools are still available in Windows 8. The Mail app, which runs on Outlook, can sync and manage multiple email accounts. The organisation tools now available in Outlook are outstanding, allowing you to categorise emails in a number of ways, across all your accounts. Windows Live Messenger can be installed as part of the Windows Essentials 2012 package so you can chat with other Hotmail users.

Other social apps are also available in the Windows Store, such as Skype and Facebook.

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Setting up

The first things to do when you get your Windows 8 PC

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Get Windows 8 on your desktop

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Set up a new Microsoft user account

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An account on your computer only

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Move, group and manage your tiles

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Personalise your PC

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See what these handy shortcuts can do

38 Discover your PC settings in the tiles view
Learn about the various sections

40 Run two apps at the same time
Use the innovative Snap feature

"Installing Windows 8 onto your system is a quick and painless experience"

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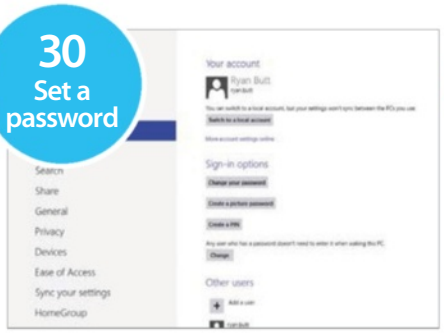

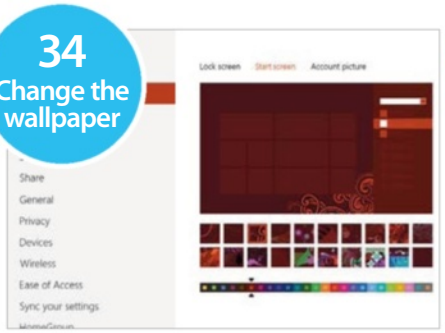

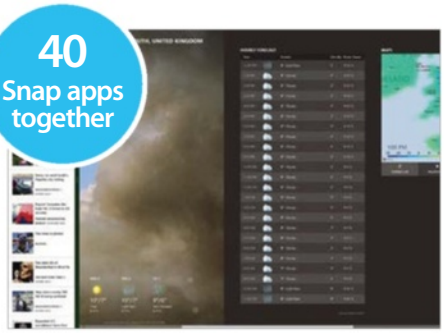

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Install Windows 8

Get the most advanced Windows operating system to date on your desktop computer by using this quick guide to its installation

Putting a fresh installation of Windows 8 onto your system is a quick and painless experience that can be achieved in a few simple steps. The Windows 8 operating system can be installed in two ways. The first method is via the use of an installation DVD, which will come as standard with most new computers. The other option is to install Windows by mounting the installation file onto a USB memory stick. The USB option will be necessary if you're using a download-only copy of Windows 8, which you can purchase from the Microsoft Store. Remember, you can also download a free trial of Windows 8.1 Enterprise Evaluation, to see how you like the operating system before buying it. It's really important that you back up your data before performing a fresh install, as formatting a partition will remove all data from the drive. Once that's done, you're ready to go. If your machine already has Windows 8 installed, go to page 24.

"It's really important that you back up your data before performing a fresh install"

Upgrade from Windows 7

Move up to Windows 8 via a USB stick

USB mounting software

If you want to install Windows 8 using an ISO file, you need to mount the file onto a USB stick to boot from it. Visit **microsoftstore.com** and search for the Windows 7 USB/DVD Download tool. Then install and run it on your system

Mounting to a USB

When using the Windows 7 USB/DVD Download tool place the ISO file for installing Windows 8 in an easy-to-find location. Browse for the ISO file in the software, then select the USB option when prompted to get to this window

Add a USB device

Insert your USB device into your PC, then click here to mount the ISO file onto it. If your device isn't in the drop down menu, you may need to format it first. Find the device in My Computer, right-click on it and select Format

Copy the file over

Once the USB device is formatted, click here to refresh the list of available devices. Click 'Begin copying'. The ISO installation file will be mounted onto the USB device so you can boot onto the device to install Windows 8

Upgrade to Windows 8.1

If you're now running Windows 8 and have yet to update to the 8.1 OS, then visit the Microsoft Store from your Start screen and find the Windows 8.1 update. After downloading the update, you'll be prompted to restart your system to complete the installation. The 8.1 update will carry over and retain all of your files and settings. However, it's still a good idea to back up all of your files beforehand just to be on the safe side.

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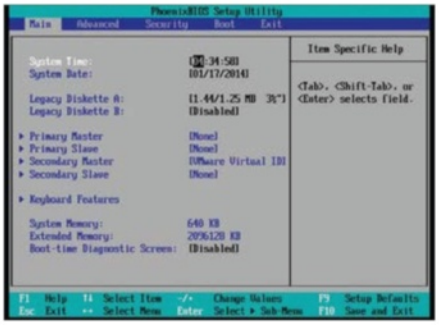
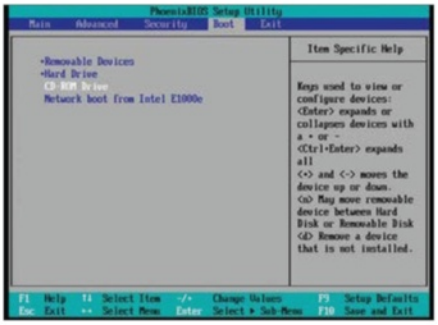
01: Reboot your computer

With the PC turned on, insert the Windows 8 Installation DVD/USB. Restart the PC, then press any key to boot from your installation.



02: Enter Settings

If the installation doesn't begin, restart the PC and tap the F12, Delete or F2 key (depends on system) to open BIOS settings.

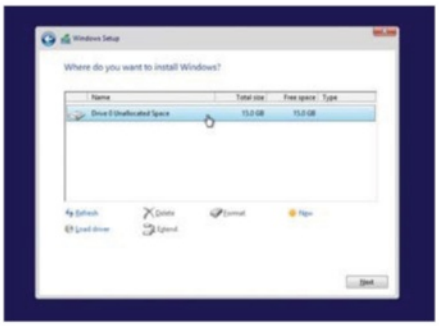


03: Boot from disc

Locate the Boot options, then select the Windows 8 installation disc to boot from. After reboot, the installation will begin.

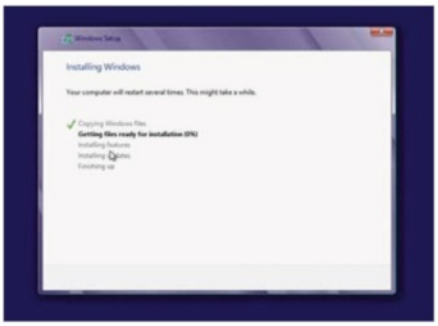
04: Initial setup

Select your language, time, currency and keyboard preferences, then tap Next. Accept the terms and conditions and tap Next.



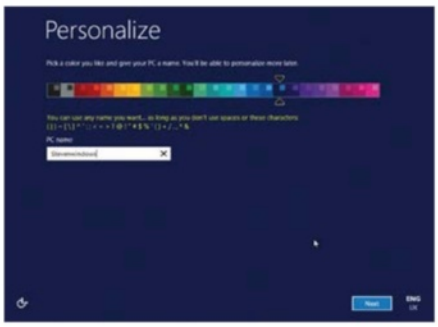
05: Custom settings

When performing a clean install of an OS, select the Custom option, then choose from a list of drives to install Windows 8 onto.



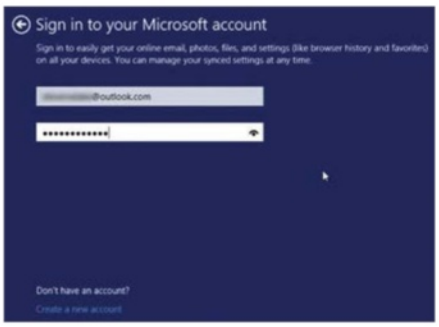
06: Start installation

The selected drive will be formatted. Click Next and the installation of Windows 8 will begin. Check the progress list for details.



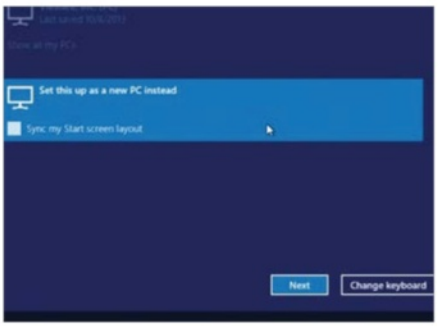
07: Personalisation

After installation comes personalisation. Name your computer. Click Next and then Customize to fully set up the Windows 8 OS.



08: Add an account

Go through the customisation options. Next, sign into a Microsoft account, or create one. Add a phone number for added security.



09: Complete installation

If you have another PC linked to your account, you can copy over settings from it. Windows 8 will reboot to the Start screen.

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Connect to a Wi-Fi network

We show you how to connect your Windows 8 computer to a Wi-Fi network for the first time, whether you're at home or on the move

Whether you want to update your social network status, check for emails or simply complete the Windows 8 installation process, you'll need a network connection. If you have an account with an ISP (internet service provider), you will already have internet access at home, so you can either connect your PC to your modem using an Ethernet cable (in which case it will all be connected automatically) or connect wirelessly. If you're going for the wireless approach, connecting is still a quick and easy process that we will guide you through here.

Lots of public places also offer Wi-Fi connections that you can log onto to check your emails while you wait for your coffee to arrive or your flight to start boarding. But if you're in a place where Wi-Fi isn't available, you can sign up for mobile broadband. This is an internet connection that you take with you and can use as long as there is a mobile phone service available. You typically buy a SIM card from your phone or cable company and plug the card into your PC to connect with mobile broadband. In this tutorial, however, we guide you through the basic process of connecting your PC to a Wi-Fi network.

"Lots of public places also offer Wi-Fi connections that you can log onto"

01: Access your Settings charm

Start off by accessing your Charms bar: to do so, move your mouse cursor to the lower-right corner of the screen, or swipe from the right of the screen (if you have a touch screen), or press ⊞+C. When your Charms bar is displayed, click on the Settings charm.

02: Click on network

The Settings charm will bring up a column of quick options that allow you to address and configure aspects of your PC that you are likely to change frequently. One of these options is your network connection, so click on this option to bring up a list of possible networks to join.

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Connect wirelessly

Connecting your PC to a Wi-Fi network

Connect automatically

Click on a network to see the option to 'Connect automatically'. If this is ticked, your PC will connect to the network automatically whenever it is in range, saving a lot of hassle

Flight mode

Click this to initiate Flight mode when on a plane to perform offline actions – such as watch films or play games. You may only use it after takeoff and before landing, though

Wi-Fi networks

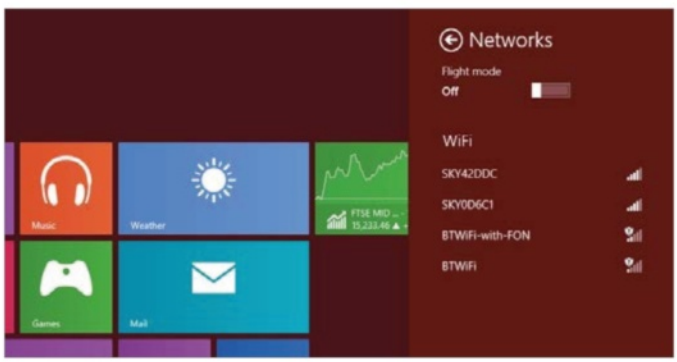
When you choose 'quick network' from Settings, all available Wi-Fi networks are listed. Click on one, enter the password – if required – and you will soon be connected

Signal strengths

By the name of each network is a graphic showing its current signal strength. If the latter is low, you may not be in range of the network and could lose connection at times

Staying private on public networks

When you're away from home and using a public network, there are steps you can take to keep your PC and data safe. The first time you connect to a public network, you'll be asked if you want to find devices and content on the network. Say 'no' so that other people can't see your PC. If you accidentally say 'yes', go to your Settings charm, click on the networks and choose the name of the network. Now simply turn off 'Find devices and content'.



03: Select a network

All the available Wi-Fi networks will be listed, so click on the one that you wish to access and then enter the password (if required). If you have managed to connect successfully, the word 'Connected' will be displayed next to the network that you have joined.

04: Enabling Flight mode

When you're on a plane, all electronic devices must be powered down fully for takeoff and landing, but once you're in the air you can put your PC in Flight mode and use it to watch movies and play games. Flight mode suspends any signal transmissions from your PC.

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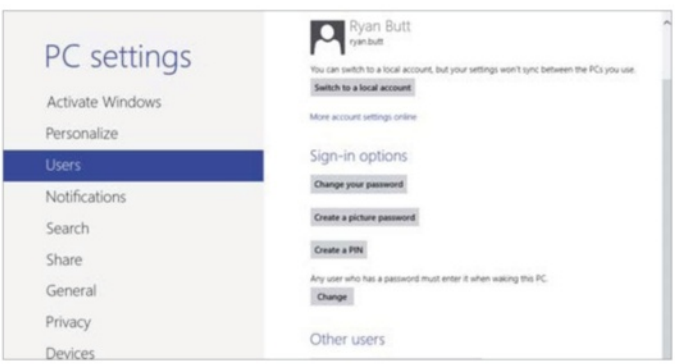
Create a new Microsoft account

We guide you through the process of setting up a new Microsoft user account on your PC to act independently of your own

You will be guided through the process of creating a primary Microsoft account when you set up Windows 8. But if someone else uses your computer regularly, we'd suggest creating a new user account so that they can personalise the PC to suit their needs, download their own apps from the Windows Store and change the settings without messing with your setup.

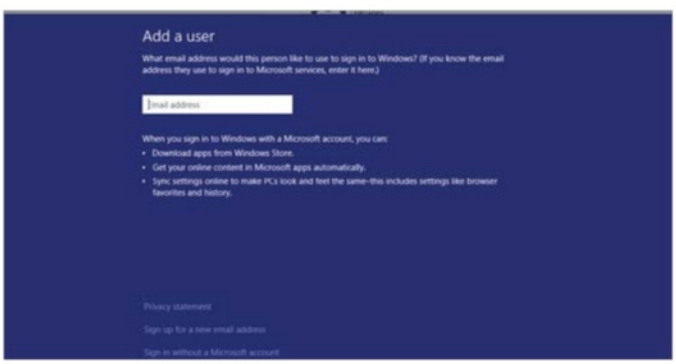
To create a new Microsoft account, you need to access Settings from your Charms bar. Next, go to the Change PC Settings and select the Users category; you will notice the 'Other users' section with the option to 'Add a user'. Here you can either add an existing email address to log in with (which may not afford you the same privileges as a Microsoft account) or click on the option to 'Sign up for a new email address'. Doing the latter will allow you to create a new Microsoft account from scratch by entering a name, a desired email address (you can choose from outlook.com, hotmail.com or live.com addresses), a password and a region. Complete the rest of the process and if it is a child's account you are creating then you have the option to turn on Family Safety before finalising the process.

"A new user account enables them to personalise the PC to suit their needs"



01: Go to PC Settings

Bring up your Charms bar and click on Settings. From the side menu that appears, click on the Change PC Settings link at the bottom. A list of options is now shown down the left of the screen – click on the option marked Users to display options that relate to your account.



02: Sign up for a new email address

Click on 'Add user' and then, on the next page, click on the 'Sign up for a new email address' option at the bottom of the screen. You'll be able to create a new Microsoft user account from scratch to allow another user to personalise the PC to suit their needs and buy apps.

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New account details

Requirements of creating a new Microsoft account

Create a password

You need to create and confirm a password for the new account. This is the password that the new user will need to enter when logging in. Enter it twice to proceed

Microsoft email address

You must log into Windows 8 with a Microsoft email address to enjoy all the benefits, such as buying apps. Here you can create a new email address with a choice of endings

Enter your name

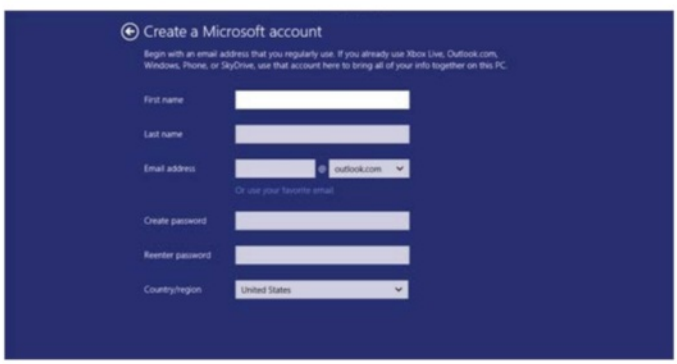
The first two fields of the Microsoft account creation screen are for the first and second names of the new user. Click on a field and then type in the relevant details before moving onto the email address

Choose your region

You need to choose the country or region for your current location as this will determine the services that are displayed on the tiles of your Start screen, and the content available via the Windows Store

Family Safety

After setting up a new Microsoft account, the final step of the procedure will invite you to turn on Family Safety by clicking on the box. This is useful if the new account is for a child, as it provides the computer administrator with reports of how the new user is using the PC – such as what they are accessing online and whether they're playing when they should be working.



03: Enter details

You now have to go through the setup process. Enter a name, select an email address for the new account, create a password to log in with and choose the country or region – this will determine the content that is available to the new user through the Windows Store.

04: Changing accounts

With a new account created, return to the Start screen and click on the account name at the top right. Click on the new user to sign in and the PC will be reconfigured back to its original state for the new user – but don't worry, the other account will remain untouched.

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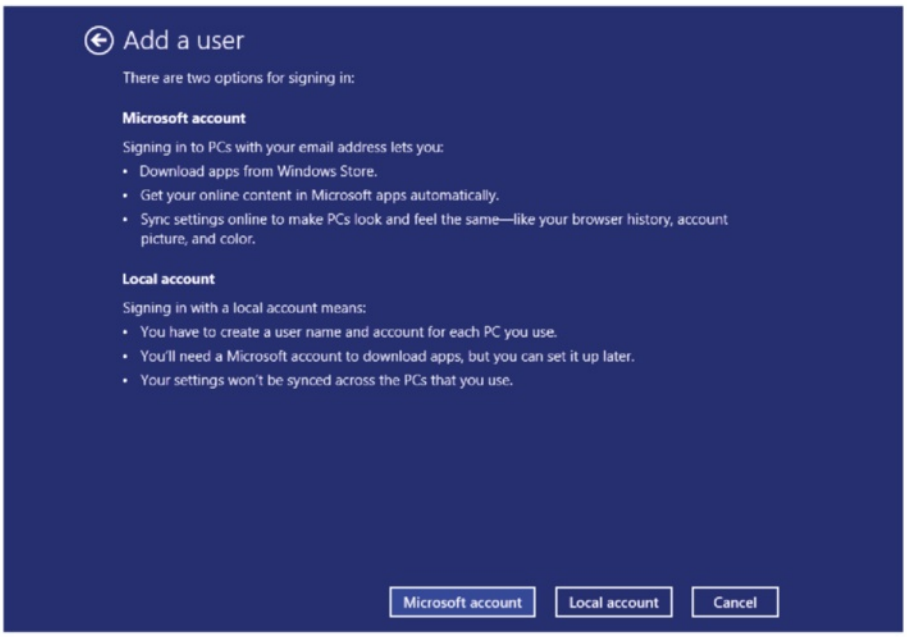
Add a new local user account

How to create a new local user account to use on your computer, and your computer only

Windows 8 supports two different kinds of user accounts that can be used to log into the computer. The main type is a Microsoft account that can be created from an outlook.com, hotmail.com or live.com address and since the accounts on these sites can be accessed from anywhere in the world, users can use the same account credentials to log onto any Windows 8 computer that is connected to the internet. Note that you will require such a Microsoft account in order to buy products from the Windows 8 Store.

The second type of user account that you can use with Windows 8 is a Local account. Unlike a Microsoft account, a local user account is authenticated from the local Security Account Manager (SAM) file that is located on the system drive of the computer in question. Since every Windows 8 computer has a different SAM file, local accounts created on a certain Windows 8 computer can only log onto that particular machine and no other computer.

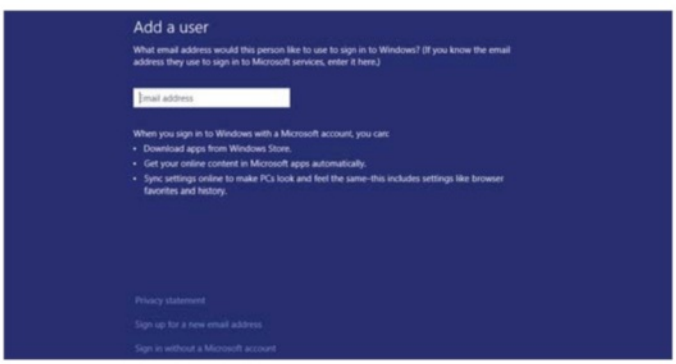
In this tutorial we will guide you through the process of creating a new local account on your Windows 8 computer.



"Local accounts can only log onto that particular machine and no other"

01: Go to PC Settings

Bring up your Charms bar and click on Settings. From the side menu that appears, click on the Change PC Settings link at the bottom. A list of options is now shown down the left of the screen – click on the option marked Users to display options that relate to your account.



02: Sign up for a new email address

Click on the 'Add user' option and then, on the next page, click on 'Sign in without a Microsoft account' at the bottom of the screen and you'll get an overview of the different types of user who can sign in. Click on the 'Local account' button at the bottom of the screen.

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User accounts

The different types of account on your PC

Sign-in options

Here you can change the password for the account you're logged in with, create a picture password to add an extra level of security to your machine and create a PIN

Password requirements

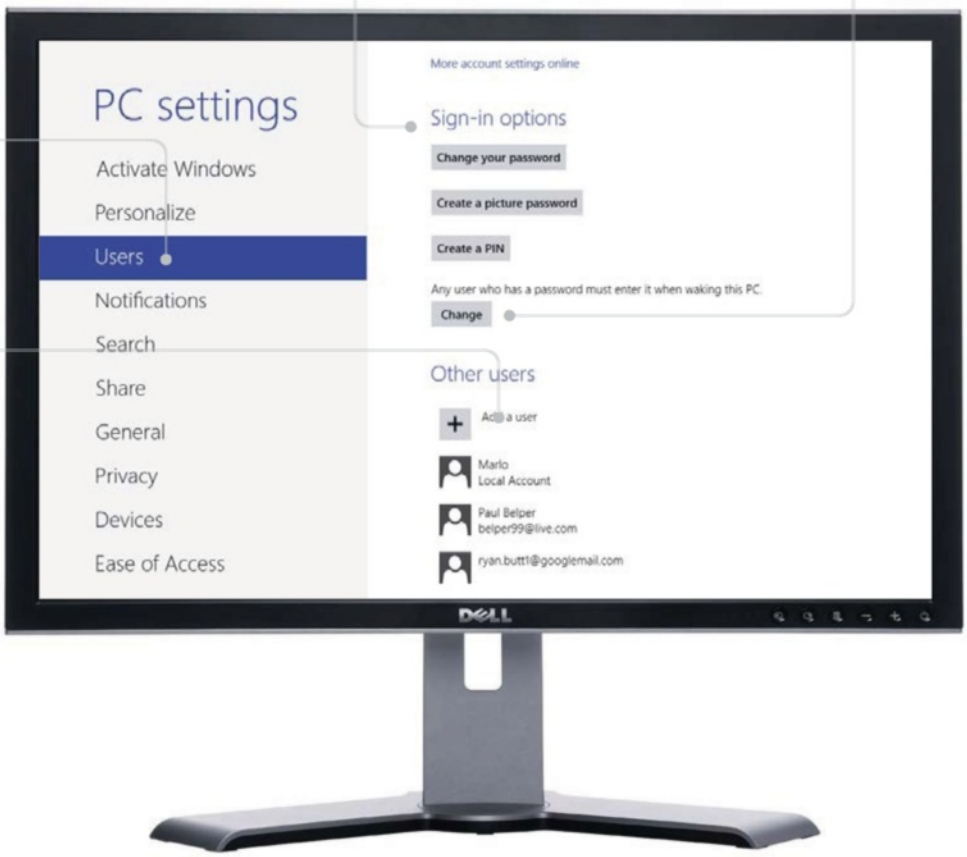
If you wish to disable the need for passwords to be entered, click on the Change button. Passwords will still need to be entered if the user logs out of the machine

User settings

You can add both new Microsoft and new Local accounts to your Windows 8 PC by going to your main PC Settings screen and selecting the Users category from the list of sections down the left-hand side of the screen

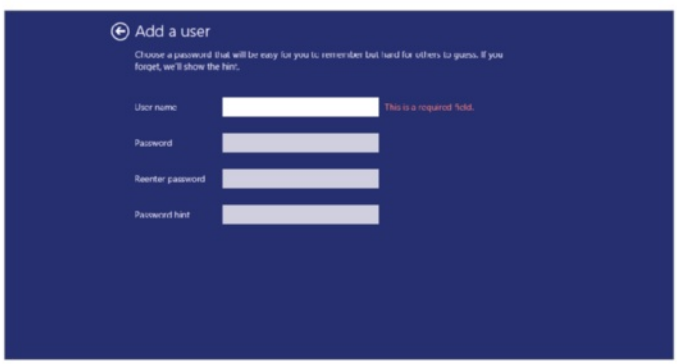
Add a user

To add a new user for either type of account, click on the 'Add a user' option which is listed under Other Users and then the option that you choose from that point on will determine the type of account that you create on the Windows 8 PC



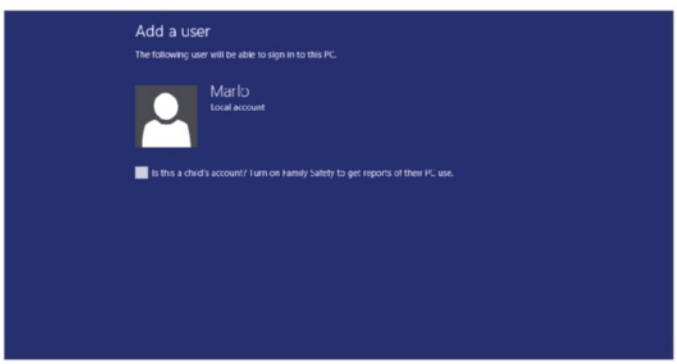
Alternative method

There is another way to create and log in using a local account. In the Users section of the main Settings screen is an option to 'Switch to a local account'. Click on this, enter your Microsoft account password to make the change, then enter the name, password and hint for the local account. You can switch accounts by clicking on the account name in the top-right corner of the Start screen.



03: Enter details

You will now have to go through the setup process that involves entering a name and creating a password to log in with – plus a hint to give you a clue as to what it is in the event of your forgetting. Once you have done that, click on the Next button to proceed.



04: Finishing up

You'll receive confirmation of the account that states they'll be able to log into your computer using their password. If the account is for a child then be sure to tick the box. For more on activating Parental Controls, see pages 52-53.

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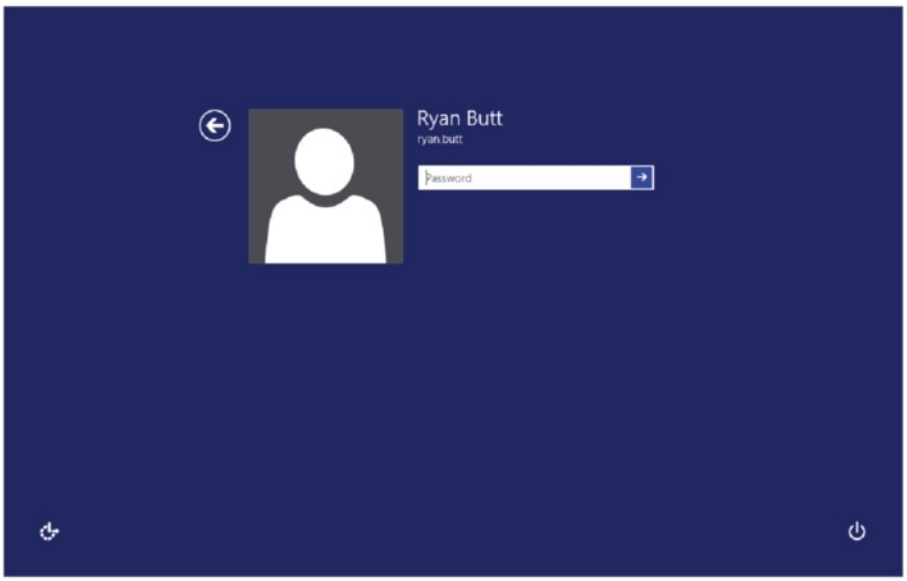
Secure your account with a password

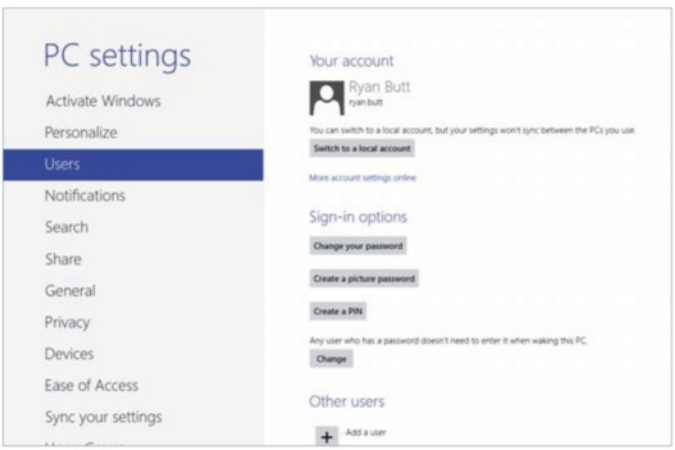
Apply or change your account password to protect your files and add extra security to your Windows 8 computer

Computers are home to all manner of sensitive data and to prevent this falling into the wrong hands you can protect your Windows 8 account with a password. So even in the event of your PC being stolen or lost, you can rest assured that none of your details can be accessed.

You can put the password protection into effect by going to your PC Settings screen and clicking on Users. This next screen will display your account details and, under the Sign In section, you will see the option to create or change your password as well as an option that states that 'Any user who has a password doesn't need to enter it when waking this PC'. Click on the Change button so that the last sentence reads 'Any user who has a password must enter it when waking this PC' and your PC will be password-protected. You'll also see options to create a picture password and create a PIN – these are extra security precautions that you can take. It is particularly important to secure your computer with a password if you are working in an office or if other members of your family use your PC.

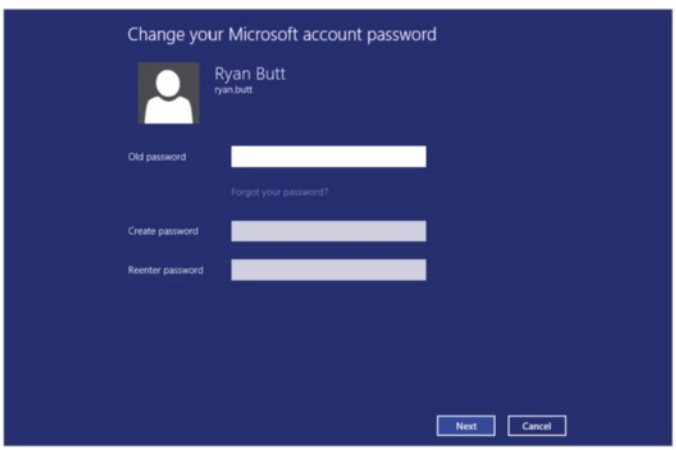


"You should secure your computer with a password if working in an office"



01: Go to PC Settings

Bring up your Charms bar and click on Settings. From the side menu that appears, click on the Change PC Settings link at the bottom. A list of options is now shown down the left of the screen – click on the option marked Users to display options that relate to your account.



02: Set your password

Under 'Sign-in options' is one to change your password. Click on this and you'll be prompted to create and confirm a password. Do so, then click on Next. Return to the Users screen and then make sure that the password requirement is activated.

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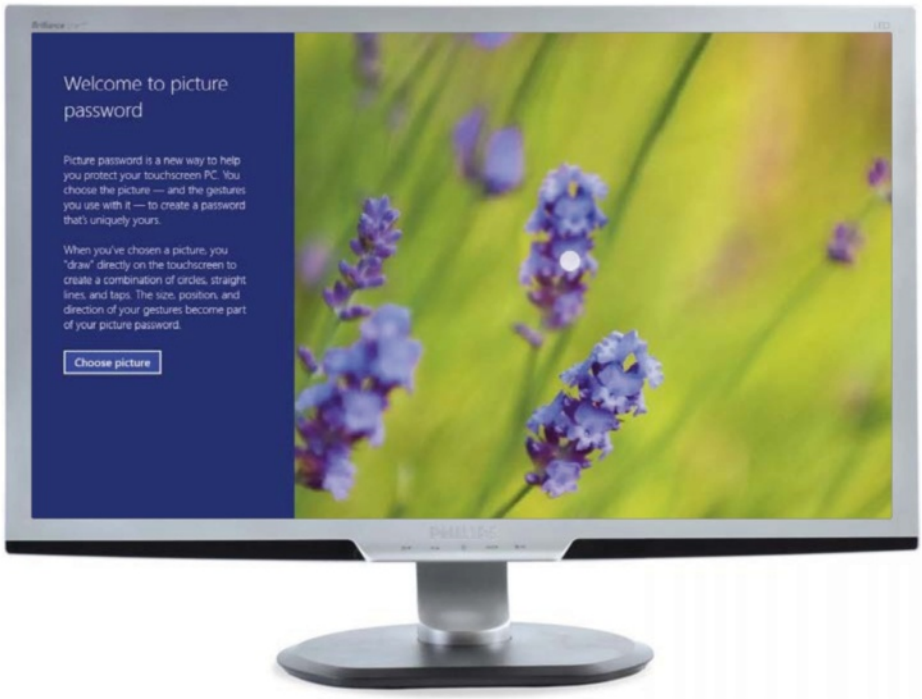
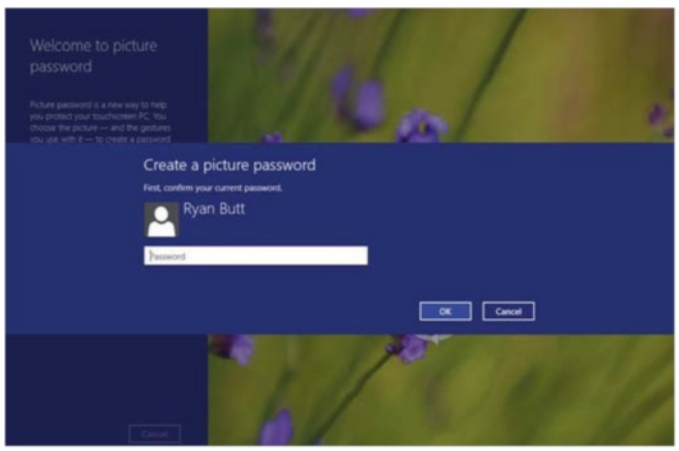
Add a picture password

Picture password is a new Windows 8 feature designed to add extra security to your account. Here we show you how to set it up

Picture password is a new way to help you protect your touch-screen PC and it works by you choosing a picture and gestures to go with it in order to create a password that is uniquely yours.

After choosing a picture, you 'draw' directly onto the touch screen to create a combination of circles, straight lines and taps. The size, position and direction of your gestures becomes part of your picture password. To start setting it up, bring up your Charms bar and click on Settings, then the Change PC Settings option and the Users category. Under the Sign-in options section is an option to 'Create a picture password'. Click on this, enter your existing password, then click on the Choose Picture option to select one from your library. Now click on 'Use this picture' and you can draw three gestures onto the image to act as your password. You can drag your mouse cursor to create gestures if you don't have a touch-screen PC. Once you have drawn three gestures, repeat them to confirm and the password will be set. Simply click on Finish and your PC will be picture password-protected.





01: Go to PC Settings

Go to your PC Settings screen and click on the Users section. Under 'Sign-in options' is one to 'Create a picture password'. Click on this and you'll be asked to enter your current password. Do so, then click on the Choose Picture option to pick an image from your library.

02: Draw gestures

Once you have chosen a picture, you must draw three gestures on it which will act as your picture password. They have to be accurate, so don't do anything too complicated (dots at key points will suffice). When you have confirmed your gestures, the password will be set.

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Customise your Start screen

Move, group and manage all of your Start screen tiles with ease to make your PC work better for your needs

The Start screen is the heart of your PC – it's where you open apps and desktop programs, see what your friends are up to and get to your favourite websites and tiles. The tiles on the Start screen can show updates from your friends, new email notifications and the next appointment on your calendar – all at-a-glance without having to open the respective apps. And because everyone who uses your PC can sign in with their own Microsoft account, each person can personalise their own tiles, colours and backgrounds.

You are able to resize the tiles on your Start screen and move them around. For example, you can make the tiles you use frequently bigger for easy access and the tiles that you use less often smaller. You can also group tiles together to help you keep track of your apps and use them more efficiently. However you choose to organise the tiles, customising your Start screen makes it easier to get to the apps, folders, sites and people that you interact with the most.

In this tutorial we will show you how to customise your Start screen to make it work more efficiently for you.

"You are able to resize the tiles on your Start screen and move them around"

01: Moving tiles

On the Start screen, click and hold on the tile you wish to move (or press and hold if using a touch screen), then drag the tile to where you want it. You can drag and drop as many tiles as you want into new positions. So get your most-used apps to the front.

02: Resizing tiles

Right-click on the tile you wish to resize (or press and hold if using a touch screen) and you will notice an array of options at the bottom of the screen, including 'Unpin from Start' and 'Turn live tile off'. Click on the 'Larger' or 'Smaller' options to adjust the size.

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Changing tiles

Manipulating the tiles on your Start screen

Tile options

Right-click a tile to select it and some options will appear at the bottom of the screen. These include one to unpin the tile from your Start screen and options to increase or decrease the size of the tile

Your apps

The 'All apps' option shows all the apps installed on your PC. This is useful since you can right-click to select an app from there and choose the 'Pin to Start' option to create a tile for it on your Start screen

Your tiles

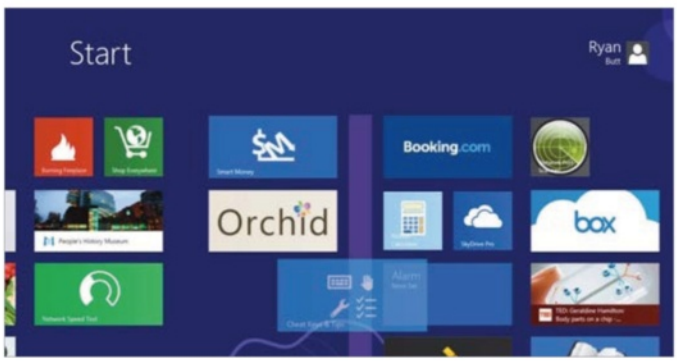
All of your tiles will be plastered across your Start screen, allowing you to access them quickly and easily whenever you need them. To access a tile, all you have to do is click on it and the respective app or service will launch immediately

Moving tiles

To move a tile to a new position on your Start screen, simply click and hold on it and then drag it to a new location. Your tiles work on a snap-to grid, so if you move a tile to where one currently resides then that tile will move out of the way

Unpinning apps from your Start screen

If you don't want a tile to appear on your Start screen any more, you can unpin it: right-click on the tile, then click on the 'Unpin from Start' option at the bottom of the screen. You can also pin new apps by right-clicking on the background, choosing 'All apps' and right-clicking on the app to add. Then simply choose the 'Pin to Start' option at the bottom of the screen.



03: Create a group of tiles

Right-click on the tiles you wish to group (or press and hold if using a touch screen), then drag them all to an open space and when a grey bar appears behind them, release the tiles. This will create a new group that you can rename by clicking on 'Name group'.

04: Moving grouped tiles

Any tile groups you have created can be moved to a new location with ease. On the Start screen, click on the '–' icon in the lower-right corner to zoom out and then drag and drop the group of tiles you want to move to a new position on the screen.

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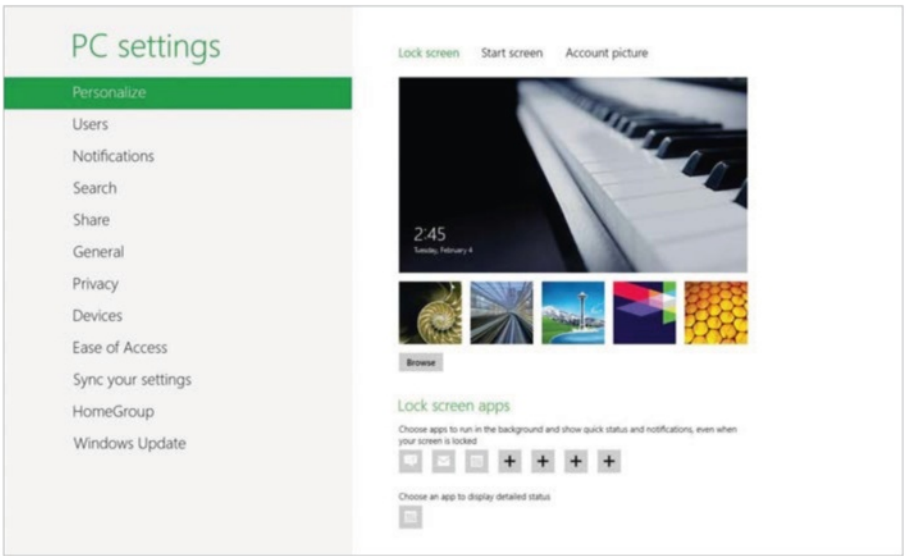
Change your PC's wallpaper

How to personalise your PC by applying a different desktop pattern to your Start screen, and a new image to your Lock screen

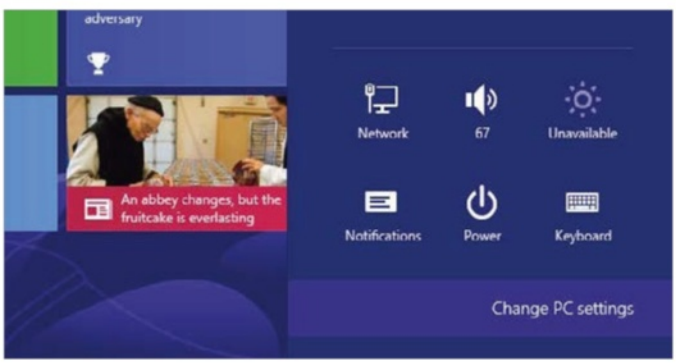
The most obvious way of stamping your own mark on your PC is to change the wallpaper, and with Windows 8 there is more than one wallpaper to change and different ways of doing it. For example, you can choose the image that adorns your lock screen or sits behind the tiles on your Start screen by going to your PC Settings screen and then clicking on the Personalise section. In the instance of the lock screen, you can then browse through pre-installed patterns or choose an image of your own by clicking on the Browse button. Likewise with the Start screen, although you don't get the option to choose your own image here (but you do have full control over the colour scheme).

If you wish to change the pattern of your desktop (which you can access by clicking on the Desktop tile on the Start screen), you need to go to the Control Panel and then click on the 'Appearance and Personalisation' category. You will then be able to change the desktop wallpaper and choose from pre-installed images or one of your own.

In this tutorial we will guide you through the process of making your PC your own.

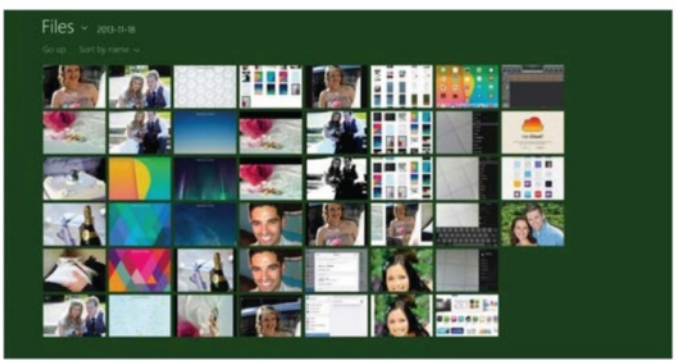


"You can choose the image that adorns your lock screen or sits behind the tiles on your Start screen"



01: Go to PC Settings

Bring up your Charms bar and click on Settings. From the side menu that appears, click on the Change PC Settings link at the bottom. When the Settings app loads, you will see a list of sections listed in a column to the left of the screen – click on the Personalise section.



02: Choose a screen

At the top are three screens that you can change – lock screen, Start screen and account picture. Starting with lock screen, click on one of the featured images to select it as a wallpaper, or click on Browse to look for one in your Camera Roll or Screenshots folders.

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Make it your own

Learn how to personalise your PC

Images to change

Dotted across the top are options that relate to the lock screen, Start screen and account picture. Click on the one for the image you wish to change and you can replace it

Change your Start screen

The only image you can't replace with one of your own is the Start screen. However, a wide range of preset images are available. Click on one to see how it'll look full-screen

Your PC Settings

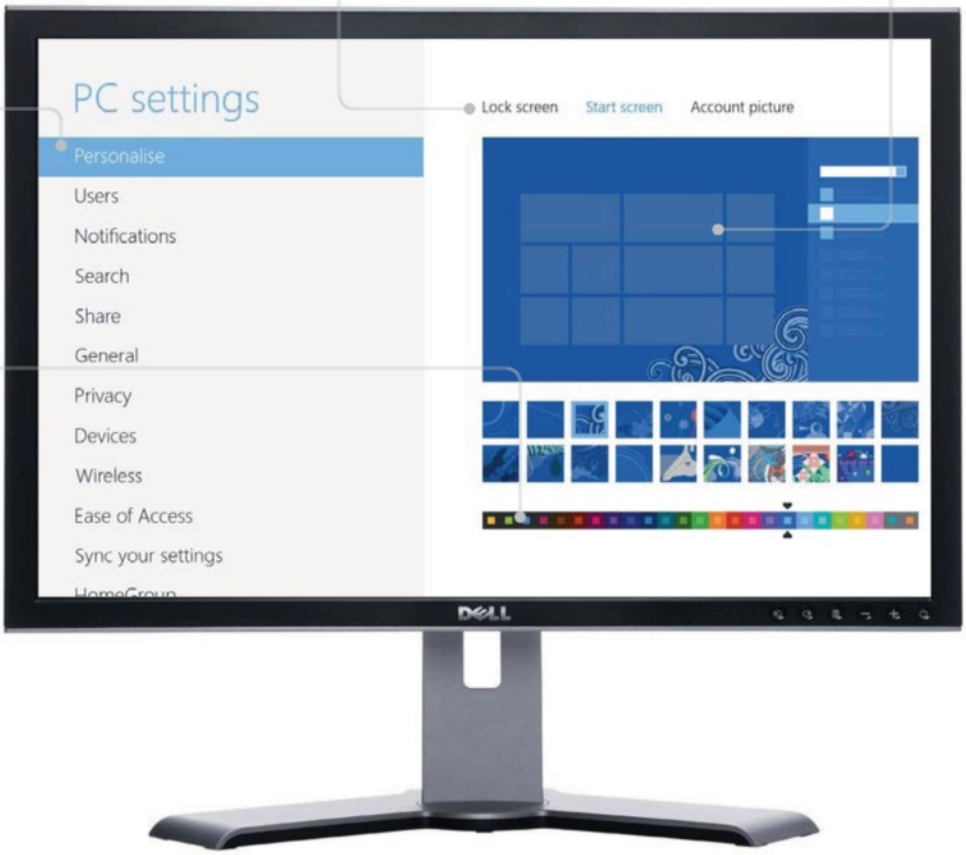
The PC Settings screen is accessible from the Start screen. Just access your Charms bar, then click on the Settings charm. You can then click on the 'Change PC settings' option and bring up a range of cosmetic options by clicking on the Personalise category

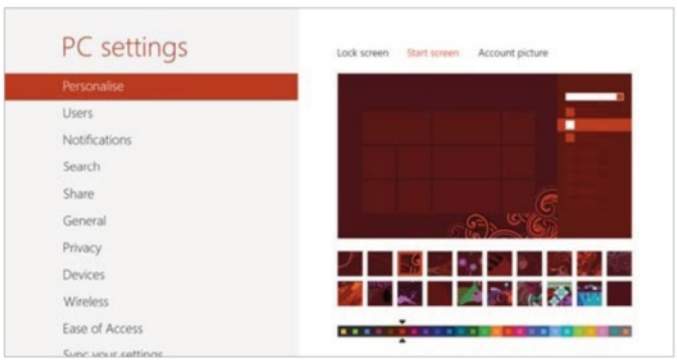
Change the colour

You can change the colour scheme of the preset Start screen images. So while the image that you select to adorn your Start screen will stay the same, you have the freedom to change the colour scheme from the wide array of shades available. Click on one to see the effect

Change your account picture

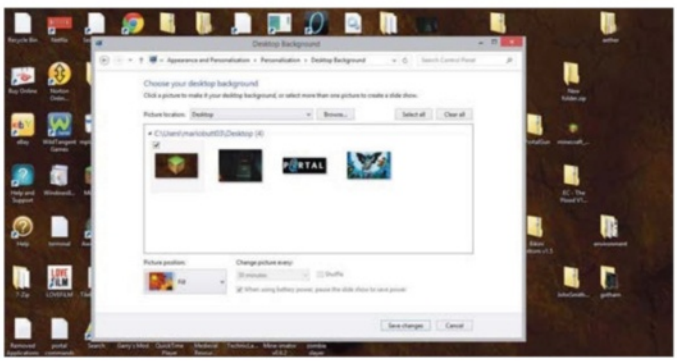
To change the account picture associated with your Windows account, go to your PC Settings screen and click on the Personalise section. At the top of the page, click on the 'Account picture' option and you will see the default picture – not very exciting is it? Now click on the Browse button and you will be able to look for a suitable picture on your computer. Alternatively, click Camera to create an account picture.





03: Customise your Start screen

When customising the Start screen, you can only to choose from preset images, but you have full control over the colour scheme. First, choose the pattern you want to use, then click on the colour roll at the bottom of the page to pick a striking scheme to use.



04: Change desktop appearance

To change the wallpaper on your desktop, click on your Desktop tile, then your File Manager. Click Desktop followed by Control Panel and then click on the 'Appearance and Personalisation' section. See pages 50-51 for more on the Desktop view.

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Introducing the Charms bar

Get to know your Windows 8 Charms bar and discover what its handy little shortcuts can do for you

The Windows 8 interface is designed with ultra user-friendliness in mind and with the Charms bar you will be able to perform basic actions no matter where you are on your PC. Charms enable you to search the web and the PC, share content like photos or websites, print and use other devices, change your settings and return to the Start screen at any time. The Charms bar is always available to the right of the screen, no matter where you are in Windows – all you have to do is swipe from the right edge or your screen if you have a touch-screen device or move your mouse cursor down to the lower-right corner to bring up the floating Charms bar (you can also press the ⊞ key with the C key to open it up).

Using the five charms on the bar will undoubtedly speed up your productivity since they act as handy little stepping stones to get you where you need to be and to carry out certain tasks with the minimum amount of fuss and effort.

In this tutorial we will introduce you to these useful shortcuts and demonstrate how they can make your life much easier.

> "Perform basic actions with charms, no matter where you are on your PC"

Charms bar shortcuts

Discover how your Charms bar can make life easier

Searching made easy
Clicking the Search charm lets you enter keywords in the search box, then click on an app or service listed to get results specific to that item. It makes searching a breeze

Computer settings
The Settings charm provides instant access to frequently used settings, as well as the main computer settings page. You can also access app settings from here when in an app

Simple sharing
The Share charm is a quick and easy way to share whatever's on your screen. For example, in Internet Explorer you can select it to share the page currently on the screen

Instant heads-up
Whenever you access your Charms bar, a floating box displaying the current date and time (and your network status) will be displayed on the screen for easy reference

Previous search results
If you open a search result and find it's not what you're after, there's no need to do a fresh search. Just swipe in from the left edge of the screen or point your mouse in the top-left corner and click and you'll return to the previous search results page.

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01: Accessing charms

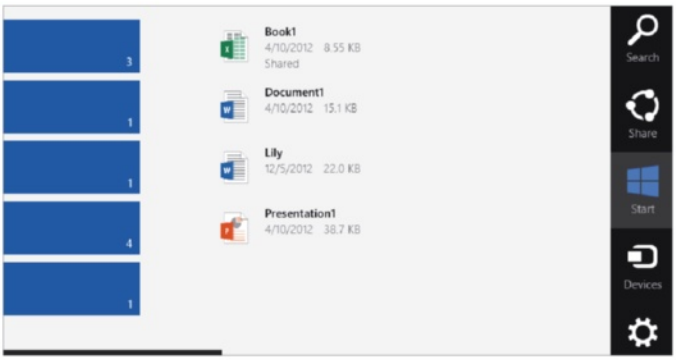
Swipe from the right of the screen, move your mouse to the lower-right corner or press ⊞+C to display your Charms bar.

02: Search charm

The Search charm uses Bing Smart Search so you can search your PC, the web, the Windows Store and more by entering keywords.

03: Share charm

This is a quick way to share files, photos and info with people you know or save things for later without leaving the app you are in.



04: Start charm

This takes you back to the Start screen no matter where you are in Windows. You can also hover over it to show the time and date.

05: Devices charm

The Devices charm is a quick way to send files and info to other devices that connect to your PC, such as a printer, Xbox or phone.

06: Settings charm

This is the place to make quick adjustments to common PC settings (such as brightness and volume) and access your main settings page.

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Discover your PC settings in the tiles view

Learn what the various sections in the main PC Settings screen can do for you

We have already introduced you to the main 'Change your PC settings' screen elsewhere and have covered a few of the topics contained within it. But now we are going to take a more in-depth look at the various other functions that can be manipulated through this app. To access your PC's main settings page, simply go to your Charms bar and click on the Settings charm there. This will bring up a column of quick options as well as the option to 'Change PC settings' – click on this and a wide array of categories will then be listed down the left side of the screen. Click on a category to access it and all of the respective options will be laid out in the main window for you to scrutinise and adjust to suit your needs. For example, you may wish to add a device to your computer, determine which apps are included in the Search charm, or set up a HomeGroup local network to share files among your family. You can do all of this and much more right here.

"A wide array of categories will be listed down the left side of the screen"

Settings options

Get to know your Settings charm

Network settings
Clicking the Settings charm brings up an array of quick-fix settings. The first is your network setting; click here to check your online status and connect to a Wi-Fi network

Volume and brightness
Since volume and brightness are much used settings, they are placed here for easy access. Click on one, then use the slider to adjust the setting to suit your needs

Quick notifications settings
If you are in a meeting or just generally don't want the distraction of notifications for a while then you can click on this option and opt to hide your notifications for one, three or eight hours. It sure beats going through your main Settings app

Change PC settings
If you wish to change aspects of your PC that aren't listed in your Settings charm column, click this option to view the entire range in more detail and tweak them to suit your needs at any given time

Windows update
The last category in the main PC settings screen relates to your Windows software. If automatic software updates are disabled, use this option to manually check for updates and download and install them. Click 'Check for updates now'.

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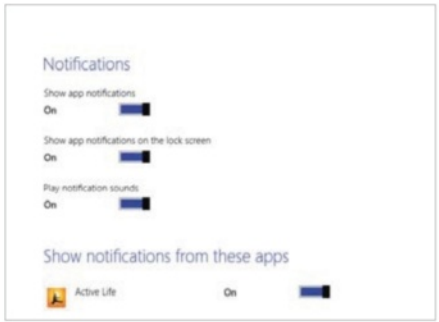
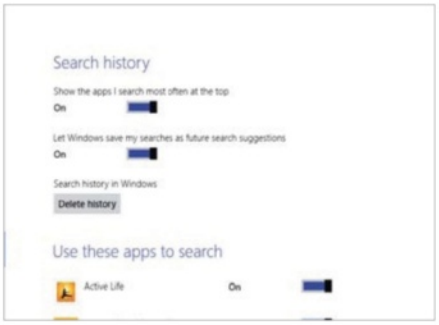


01: Notifications

You can set general notifications options, such as turn on sounds, and also turn notifications for specific apps on or off.

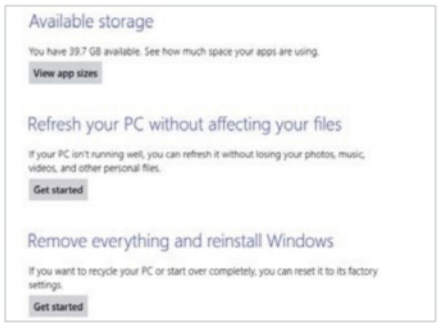


02: Search settings

You can prioritise the order of apps that are included in your Search charm, as well as determine which apps are included.

03: Share settings

This relates to the Share charm and you can set it so that the sharing apps you use most often appear at the top of the list and more.



04: General settings

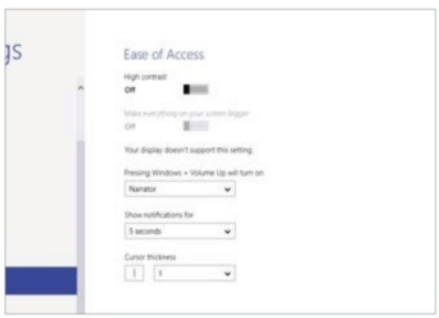
Here you can set your current time zone, set up your touch keyboard and app switching, and perform restart and reset actions.

05: Privacy settings

This is where you can determine whether apps can use your location and whether information is sent to the Windows Store.

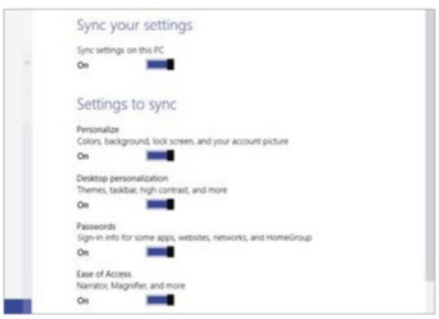
06: Device settings

This setting will list all of the devices currently associated with your PC and enable you to add new devices to the list.



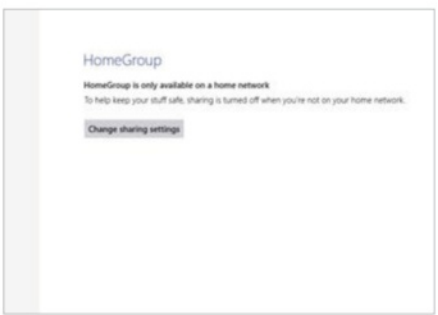
07: Ease of Access

If you have a visual or hearing impairment then the simple set of options here allow you to make your PC easier to use.



08: Sync your settings

If you use multiple Windows 8 devices, this option lets you sync the settings between them so they all work and feel the same.



09: HomeGroup settings

This allows you to set up a HomeGroup, whereby you can share content around home PCs connected to the same network.

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Run two apps at the same time

Make use of the innovative Windows 8 Snap feature to run two apps at the same time on your computer

One of the lesser-known features of Windows 8 is Snap, which enables you to run two Windows 8 apps side-by-side. Not only does this system make it easy to keep your most-used apps open and switch between them at will, it also means you can place one open app at the side of the screen to view information (such as appointments, weather, etc) while you are working on the other app in the lion's share of the window. This ingenious feature really can improve your workflow and productivity.

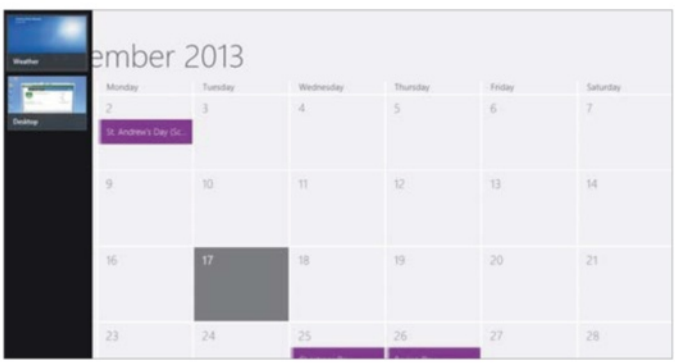
When you drag an open app into position at the side of the screen, the format of the app may be modified to maximise its usefulness within the tighter space confines. This means that you can enjoy the benefits of heads-up information from one app while you are working with another.

This isn't one of the most talked-about features of Windows 8, but it can be very useful indeed. Here we will explain and demonstrate how to use Snap in this tutorial so that within next to no time you'll be juggling your apps and increasing your productivity on your Windows 8 computer. What are you waiting for? Snap to it!

"Enjoy the benefits of heads-up information from one app while you are working with another"

01: Using Snap

To use the Snap feature, open an app and when it has launched, press ⊞ to go back to your Start screen. If you move your mouse to the top-left corner of the screen, swipe from the left or press ⊞+Tab, you will see the app running in the background.



02: Activate the switcher

Next, launch the app you want to use primarily, then move your mouse to the top-left corner and along the side of the screen, swipe in from the left or press ⊞+Tab. This brings up the app switcher, which enables you to switch between the open apps.

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Multiple apps

Using Snap to run two apps at the same time

Split-screen

By clicking and holding on an app in the app switcher, then dragging it down to the left of the screen, that app's interface will be modified to sit in the space and remain open

Arranging apps

If you click and hold on the partition here, you can move it left or right to increase the amount of desktop space allocated to the app and give one app space priority over another open app

Open apps

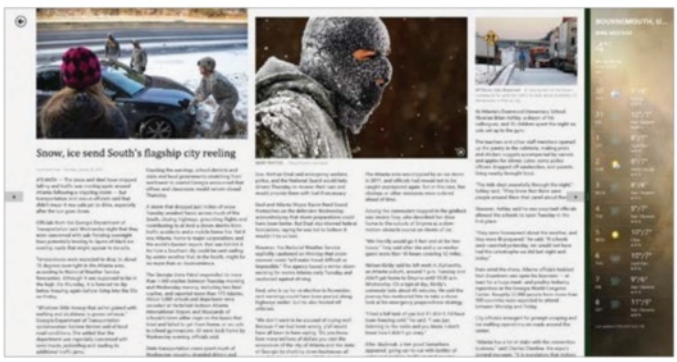
When you have multiple apps open, move your mouse cursor to the top-left corner of the screen and you will see thumbnail images of the apps that are currently running. Click on a thumbnail to quickly switch between open apps

App switcher

If you click and hold on an open app thumbnail in the top-left corner, you can drag it downwards to place it in an app switcher window that makes it even easier to see which apps are open and switch between them

Cycling snapped apps

Note that you can never split apps 50/50 on your desktop in split-screen mode, since one app always has to take priority over another and appropriate the majority of the screen. You can press ⊞+. (the full-stop key) or ⊞+Shift+. (the full-stop key) to cycle between the snapped and full-screen modes. The more you play around with this system, the easier you will find it to use and navigate the apps running on your Windows 8 computer.



03: Go to split-screen

Now drag and drop or touch and drag the app you want to use in split-screen mode and drop it at the left or right side of your screen. The app may show a slightly different interface than normal; depending on the app, you may see updated info or suchlike.

04: Arranging apps

To control which app takes up most of the screen, click and drag the handle between the two apps. To move an app to the other side, use your mouse to grab the app and drag and drop it there. It takes a bit of getting used to, but the system will ultimately prove very useful.

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Everything you need to get up and running with Windows 8

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Browse the internet via the Desktop

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Manage your favourite sites

76 Pin a website to the Start menu
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77 Surf in secrecy with InPrivate Browsing
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Remove any traces of your web activity

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82 Navigate the Windows Store
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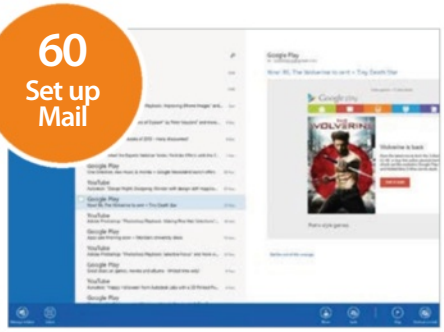
94 Add contacts in the People app
Store names, addresses and email

96 Sync your contacts
Pull in information from social sites

98 Chat to your contacts
Send text & video messages to friends

"The Start screen is great, but the Desktop mode is still alive"



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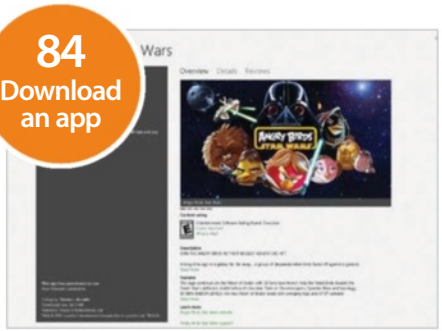

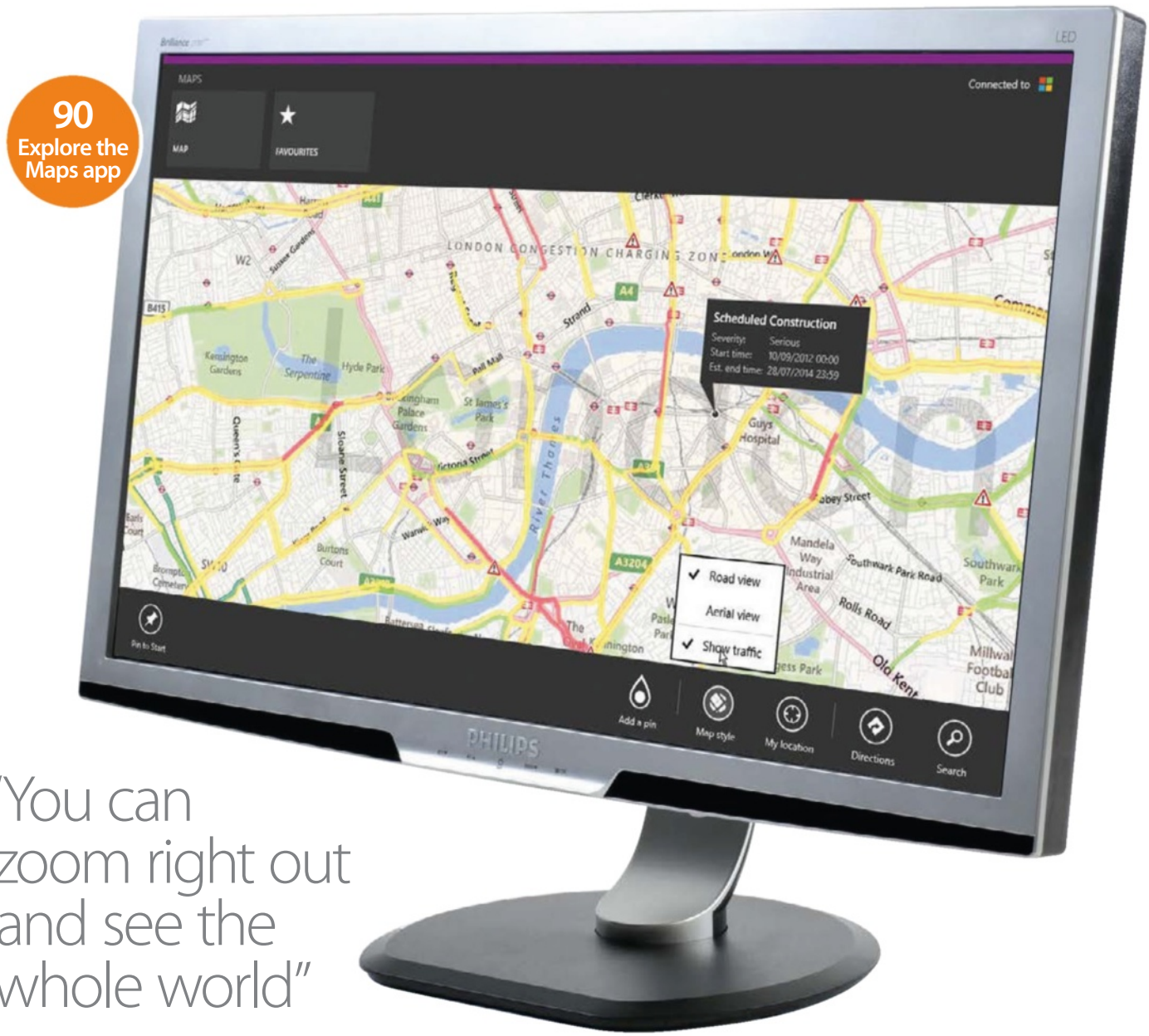

"You can zoom right out and see the whole world"

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Introducing the Desktop mode

Behind the glamour of the Start screen resides the familiar Desktop mode with windows and icons

While the Start screen is great for content consumption and quickly accessing Windows 8 apps, the Desktop mode is still alive and kicking for your traditional or serious computing needs. To get to it, simply click on the first large tile on the Start screen. Helpfully, it's the one marked Desktop. To make the Desktop view your default, skipping the Start screen entirely, go there now. Right-click on the bar at the bottom (the taskbar) and click on the Navigation tab. Under 'Start screen', put a tick in the first option. When you sign in to the computer, you'll be taken to Desktop mode.

Now, just because you're in the Desktop mode, it doesn't mean you can't access either the Start screen or the apps that were running on it. Click in the bottom-left corner to switch straight back to the Start screen. Move your cursor to the top left to see the last running app from the Start screen and move the cursor to the top of the screen to activate Snap mode.

"Desktop mode is still alive for your traditional or serious computing needs"

On the Desktop

Discover the hidden features of the Desktop mode

Access Windows 8 apps

There's a switching system to go between Desktop apps and Start screen ones that are running. Desktop apps which are minimised show on the taskbar. To access the Start screen apps, move the cursor to the top-left corner

Taskbar apps

Any Desktop program can be pinned to the taskbar for a one-click method of launching. If you can't find the icon to pin, go to the Start screen, move down and click on All Apps. Right-click on the tile for the program and select 'Pin to Taskbar'

Taskbar shortcuts

Right-click on the taskbar and click Properties. Click on the Toolbars tab. There is a list of items that can then be accessed as shortcuts on the right side of the taskbar. These include addresses, links, keyboard options, and apps which have syncing options, or the desktop shortcuts. Check any that you want to use. The name will appear with a shortcut double-arrow. Click on this to see the list of what is there.

Charm options

Move the cursor to the top- or bottom-right corners, then move upwards to bring up the charms. These allow access to features which provide a consistent interface across the system, such as when printing or accessing system functions

Uninstalling apps

To quickly uninstall programs, right-click on the Start button and select 'Programs and Features'. This brings up the Uninstall menu. Select the program to remove, then click Uninstall. Some programs can also be repaired here

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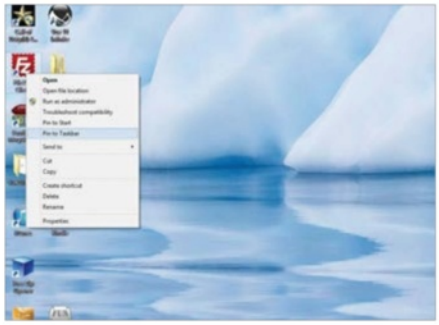
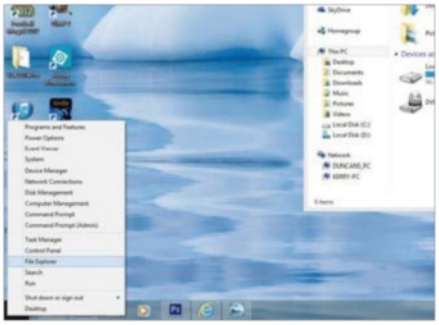


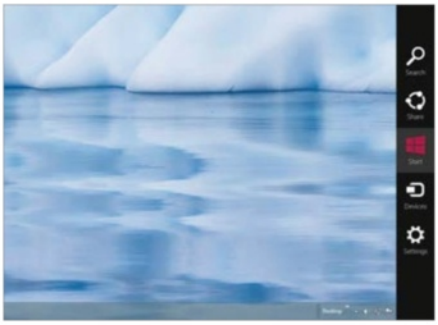
01: Pinning icons

Your most-used programs can be pinned to the taskbar for quick access. Right-click the desktop icon and left-click 'Pin to Taskbar'.



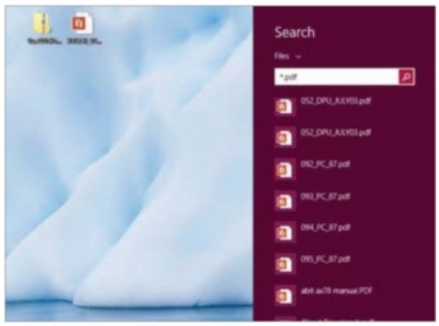
02: Access system functions

With Windows 8.1, lots of system functions can be accessed via the Start button. Right-click to see all the functions available.



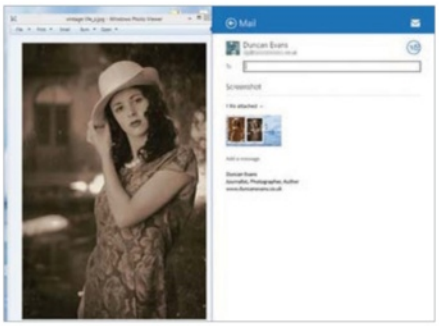
03: Find the charms

Move the cursor to the top- or bottom-right corner to show the Charms bar on the right. It contains five icons for handy shortcuts.



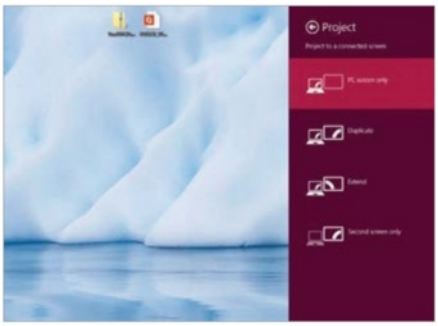
04: Search for files

Click the Search option and opt to search in files, settings or everywhere. Enter the query to see a quick list. Press Return for a full list.



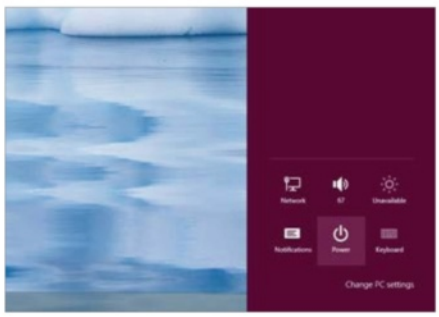
05: Share things

Click on Share to take a screenshot of the desktop and email it via the Mail app. Other apps also use Share to send information.



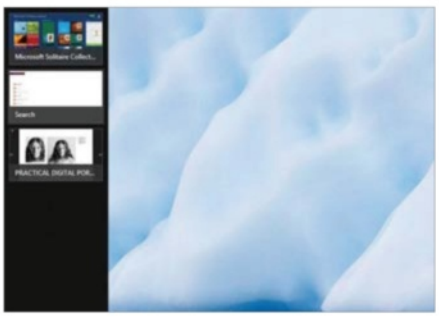
06: Use Devices

Click Devices to play media, print files or project the display: mirror it, span it across two monitors, or just show it on the second.



07: Access Settings

Settings are also available from the Settings charm. This accesses power off, personalisation and PC info.



08: Multitasking apps

To use any running apps, move to the top left, then down to show them. Left-click to select; right-click and Close to remove.

09: Snap view

Move to the top of the screen. Click, hold and drag down, then right to create a split-screen. Click an app to fill the left side.

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Change how Windows works in the Desktop Control Panel

If there's one place you need to go to customise how your Windows system looks and works, it's the Desktop's Control Panel

There are two ways of launching the Control Panel. Either right-click on the Start button and then left-click on the entry for it on the menu, or move the mouse cursor to the top- or bottom-right corner to show the Charms bar and then select Settings. One of the options here is Control Panel. By clicking on it you gain access to the Control Panel screen, which has sections for system and security, the network and internet access, hardware devices, uninstalling programs, user accounts and family settings, appearance and personalisation, the clock and regional preferences, and ease of access for those with impairments. That's a lot of functions in one place. Once your computer is up and running, the most often used section is for Programs, where you can uninstall software that isn't used any more. However, it's always worth checking your system security and if you want to use one of the new Windows 8 desktop themes, rather than just one background, here's where you can do it.

"The Control Panel offers a lot of functions in one place"

Create a theme

Change the background and slide show

Make it stand out
If you have a visual impairment, you can use a theme that makes it easier to see text from backgrounds. These are the High Contrast themes, which feature either black or white backgrounds with dramatically contrasting text and menu headers

Change the sounds
Clicking on Sound brings up the Sound dialog, which houses the sound themes. Initially the choice is between the Windows sound theme and silence, but third-party themes can come with sound effects. You can also edit which sounds are used

Your themes
These are the themes currently installed, including any that you've created yourself. To use one, simply click on it. The Everyday Art folder uses an RSS feed, so needs an internet connection to supply the images for the backgrounds

Create your own
This brings up the background browser where you can select different images from your hard drive to use in a slide show. You can also change the time period for when the background picture gets changed for the next one. Save any new theme

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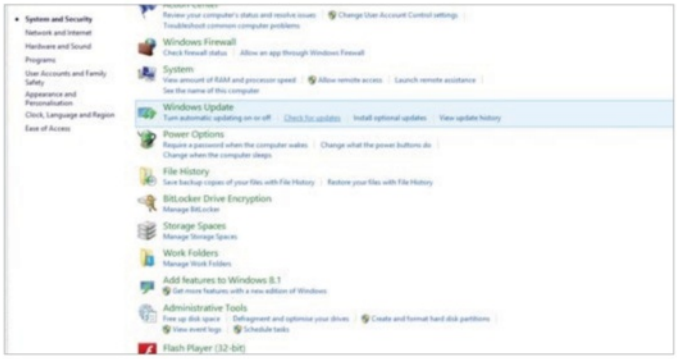
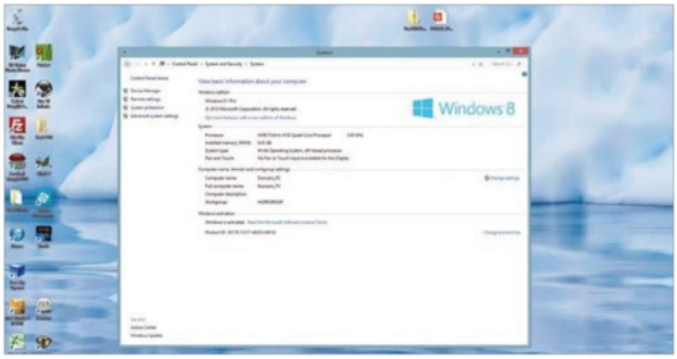


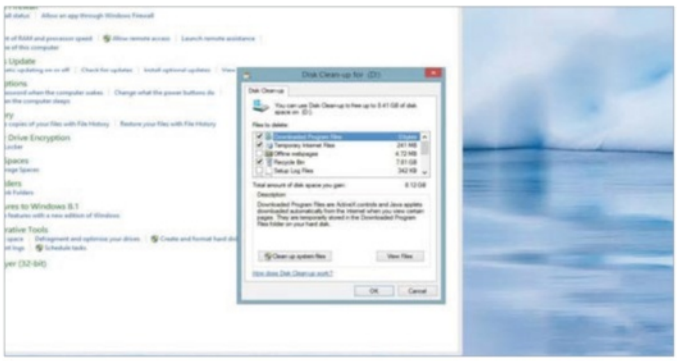
01: System security

Click on System Security to open the options. To ensure you have the latest updates, click on 'Check for Updates' under Windows Update.



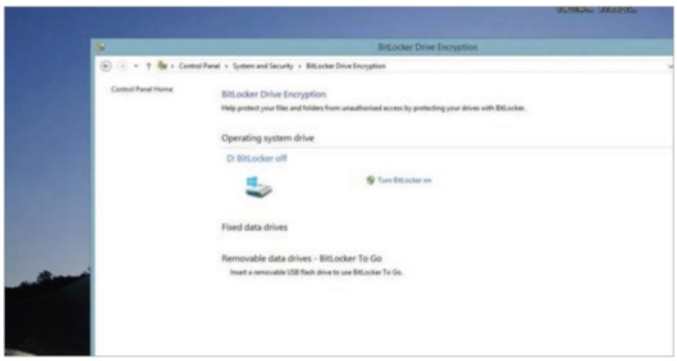
02: Check your system

To ensure you are using a genuine copy of Windows 8 that's activated, click System. This also shows your system details.



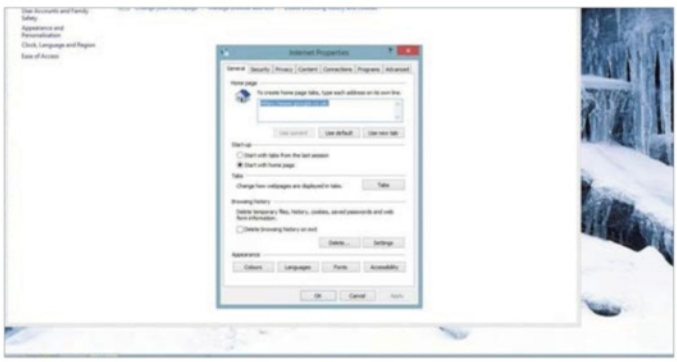
03: Free up space

Under Administrative Tools, click 'Free up disk space'. After checking your drives, it says where it can save space by deleting unused files.



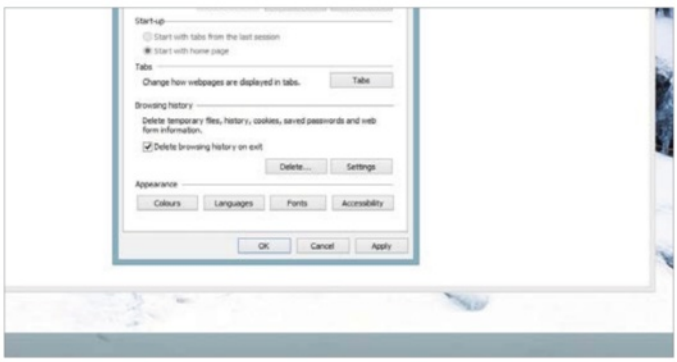
04: Protect your data

To protect sensitive info, you can encrypt your hard drive with BitLocker. Click on this in 'System and Security', then 'BitLocker on'.



05: Internet options

Back on the main menu, click 'Network and Internet'. Click 'Delete browsing history and cookies' to see the Internet Properties dialog.



06: Delete history

Here you can tick the box to 'Delete browsing history on exit'. Also, you can add extra homepages or change the one that's listed.

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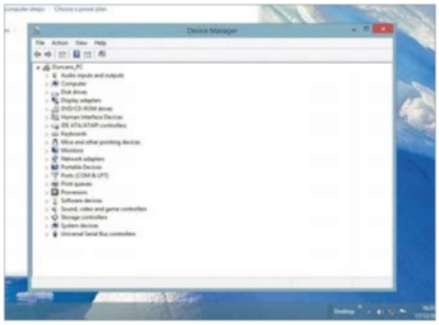
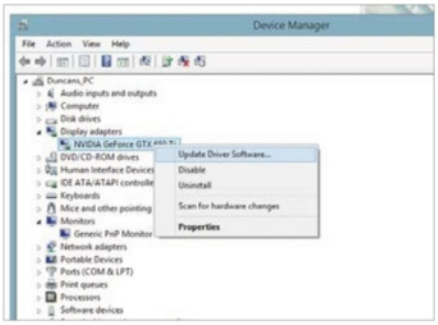


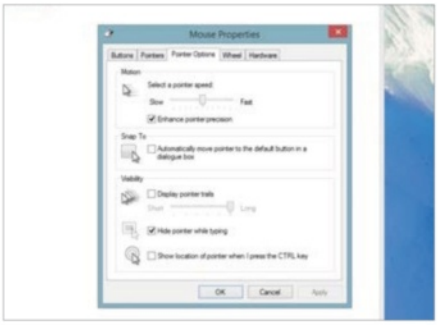
07: Hardware devices

If a new piece of hardware isn't recognised, here's where to find it. Click on 'Hardware and Sound', then on Device Manager.



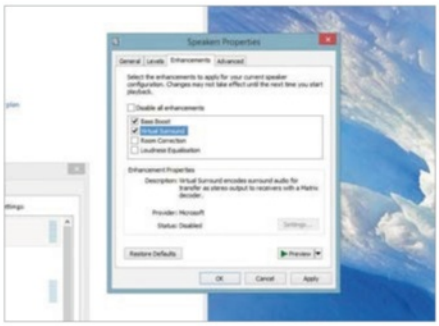
08: Update driver

Right-click on the hardware item and select Update Driver. Point to the new driver's location and the system will then install it.



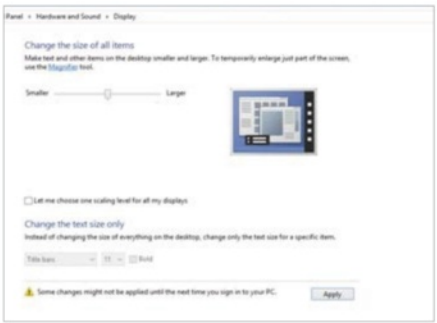
09: Customise your mouse

For mouse options, click Mouse. You can adjust the double-click speed, use custom pointers and change the speed of operation.



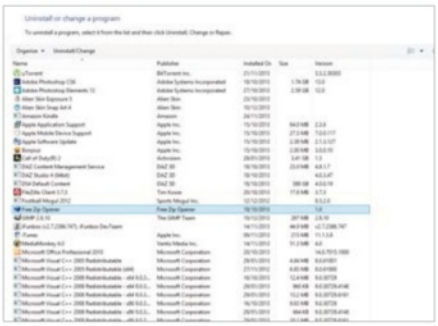
10: Sound options

Click on Sound, select Speakers, then Properties. Click on the Enhancements tab to improve sound quality.



11: Bigger text

Having trouble reading text? Click Display, then use the slider to increase the size of the text used, or just adjust menu text.

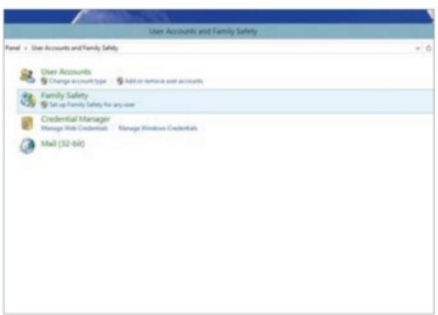


12: Uninstalling programs

To remove programs/apps, click Programs, then 'Uninstall a program'. Select one, then click on Uninstall/Change to remove it.

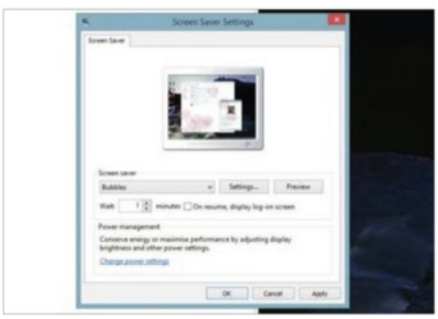
13: Default file opening

To open a specific app when you double-click a file type, click 'Make a file type open'. Select file extension then Change Program.



14: Add users

To let other people use your PC, click 'User Accounts and Family Safety'. Add extra accounts and set up Family Safety options.



15: Pick a screen saver

Click on Appearance and Personalisation and then on 'Change screen saver'. Select one to use from the drop-down box.

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Ease of use

Make it easier to read and use Windows 8

Access options

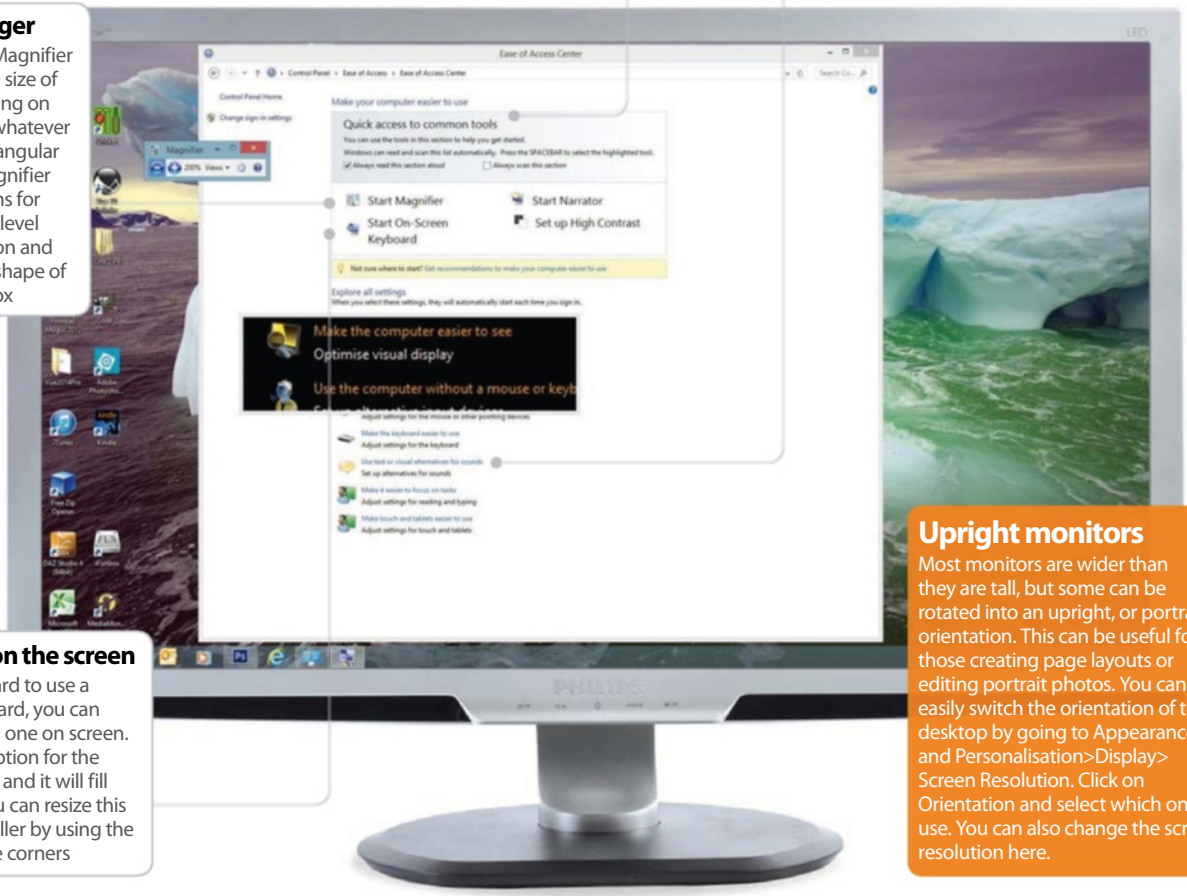
In the Ease of Access Center, there are a number of features to make it easier for visually or physical impaired people to access the computer. Any of the options selected will run by default the next time the computer turns on

Hard of hearing

If you have difficulties with hearing, rather than turning up the volume and annoying anyone else in the house, use the option to have text or visual alternatives for sounds. These include flashing the active window, desktop or caption bar

Make it bigger

Click on Start Magnifier to increase the size of either everything on the screen or whatever is inside a rectangular panel. The Magnifier tool has options for increasing the level of magnification and changing the shape of the viewing box

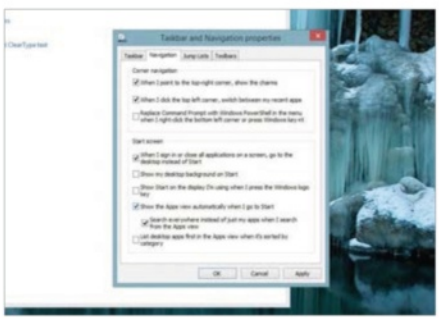


Keyboard on the screen

If you find it hard to use a manual keyboard, you can create a virtual one on screen. Activate the option for the on-screen one and it will fill the screen. You can resize this to make it smaller by using the handles on the corners

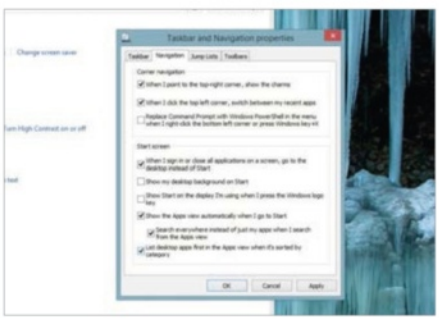
Upright monitors

Most monitors are wider than they are tall, but some can be rotated into an upright, or portrait, orientation. This can be useful for those creating page layouts or editing portrait photos. You can easily switch the orientation of the desktop by going to Appearance and Personalisation>Display> Screen Resolution. Click on Orientation and select which one to use. You can also change the screen resolution here.



16: Navigation properties

Click Taskbar and Navigation>Navigation Properties. To see apps on the Start screen, tick 'Show the Apps view automatically'…



17: Desktop programs first

…If you now check 'List desktop apps first', then when the Apps list appears, your Desktop programs will appear first.

18: New languages

To add new language support, click 'Clock, Language and Region'>Language, then 'Add languages'. Select them and click on Add.

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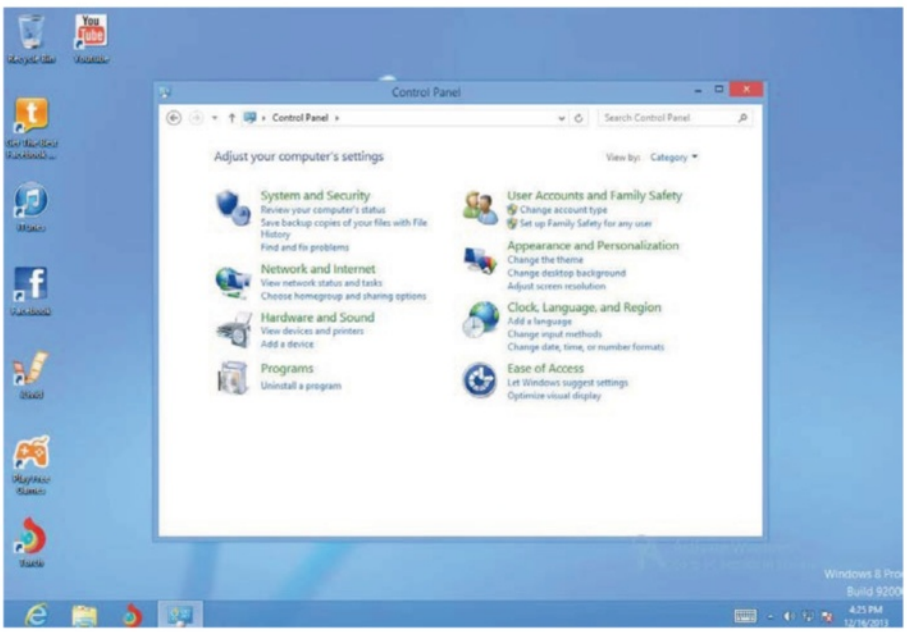
Protect and secure your PC

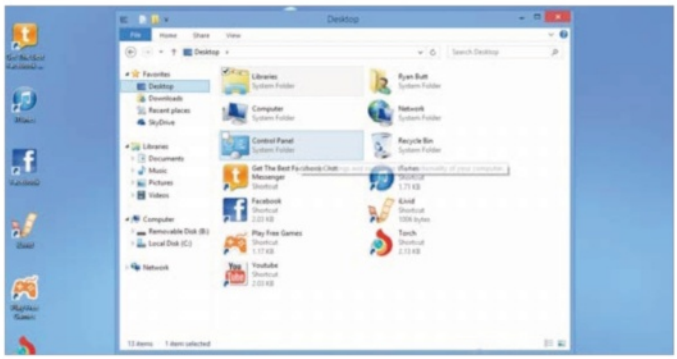
Learn about your computer's built-in Windows Firewall software and how to access and use it effectively

A firewall is software or hardware that helps prevent hackers and some types of malware from getting to your PC through a network or the internet. It does this by checking the incoming data and then either blocking it or allowing it to pass through to your PC. A firewall isn't the same as an antivirus or anti-malware application. Firewalls help protect against worms or hackers whereas antivirus applications help protect against viruses, while anti-malware apps help protect against malware. You essentially need all three to combat potential threats to the well-being of your computer. Don't get too carried away, though, because you only need one firewall app on your PC (in addition to the one that's probably built into your router). Having more than one firewall app on your PC may lead to conflicts and problems.

Your PC comes with a built-in Windows Firewall which can do a perfectly decent job of protecting your machine against outside threats. You can turn it off by going to the Control Panel on your Desktop (follow the steps ahead for details on how to get there) and once there, you have full control over what goes into your computer.

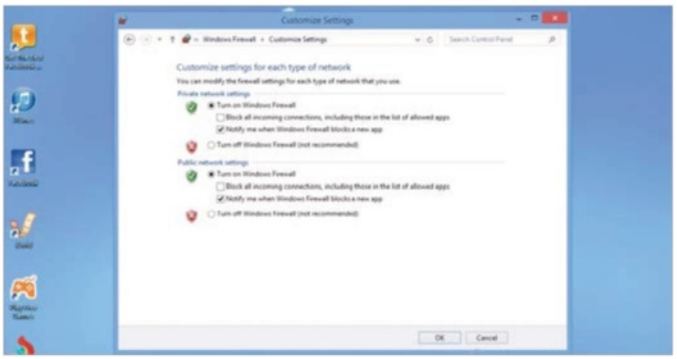


"Prevent hackers and some types of malware from getting to your PC"



01: Go to Control Panel

From the Start screen, click on the Desktop tile, then click on your File Explorer. Now, in the column on the left of the window, click on Desktop and this will display a range of locations, including Control Panel – select this, then click on the 'System and Security' section.



02: Go to Windows Firewall

Next, click on Windows Firewall and select 'Turn Windows Firewall on or off' on the left side of the window. From here you can modify the firewall settings for each type of network you use. Click the 'Turn on Windows Firewall' option at the top of each listed network.

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Firewall settings

Get to know the various features of your firewall

Allow content through

If there is content that you would like to wave through Firewall, click this option and you will be able to see what is barred and add specific apps to bypass the security

Advanced settings

The advanced settings allow you to authenticate communications between computers, view and create firewall rules and view all of the current firewall and IPsec policy

Firewall activation

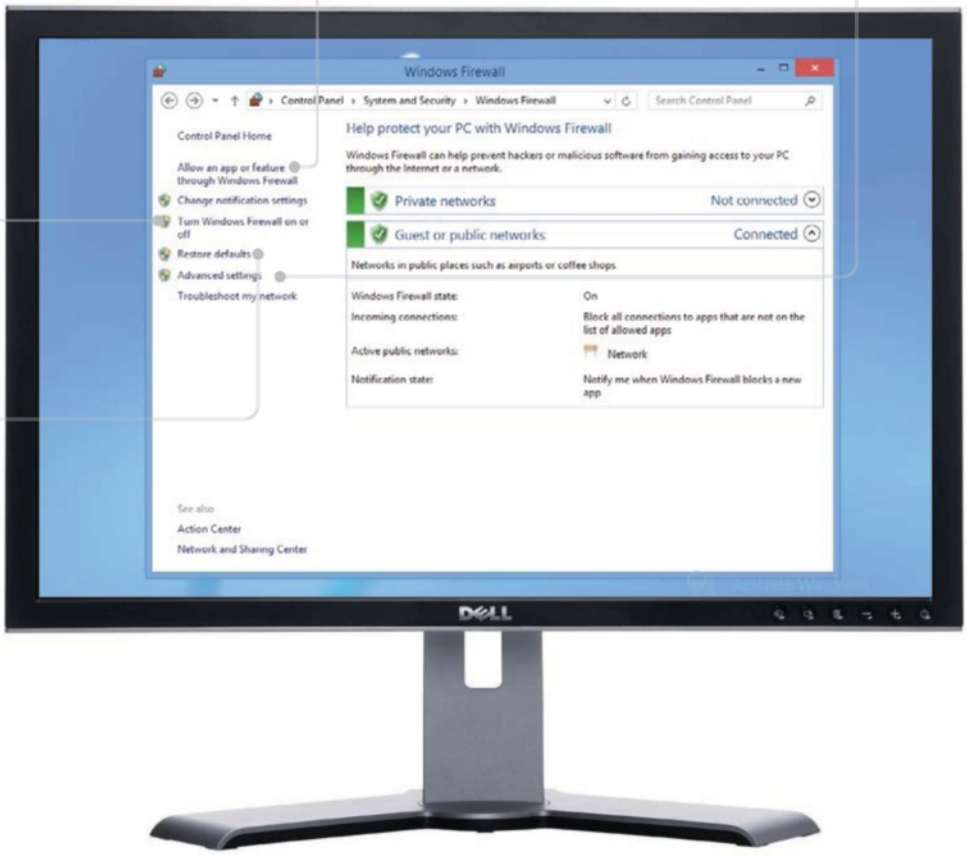
While in the Windows Firewall section of the Control Panel, click 'Turn Windows Firewall on or off' to check if your PC's built-in firewall is turned on. From here you can also opt to block incoming connections and get notified when the Windows Firewall blocks an app

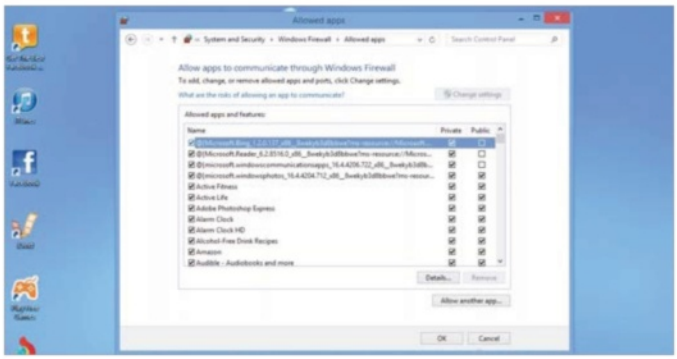
Restore defaults

If you no longer need to wave an app through Firewall or you have accidentally tweaked some settings, click 'Restore defaults' and settings will be reset to their original state

Opening ports

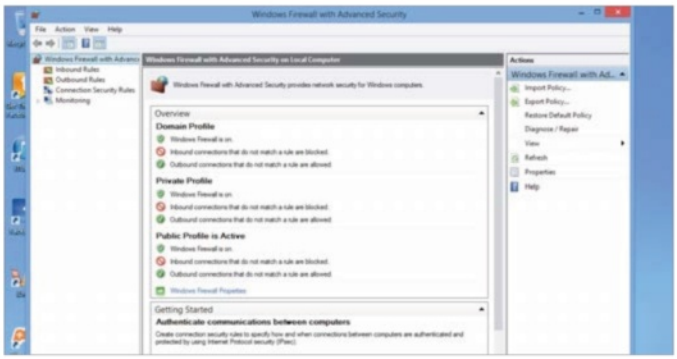
If Windows Firewall is blocking an app that you want to receive info through, you can usually sort that out via the 'Allow an app…' option. However, if the app isn't listed, you might need to open a port. To do this, click on 'Advanced settings' and then, in the 'Windows Firewall with Advanced Security' dialog, click on Inbound Rules, then click New Rule and follow the instructions.





03: Waving stuff through

If there is content that you wish to allow through Windows Firewall, click on 'Allow an app or feature through Windows Firewall' in the left column and you can then see what currently is and isn't allowed through. Click on 'Allow another app…' to add items to the list.



04: Advanced options

By clicking on 'Advanced settings' in the left part of the Firewall window, you can authenticate communications between computers, view and create firewall rules, and view all current firewall and IPsec policy and activity so you can see exactly how the firewall is working.

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Set parental controls

Learn how to protect young family members from accessing inappropriate content on your computer

If your PC is used by the entire family then you may not be aware of the safety measures that you can put in place to ensure that youngsters are safe from accessing inappropriate content. These options are tucked away in the Control Panel on the desktop of your Windows 8 computer, which you can access by clicking on the Desktop tile on the Start screen.

In the Control Panel, under the 'User Accounts and Family Safety' section you will be able choose a user that the restrictions are placed on (we have shown you how to set up separate accounts for different family members elsewhere in this book). Ensure that the main Family Safety option is turned on and then you will be able to go about adjusting a range of parameters that relate to internet use (the sites that the user can access based on content or blocking or allowing individual sites by name), time limits (the amount of hours the user can use the PC per day and setting curfews when they have to be off it) and restrictions for the Windows Store and the apps that are downloaded from it. Read on to find out more.

"With the Family Safety option turned on, you can adjust various parameters"

User Settings

Get to know the range of user settings options

Web filtering
These options let you control the websites the user can access. You can allow or block specific sites and set filtering levels, such as only allowing sites designed for children

Store and app restrictions
These options let you allow or block games and Windows Store apps by rating, or by name. You can select apt ratings from a list to ensure only appropriate content is allowed

Family Safety on
To start setting restrictions on certain users, ensure that Family Safety is turned on and the Windows settings underneath will become available so that you can start placing restrictions on web content, apps and PC usage

Time limits
Here you can set a time limit on how long the user can use the PC for, by putting a specific time frame in place. You can also set a curfew and block the times that the user isn't allowed to use the PC

Disabling restrictions
To disable restrictions, you don't have to go back and change all the settings you've altered – just go to User Settings and turn Family Safety off. The user can now continue to use the PC without any restrictions imposed on them.

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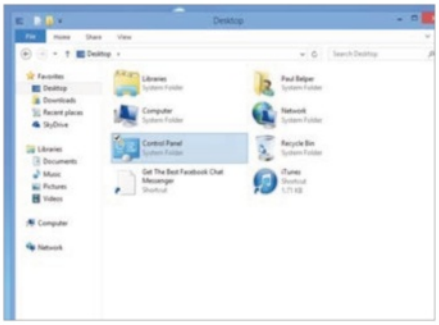
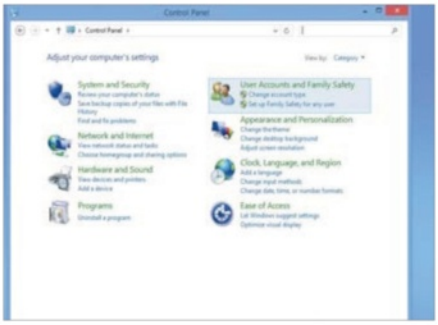
01: Go to Desktop

From the Start screen, click on the Desktop tile and then click on the File Explorer icon in the bottom-left corner of the screen.



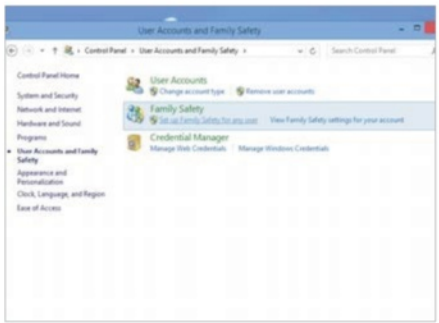
02: Go to Control Panel

In File Manager, click on the Desktop link in the left-hand column and then click on the Control Panel location in the main window.



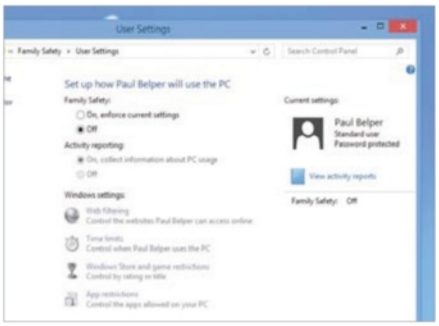
03: Family Safety

In Control Panel options you'll find 'User Accounts and Family Safety'; click on this item to start setting up family restrictions.



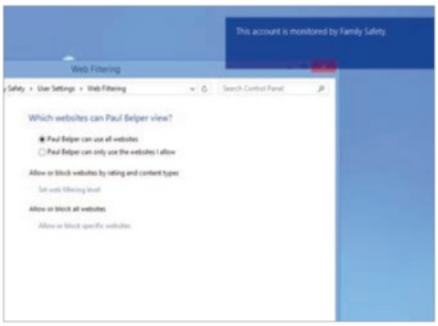
04: Choose a user

Click on 'Set up Family Safety for any user', enter your administrator password and then choose a user to set up Family Safety for.



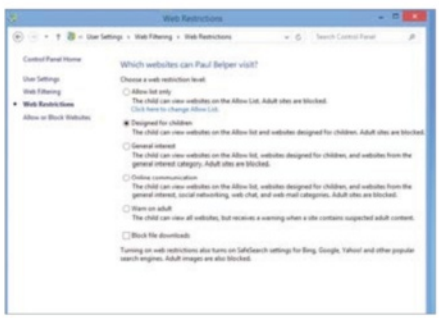
05: Turn on Family Safety

On the User Settings screen, turn on Family Safety and the Windows settings will become available. Click on 'Web filtering'.



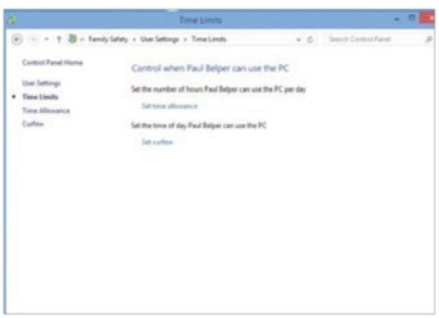
06: Restrict websites

Here you can restrict the websites that the user can access. Select 'Only use websites I allow' and click 'Set web filtering level'.



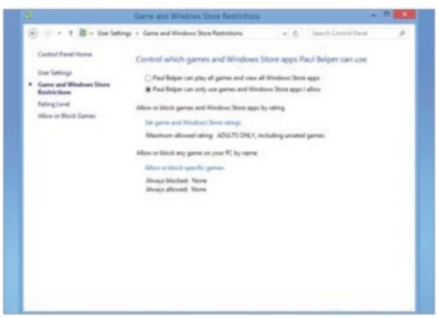
07: Restriction level

The next screen lets you set the restriction level, such as blocking downloads and only allowing sites designed for children.



08: Set time limits

Back on the User Settings screen, click 'Time limits' to enter the number of hours the user can use the PC a day and set a curfew.



09: Store/app restrictions

The last two sections in User Settings relate to the apps that the user can access from the Store. You can also block specific apps.

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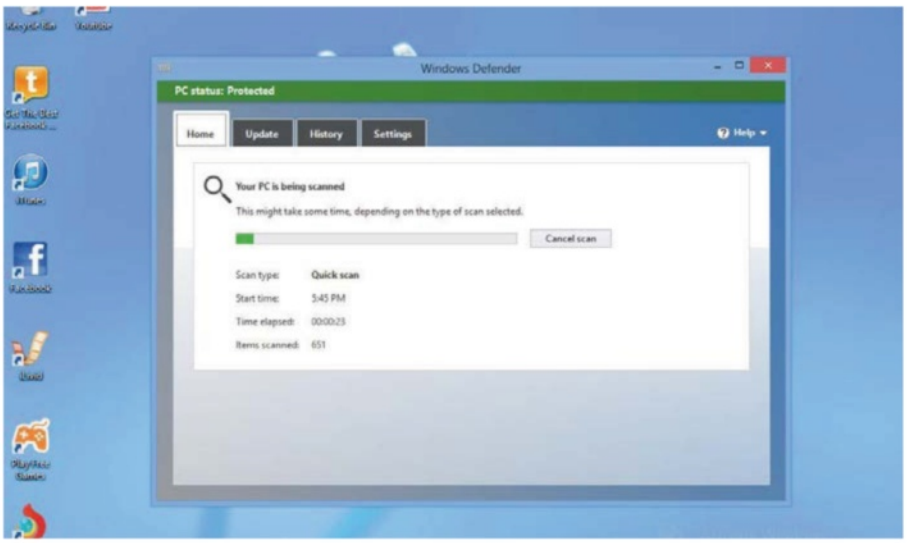
Keep your computer safe with Windows Defender

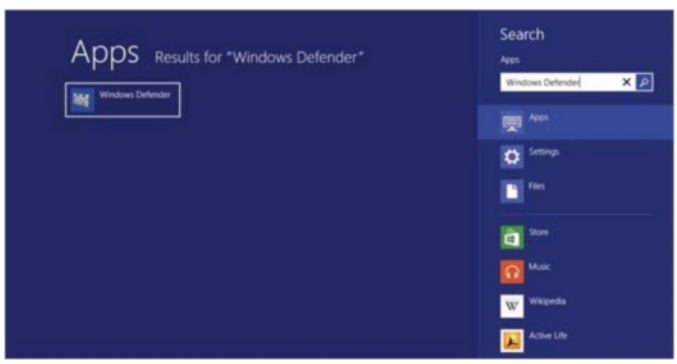
Find out how Windows Defender can bravely battle on your behalf to keep your PC free from malicious and unwanted software

Windows Defender is your first line of defence against spyware and other unwanted software. When Windows Defender is on, you will be notified when spyware or other potentially unwanted software tries to install itself or run on your PC. Spyware can be installed on your computer without your knowledge any time you connect to the internet and it can infect your machine when you install some programs using a CD, DVD or other removable media. Spyware can also be programmed to run at unexpected times, not just when it is installed.

Windows Defender offers two ways to help keep spyware from infiltrating your computer. First it alerts you when spyware attempts to install itself or run on your computer and when programs attempt to change your Windows settings. Second, Windows Defender offers scanning options that can be scheduled to scan on a regular basis and will remove anything that's detected during a scan. In this tutorial we will help you get better acquainted with this essential piece of protective software.

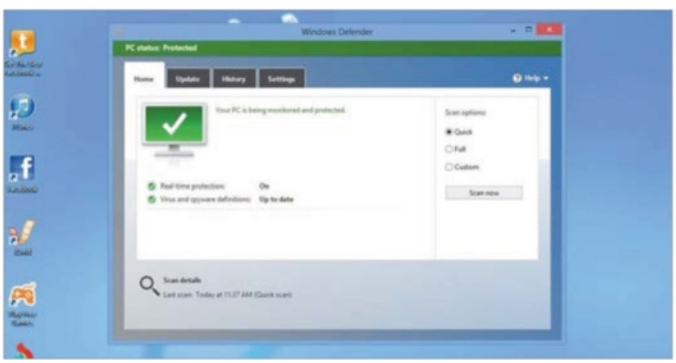


"It alerts you when spyware attempts to install itself or run on your PC"



01: Accessing Windows Defender

The quickest way to launch Windows Defender is to click the Search charm. Enter 'Windows Defender' into the search field and it will be in the list of results. Windows Defender will launch on your desktop and provide three scanning options: Quick, Full and Custom.



02: Scan types

The Quick scan only checks the areas on your PC that malicious software is most likely to infect and any apps currently running. A Full scan checks all files on your hard disk (which can take a while). A Custom scan only checks the files and locations that you choose.

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Defender options

Protect your computer with Windows Defender

Full scan

If you have time, select the Full scan option. This will meticulously check all files on your hard disk to root out any malware that may be lurking. It could take over an hour to complete

Quick scan

A Quick scan will only check the areas of your PC that malware is most likely to infect and any apps currently running. This should only take a few minutes to complete

Software update

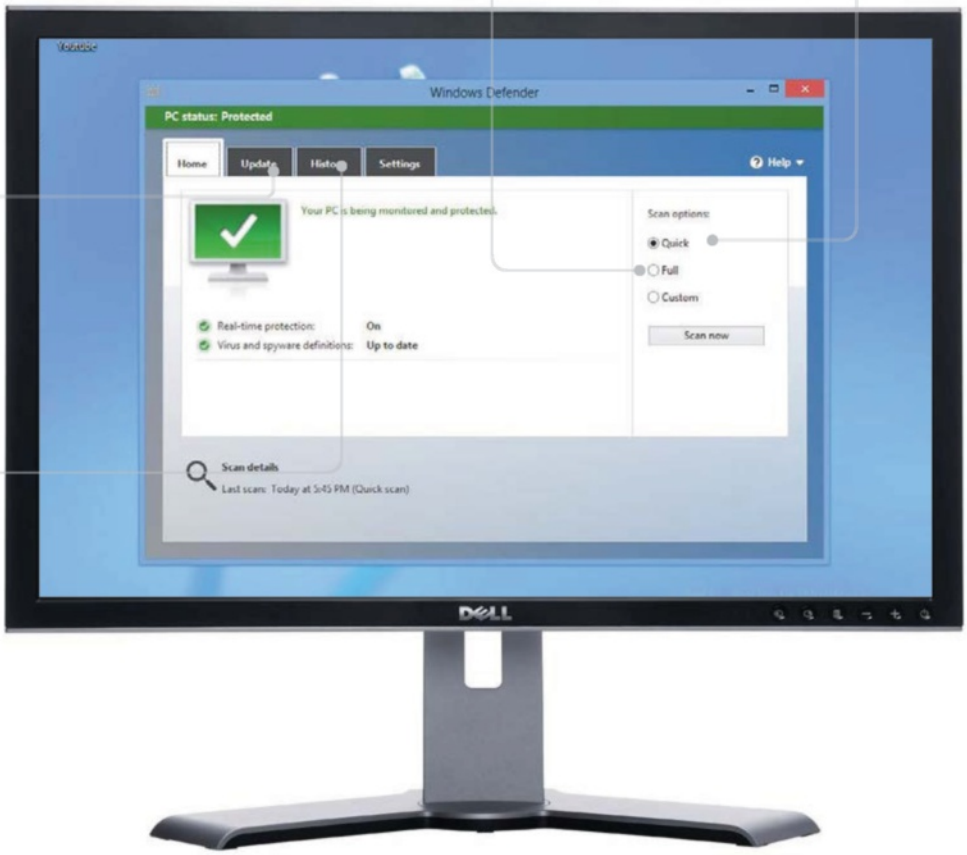
Clicking this tab allows you to make sure your PC is running the latest software to help protect against threats. All of the virus and spyware definitions will be listed and you can click on the Update button to ensure they are completely up to date and working on your behalf

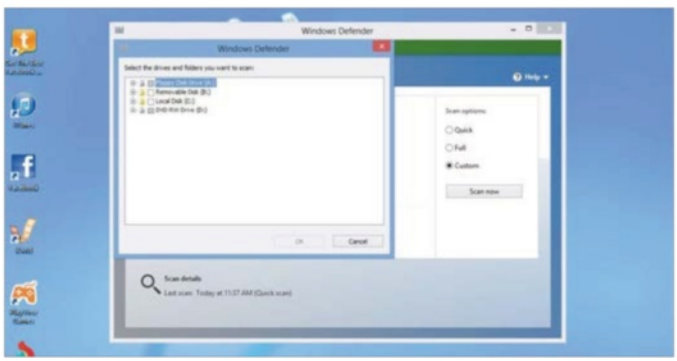
Defender history

Click the History tab to view items detected as harmful and the actions you took. Click each item to see those that have been prevented from running or removed, ones allowed through, and all items that were detected on your PC

Windows Defender Settings

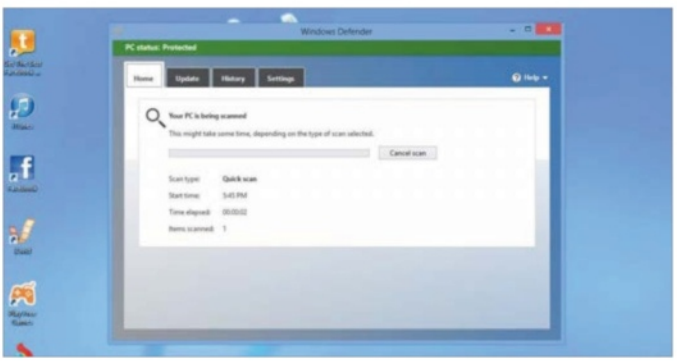
By clicking on the Settings tab, you can view the various protected steps that are in place in your Windows Defender app. You can turn on real-time protection that will alert you whenever malicious or potentially unwanted software tries to install itself on your PC, exclude certain files from the scans





03: Manually removing viruses

Sometimes a virus must be removed manually, which should only be attempted if you are familiar with the Windows registry and know how to view and delete system and program files. Write down keywords such as email headers and look them up online.



04: Recovery and prevention

After a virus has been removed, you might need to reinstall software or restore lost info. Making regular backups of your files can help you avoid data loss if your PC gets infected. If you haven't made backups in the past, it's a good idea to start now and get into the habit.

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Get to grips with Task Manager

Remove unresponsive programs and remove unnecessary processes to increase your computer's startup speed

The Task Manager is one of those system services that you don't normally need to bother with, until something goes wrong. For whatever reason, and web browsers are often the culprits here, a program can stop responding and just sit in the middle of the screen. It doesn't respond to clicking on the Close gadget and you can't move it. Rather than shut the entire computer down, you need to go to the Task Manager to force it to quit. The Task Manager can do more, though, particularly if you need to investigate why performance is suffering – when booting up or generally running. The Startup page of Task Manager shows what is scheduled to run, what has been disabled and how much of an impact a process has. If Windows 8 used to fly out of the gate but now it takes ages to start up, this is probably where the problem lies.

You can see all the routines that are running in the background and discover how much memory they use, whether they are paging files to the hard drive, sending details over the network or using too much CPU time. If you're not sure if you have a virus, here's where you can track down processes acting suspiciously.

"See all the routines that are running and how much memory they use"

Inside the Task Manager

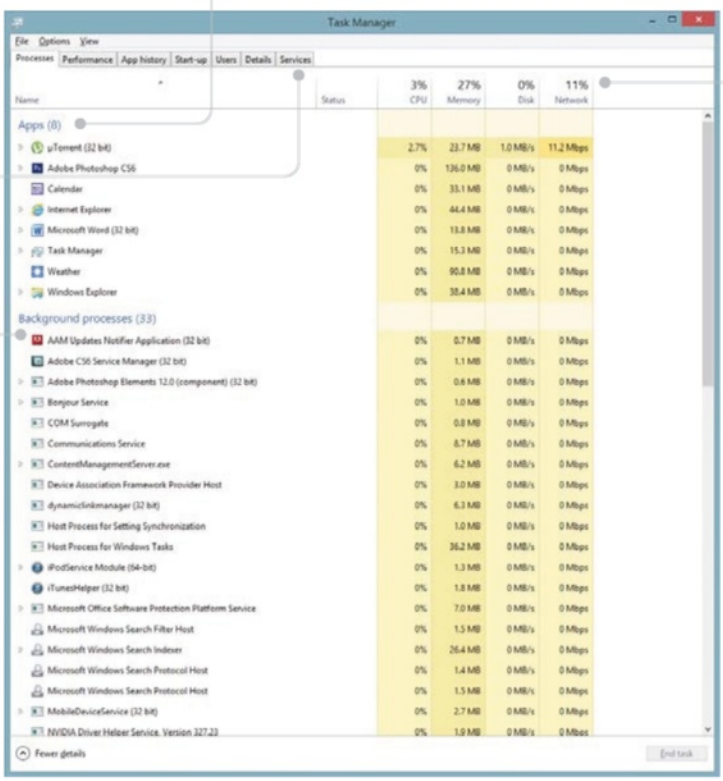
Discover the features and reports it has to offer

Apps running

These are the apps and programs currently running, whether active or minimised. It includes everything, from desktop programs to the apps from the Start screen. Double-click on any of them to immediately switch to it

What is being used

These columns show what percentages of the CPU cycles, memory, disk paging and network bandwidth all the currently running processes are using. Most apps will occupy very little CPU time when minimised unless they are actively doing something



Windows services

Unless you really know what you're doing, leave the Services tab alone. These are Windows functions, both running and stopped, and while additional ones can be stopped to make Windows run quicker, it requires a very good understanding of the OS

In the background

Some of the background processes are activated by Windows, but most are generated by the apps and programs you have installed. Not all of them are necessary to have constantly running and they do take up processor time and memory

Be careful

When looking for tasks that are taking up lots of memory or CPU time, make sure you know what they are before closing them. Programs and apps are easy to identify and so are some of the background processes, but others are not. Equally, don't start closing a Windows service unless you're convinced it's a virus, because you can make Windows unstable and crash. For startup processes, some are genuinely useful, but others really are time-wasters you can do without.

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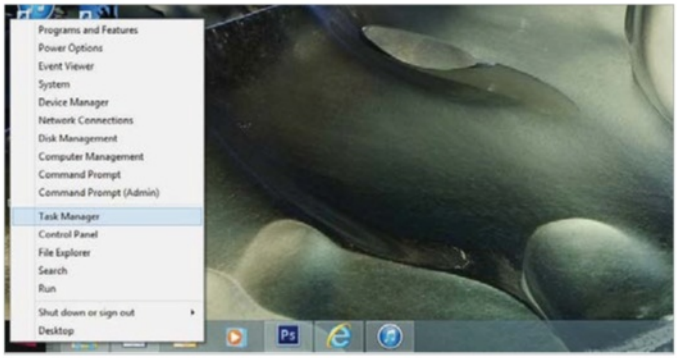
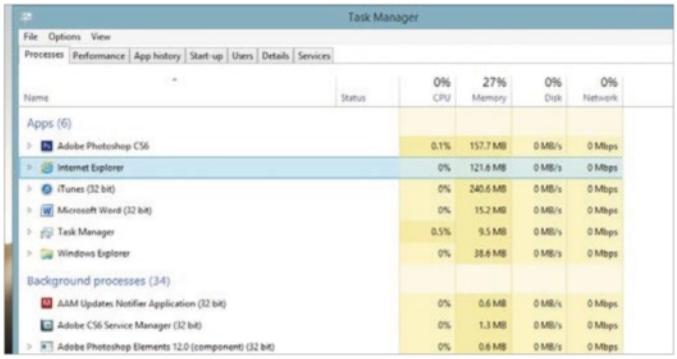


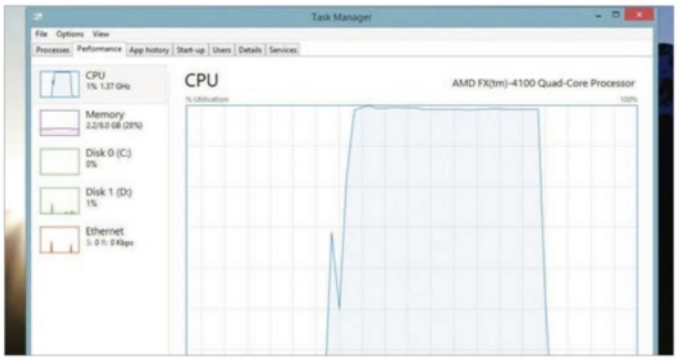
01: Launching the Task Manager

Either press Ctrl+Alt+Del together and select it from the menu, or right-click on the Start button and left-click on the menu entry there.



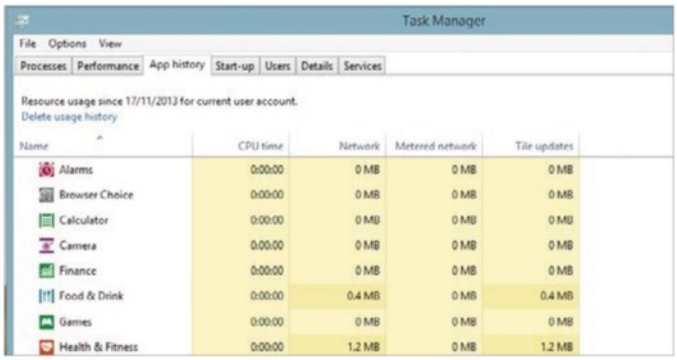
02: Remove an app

If you have an unresponsive app, it'll appear in the Processes tab, under the heading for Apps. Select it then click on End Task to kill.



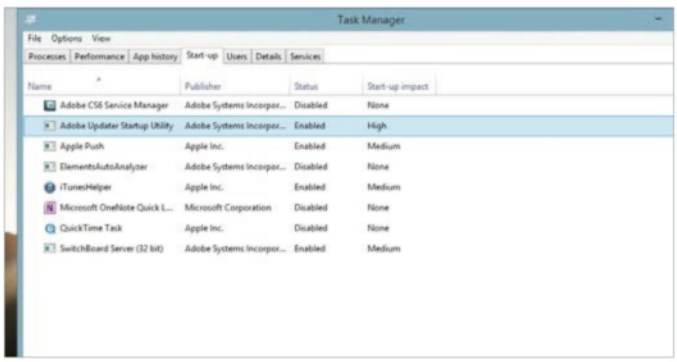
03: Check performance

See what your system is doing and if the CPU is being overburdened by a hidden process. Click the Performance tab to check.



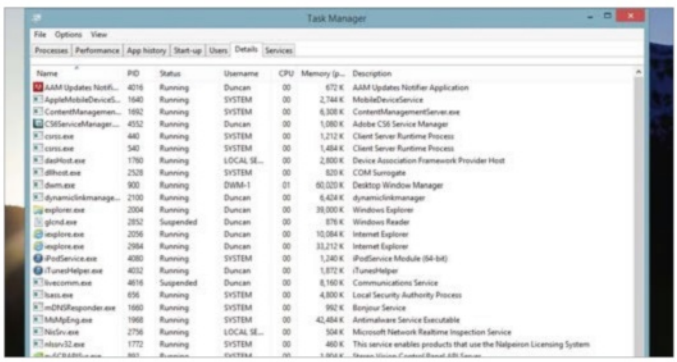
04: Check app history

The apps on the Start screen are different from Desktop programs and you can track their usage by clicking on the App History tab.



05: Speedy startups

Click the Startup tab to see which items run when the PC starts. To stop a service running on startup, click on it and then on Disable.



06: Spot problems

You can detect suspect services by clicking on the Details tab. Check the list for anything occupying lots of CPU time.

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Resolve issues with Action Center

When you have a problem that no one can help with, check out the Action Center to find a solution

Old programs with incompatibilities, badly written new ones, issues with JavaScript or web browsers: these are all areas that can cause problems. When trouble starts, make the Action Center your first port of call. Click on the little flag icon at the bottom right of the taskbar, then on the Open Action Center link to start it running. It offers a number of features, covering problem solving, maintenance, security, file recovery and completely wiping and restarting your PC from scratch. Security covers all the main Windows 8 systems such as the firewall, Update, Defender, internet security, User Account Control, SmartScreen, network access and your Microsoft account. The maintenance side offers solutions for problems that have occurred and tracks all error reports so that even if you don't follow a problem up immediately, you can look at it again later. There is also the Troubleshooting wizard and the Recover section, which houses System Restore for when things go really wrong. The settings for System Recover can be configured if it's taking up too much hard drive space and you can also create a recovery drive.

"When trouble starts, make the Action Center your first port of call"

Tracking problems

Check problem history and look for solutions

Stability index
Windows 8 creates this reliability graphic based on days without problems, taking a downward turn when something comes up. The line slowly increases over time, signifying a more stable system. An index of under 5 indicates a lot of problems

Error report
A red circle with a cross in it indicates when a problem has occurred, either a driver failure or, more usually, a program becoming unresponsive. Click on the circle to see which item was responsible for creating the error report

The Critical event
What caused the error report. In this case it was a Windows process that stopped responding and was closed. Usually it's unresponsive programs. It lists what the problem was and when it happened

Check for solutions
At the end of the error report is a link to check for solutions. Click on this to get the error-reporting system to check the Microsoft knowledge base for any answers. You can retrospectively check any problems this way, regardless of when they happened

Managing User Account Control
In previous versions of Windows, the UAC was like an overbearing parent, forever looking over your computer's shoulder. These days you can configure the settings so it is as active or passive as you want. There are four settings to use, with always report any changes and don't report anything at either end. The other two settings are more useful as they strike a balance between continual nagging and keeping your computer safe.

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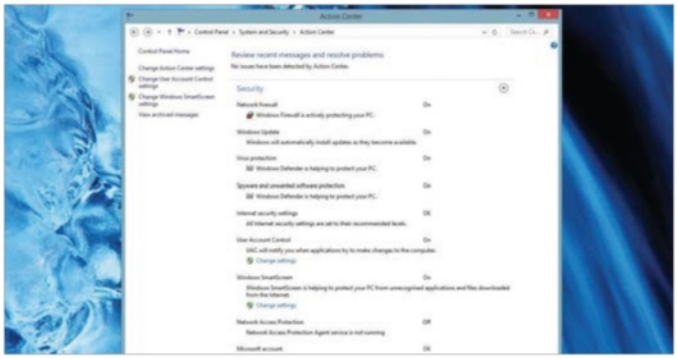
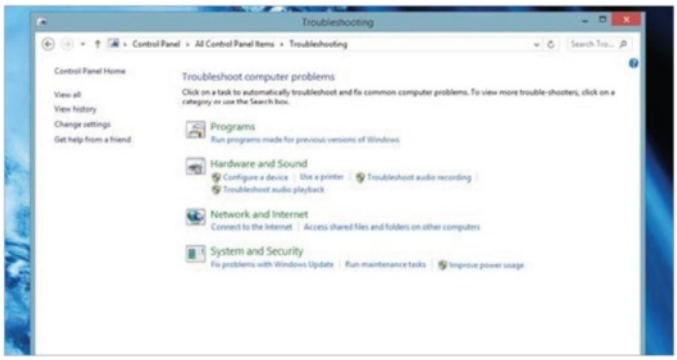
01: Change the settings

Launch Action Center and click 'Change Action Center settings'. Everything ticked can generate a report. Turn off any you don't want.



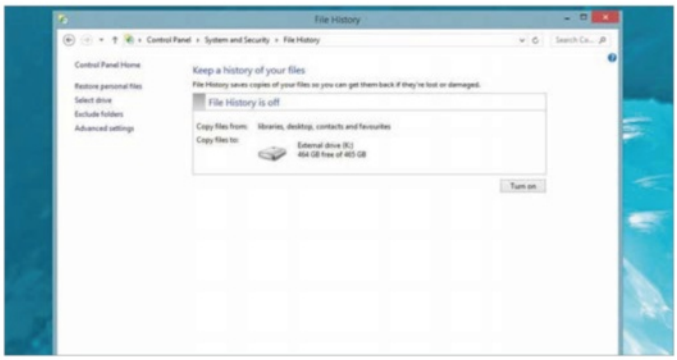
02: Security check

Click the Security down-arrow to see options. If you have antivirus software, it may turn off Windows virus protection so they don't clash.



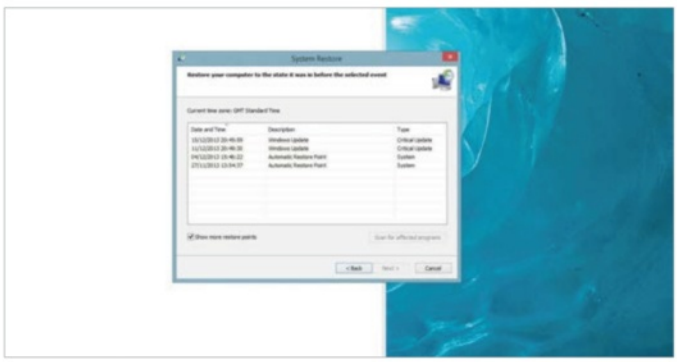
03: The troubleshooter

If there's a specific problem with getting something to work, click on Troubleshooting and then select the category that fits the problem.



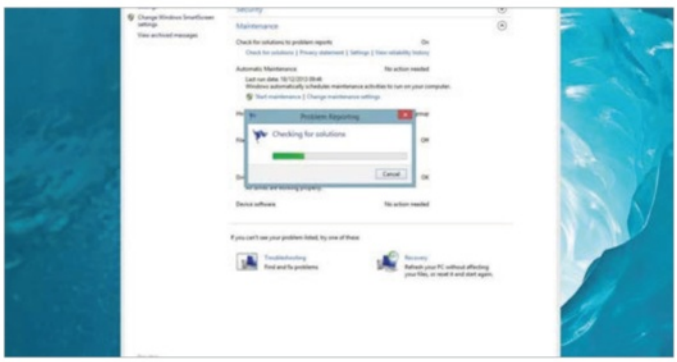
04: Back up files

To keep copies of all your files, click the Maintenance down-arrow, then 'Turn on', under File History. You'll need an external hard drive.



05: System recover

If something you installed caused chaos, click Recovery, then Open System Restore. Click Next, then select a restore point to return to.



06: Solve problems

When you have a warning sign in Action Center about a problem, open Maintenance and click on 'Check for solutions' to get help.

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Set up Mail on Windows 8

Get your email on the Start screen by configuring the Mail app to work with your email accounts

The Mail app on the Start screen is actually one element of Mail, People and Calendar – which is why if you uninstall one, you uninstall all of them. The advantage to having them this way is that they can seamlessly share info (contacts, birthdays etc). Initially, Mail isn't set up, so click on it to add an existing account. This will import the emails from your existing account and let you read and answer them. The trouble is that it doesn't support POP3 email accounts. If you have your own domain and a dedicated hosting package with an ISP, it's very likely you use POP3 for email. If you use Hotmail or another web-based service, you're fine. Mail supports what are known as EAS and IMAP servers so if your email service uses one of those, you can directly add it. If you are using POP3, though, and are connecting to it with Microsoft Outlook, there is another solution. You can sync your desktop Outlook account with Microsoft's online Outlook.com and then use that account as the details for the Mail app. It means desktop Outlook tells online Outlook.com what it's been doing, and those emails are then synced with the Mail app.

"You can sync your desktop Outlook account with Microsoft's Outlook.com"

Around the Mail interface

Manage folders and control your email

Order your emails

Here you can access the folder structure and see what draft emails you have and anything that has recently been sent. There are also icons for your favourite contacts so all emails from them appear there, and any that have been flagged for attention

Reply and delete

These three icons manage your basic email functions. The first one on the left is for replying to an email that has been selected. The middle icon is for sending new emails; the last one is for deleting the selected email

New window option

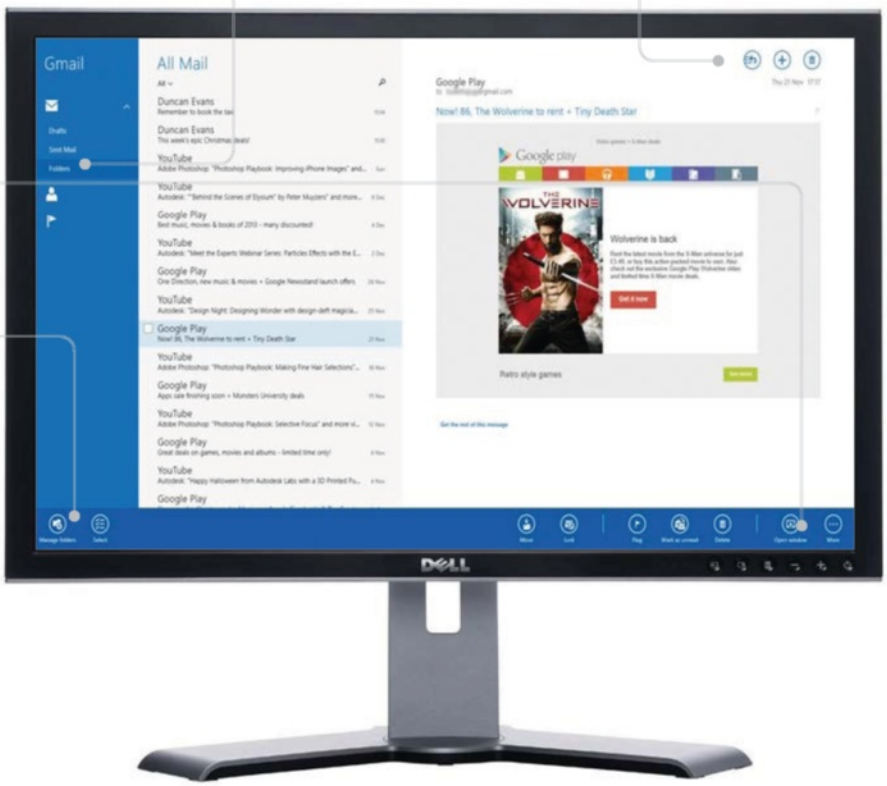
By default, you read all emails in the right-side pane of the Mail app; but if you get one that shows lots of images, for example, it's worth seeing it alone. Click on Open Window and that email opens in a separate window that can be resized larger

Folder options

The 'Manage folders' icon lets you create new folders and subfolders within the Folders structure. This is useful for saving emails into locations with appropriate names. You can also empty out a folder and pin that folder to the Start screen

Flagging and marking

Another couple of options worth looking at are the Flag icon and the 'Mark as unread' icon. The first adds a flag to an email to mark it as important. This will then appear in the Flagged folder on the left. Marking an email as unread means that it will stay in the folder and increase the new email counter on the left. This is worth doing if you can't deal with the content right then, but need to ensure you don't forget about it later.



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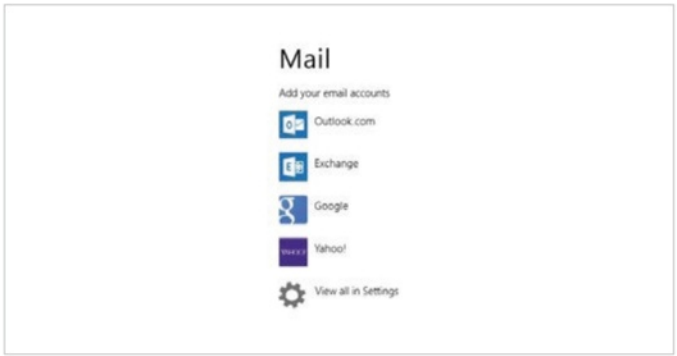
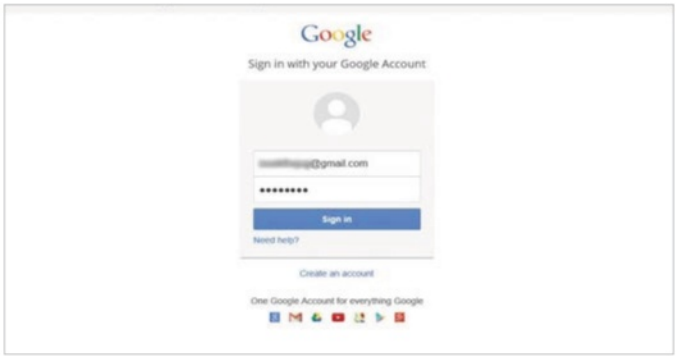


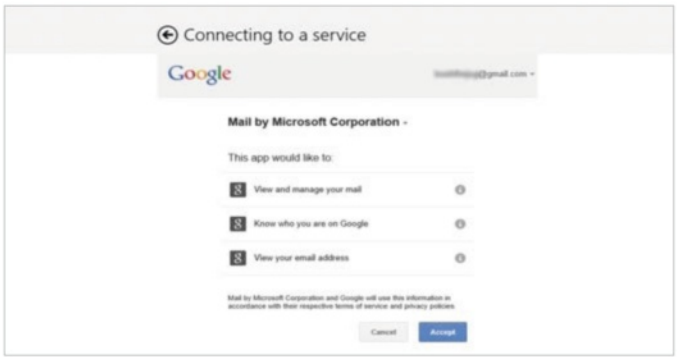
01: Getting started

Click the Mail tile on the Start screen to see a list of email services including Outlook.com, Google and Yahoo!. Click on one.



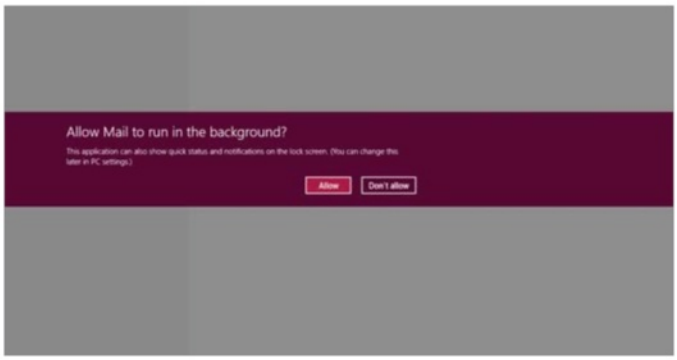
02: Add an account

Here we're adding a Google Gmail account. Enter the email address and the password for the account, then click on Sign In to connect.



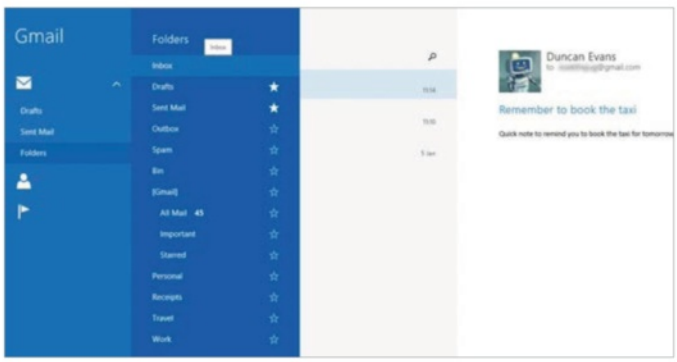
03: Get permissions

It'll request your permission to use your account to identify you and manage your email with Google. Click on Accept to proceed.



04: Allow background service

Gmail through the Mail app offers the option of running in the background so it can put mail on the lock screen. Accept or refuse.



05: Get mail

Once set up, Mail will sync with the Gmail account and get new emails. Click on Folders, then Inbox to read and reply to messages.

06: Manage email

To move an email from the Inbox to a saved folder, check it then click Move. Select the destination folder and it'll be moved there.

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Send an email with attachments

Add music, photographs or documents to your email message and configure a signature to go with it

Once you have an email account set up with Mail, you can use it as you would any other email client. As you start writing an email, it creates a draft of it, so if you get interrupted and need to come back to it later, it'll be waiting in the Draft email folder. Simply click on it to continue writing. One of the other options is to add attachments to an email, whether that's audio, graphical or text in content. Anything that is a standalone file can be attached and sent with the email. There are limits, though, as very large files may not get through either your mail server portal or the recipient's. Anything over 15MB in size will generate a warning that it may not get through, though this is because the recipient may not be able to receive it. The actual file size limit for Mail attachments is a handsome 25MB. It won't attach and send anything larger, so if you need to use bigger files then it's better to use SkyDrive instead. The other feature of Mail is that it can use signature text, but by default this is a very bland 'Sent from Windows Mail' message. You can change this to something more useful by editing the message in the Settings.

"Anything that is a standalone file can be attached and sent with the email"

Format the message

Use customised fonts and colours in your text

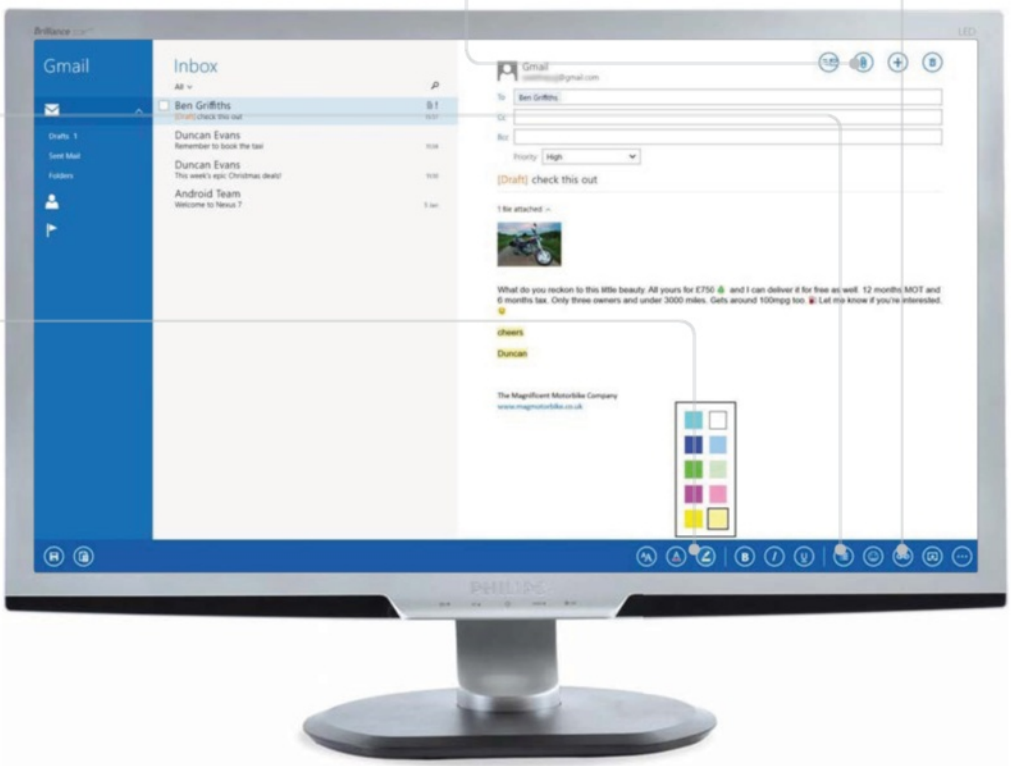
Add attachments
Click the paper clip to add attachments. You can attach multiple files, as long as they're not over 25MB in total. However, note that the recipient's file size limit may be lower, so it could bounce back

Weblinks
Typing in a web address (URL) will usually turn it into a blue link. However, for more unusual URLs that aren't picked up, highlight the text and click here to mark as a link

Create lists, add icons
The body of the email doesn't just have to be boring text. Click on the List icon to create either a bullet or numbered point list. The emoticon icon next to it will insert the selected emoticon at the cursor point

Colour it up
Right-click to bring up text options. You can change the font type and the size for better legibility. Also, mark an area of text, then select the Marker icon to highlight those words to give them more prominence

Other editing options
There are more text editing features. You can copy and paste text or images. Use the Paste icon on the far left. If you paste in some text and it's full of bad formatting, click the More icon and select Clear Formatting. You can also Undo any recent changes and Redo them to reapply. When creating a complex email, it may be easier to see it full-screen, so click on New Window for that.



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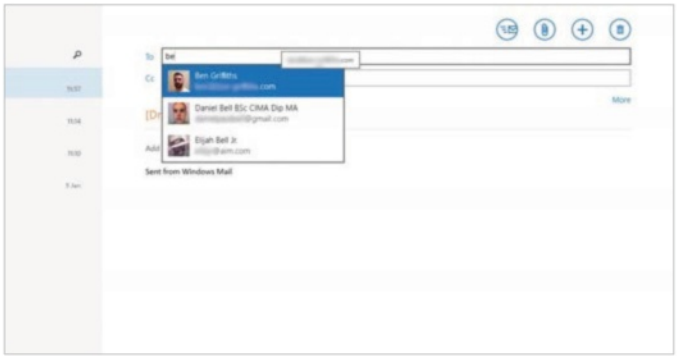
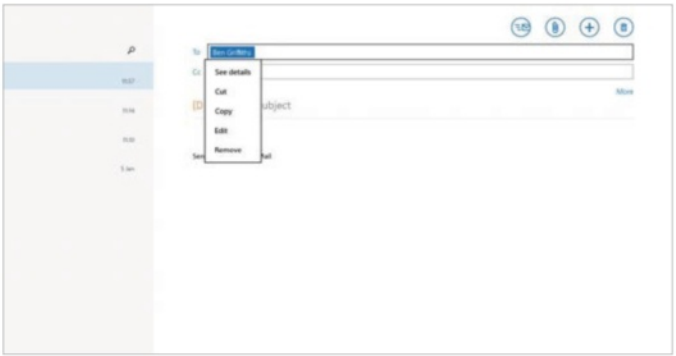


01: New mail please

Open Mail and click on the new mail icon. Start typing the recipient's address in the 'To' field and there will be suggestions provided.

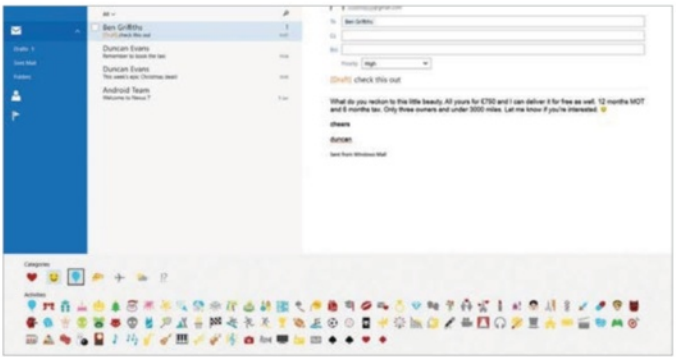


02: Edit the recipients

Move to any recipient and press Return to select, or continue typing the name. Click on the name to edit or remove and type another one.

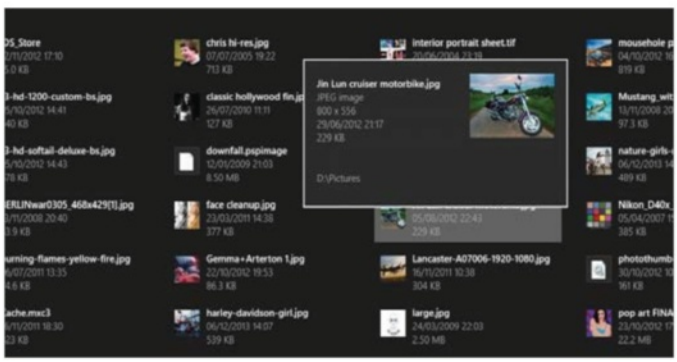
03: Add a subject

Enter a subject then click More. Options include tagging the message with a priority level. Here a High level has been selected.



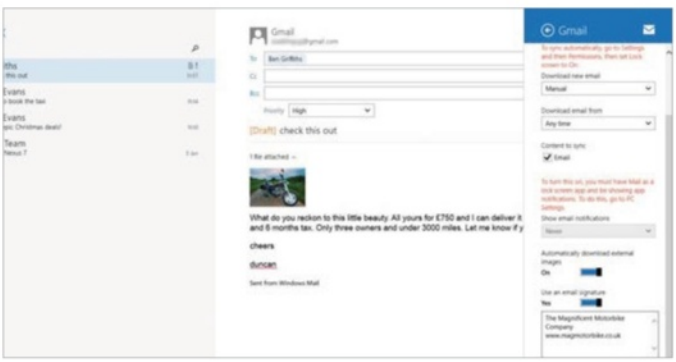
04: Write the copy

Write the message. Right-click to bring up the formatting options. One of these is to include emoticons. Click on the icon to see them.



05: Attach a file

Click the paper clip for an attachment. The browser starts in your Pictures folder. Select an image to add, then click on Attach to return.



06: Change the signature

To alter the signature for emails, go to the Settings charm and click on the account. Edit the text box for signatures. Finally, click Send.

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Filter out junk mail

Move and remove unwanted messages and block those senders from bombarding you with junk mail again

One of the curses of the modern age is junk email. It's bad enough getting sales emails from real firms you know, but the spammers are far, far worse. These are the people who hoover up email addresses from websites, or buy/steal them from giant mailing lists. Once your email address ends up on one spammer's list, it will propagate to endless others. The spam emailer will bombard you with messages about products you have no interest in at all, in the vague hope that someone out of the millions being emailed will respond. Then there's the darker side: the spammers who aren't selling products, but are simply trying to put a virus on your PC so they can steal financial information, or damage your PC so that you have pay them to repair it. Windows 8 has some robust mechanisms built in, but you can help yourself by defining incoming mail as junk and blocking that sender from getting through to you again. So don't just delete unwanted email, take the upper hand and let the Mail app know that a particular sender is a spammer, to stop them sending you anything else.

"Let the Mail app know that a particular sender is a spammer"

Dealing with junk

The options are slightly different for Gmail

View folders

Click on Folders in the pane on the left to see the various folder types, from the Inbox to the Spam and Bin ones where junk mail goes. You can still go to the Spam folder and mark anything as Not Junk to restore it to the Inbox

Removing emails

After selecting emails that you don't want, the quickest way of getting rid of them is to click on the Delete icon. Another option is to go to the folder you want to clear, click on Manage Folders and select Empty Folder to remove everything

When it's junk

Any emails marked as junk and appearing in the Junk folder will have images and links removed. To empty the Junk folder, select all emails and click on Delete to remove them all. This will permanently delete them, otherwise they will just build up in the Junk folder. Any new emails from any of the senders marked or blocked will end up here. If you are missing an email you were expecting, have a look here to see if it's been mistakenly marked as junk.

Remove emails

You can remove emails all at once, after they have been selected manually. In this case, check them all, then click on Move and select Bin instead. That moves them to the Bin folder. Although the terms are different, the actions are the same

Move to junk

Only Outlook.com-synced accounts get the Sweep options. If you are using a Gmail account then instead, select all the emails that are junk and use the Move button. One of the options on it is to mark those emails as Spam

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01: Spot the junk

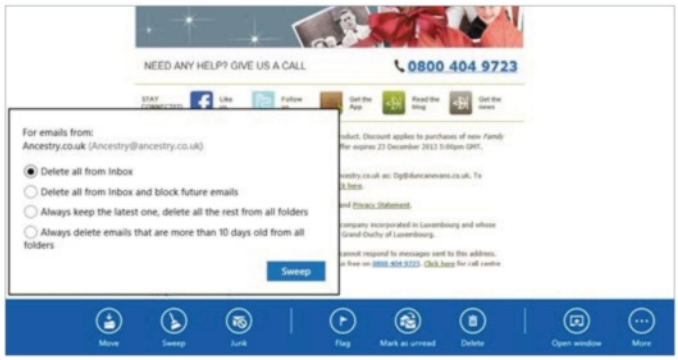
Identify something you don't want, whether it's malicious or not. Click on it and one of the options on the message line is to delete it.

02: Try to unsubscribe

Look for an unsubscribe link at the end of the message. If you have to log into a long-forgotten account, then try the next step.

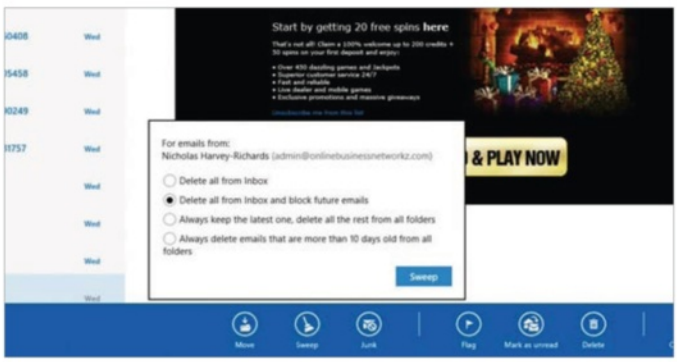
03: Mark as junk

With an email selected, tick the checkbox or right-click anywhere to bring up a menu. Click on Junk in the bottom bar to remove.



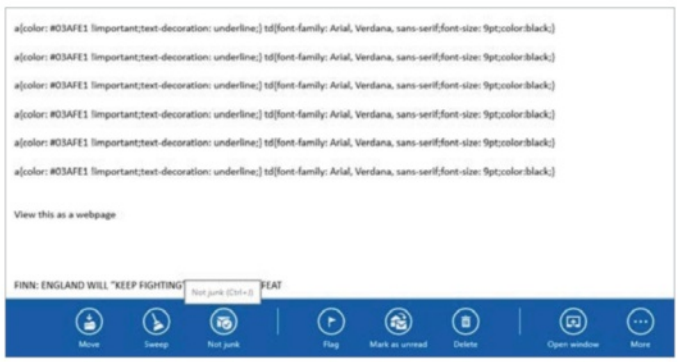
04: Sweep them up

If using an Outlook.com account, there's a Sweep option. Click on this, not Junk. You can delete all mail from that sender at once.



05: Block the sender

Sweep also has an option to delete all emails and block the sender. This marks them as a spammer and stops any more coming through.



06: Not junk

If you marked something as junk inadvertently, go to the Junk folder, select the email, right-click and then click on Not Junk.

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Get to know the Calendar app

Discover the features and options for the Calendar, which include customising the events and adding accounts

If you need a light and fast calendar without having to buy Microsoft Office, the Windows 8 Calendar is a good option. It can also sync with Outlook.com, the online Microsoft service. The Calendar app is connected to your Mail and People apps by your Microsoft account name, which is usually the email address you used when you installed or configured Windows 8. One of the advantages of being linked in this way is that the Calendar can use details from those other apps to automatically add events to the timeline. One example of this is that you can connect Facebook and LinkedIn to your Microsoft account. The People app uses this information to populate a contacts list. The Calendar uses it so that anyone who has listed a birthday will be added to the Calendar events. You don't need to add them; they will appear automatically. The Calendar is a Start screen app, so it has a very minimalist look to it. It uses the common functionality of all Windows 8 apps – so if you want to access the settings, use the Charms bar to get to them by moving the cursor to the top or bottom right corner, then up onto Settings.

"Anyone who has listed a birthday will be added to the Calendar events"

Inside the Calendar

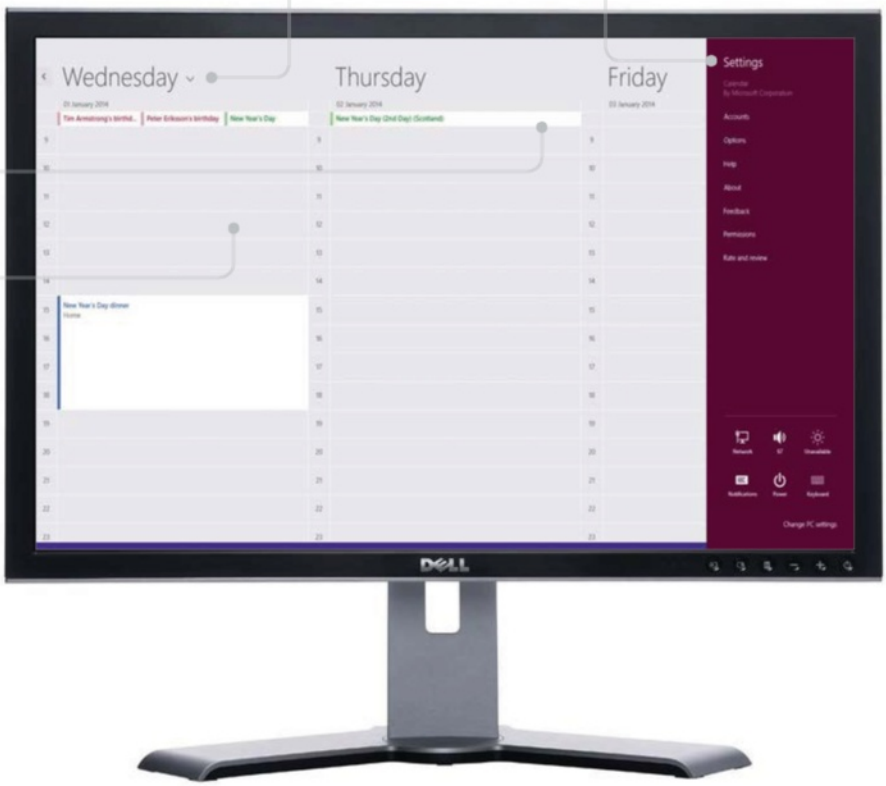
The options available for using the Calendar

View by day
View options include for the entire month, that week or by the day. On day view, you also get the appointments broken down into occupying either certain time slots or listed at the top of the screen – when they apply to the whole day

The Settings
The Settings screen is accessible via the Charms bar. Here you can configure the colour scheme of the events and appointments and add new accounts for web and server-hosted calendars. This calendar can then sync with others

Check an event
The event is shown across what hours it occupies. It can also be set to zero minutes, making it an alert for that day. Click on the event itself to view or edit additional information about it or configure extra options relating to it

Manual sync
To force a manual sync with the online accounts registered and configured, right-click anywhere on the screen and select Sync. This will then import any events that have been added to other calendars that are synced with this one



Syncing with others
One of the problems with the Calendar app is that it can no longer sync with Google, thanks to Google abandoning the protocol required to link them. The other is that you can't sync the desktop Outlook calendar events either. However, you can save your desktop Outlook calendar as an ICS file, import that into your Outlook.com Calendar account and that will synchronise with the Windows 8 Calendar. It won't update automatically, though.

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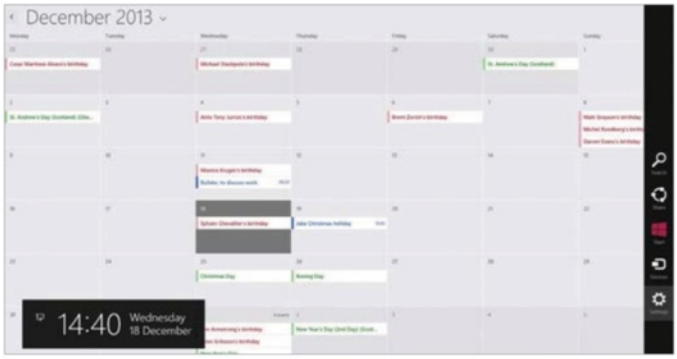
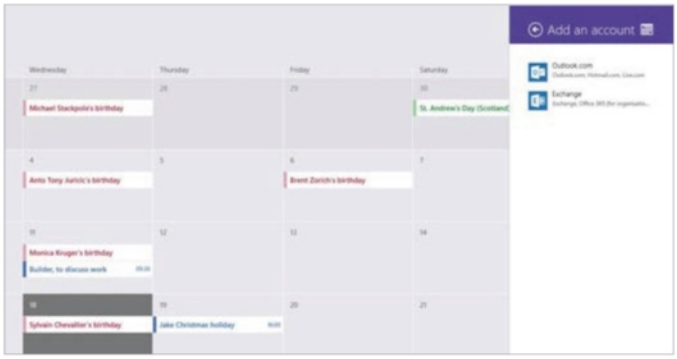


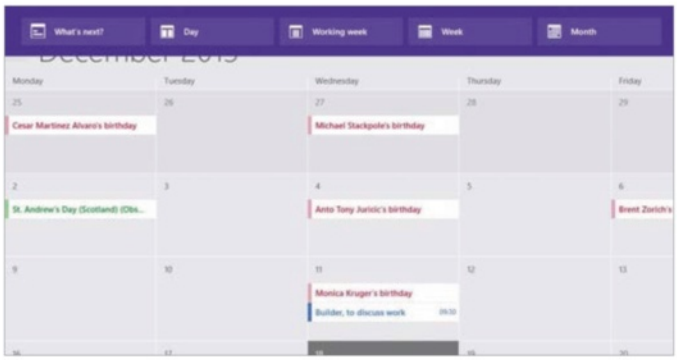
01: Go to Settings

The Calendar will already be set up to use the account you log into Windows with. To add another account, open the Charms bar.



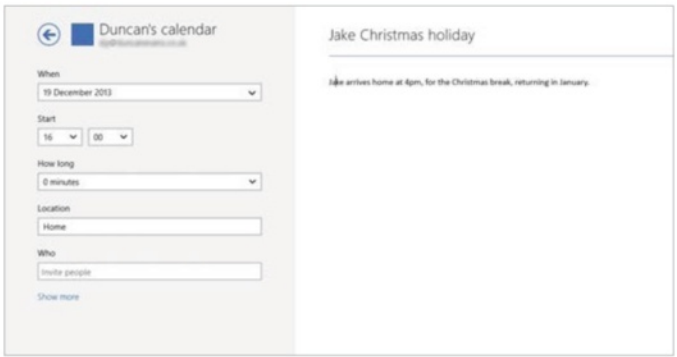
02: Add new account

Click on Settings, then Accounts. Click 'Add an account' to see the two types. These include web-based ones like Outlook.com.



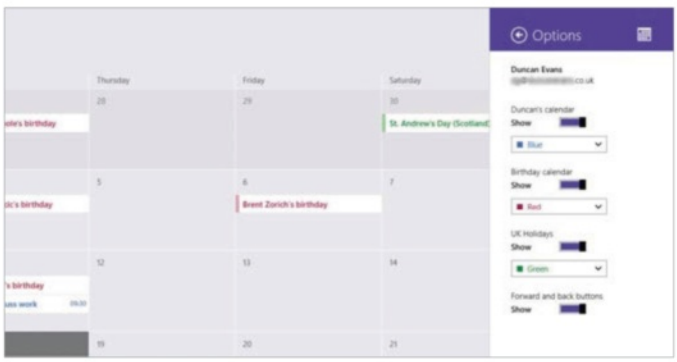
03: Different viewing options

Right-click anywhere to bring up the view options. You can see appointments by day, week, month or a list of what is coming up.



04: View the details

Left-click on an appointment to see more details about it. These can then be edited and then saved, ready to sync.



05: More options

Go to Settings and select Options. You can toggle the three types of calendar on and off or choose which colours to use with them.

06: Coming soon

Click on the What's Next icon to get a list of events as they happen. Right-click and select Background to choose a new background.

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Add a Calendar event

Use the Calendar to keep track of appointments and events by adding them and synchronising with Outlook.com

By signing up for a Microsoft account when you installed or configured your Windows 8 account, you linked your email address so it could be used between Microsoft apps. One of the benefits of that is the Outlook.com website, which uses the same style of presentation for Mail and Calendar as the Windows 8 apps. You can sync mail and calendar events between the two so that when out and about, you can view exactly the same content on a portable internet-connected device as you do with Windows 8 on your home PC. In this tutorial we're going to look at adding new events to the Windows 8 calendar and seeing what extra options are available when creating them. These include notifying other people about the event by email automatically, setting where the event is to take place, adding reminders or keeping it private from any shared calendars. Events can also be set to repeat, from specific days, weekends, to each week, month or year to save typing it all in again. You can also set your status for the event, so if it's going to take up all your time, other people will know that you will be busy.

"Options include notifying others about the event by email automatically"

Using the day view

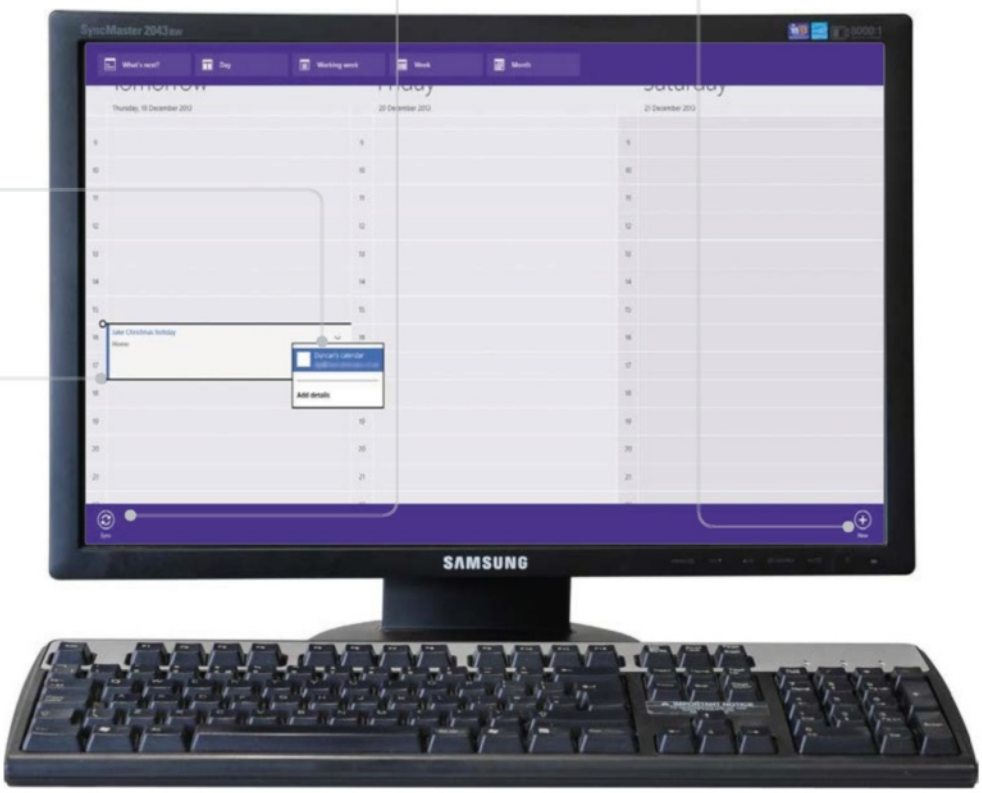
Add events with adjustable time limits

Upload and download
Clicking Sync will send all of your data to Outlook.com, as this account comes courtesy of Microsoft. Simply log in with your Windows 8 email and password. Any events added to the online Calendar sync back here

Create a new event
Right-click to bring up the options for viewing and also click on New to add another event that way. This adds a new event to the current day, going straight to the details screen, rather than making you do it in two stages when clicking on a date

Different calendars
Any new event created can be added to another synced calendar rather than the default, which is your own calendar. You need to have gone to Settings to have added a secondary account to use

Set the time
In day view, set the duration by clicking on the edges of the event box and dragging them up and down to increase or reduce it. To set it to zero time, you need to click on the event and manually change the time



Types of calendar
The Birthday calendar uses dates from linked Facebook and LinkedIn accounts. Then there is the Holiday calendar. You can't delete events from either of these. Lastly, there's your own calendar and any others that you sync with. To remove an event, click on it to get to the details page and then click on the trash-can icon. If you don't like the default colour scheme for each calendar, change them in Options.

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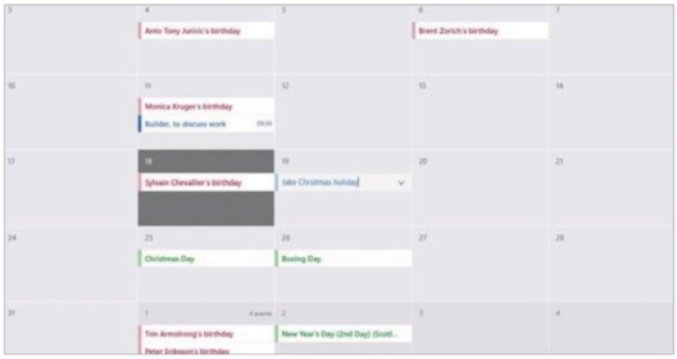
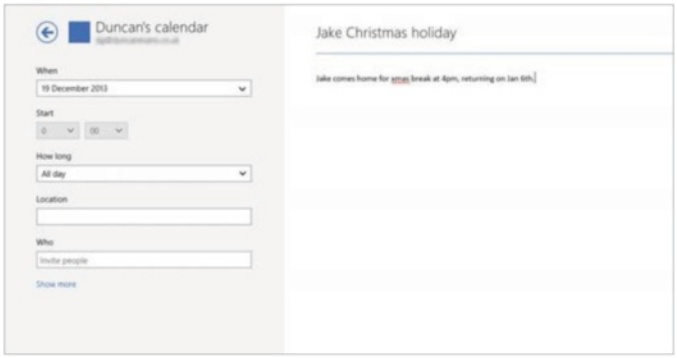


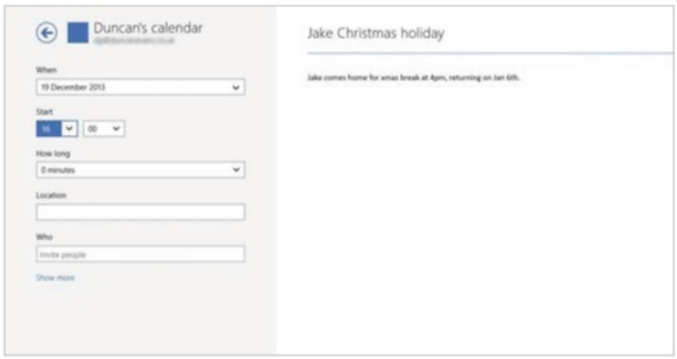
01: Adding an event

In monthly view, left-click on any blank area of a day and type in the event to add it. Press Enter and it will be added as an all-day event.



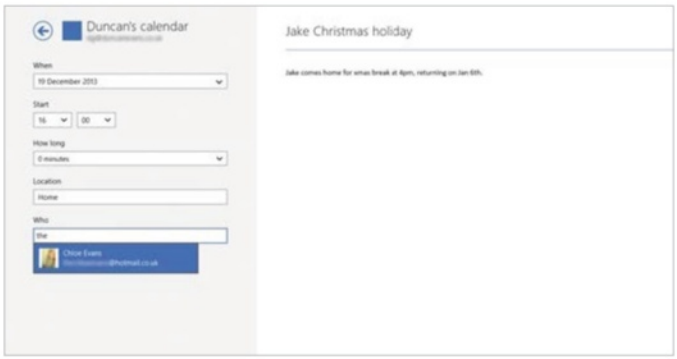
02: Add the details

Either click on the down arrow before finishing or click on the entire event afterwards to go to the details mode. Add an explanation.



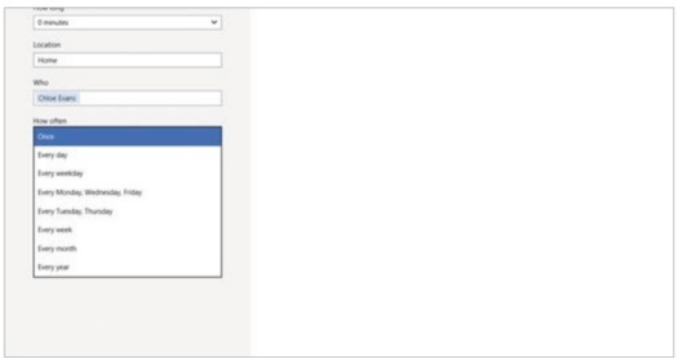
03: Add a time

To change from an all-day event, click on How long and set a time. Then you can change the clock to a time when the event happens.



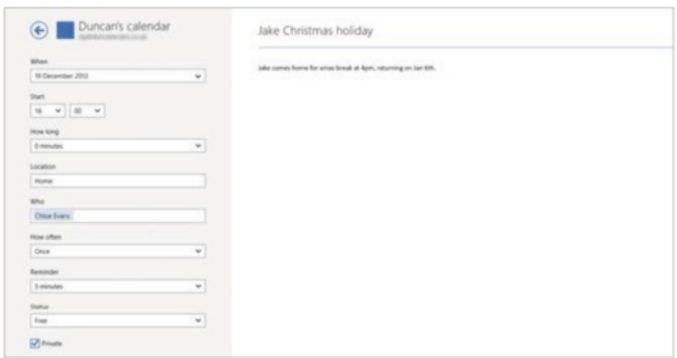
04: Invite people

Let others get email notification of the event by adding them to the Who field. Start typing to get the addresses filled in. Add a location.



05: More options

Click 'Show' more for extra options. The first lets you repeat the event over specific days of the week or by the week, month or year.



06: Set reminder

Get a repeated notification with a reminder. You can also set this to show when you're busy and to keep it private from shared calendars.

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Go online with Internet Explorer

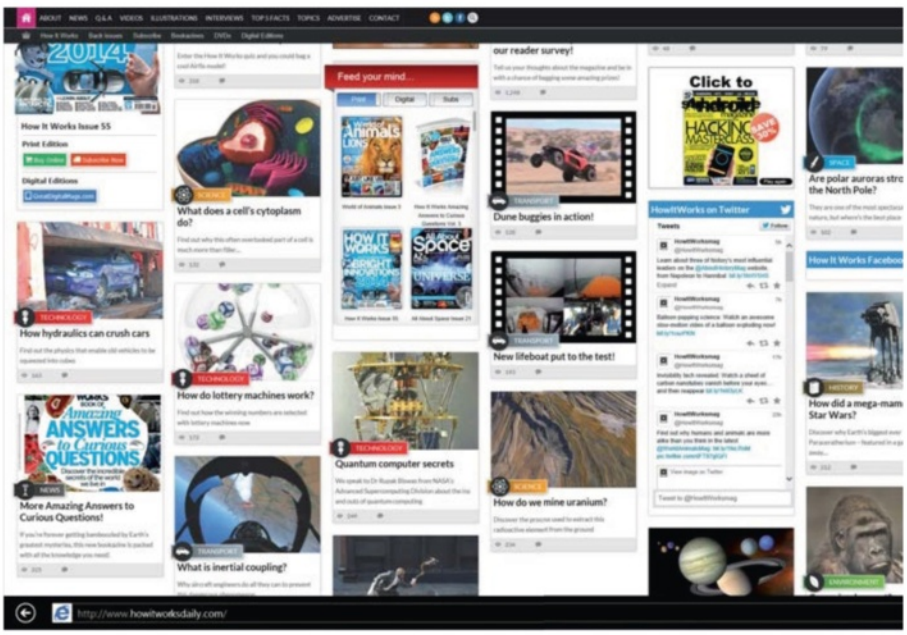
Use the tiles variant of the popular web browser, Internet Explorer, to utilise and peruse the world wide web

These days, the thought of buying and using a PC and not accessing the internet is almost unthinkable. The immense resource that is the internet demands that you set up and configure your PC to provide a window onto this enormous system. In fact, for many users out there, their personal and business interests couldn't function without it. Therefore a browser is of paramount importance.

Microsoft's Internet Explorer (sometimes abbreviated to IE) is one of the most mature and popular web browsers available. With its advanced feature set, it provides everything you could possibly need. Which is what you want when you are browsing. That is, you don't want to be battling the user interface when all you want to do is access information or take advantage of an essential service.

The great thing about Internet Explorer, when used within Windows 8.1, is that it can be accessed via the tiles system that is part and parcel of the operating system. This means that accessing the software is quite seamless and natural in operation.

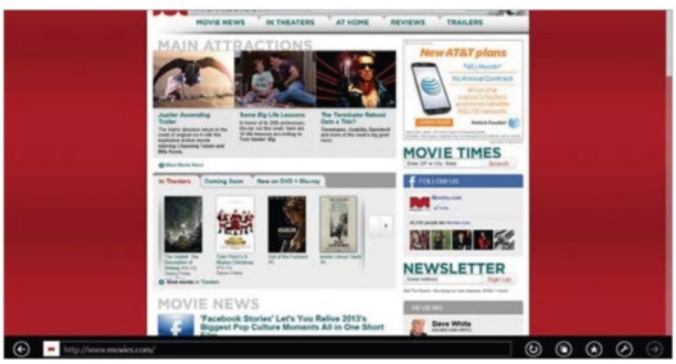
In this tutorial, we use Internet Explorer to browse the world wide web.



"One of the most mature and popular web browsers available"

01: Access the Start screen

When you start your PC and enter your Windows 8.1 password, you are taken to the Start screen, where all of the most important apps on your PC are shown as tiles. Locate the tile that indicates Internet Explorer. Click on it to load the software onto the screen.



02: Access search engine

Upon launching Internet Explorer, you'll want to find a website or access information. A search engine is the best way to do this, especially if you don't know the address of the site. Internet Explorer has one built in: locate the search bar at the bottom of the screen.

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Browse around

Get to know your Internet Explorer browser

Website address bar

This dual-purpose bar enables you to enter search parameters to seek out the website that you need. It also allows you to take a more direct route by entering a website address

New tab

To create a new tab, click on '+'. It will open a new screen for you. When the screen pops up, you will be able to go directly to a new website or initiate a new search

Main screen

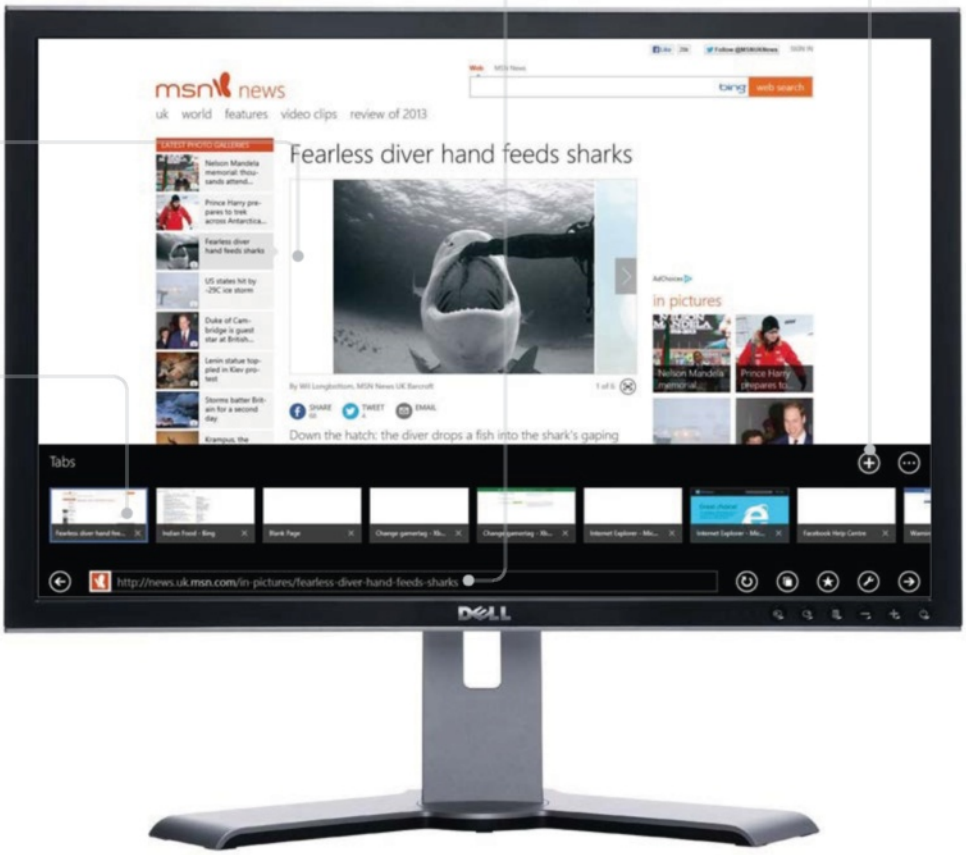
This is the main area where you'll see the results of any website search, listing websites for you to investigate and also showing the contents of the chosen website in all its glory. You can also scroll if the page is very large

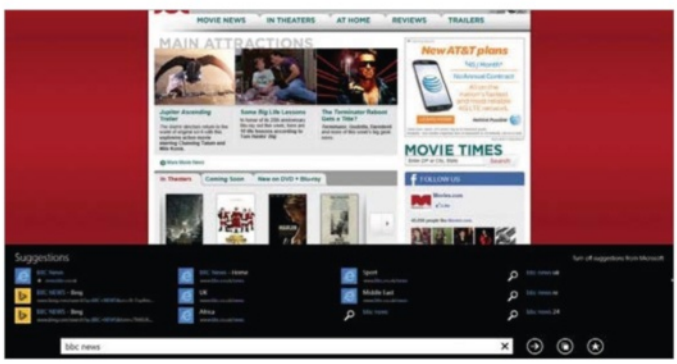
Tabs

The tabs hold a new screen of info. Each time you create a new screen, it is listed in this scrollable row as a tab. Click on each to quickly move between screens

Predictive searches

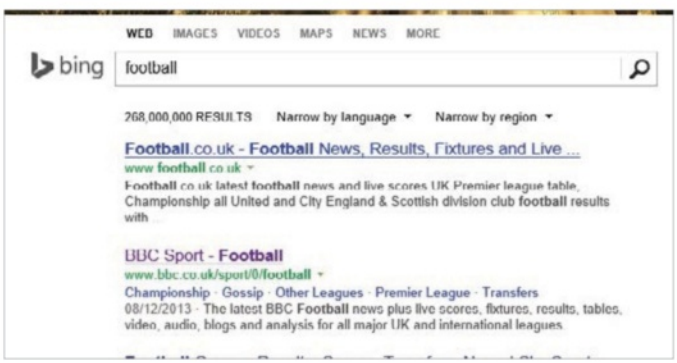
When you begin to search for the website of your choice, a menu list will try to guess what you might want. As you make progress with typing your parameters, the predicted information will become more direct and targeted. Notice that it changes dynamically with each letter added in the bar. If your desired website is located in this list, move to the required site and click on it to access it. The new website will load.





03: Use a search engine

Enter key words into the search bar that relate to the subject. For example, find BBC's news pages with 'BBC' and 'News'. For dietary advice on diabetes type 'diabetes' and 'diet'. After entering the search parameters, click 'Web search'.



04: Access your website

The browser will ask the search engine to return likely results. You will see these listed over multiple pages, which you can cycle through by clicking on the page number at the base of the screen. When you have found your selected site, click on the blue title to access it.

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Open Internet Explorer in Desktop view

Utilise the power of Windows 8.1 operating system and browse the internet via the Desktop

If you have upgraded to Windows 8.1 via an older version of the operating system (such as Windows 7) and have been a dedicated Internet Explorer user but want to retain the option to use the browser via the Desktop view, then this is the tutorial for you. Why? Because, if IE is your default browser, when you load Internet Explorer from Windows 8.1, it will load a tile-friendly suite of windows and command menus.

There may be other users out there, however, who have been using a third-party web browser that they prefer – such as Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox – and who now wish to utilise the Desktop version of Internet Explorer through Windows 8.1. If you have upgraded from an older Windows operating system with a third-party web browser set as your default, then this tutorial is redundant because clicking on Internet Explorer from Windows 8.1 will automatically force it into Desktop mode.

If, however, you later make Internet Explorer your default web browser, then this will trigger the rather lovely tiled user interface again. Read on to learn more.

> "It will load a tile-friendly suite of windows and command menus"

Open Explorer

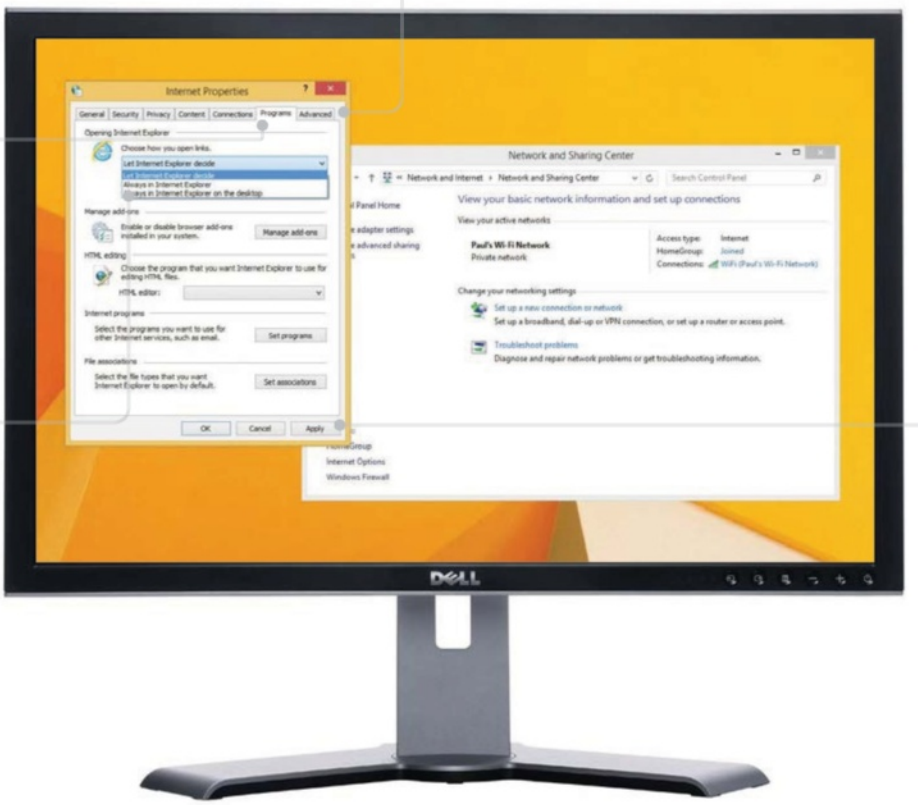
Tell Windows 8.1 how to open Internet Explorer

Tabs
The Internet Properties box offers many ways to modify how the internet works on your PC. The tabs provide an easy way to access sets of networking commands

Apply
You can make as many selections and commands as you wish, but none will be used until you confirm it. This is why the Apply and OK buttons exist. They provide a way out of mistakes

Programs
The Programs tab is where you can find instructions that are specific to the Internet Explorer browser. Here, you can manipulate how the browser will load onto the screen, making the program work best for you and how you use your computer

Drop-down
The drop-down menu hold options that will change the personality of the Internet Explorer browser. This is where you can ask the program to open onto the desktop automatically. Just highlight the required choice



Your default
If Internet Explorer is not set as your default browser, you can tell Windows 8.1 to make it so. In the Program tab of Internet Options, click Set Programs. In the pop-up, click 'Set your default programs'. Find Internet Explorer then 'Set this program as default'. Click Apply, then exit and reload Internet Properties to make further modifications.

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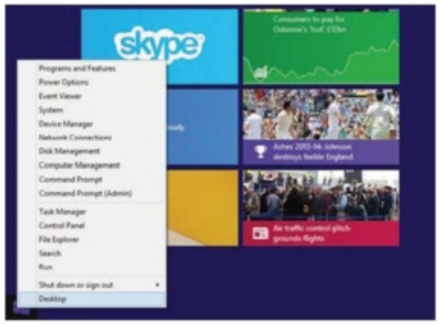
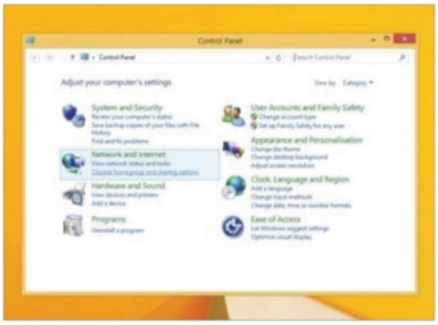


01: The Start Button

To open Internet Explorer on the desktop, either right-click the Start button at the bottom left and click on Control Panel…

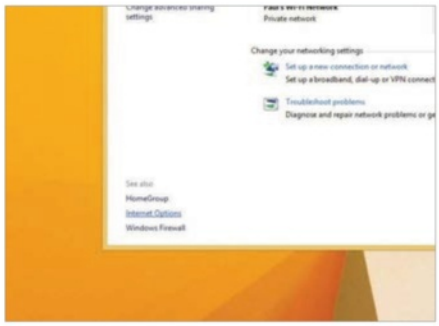
02: The Control Panel

…or move to the right side of the screen and click on the Search icon at the top right. Type 'Control Panel' and click on the icon.



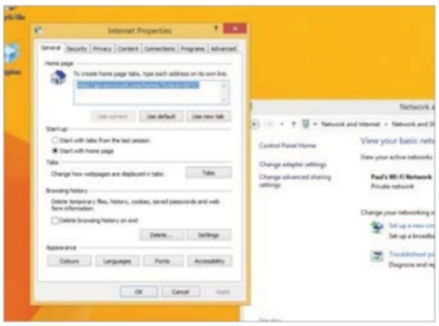
03: Networks and Internet

In the Control Panel, look for the 'Networks and Internet' heading and click 'View network status and tasks' under it.



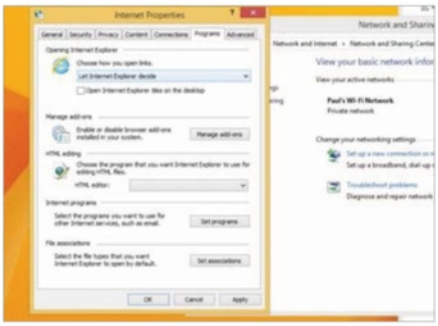
04: Internet Options

Look to the bottom left of the new window that appears and locate the Internet Options link. Click on this.



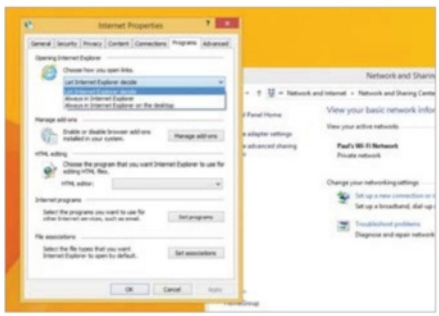
05: Click Program tab

At the top of the new Internet Properties window is a selection of tabs. Locate the Programs tab and click it.



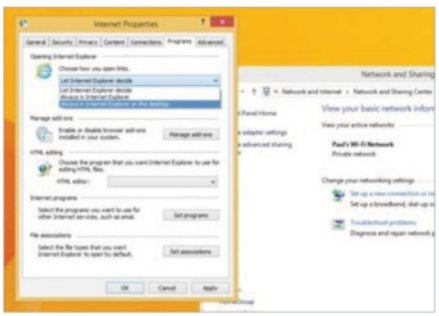
06: Drop-down menu

The first section of this tab view deals with Internet Explorer. Click the drop-down menu to see varying ways to open IE.



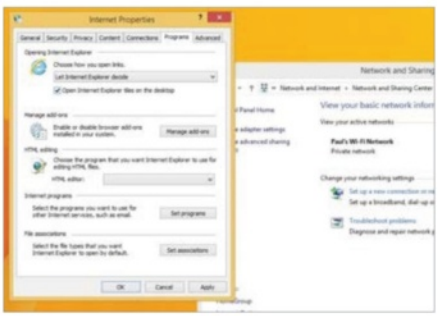
07: Choose from list

After clicking on the drop-down menu, you'll be presented with three options. Be careful which one you select.



08: Change the entry

Change the entry to 'Always in Internet Explorer on the desktop'. This will be highlighted to show it has been selected.



09: Tick the box

You can specify that you want Windows 8 UI tiles to open in IE on the desktop by ticking the box. When finished, click Apply, then OK.

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Add and manage favourites

How to add, move and otherwise manage favourites in both tiled and desktop versions of Internet Explorer

It is good to be able to utilise your web browser to roam the world wide web, looking for essential and trivial information, but what if after you have left a website, you want to return again? Yes, you could always type in the website address, but can you remember it? Some of them can be quite long, especially for a specific webpage. Alternatively, you could search again for the website via the browser's search engine, but that takes time. Also, was the site found after a direct search or after many minutes of convoluted and tangential web surfing? In which case you may have no chance.

The best way to guarantee a return to your favourite is to store the name of the website and its address into your browser. The stored item then becomes a bookmark or favourite, which will remain in your browser until you decide to delete it. Favourites can be manipulated in many different ways. Ideal because, if you store many favourites, they can become muddled and messy, making finding the favourite of your choice difficult and time consuming. We show you how to organise them into folders to avoid this.

"Favourites can be manipulated in many different ways"

Tiled bookmarks

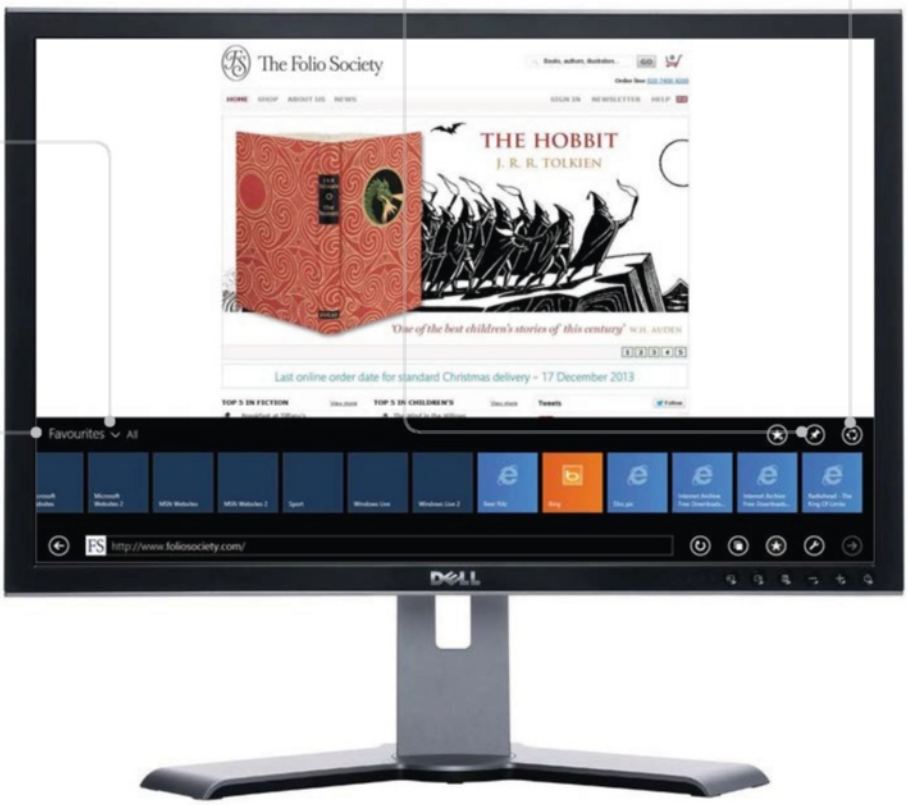
Your tiled Internet Explorer favourites explained

Pin
Creating a favourites list is great for quick access to sites. If you use the Pin option from the favourites menu, it's even quicker as the site address will be attached to the Start menu

Share
You may find a website that would interest a friend or a colleague. What better way to spread joy and happiness than to share the website link? Click the rotating icon to share

Favourites header
Click on the Favourites title header, which is located on the bottom left of the screen, and a pop-up menu will show you all of the folders that currently hold links. Click on one to see the contents of the folder listed on the favourites bar

Favourites list
At the base of the screen, you will see a list of your favourites stretched across it in a horizontal fashion. If you have several favourites within your list then the list will fall off the screen, but can be scrolled to view them all



Tile-based features
In Windows 8.1 IE, to modify a favourite in the row of tiles, right-click on it. A new menu will pop up. Locate and select Edit to change its folder location, or delete it by clicking on Remove. Finally, use the scroll wheel on your mouse to scroll through the saved favourites list.

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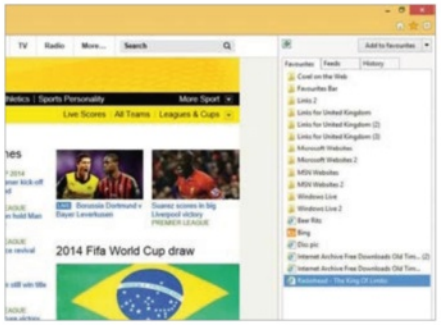
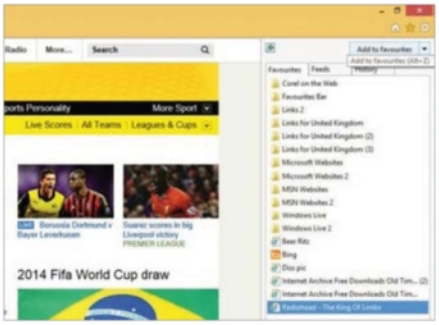


01: Desktop first

Open IE and find the website you want to save in the Favourites section. Click on the star icon on the top right of the screen.

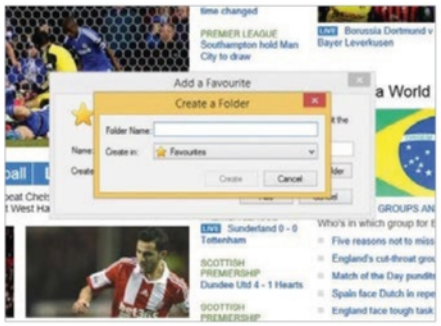


02: Add favourite

At the top right of the new menu, click on Add Favourites and a pop-up window will open in the middle of the screen.

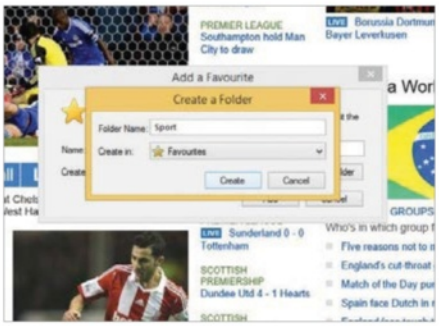
03: Fill in details

The pop-up window has a few fields that you can alter. Firstly, enter the name of the new favourite in the Name field.



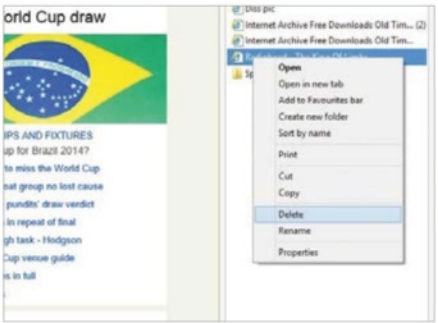
04: Favourite folder

Decide if you want to keep the default folder. If so, click Add to complete the save. Otherwise, click on 'Add folder'.



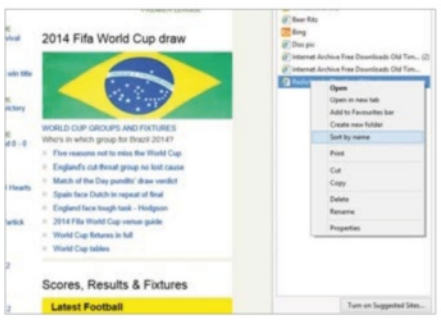
05: New folder

Enter a name for the new folder. Click on 'Create in' and decide where you want the folder to reside. Click on Create.



06: Delete & Rename

Click on the star. To delete a favourite, right-click it and Delete. To rename, select it and type a name; click outside the rename box.

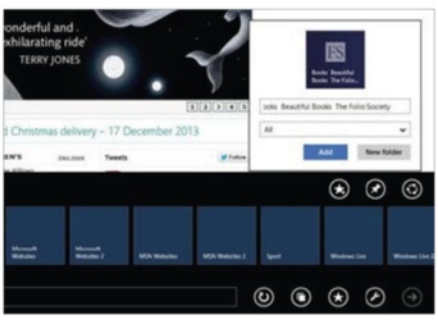


07: Sort / new tab

Open favourites, right-click one and select 'Sort by name' to sort the list. Select 'Open in new tab' to load the site in a new window.

08: Tiled interface

To open the favourites in the tiles interface, click on the IE tile, then the base of the screen and finally the star icon.



09: Add tiled favourite

To add a favourite, click on the star-plus icon. Insert a favourite name and where you want the favourite to reside, then click Add.

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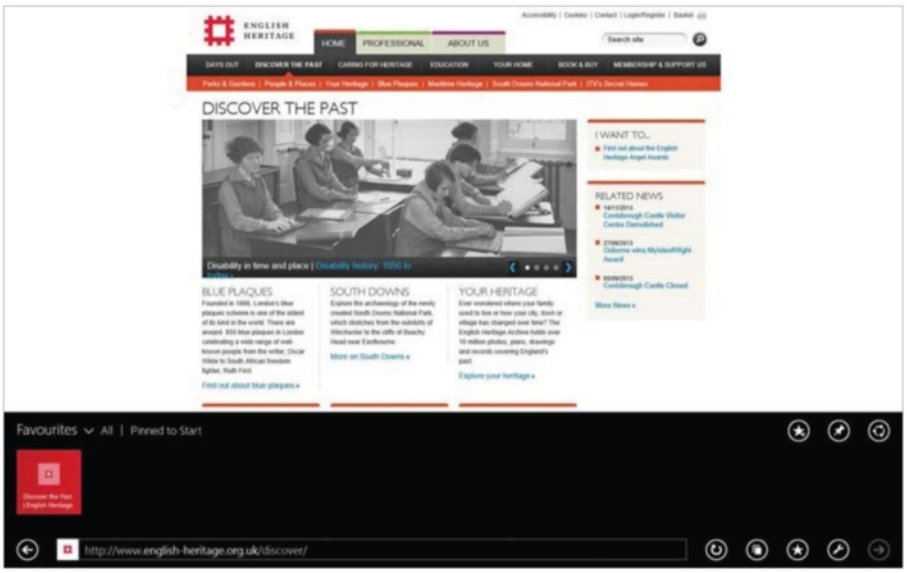
Pin a website to the Start menu

Improve your website access speed by fixing the site in question to the Start menu with the Pin option

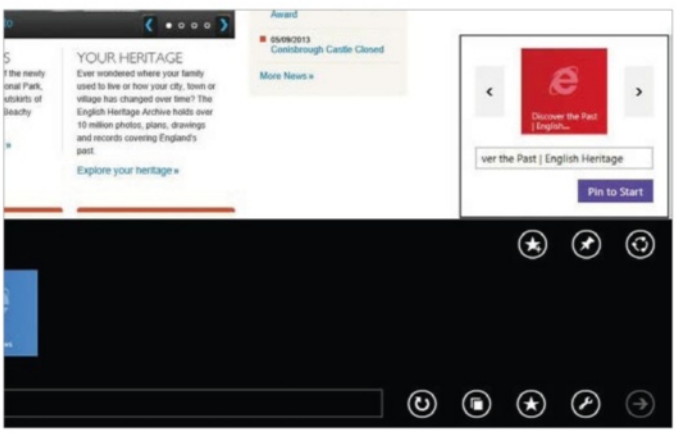
One of the problems of the internet is its sheer size. As you use the internet and you explore more of it and you realise how much useful material there is out there, you will accrue information of all sorts that you will want to record and archive, offline. One category of information is arguably the most obvious: the address of your favourite website. Yes, you have access to a handy Favourites menu to provide a useful website address record, but sometimes this is not enough. It doesn't provide enough speed or accessibility. There are occasions when faster access is needed, an address that is ready to click on and access as soon as you start up your PC. This is where the Pin option, within Internet Explorer, hovers into view and solves an immediate problem. By pinning a website address to the Start menu, you have the ability to click on the address before you have even opened up your web browser. In fact, by clicking on the website address, this in itself will load up Internet Explorer, which will immediately target the website as its first port of call. If you want to know more, read on.



"A web address ready to click on and access as soon as you start up your PC"

01: Open Favourites

Open Internet Explorer and enter the website address of your choice in the search bar that is situated at the base of the screen. Click on the star icon, to be found on the right of the search bar. This will open the Favourites section, displaying your saved websites.



02: Pin website

Click on the Pin icon on the right side of the Favourites menu. An image of the website will appear in a pop-up above the icon. If the icon image is not to your liking, click on the side arrows to choose another one. Decide upon the title for the icon and click 'Pin to Start'.

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Surf in secrecy with InPrivate Browsing

Find out how to activate the private browsing option in the Desktop version of Internet Explorer

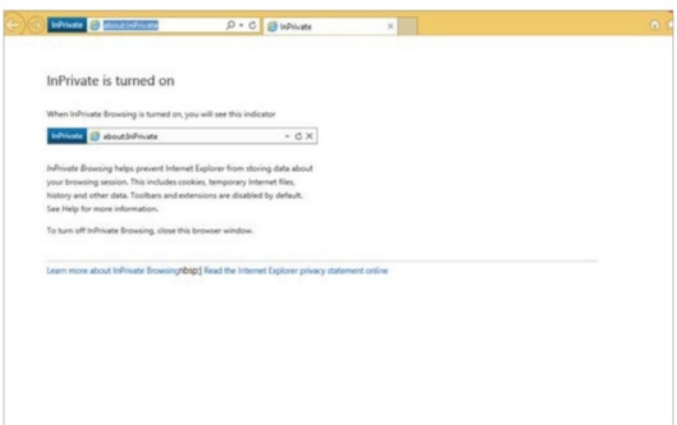
One of the principal issues surrounding the use of the internet is security. InPrivate Browsing on the desktop version of Internet Explorer allows you to surf the web without leaving tracks. If anyone else is using your computer, they will not be able to find out what websites you have visited. You can start the service from any new page that you have opened in the browser or, alternatively, via the Safety button.

When you start InPrivate Browsing, IE opens a special browser window – note that any protection can only be provided from within that window. Of course, you can open as many tabs as you want in that window and they will all be protected by InPrivate Browsing. Be aware, however, that if you open another window to browse within then you will not receive the protection that you desire. Once you have finished with the service, you can close the InPrivate Browsing window.

Information, such as cookies and temporary internet files, will be retained temporarily but they will be deleted at the end of your browsing session.

01: Find Safety

In the desktop version of Internet Explorer, locate the Tools icon at the top right of the screen. Click once and a drop-down menu will appear. Within this menu, locate the Safety option and click on it. This will open a new window with new options.



02: Go InPrivate

In that window you'll see the InPrivate Browsing option. Click on it and a new window will appear. Within this window, you can open up as many tabs as you wish and they'll all provide private browsing. End the InPrivate Browsing by closing the window.

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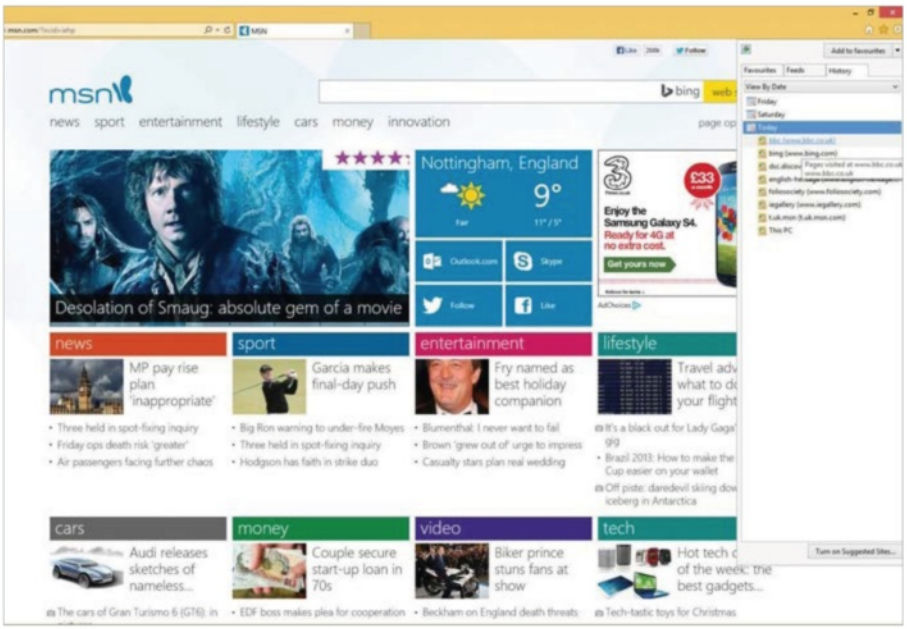
Delete web browsing history

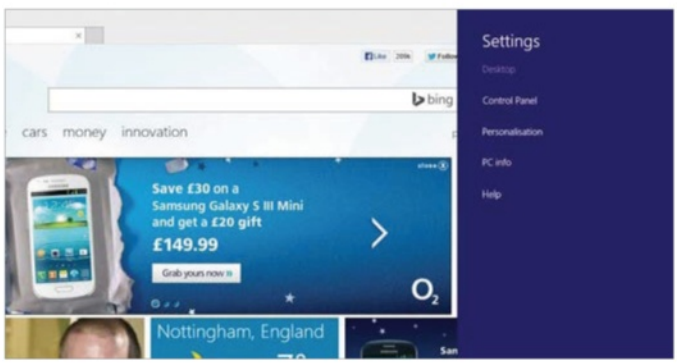
Remove any traces of your web-based activity by removing the history area of Internet Explorer

If we are going to tell you how to delete the web browser history, maybe you should know what it is and what it is for. Simply, it is the recorded list of websites that you have visited recently. Why do web browsers maintain a list of recently visited websites and how is it useful? Having the browser keep a record of your online activity is a good idea. Consider a scenario in which you have visited a webpage but you forgot to note down the address or bookmark it. You can quickly get it from the browsing history, assuming that it's still in there. Internet Explorer also provides a search field in which you can type a query and hunt for the elusive web address, quickly. This is a great time-saver because you don't need to go through each link manually.

With the latest edition of Internet Explorer version 11 you should be aware of one little quirk that might confuse you: there is no option to check the browsing history via the Windows 8.1 tiled version. It does exist. That is, the browsing history is automatically synced between the Internet Explorer tiled version and the desktop version, but you can only access the web history of both in the desktop version of Internet Explorer.



"Your history is the recorded list of websites that you have visited"



01: Enter Settings

If you want to delete the browsing history of Internet Explorer then you can do so through the tiled or desktop versions of IE. Let's begin with the tiled version. Load IE tiled and then open the Charms bar by moving the mouse to the top- or bottom-right corner. Click Settings.

02: Delete History

Locate the Options selection down the sidebar and a new menu will appear. Scroll down it and click on History and you will be taken to a new selection of options with checkboxes adjacent to them. Make sure the checkbox next to History is ticked. Click Delete.

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Clear your history to preserve privacy

Delete your browsing history

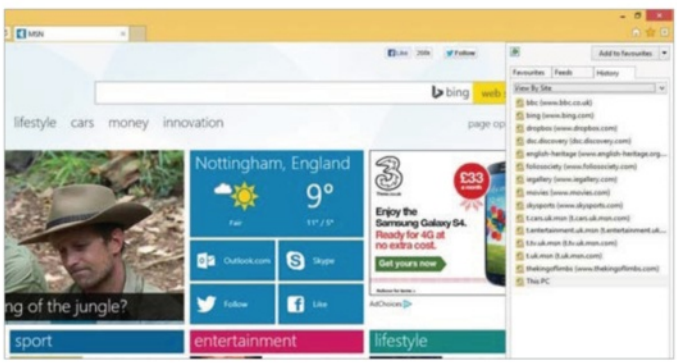
View By
You can see what websites you have within your History section by clicking this button. Here, you will be able to view your list by Most Visited, Order Visited, Date and Site. In this way, you can pick and choose your deletions

Tab
The History section has been designed to fit around the Favourites one, since they concern your web habits. To access the History section, click on the History tab

Website icon
To distinguish websites, most firms add a History icon to help identify them. For example, compare the generic entries here with the more characteristic English Heritage website with its distinctive red square icon

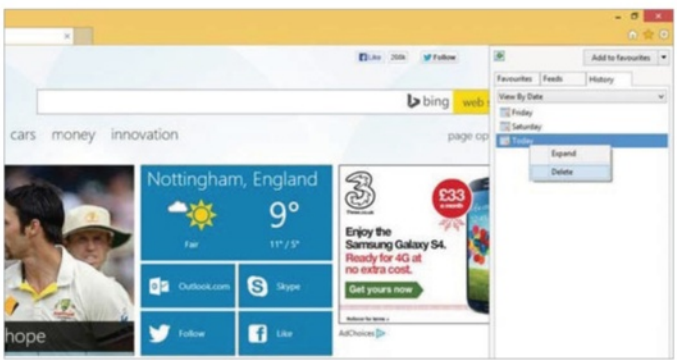
Desktop users only
Notice that this image has been taken from the desktop version of Internet Explorer. If you want to manage your History section then you will need to load up the desktop variant. The tiled version of IE does sync with the desktop version, however

Search History
If you want to be selective about which parts to delete, but your History list is extensive, then you can zero into the website of choice using the Search History option. Click on the View By bar, just under the Favourites tabs and select Search History. Enter an obvious search word and one or more results will be listed below. Right-click and Delete to erase the entry.



03: Load desktop version

In the desktop version of IE, locate the Favourites icon at the top right. Click on it and a drop-down menu will appear. You will now see three tabs, listed horizontally across the window. Locate and click on the History tab. Note that your History is listed beneath.



04: Delete History

Click the View By option to select how you want to view the History. You may wish to delete only part of it, in which case View By Site lets you micromanage the deletions. To delete all the History, select View By Day, right-click on each day and select Delete for each day.

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Access web content offline

How to add items to the Reading List feature and access them later with this handy management tool

Windows 8.1 adds a suite of benefits to the user, including one additional app known as the Reading List. This program is designed to run alongside the Internet Explorer app as well as others that contain articles and reading material you might wish to save to read later.

The app is built upon the premise that you might want to utilise it to create a sort of virtual reading list. Once items are added to it, you can return to your saved articles at any time that you wish.

The Reading List also offers a host of management tools, such as the ability to search your saved articles. You can also remove articles and multi-select them for batch removal, while deleted articles are reserved in a Recycle Bin-like feature that can be configured to store text. Useful for those who own a variety of devices, Reading List also syncs across your devices, so you can save an article on your desktop PC and finish reading it on your tablet. Here's hoping that a Windows Phone version of this useful app is on the way as well. If you want to know more about how to best utilise the Reading List, read on.

> "The Reading List offers a host of management tools for saved articles"

Reading List features

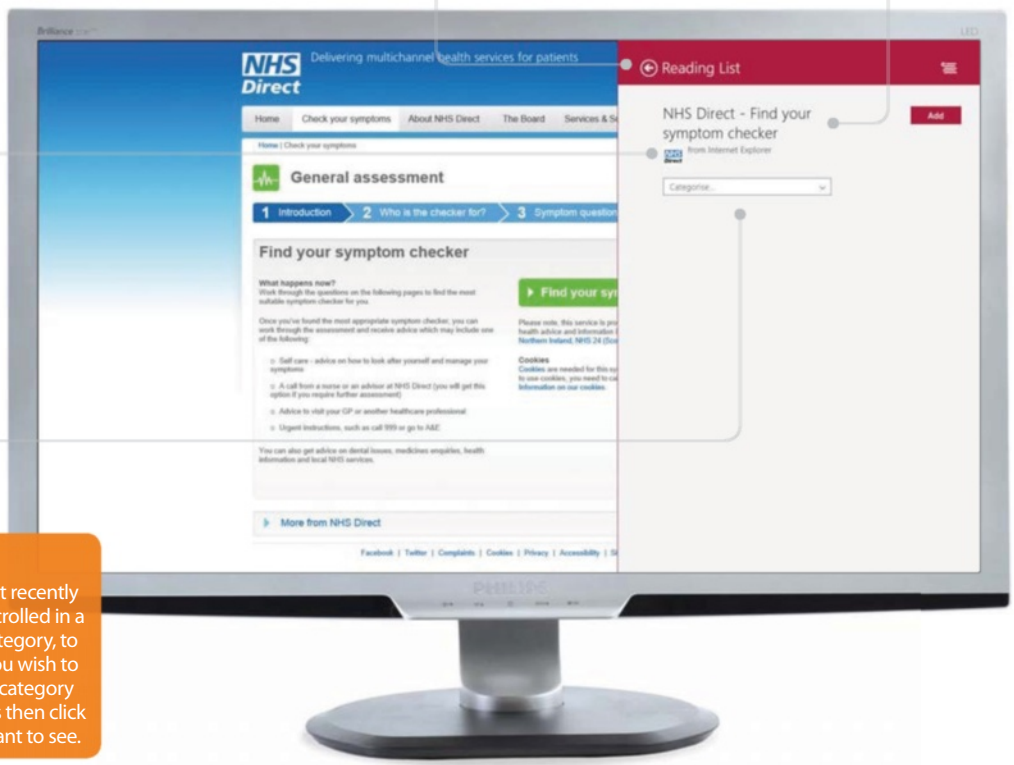
The Reading List app saves text for later viewing

Reading List
Load the Reading List app by clicking on its Start screen tile. A reminder of the icon art is located at the top of the window. To return to the Share menu sidebar, locate and click on the left pointing arrow

List header
You may assume that what you're about to save into the Reading List is what is situated to the left of it. That should be the case, of course, but to make sure, the app copies the name of the article into the Reading List pane

Icon design
A method of identifying your saved reading text, apart from the obvious header text, will be the icon. Most websites will be able to provide you with a unique icon art design which will make locating them a much easier process

Your category
When you save your favourite text, you can save it within the supplied default folder or category, or you can click on this bar to select a folder of your choice, or, indeed, you can name a new category to save the text in



Filter viewing
In the Reading List, you can see your most recently added items first. Earlier articles can be scrolled in a timeline. You can also filter your list by category, to make it easier to find what you want. If you wish to do so, right-click within the app, click the category name you want to see, or click Categories then click the name of the category of items you want to see.

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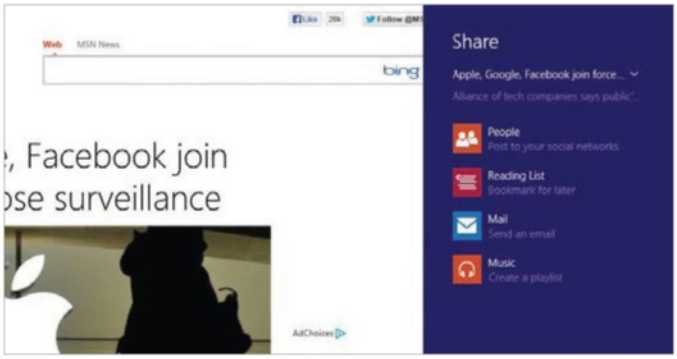
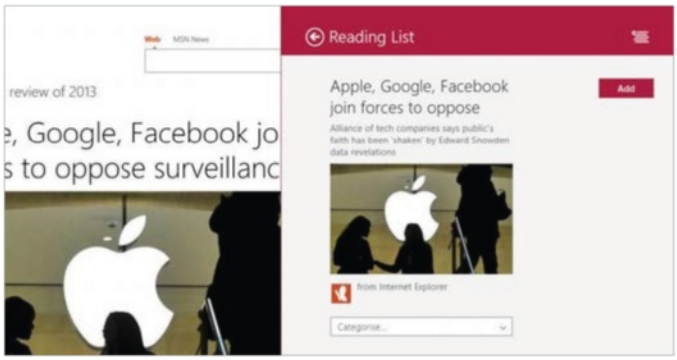
01: Load favourite site

Select an app from which you will save your text. In this case, we will use Internet Explorer. Find and load your preferred website.



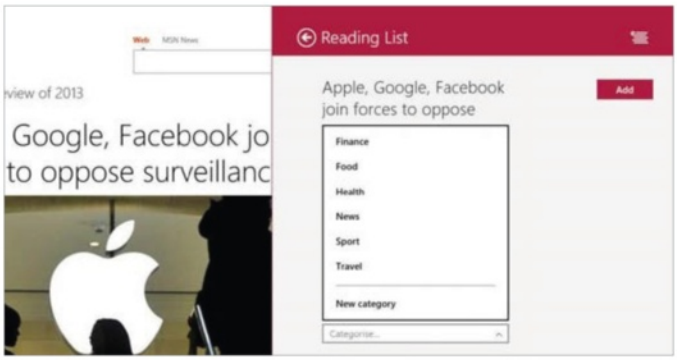
02: Access Share

Bring up the Charms bar on the right, as usual, and click on the Share charm. The Share menu will appear on the screen.



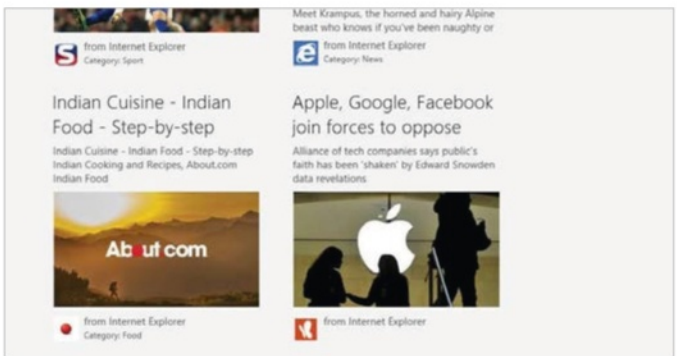
03: Load Reading List

Click on the Reading List icon. The Reading List app will occupy the right side of the screen. The app will then be ready to save the text.



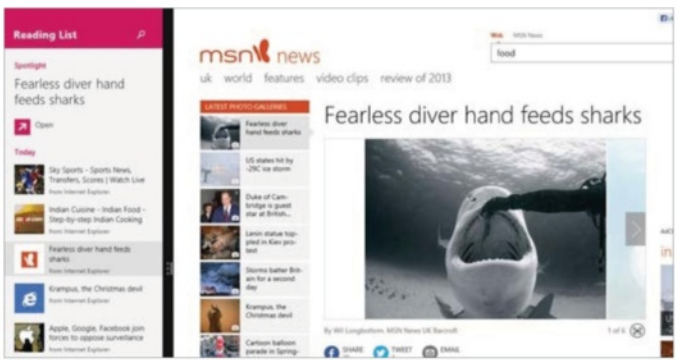
04: Choose a category

You can save the site now or allocate a category to save it in, or create a new category, to store the page for later viewing.



05: For later reading

When ready to read the saved text, return to the Start screen and click on the Reading List tile. Your saved articles will be presented.



06: View reading pane

When you click on an article, the others you've saved are accessible via the Reading List pane located on the left of the screen.

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Navigate the Windows Store

Find your way around the Windows Store and locate the content that you want to be using

The Windows 8 Start screen uses a neat grid of tiles to house the different elements of the operating system. The Windows Store is conveniently placed on the first screen. However, this will differ depending on which device is being used to view the Store.

Windows 8 is all about making the user experience easier and more intuitive – including the navigation process. The Store can be found via the Start screen, housed in a green tile with a white Windows shopping bag icon. Opening the Store will reveal a selection of grids, all neatly categorised and kept separate to ensure clarity. The first category is Spotlight, which is a mixed collection of apps. For a more specific collection, scroll and locate the desired category, such as Games. Selecting the latter will display all the thousands of games available. Use the subcategories to filter out unwanted types. From inside a category you can scroll right to continue looking at the apps, and left to get back to the start. The large top-left arrow takes you back screen by screen to where you want to go.

"Opening the Store will reveal a selection of grids, all neatly categorised"

The Windows Store interface

Take a tour around an app category

Navigate
When visiting a specific subcategory, you will want to return to the Store home screen at some point. Click the left pointing arrow and this will take you back to the screen displaying all the different categories. Select another category to continue

App details
Apps are listed in blocks which display in various heights depending on size of window. Each app offers an associated icon, the name of the app, rating and the price. To get more details about an app, simply click on the desired app block

Category title
The Windows Store is broken down into a wide selection of categories. These include Spotlight, Social, Games, Entertainment and Photos. The name of each category is constantly on display to remind users where they are

Subcategories
The Store has thousands of apps. The precise number for each category is displayed next to the category name. The subcategories list will filter out unwanted apps and only display the desired apps, making for easier searching

Search the Store
The Windows Store is intuitive to use and it takes little more than three clicks to find what you want. However, if you are not casually browsing and know exactly what you're after, a better option is the Search facility. Go to the top-right corner of the screen to bring up the Charms bar. Select Search and type in the name of the app or a keyword. Make sure the Store app is selected in the list. The result will appear in the main window while the search bar stays open.

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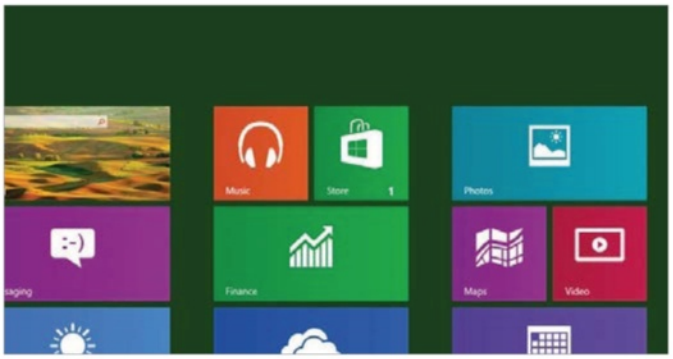
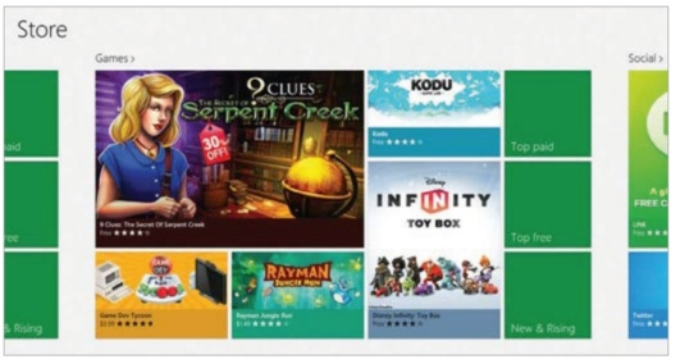


01: Get started

The Start screen grid houses the Store tile – a green square with a white Window shopping bag icon. Click it to enter the Store.

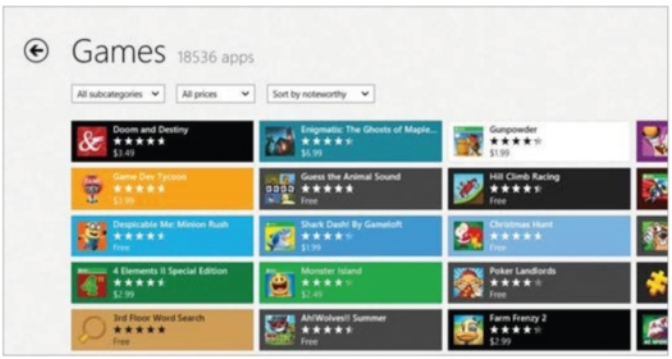
02: Spotlight

The initial 'Spotlight' screen shows popular apps. It also features links to the Top Free, Top Paid and New & Rising apps.



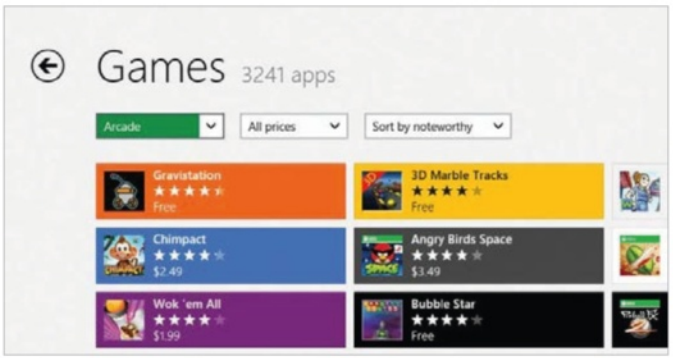
03: Store categories

Moving to the right reveals the mini grids with the top apps for the current category. Again, this features links to the top apps.



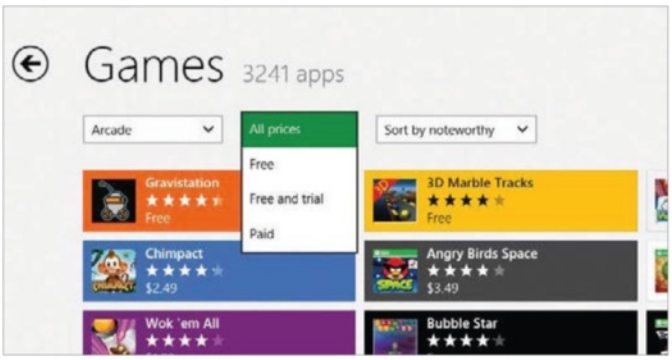
04: Games

Selecting a category (eg Games) opens a grid of related apps. Browse through the apps to locate an app you want to view and click it.



05: Subcategories

Each category has subcategories to help filter the thousands of apps. Click 'All Subcategories' and select the subcategory of choice.



06: Prices

If the price is key, click the 'All prices' drop-down menu. This lets you view all the Free apps in a category, or all the Paid apps in it.

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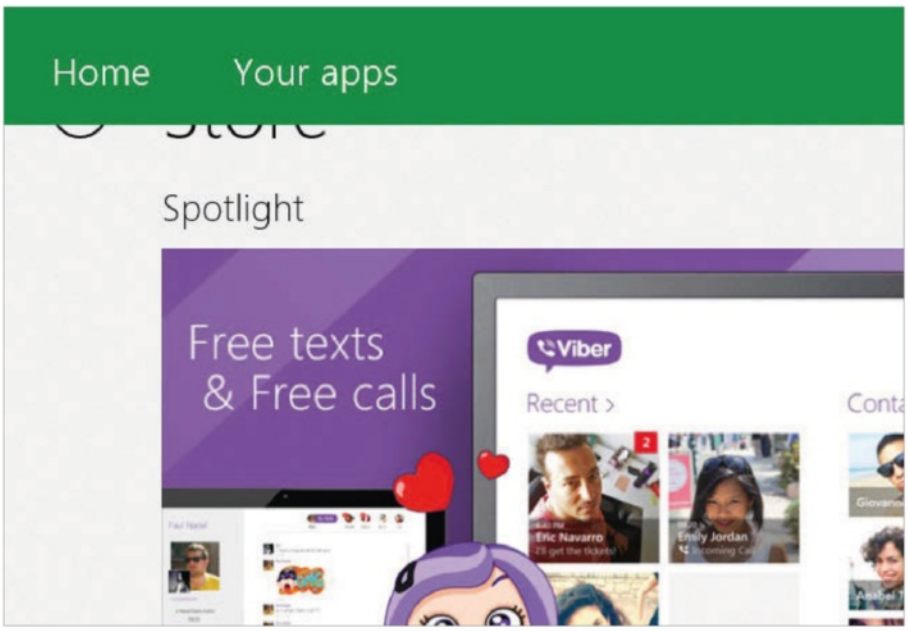
Download and run an app

Get the apps you want from the Windows Store and install them on your desktop, ready to use

There are thousands of apps that can be downloaded from the Windows Store and installed on your computer. First, you need to get the apps. This means a lot of browsing or, if you know what you are looking for, a little less searching.

Apps are split into categories, so the first step is to find the category that contains the app you're after. Once inside the category, it is a good idea to select a subcategory to narrow down the search. Alternatively, the Windows search facility can be used to filter further – the ideal choice if you know what app you want.

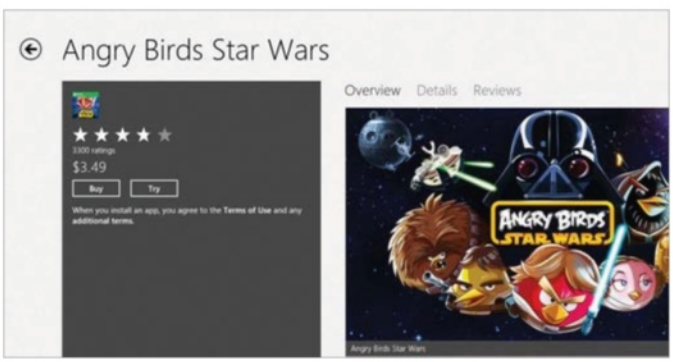
Once the desired app makes an appearance on screen, the next step is to click the app details to get a full-screen summary. This provides a host of details, including a description of what the app is and links to the relevant website, etc. However, the important stuff is housed on the left side of the screen. What is displayed is dependent on whether you are purchasing an app or downloading a free one. If it's a free app, you will simply need to install it. Once the selected app has been downloaded, it will appear on the Start screen. All you then need to do is select it and start using it straight away.



"Once the app has been downloaded, it will appear on the Start screen"

01: Choose an app

The first step is to choose an app via the Store, so open the latter. Next, scroll right until the desired category is found. Now, from the listed category, browse and select the app you wish to download. Click the desired app to view more details.



02: Free, Paid and Trial

Apps can be Free, Paid or Trial. If selecting a free app, the information on the left will state 'Free' and underneath will be an Install button. Simply click that to install the app. If it's a Paid or Trial app, it will offer a Buy or Try button; again, click to install.

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Get an app

Find an app you like and get ready to install

Permissions

The app details will reveal the permissions it requires. Typically, these will include access to your internet connection. There will also be details on the category the app is stored in and its size

Updates

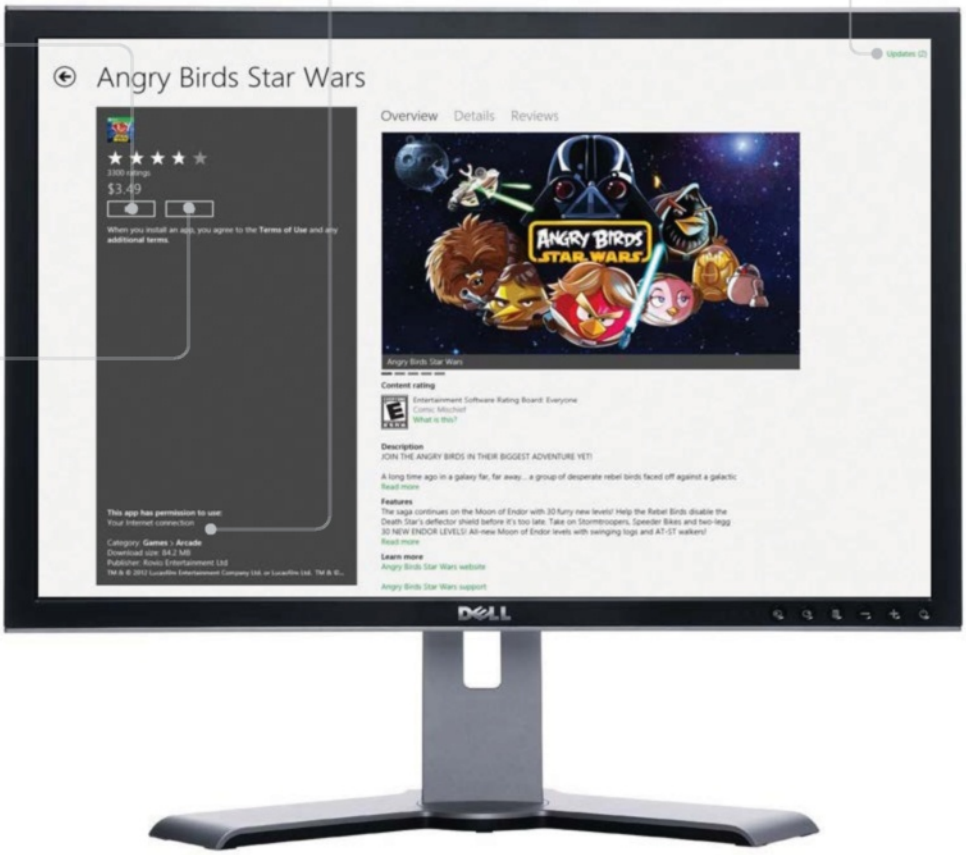
When an app gets an update, the Updates link at the top right of the screen will display the number of updates currently available. To view further details of the updates, click the Updates link. Simply select the apps to update and start the process

Paid apps

Buy and Try are the alternatives to Install found on Free apps. The Try button allows you to download and install a trial version of a Paid app. The Buy button works in the same way, but this take payment from the account that you are logged in with

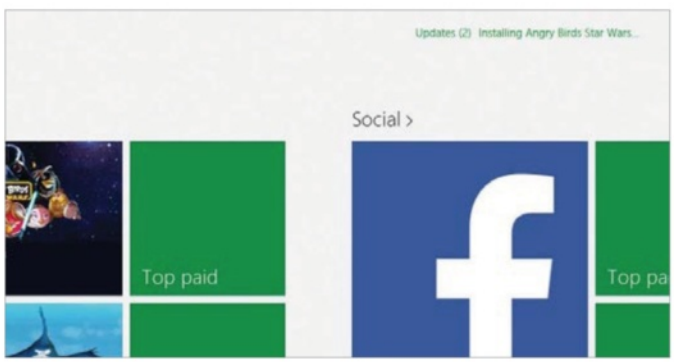
Free apps

Apps come in three different types: Free, Paid and Trial. Free apps differ slightly to the Paid apps. When viewing the details of a Free app, they will have an Install button just under the star ratings. Click this and the app will start installing



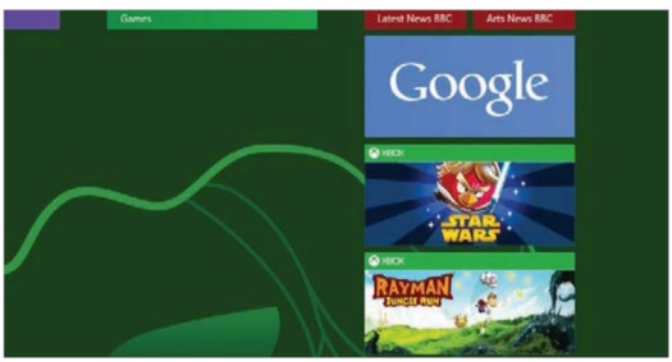
Microsoft account

To download and buy apps, you'll need a Microsoft account. If you already use an email and password to sign into Hotmail, Outlook.com, Skype, Messenger, Xbox Live, SkyDrive or Bing, then you already have a Microsoft account. If you don't have a Microsoft account, however, then you will need to create one. Head over to **http://bit.ly/1c64VHK** and follow the on-screen instructions.



03: App installed

Once the Install, Buy or Try button is clicked, a message will appear at the top right to tell you which app is being installed. Once the app has finished installing, a notification will appear at the top right. To view an app's progress, simply tap the 'Installing…' text.



04: Start new app

Once an app is installed, it's added to the Start screen. Browse to the right to find the newly installed app and click to open. To view all your installed apps, right-click at the top of the screen to see Your Apps. These can be sorted by date, and their details viewed.

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Upload files to SkyDrive

Store files in your free online storage space by uploading them using the SkyDrive Start screen app

You don't need a Microsoft account to use Windows 8, but there are lots of benefits if you do and one of these is free online storage space. You may have heard of the term 'cloud storage' and this simply means storing files on the internet instead of on your computer. Microsoft provides you with several gigabytes of cloud storage and you can use it in any way you like. You can think of it as an online disk drive.

There are many advantages to storing files online and one is that they are safe from disaster, providing a useful backup if anything should happen to your computer or tablet. Another advantage is that you can free up disk space and if you have several gigabytes of photos, for example, you could store them in SkyDrive instead of on the computer or tablet. Many people have fast internet connections these days and so accessing files online is quite quick and easy. You wouldn't want to store large videos online, but documents like word processor files, spreadsheets and photos can all be stored in SkyDrive. In this tutorial we will show how to access SkyDrive and upload your files.

"Word processor files, spreadsheets and photos can all be stored in SkyDrive"

Upload files

Browse files and upload them to SkyDrive

File selections
Each file is displayed as a small tile and because these ones are photos, there is a thumbnail image. The date of each file and its size is displayed too. Click a file to select it and click it again if you change your mind

File information
It can sometimes be difficult to tell one file from another, but there is a useful way to see more details and all you need to do is to let the mouse hover over one. A window pops up with a larger thumbnail and more information

This PC
Click the little down arrow to the right of 'This PC' to display a menu. It shows a list of other places that files can be selected from, such as a network location, or files that have been saved by Start screen apps

Sorting options
When there are a lot of files, it might be difficult to find the ones you want to upload. Here the files are displayed in alphabetical order, but by clicking the arrow next to it, a menu is displayed which allows you to sort by date

SkyDrive in Explorer
It's also possible to upload files from the desktop. From the Start screen, click the Desktop tile, then the Explorer icon at the left side of the taskbar. In the left panel, SkyDrive is listed and selecting it shows the files on it.

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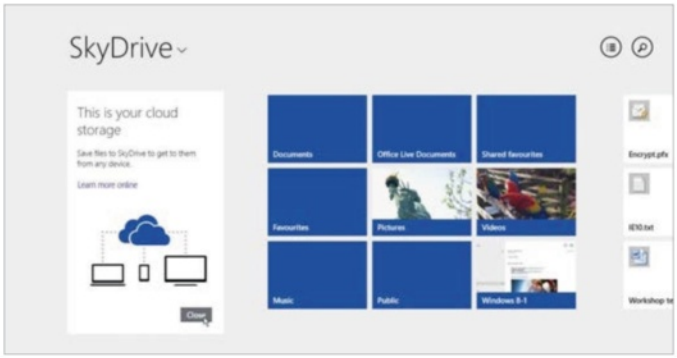
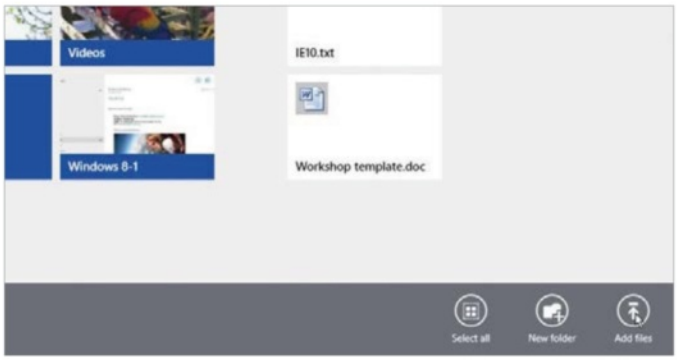
01: Start with Start

Go to the Start screen and click the SkyDrive tile. We have dragged our SkyDrive tile to the top-left corner so that it is easy to access.



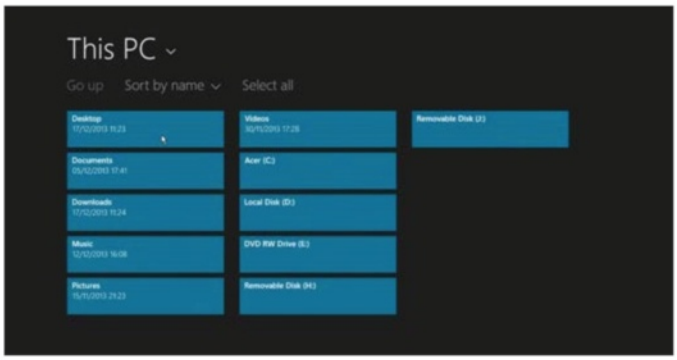
02: Welcome to SkyDrive

The intro panel on the left can be closed. The rest shows your files and folders, and will be empty if you haven't used it before.



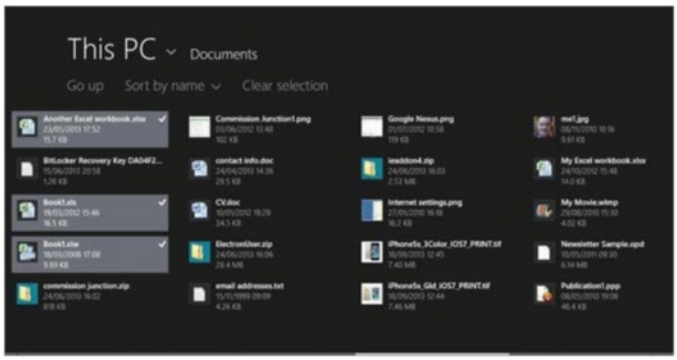
03: Access the menu

Move the mouse to an empty space and right-click to open a panel at the bottom of the screen with useful functions. Click on 'Add files'.



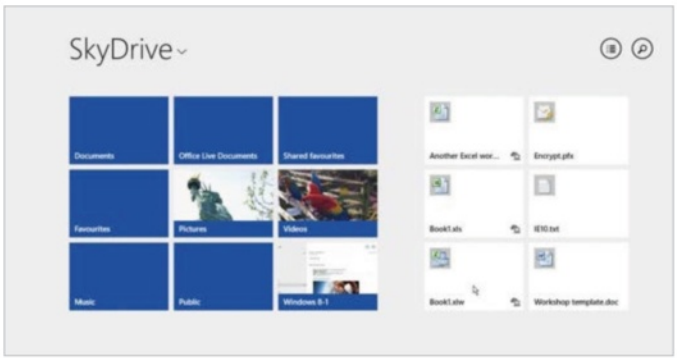
04: Browse the disk

On the new screen, drives and folders are shown as tiles. Click a folder to open it; clicking 'Go up' returns you to here.



05: Select and upload

Click each file you want to upload to select it (click again if you change your mind). Then click 'Copy to SkyDrive'.



06: View your files

After uploading, you return to the main SkyDrive view and your files are displayed. The Blue items are folders.

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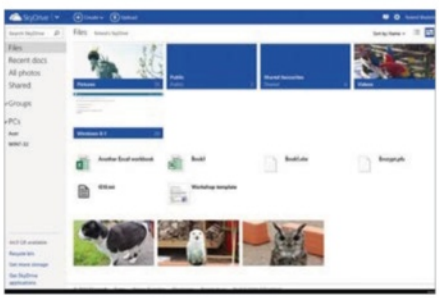
Share files with SkyDrive

Share your documents and photos stored on SkyDrive with your friends, Facebook or the public

SkyDrive is a useful place to store files and you can upload documents created in Word, Excel and other applications, add photos taken with digital cameras or mobile phones, and so on. Not only does this keep them safely stored online in the cloud and free up space on the computer, tablet or phone, it also enables you to share them easily. Any type of file uploaded to SkyDrive can be shared and it is especially useful with Office documents and photos.

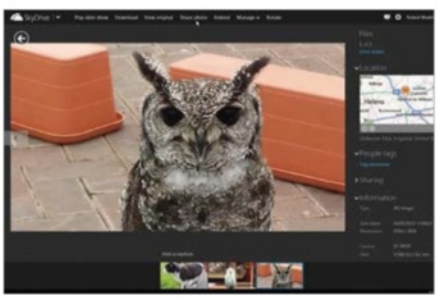
You can show off all your latest photographs by sending links to friends, inviting them to view the album online. You can also post individual photos or even whole collections of photos to Facebook. You can even create an album for Facebook and upload photos to it so that all your friends can view them. You can get a public link to a file on SkyDrive or you can invite just one or two of your closest friends or family, or selected work colleagues. It is up to you who can see the shared files and you have full control over them.

"Show off all your latest photographs by sending links to friends"



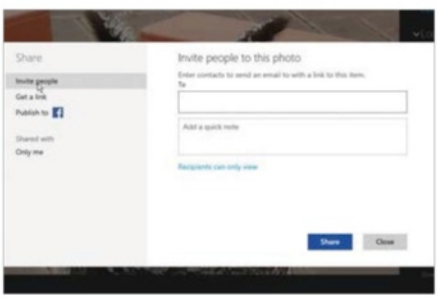
01: Use Internet Explorer

You can't share files from the SkyDrive app – you must use Internet Explorer. Click the tile on the Start screen and go to **skydrive.com**.



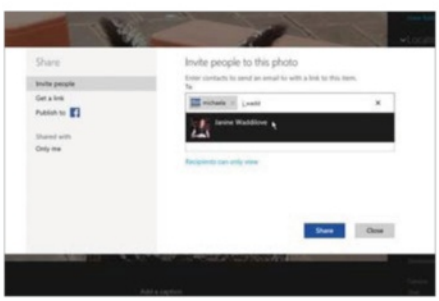
02: Click a file

Click a photo and it opens in full-screen. If you want to share it with friends, click the 'Share photo' link in the menu bar at the top.



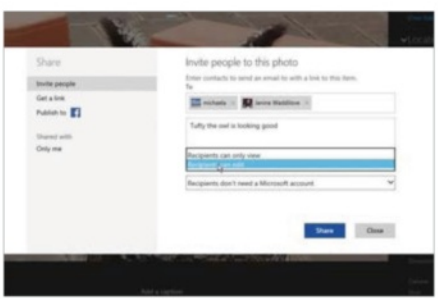
03: Share it

The sharing options are 'Invite people', 'Get a link' and 'Publish to Facebook'. Any can be selected, but we will use the first.



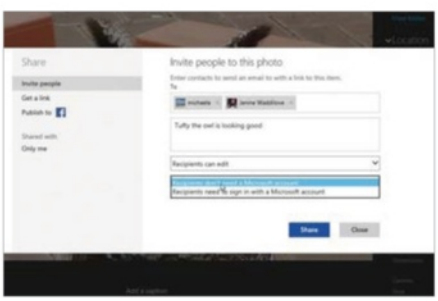
04: Invite people

Click in the 'To' box and start typing a name to see suggestions from your contacts list; these can be clicked to save further typing.



05: Sharing options

Click 'Recipients can only view' twice to display this menu. You can choose whether a file can be viewed only or edited too.



06: Limit access

One way of limiting access is to require that recipients have a Microsoft account. Click the Share button to finish.

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View your shares

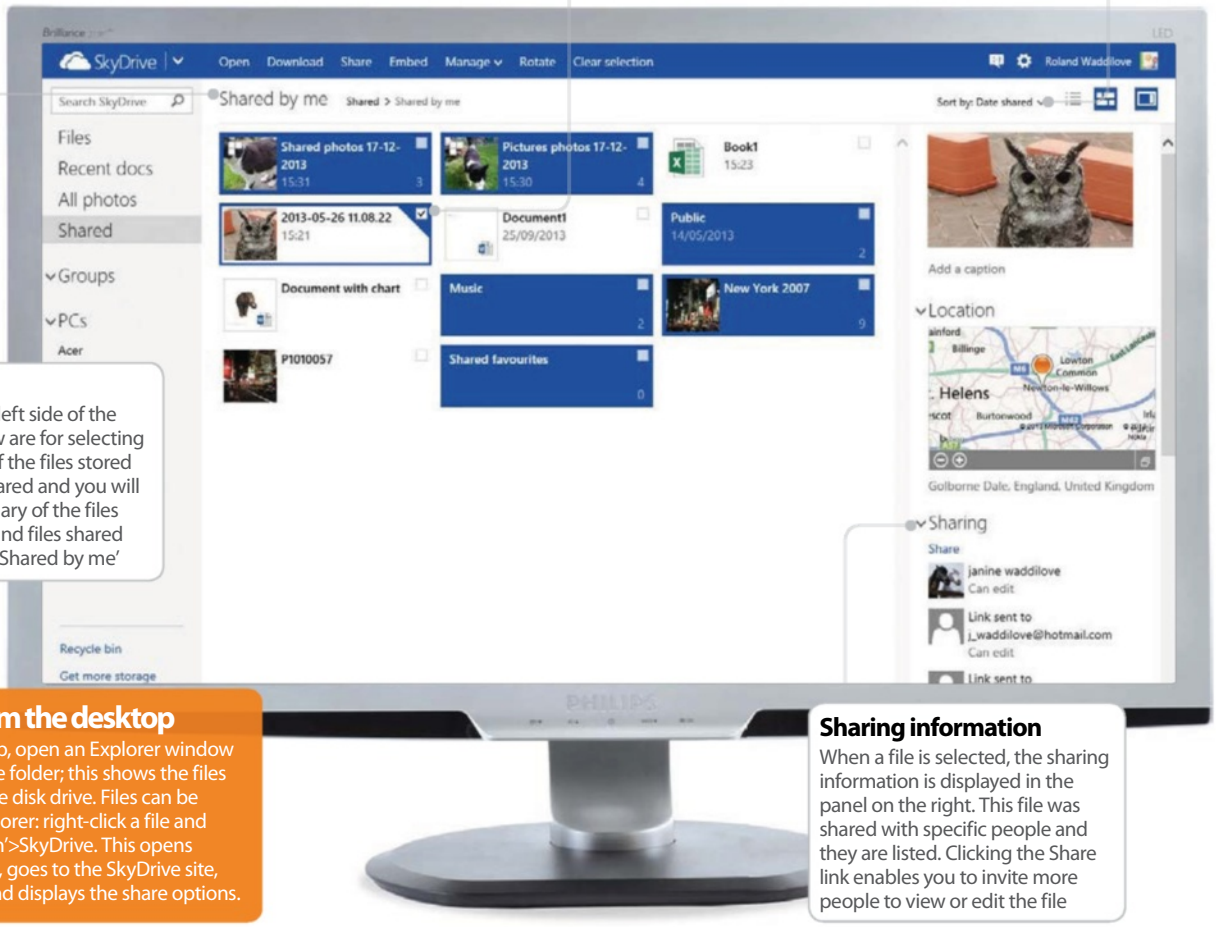
See what files you are sharing and who with

File selection

As the mouse passes over a file tile, a box appears in the top-right corner. Click it to select it. When one or more files are selected, the menu bar appears at the top of the screen and the information panel is displayed on the right

View options

These menus and buttons are used to select different views. Here the files are sorted by date shared, but clicking it lists other options. The far right icon shows or hides the information panel. Try the different views



Select a view

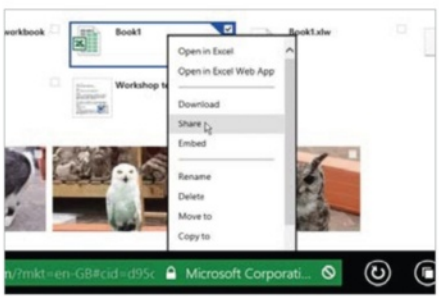
The items at the left side of the SkyDrive window are for selecting different views of the files stored online. Select Shared and you will see a brief summary of the files you are sharing and files shared with you. Select 'Shared by me'

Sharing from the desktop

From the desktop, open an Explorer window to find a SkyDrive folder; this shows the files also stored on the disk drive. Files can be shared from Explorer: right-click a file and select 'Share with'>SkyDrive. This opens Internet Explorer, goes to the SkyDrive site, selects the file and displays the share options.

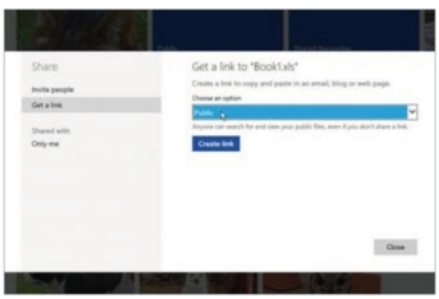
Sharing information

When a file is selected, the sharing information is displayed in the panel on the right. This file was shared with specific people and they are listed. Clicking the Share link enables you to invite more people to view or edit the file



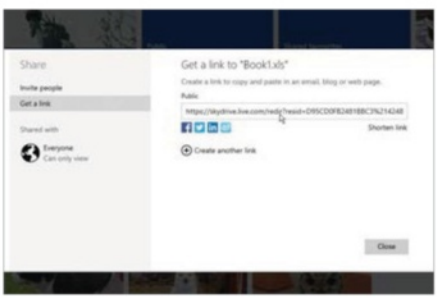
07: Share files

Another way to share files is from the file screen in step 1. Right-clicking a file selects it and on the menu that is displayed is Share.



08: Sharing options

This time we'll use 'Get a link'. There are 'View only', Edit and Public options. Opt whether or not to make it public or editable.



09: Copy the link

Click Create Link. Right-click the link, choose 'Select all', then right-click and Copy. It can then be pasted in emails and elsewhere.

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Explore the Maps app

Use the Maps app to find local businesses, get up-to-date traffic reports and explore the world

The Maps app on the Start screen is more than just a map and it has lots of great features. For example, you can zoom right out and see the whole world and swoop in right down to street level. You can visit any part of the world to plan trips and view holiday destinations, or to simply explore places far away that you have never been to.

The search facility enables you to find any place in the world, and it is amazing what you can find. Just right-click on the map and click the Search button to bring up the search panel. Whether you want to explore Paris in France or Paris in Texas, Maps can find them both (search for 'Paris, US' for the US city). It can work out your current location too and this enables you to easily see what is around you. A couple of clicks is all it takes to add traffic information to the map and you can see where the traffic is heaviest and where there are problems like roadworks.

Maps has two views: a traditional illustrated map style and satellite imagery. Switching from one to the other is easy and you may find one more useful than the other depending on what you are viewing. Try them both.

"The search facility enables you to find any place in the world"

Maps menu bar

Use the buttons in the bottom panel in Maps

Map style

The 'Map style' button is used to switch from the traditional Road view to the Aerial view. The aerial view uses photographs seamlessly stitched together. Zoom right in with the '+' button and you can see buildings, trees and even cars

Search for it

Click the magnifying glass to search. Enter any place name and Maps will find it. It usually shows the most obvious location, but you can fine-tune the search by adding extra info. For example, enter 'Paris, US' or 'Liverpool, Australia'

Add a pin

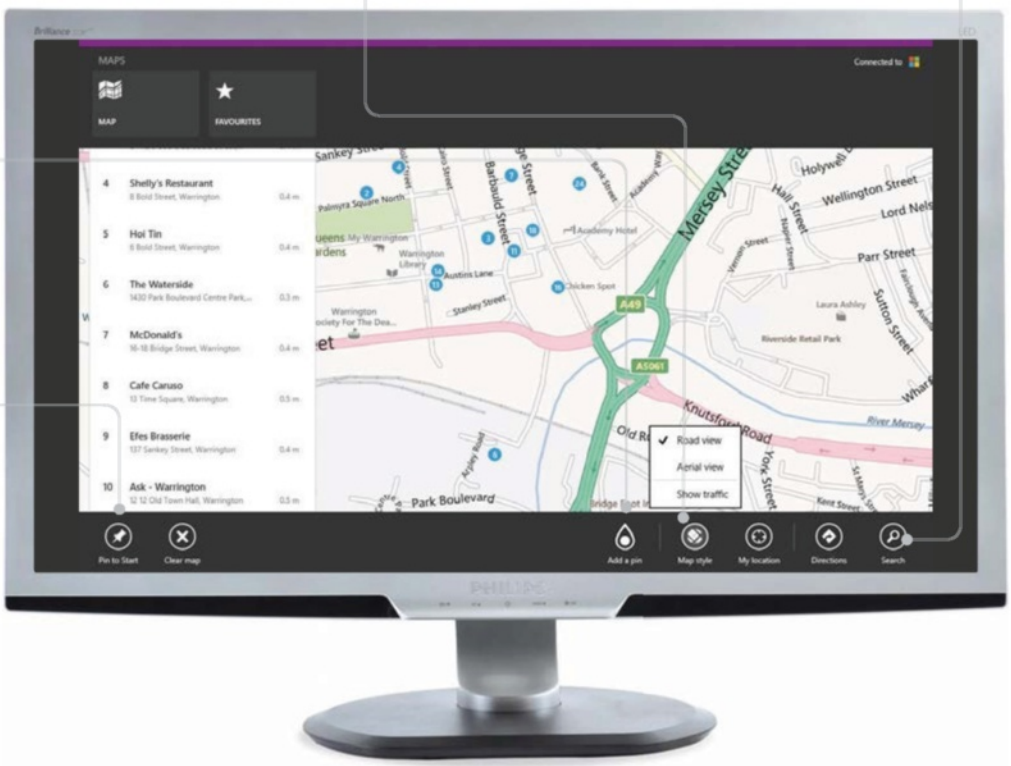
Another way to save locations is to add a pin to the map. Click and drag the 'Add a pin' icon and drop it on the map at whatever location is of interest. Clicking the pin displays a pop-up panel with buttons to access various functions

Pin to Start

If you have a map you'd like to save, you could add it as a tile to the Start screen. Clicking the tile would open Maps to show the current location. 'Clear map' removes the current search information.

Save favourites

Creating favourites is achieved by placing a pin and searching for a city, a hotel, place to eat, etc. Click the pin and a panel shows a row of icons. Click the star icon to add it to Favorites. To access the latter, right-click on the map and click Favorites in the top panel. Then click a favourite to view it on the map.



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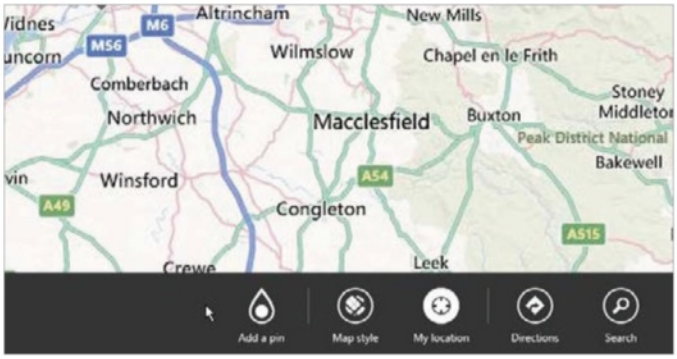
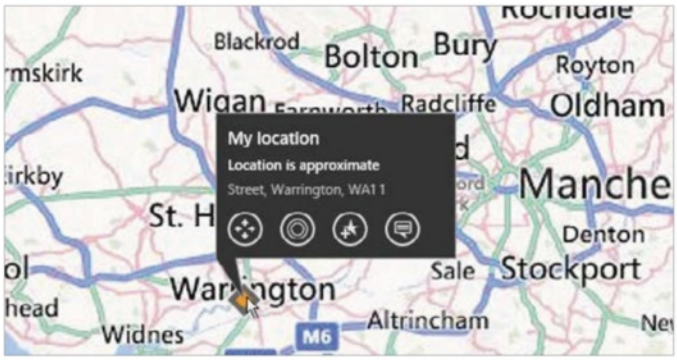
01: Start exploring

Open the Maps app from the Start screen and it will show the last map viewed. Click and drag the map around to move it, click the '+' and '–' symbols to zoom in and out.



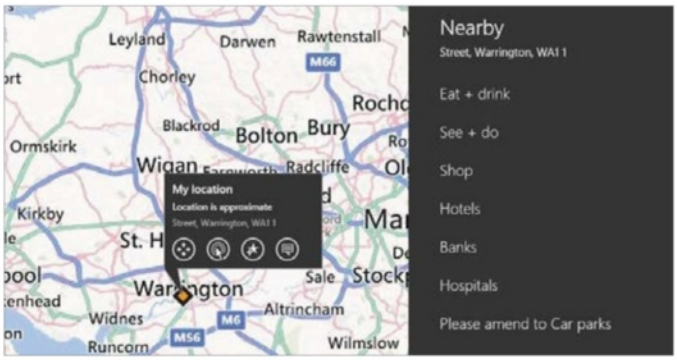
02: Show the menu

Right-click the map to display the menu bars. To show your location if it isn't already displayed, click the 'My location' button at the bottom.



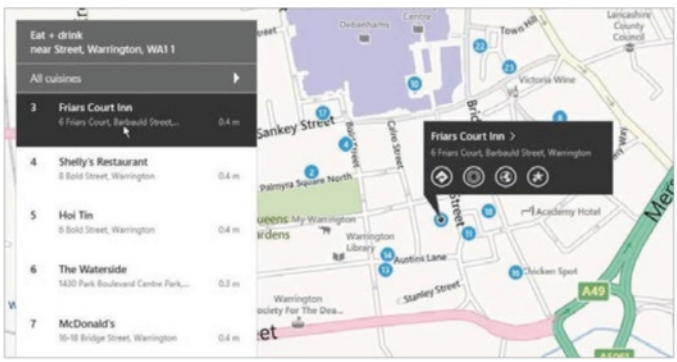
03: Location options

Click the diamond map icon indicating your location and a panel is displayed. The first icon on it, Move, adjusts the position in case it is not quite right.



04: Discover nearby attractions

Click the second icon in your location panel and on the right is the Nearby panel. Maps can show you where to find shops, hotels, banks, hospitals and places to eat.



05: Places to eat

Click 'Eat + drink', say, and blue numbers on the map indicate local eateries, while the left panel lists each one. Click one to see it.

06: Change map styles

Right-click a map and click 'Map style'. Choose the traditional Road view or Aerial view with satellite imagery. Traffic can be shown too.

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Get directions in the Maps app

Whether you travel by car, public transport or walk, Maps shows the best route and provides directions

Maps has many useful features and the best is the route planner. Tell it where you want to start from, where you want to go and it shows the route to take. This is very useful and before setting off on a journey you can view the route, discover any potential problems, see how far it is and how long it'll take. You can also print out the directions and take them along.

The tutorial takes you through the steps required to get directions. It depends on the journey, but sometimes there is more than one way to get to the destination. For example, there may be a shortest route and a fastest route, or one that avoids roadworks. When the route panel is displayed on the left, click the arrow next to Routes to display the alternatives and click one to see the directions. The new route is highlighted in blue on the map. Don't forget to display traffic information. This shows roads where traffic is heavy and known problems, and you can select each route in turn and make sure it avoids them. Printing the route directions to take with you is a straightforward task and you will find an explanation in the small boxout.

"You can select each route in turn and make sure it avoids traffic problems"

Explore the route

Check each step of the way and learn it

Alternative routes

Click the arrow next to Routes to show the alternatives. There are three here and clicking a route displays the directions in the panel and the route on the map. Click each route and explore it to discover the best one to take

Traffic and more

The A shows the starting point; the numbers, each turn. Click them to highlight the step on the left. Turn on traffic information to see problem roads highlighted in red, or to see roadworks you might need to avoid

Add to Favorites

If planning a trip, you might want to create several routes for all the places you want to visit. Click this icon and a route is saved to Favorites. Right-click the map to go to Favorites and show a route

Route steps

A route consists of many steps and each one tells you which road to take or whether to turn left or right at junctions and roundabouts. Click a step and the map will zoom in to show the exact location. Make sure you know each step

Print a route

When a route is displayed, move the mouse to the bottom right to show the Charms bar; click Devices, then Print and select a printer. A preview of the printout is displayed and if you move the mouse over it, an arrow at the right side enables you to flip through the pages. The last one shows the maps and there's the start, end and overview.

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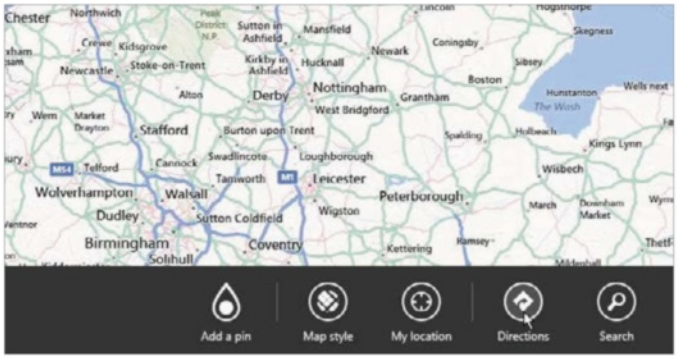
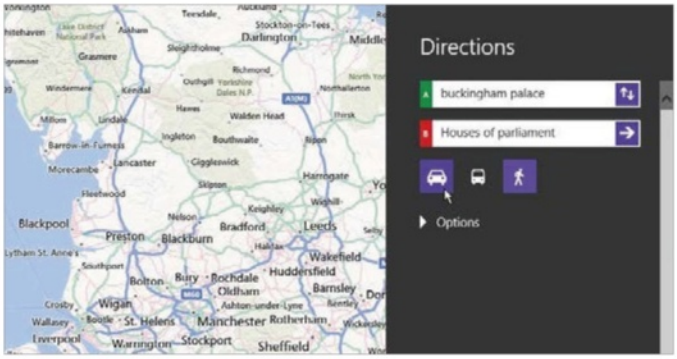


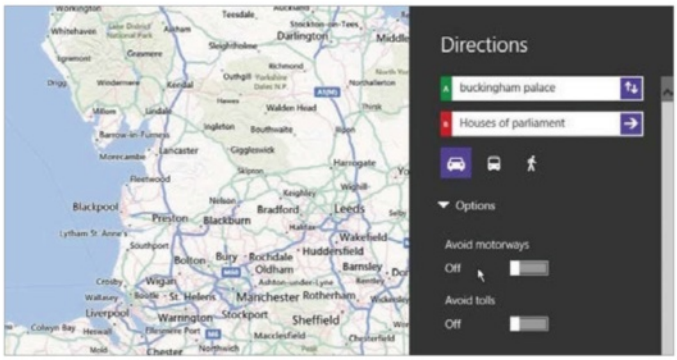
01: Plan a route

Open the Maps app from the Start screen and no matter what part of the world it shows, right-click it to show the bottom panel and then click Directions.



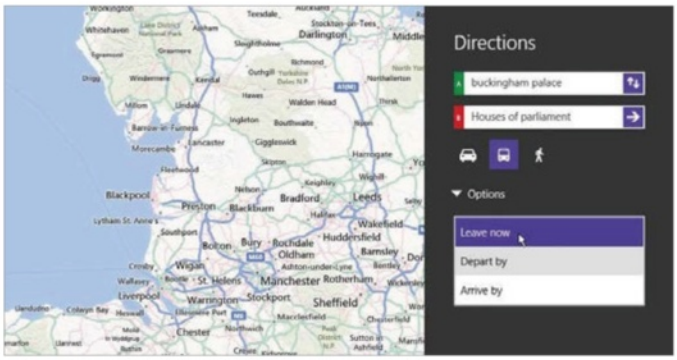
02: Start and end

There are two boxes labelled A and B. These are the start and end points of the journey. Click in each box and enter cities, an address or a landmark.



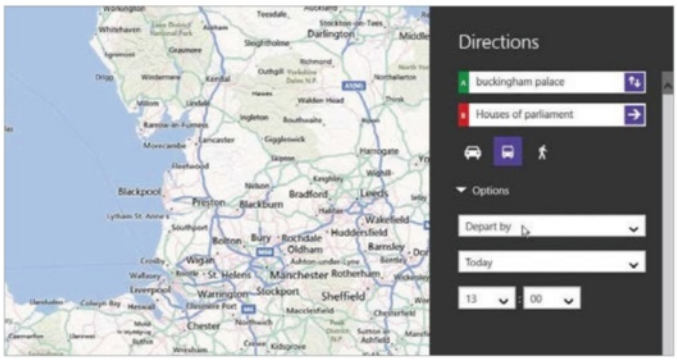
03: Travel method

The three icons select the method of travel and the options are car, public transport or walking. Travel by car and you can opt to avoid motorways or tolls.



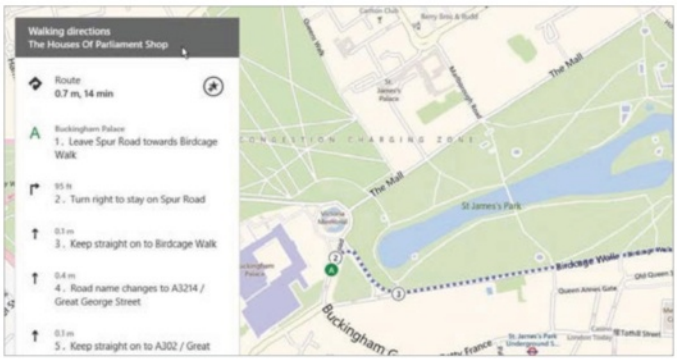
04: Departures and arrivals

Select the public transport (bus) icon to access a menu to select the time. You can leave right now, choose the departure time or when you want to arrive.



05: Set the time

If you want to depart at a certain time, select 'Depart by', choose the day and set the time you will leave. It predicts when you will arrive.



06: Walk it

Our journey is short, so we chose the walking option. Each step is described in the panel on the left, from the start to the destination.

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Add contacts in the People app

Add friends and work contacts to your PC's digital address book and store names, addresses, email and phone details

Microsoft has included an excellent contact manager with Windows 8: named the People app, it appears on the Start screen. Click this tile to display it full-screen and you'll find it can be used to store contact info for friends, relatives, colleagues or customers. It's easy to use and quite flexible since the amount of info stored can be expanded by adding extra items.

The first time you open the People app, you may be surprised to find that it already contains many contacts. This is because it can pull in and display contacts from various sources. For example, it can show all the contacts used with the Mail app or the Outlook.com website (which used to be called Hotmail). It can also show contacts stored in Facebook, Twitter and Skype. Even though it might have most of your contacts already, there will be times when you need to add more. The tutorial shows how to add a contact and to expand the information stored using custom fields. Once you have added contacts, they can be displayed by clicking one of the letters on the home screen or by clicking the All Contacts heading above them.

"The People app can pull in and display contacts from various sources"

Add contact details

Fill in the form to add a new contact

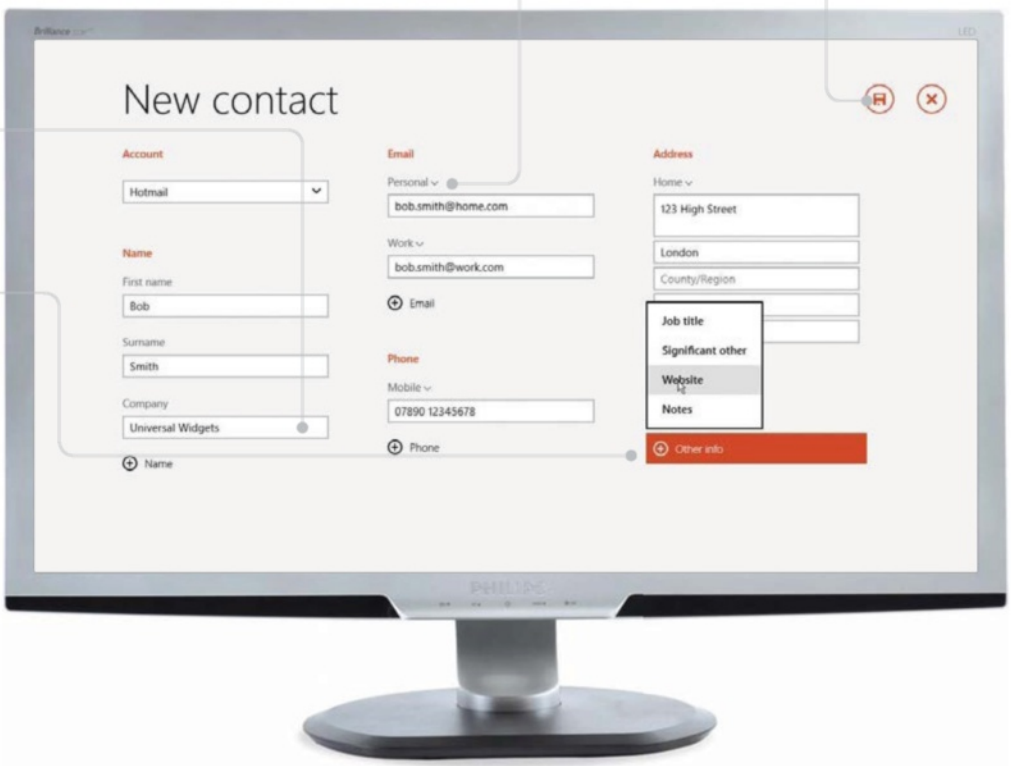
Change the headings
A down arrow like this one means that more than one heading is available for this item. With email, for example, it could be a personal or work email address. Click the heading and set it as required

Finishing off
You don't need to fill in all the boxes and providing there is a name, you can click this save button to store the contact. The X button quits this screen if you change your mind and don't want to add a contact

Is it necessary?
There are boxes for all sorts of info and they don't have to be filled. For instance, if the contact is a family member, you don't need to fill in the Company box. Any of the boxes can be left empty if you want

Add more information
Only basic info is initially requested, but there are many more items that can be added. Click '+' next to items like 'Other info' to access a pop-up menu. Select the item you want to add to the contact

Editing contacts
Say you've entered erroneous info for a contact, their details change or you want to add extra items. Don't worry. Just browse and select the contact from the People home screen to show their details. Then you can right-click an empty part of the screen and click the Edit button. All the information can be changed or deleted, or more can be added.



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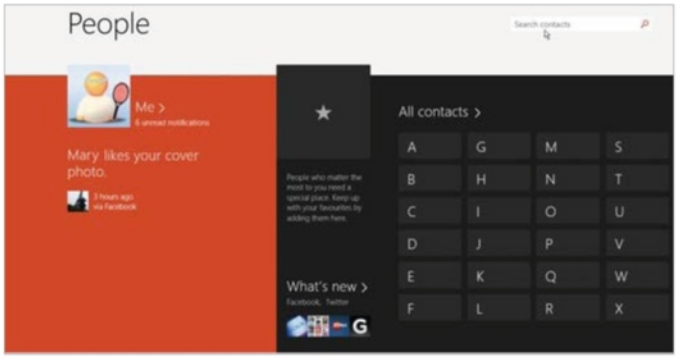
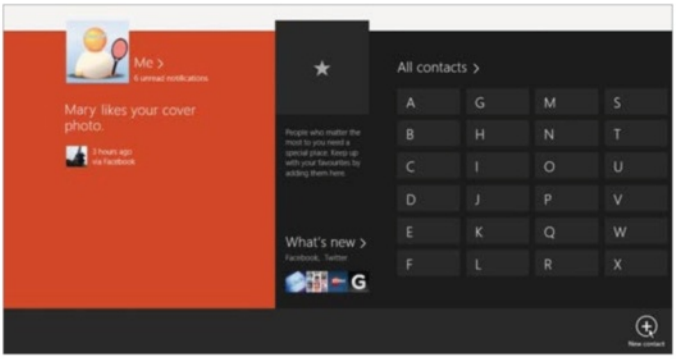


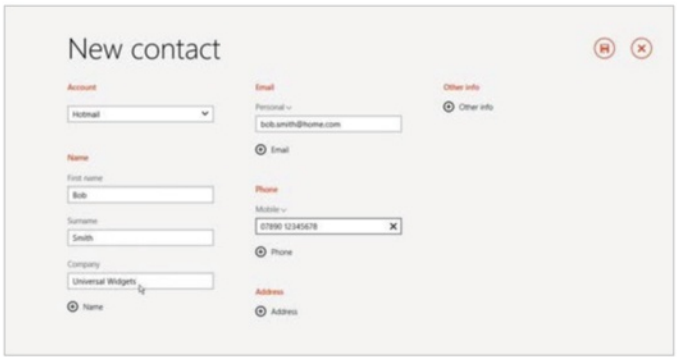
01: Open People

Go to the Start screen and click the People app tile to open it. There isn't an obvious way to add contacts.



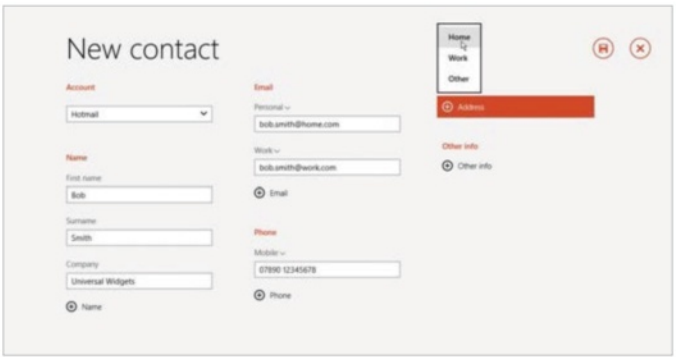
02: Show the panels

Right-click on an empty part of the screen and top and bottom panels will be displayed. Click 'New contact' at the bottom.



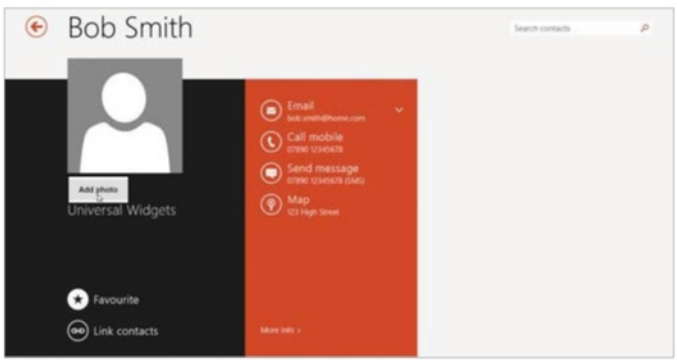
03: Basic information

The new contact form has space for just key pieces of info. Enter the first and last names, company, email address and phone number.



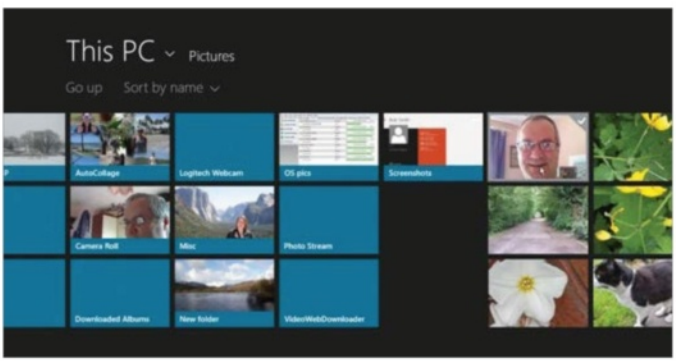
04: Add more items

There isn't a box to enter their address, but clicking '+' next to Address lets you add one. More items are added in the same way.



05: Replace the photo

After clicking the save button (top right), the contact's info is shown. There is just a dummy photo and clicking it enables you to add one.



06: Choose an image

If there's a photo of the contact on the PC, you can browse the disk drive and select it. Click the Open button to add it to the contact.

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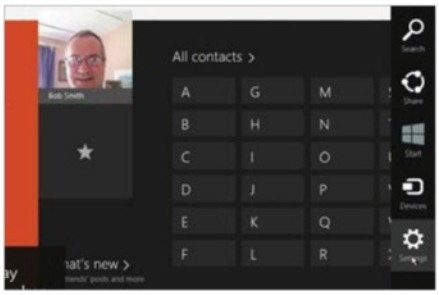
Sync your contacts

Configure the People app to pull in contact information and status updates from Facebook and Twitter

The People app is a useful contact manager that is just one mouse click away on the Start screen. Adding contacts is straightforward and we looked at this in the last tutorial. What we didn't mention is that there's a quick way to add many contacts: by using social networking services like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and others. If you are a member of any of these services and have friends or followers, the People app can connect to them and combine the contact information with the people it already knows. The app then shows contacts across all the services and it gives a great overview of everyone you know.

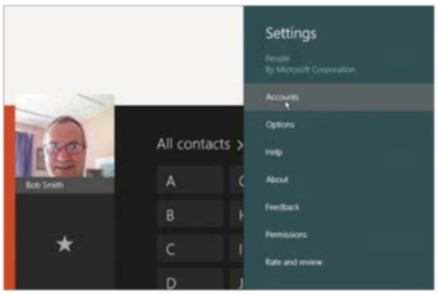
Each service is added one at a time and the method is the same. Go to the settings, choose Accounts and it lists those you can add. Select each one in turn. This involves signing in to the service, so you will need to know your username and password, and then authorising the app and giving it permission to access your contacts.

"Each service is added one at a time and the method is the same"



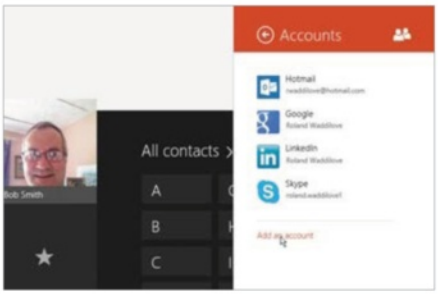
01: Show the charms

Open the People app. Move the mouse to the top-right corner and pull down for the charms, then click Settings.



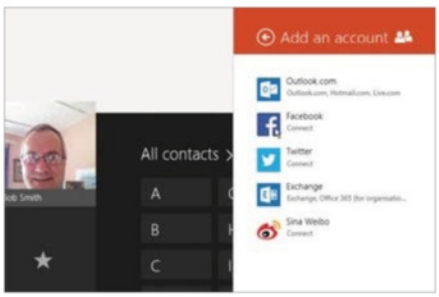
02: Go to Settings

We need two things here: Accounts and Options. First, let's go to Accounts, which shows who the People app is connected to.



03: People's connections

These are the accounts the People app is connected to. We've added some, but not Facebook. Click 'Add an account'.



04: Select an account

These are the accounts that haven't yet been added to the People app. Click Facebook to add the account.

05: Connect to Facebook

A link shows what happens when you connect People to Facebook. When you're happy, click the Connect button to continue.

06: Facebook login

You need to log into Facebook with your usual email address and password for it. Tick the box for 'Keep me logged in'.

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Show your contacts

Make sure you can see all your contacts

Contact options

To open this Options panel, move the mouse to the top right to bring up the Charms bar. Click Settings and then click Options in the Settings panel. You can choose to sort contacts by their first name or their last name

Show them all

You can choose which sources the People app uses when showing contacts. You might want to hide some contacts, such as business ones from LinkedIn when using your home PC. We prefer to show them all

Facebook updates

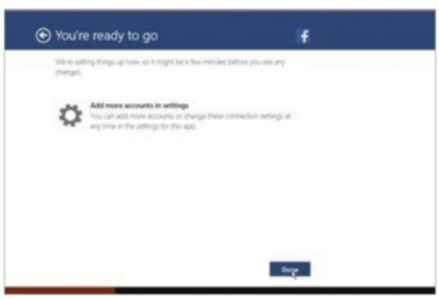
After adding Facebook to the People app, on the app's home page you will see recent updates to your news feed. This is useful and you can see what contacts have recently posted right from within the People app without going to the site

What's new?

The large status update for Facebook on the left is fine, but social networks are busy places and there are often lots of updates. Click the 'What's new' link and you can see all the latest Facebook and Twitter posts made by your contacts

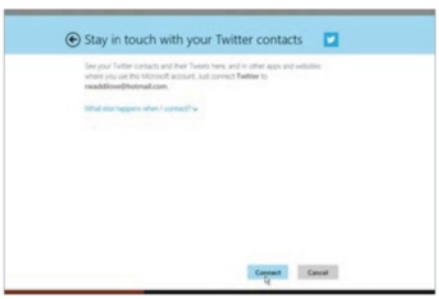
What's new filters

When the 'What's new' section is visited to see updates from your contacts, click the down arrow to the right of the title. This lets you filter the posts and show just Twitter updates, Facebook only, or all updates across both services. Filtering the posts can make it easier to read, by focusing on one service.



07: Finishing off

Once logged in, People retrieves contact info and adds it to its own. Click Done on this screen and then Yes on the next one.



08: Add Twitter

Go and repeat steps 1, 2 and 3. On step 4, this time you need to select Twitter. When this screen appears, click Connect.

09: Authorise Microsoft

As with Facebook, there are several steps to authorise People to access the info in your Twitter account and retrieve contacts.

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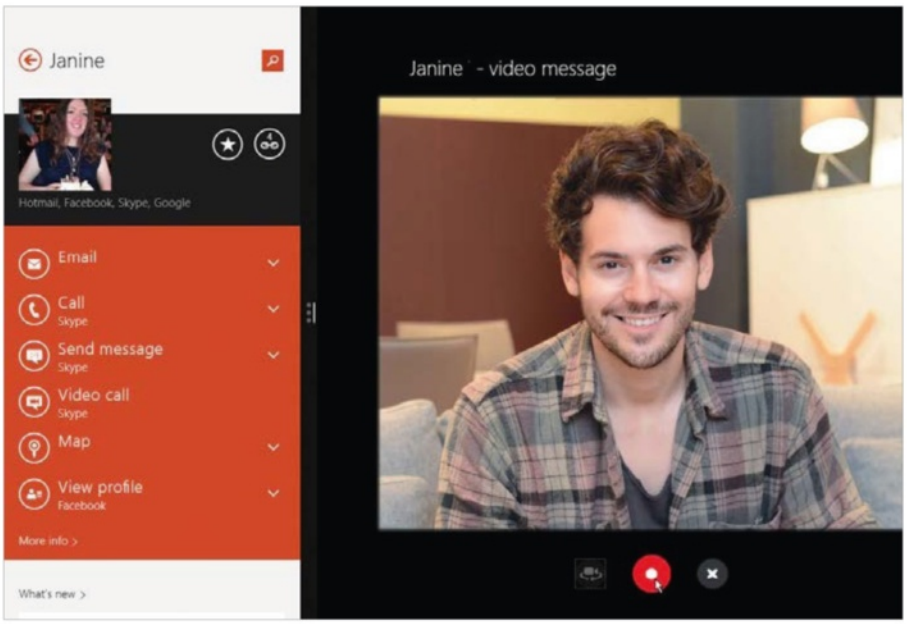
Chat to your contacts

Use the People app and Skype in Windows to send text and video messages to friends and relatives

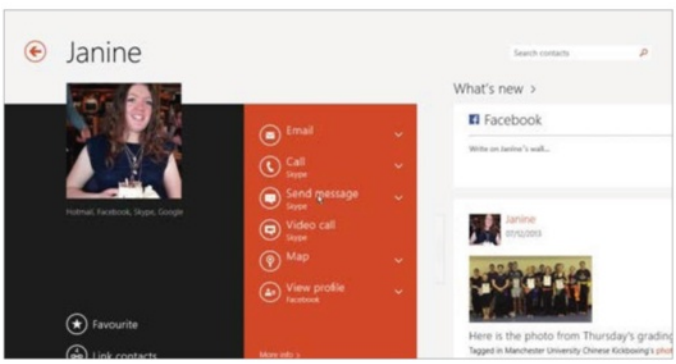
A nice feature of Windows is the ability to chat with friends and relatives over the internet. You can send them text messages, files and even recorded video messages and they can send back replies. If you start a conversation with a friend while they're online, you can have a live conversation via text messages. If they aren't at their computer, phone or tablet, the message will be delivered to them when they go online.

In Windows 8 there was a Messages app, but in Windows 8.1 this has been replaced with Skype. (Upgrade to 8.1 in the Windows Store for free.) This is available not only on Windows PCs, tablets and phone, but on those using other operating systems, such as the iPhone, iPad and Android devices. Your conversations therefore aren't limited to Windows users. Whatever device your friends have, tell them to get Skype and then you can chat from within Windows.

Although you can start Skype and begin a conversation, we show how to do this from the People app. This route provides more options and you can see the contact and the different ways that they can be contacted. Let's start chatting.

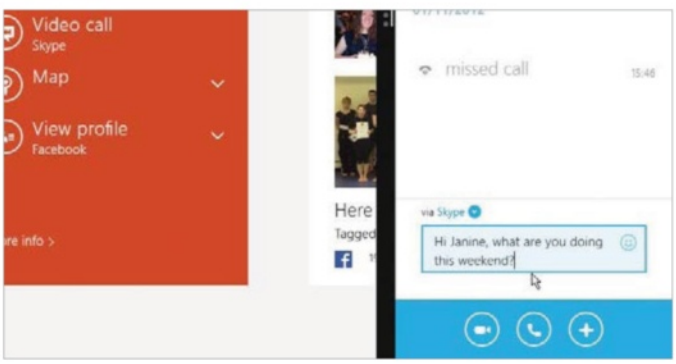


"In Windows 8.1, the Messages app has been replaced with Skype"



01: Find a contact

Open the People app. On the home screen, enter the person's name that you want to start a conversation with into the search box. Click their name to open their contact details page. There is a list of different ways in which you can contact them. Click 'Send message'.



02: Start a conversation

Skype is used to send messages and is shown in a panel on the right. Skype is a multipurpose app that can be used in a variety of ways and it shows previous chat messages, calls and so on. Type the message into the box at the bottom.

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Chat with friends

Get to know all of your chat options

Skype messages

Type into the Skype text input box in the bottom-right corner. When you press Enter, the message is sent. Clicking the smiley face at the right side enables you to add emoticons. The Skype panel shows the messages in the conversation

Chat options

Clicking the '+' button brings up a menu. This enables you to add participants and have a three-way or four-way conversation with friends. Files and video messages can be sent to the person too

Contact details

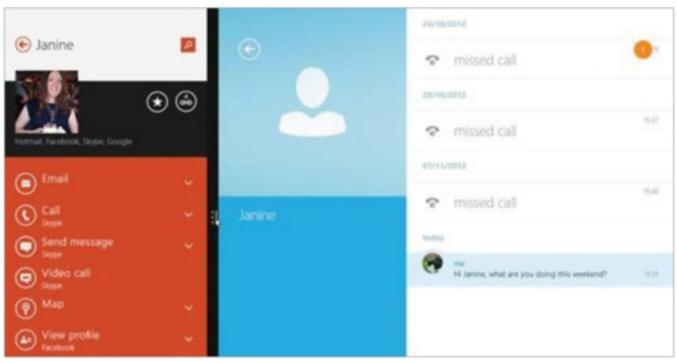
Show a contact in the People app and it displays all the different ways in which you can communicate with them. In this case we are going to send a message using Skype. Click the option in the list to open the Skype app on the right

Facebook messages

This contact has a Facebook account and their status updates are shown here. One way to chat with a contact is to post a message on their wall. You must remember that everyone will be able to see the message, however

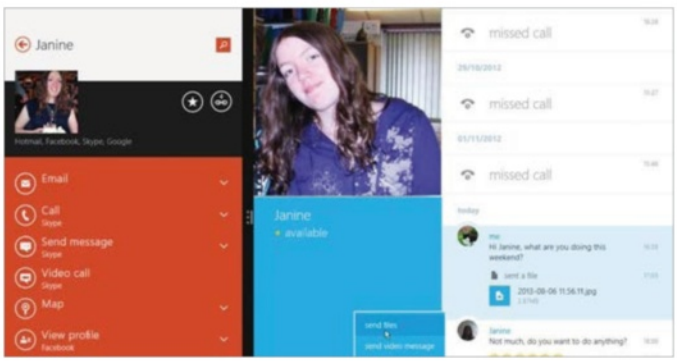
Chat using Facebook

If you go to a contact in the People app and that person has a Facebook account, all their latest posts are displayed. You might need to scroll the screen sideways to reveal the Facebook feed, so spin the mouse wheel or swipe left. There is a facility to post messages on their wall, but remember that not only can the person see the message, but also all their friends too. It's a public message whereas Skype is a private conversation.



03: Expand Skype

Move the mouse over the divider between the People and Skype apps, then click and drag it to the left. This enables you to see more of Skype and People's contact information is reduced. The message will be received when the contact comes online.



04: Extra options

The other person has come online and the status shows them as available. They'll receive the message and can send back replies. The '+' button enables you to add people to the conversation, record and send a video message, or send a file. They can send you files too.

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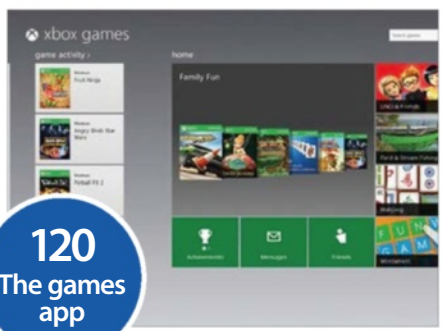
The next step

Learn your way around Windows 8's entertainment and lifestyle apps

106 Download videos

108 Make a movie



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Use Windows 8.1's built-in Photos app

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Crop, rotate & display imported images

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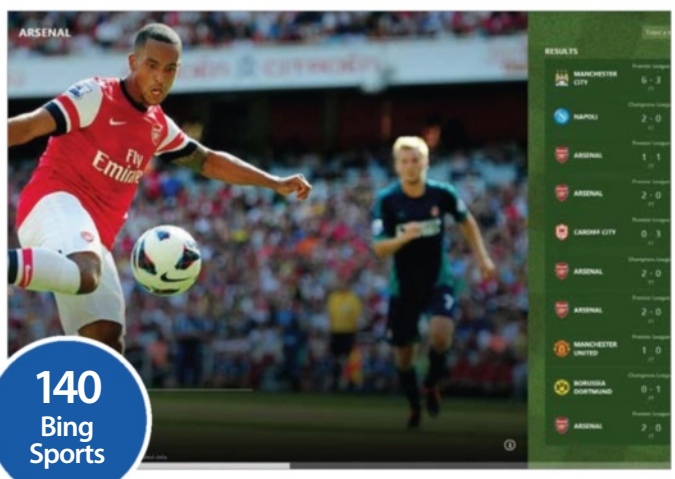
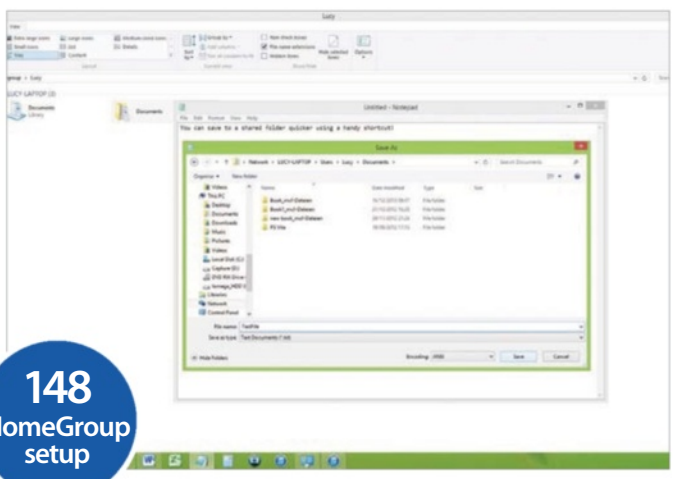
110 Download music

"You can gain access to millions of songs"



140 Bing Sports



148 HomeGroup setup

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Import photos and videos from a camera

How to import photos and videos using Windows 8.1's built-in Photos app

The Windows 8.1 update brings to the table a more cohesive and mature version of the operating system. As with any multimedia-rich operating system, it also provides a number of different ways in which you can import photos and videos into your computer from, say, an external storage device or camera.

For example, if you used the previous generation of Windows, you would normally plug your camera into your PC (via a USB cable) where it would show up as a drive letter in 'My Computer'. This then enabled you to manually copy/paste the media to a folder.

While you can still do this, to make life even easier Windows 8.1 has a simple process of importing the photos and videos from your camera using the built-in Photos app. Before we begin to explain the process in this tutorial, we need to mention that importing photos, and especially videos, can take a while if you are using the USB cable from your camera. However, if your computer supports it, take the memory card out of the camera and plug this into your internal card reader. This may speed things up.

"A simple process of importing the photos and videos from your camera"

Import process

The Windows Photo app makes it easy to import

Select files
You can customise what files are imported by selecting them with a left mouse click. However, if you hover the mouse cursor over an image, you can also view information related to the file, such as its size and date created

Clear selection
When you select your storage medium, the import process will then scan for files and automatically select them all for inclusion. To quickly negate this, click on the 'Clear selection' icon

Future imports
When importing photos or videos using the same storage medium, the next time it'll automatically deselect the files already imported. Once imported, the system will name them by date format; to change this, head to the Photos app, right-click the folder and choose Rename.

Select all
Using the 'Select all' icon will of course select all of your files. However, this function can be useful if you want to import the majority of files but then leave out a small selection: by clicking on a file, this will deselect it, but the rest will be left intact

Import files
Once the files have been selected, click on the Import icon. This will then start the import process and once finished, all of the selected files will be displayed in a thumbnail format

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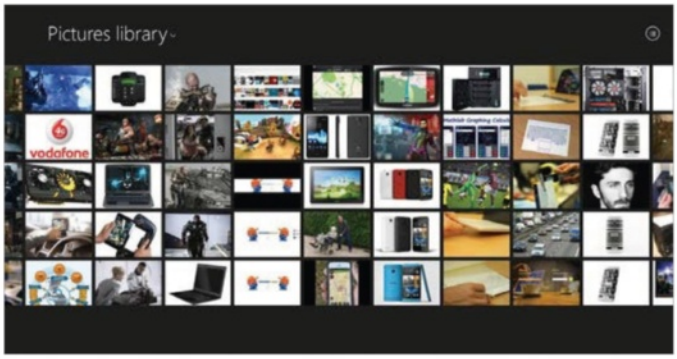
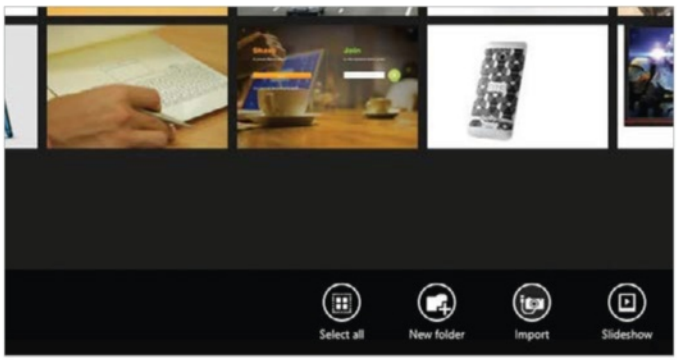
01: Insert camera

Connect your camera via USB or take out its memory card out and insert it into a card reader. Wait for the PC to recognise the insertion.



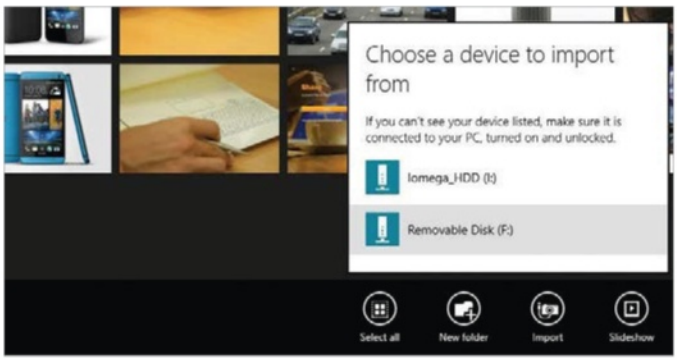
02: Launch Photo app

For now, ignore any message about what to do with the newly inserted device. Click on the Start button and launch the Photos app.



03: Click on Import

Swipe up from the base or right click the screen. A black bar will now appear. We are interested in the 'Import' icon so select this.

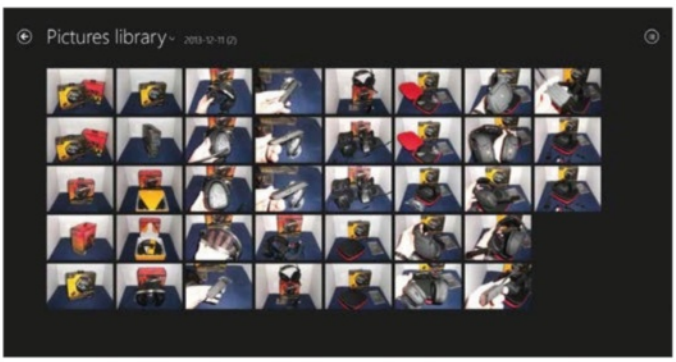


04: Select your device

A list of external storage devices will appear. Select the camera/memory card and wait for the PC to scan it for suitable files.

05: Select your files

By default the app selects all files to import. If you don't want them all, click 'Clear selection', then left-click the files you do want.



06: Import your selection

With files selected, click the 'Import' icon at the base. The computer with then start to import the files and display the results at the end.

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Edit and enhance your photos

Use the Photos app to crop, rotate and display your imported images in a handy slideshow format

The images imported from your camera should appear normally on screen and then you can browse through them using swipes (if you have a touch screen) or by clicking the left/right arrows that appear when the mouse is hovered over an image.

Alternatively, you can run a slideshow, as covered in the tutorial below. A slideshow simply adds a subtle fade effect to the images before it automatically displays them one-by-one in a timely fashion.

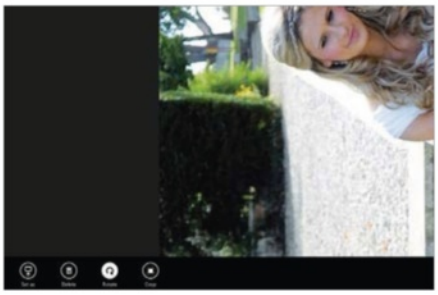
However, you may find your images aren't perfect, for example wrongly oriented. Also, you may find that certain areas of the image include a person/object that is not required or you may just want to zoom in on a specific area to highlight an important moment.

Fortunately, this is quite an easy process to rectify and in the tutorial we will showcase the process of rotating an image to the desired orientation. We also cover the crop function, which is the tool used to remove unwanted areas of an image.

"The crop function enables you to remove unwanted areas of an image"

01: Select your image

Open the Photos app and from the list of images, select one to adjust. It should now appear in a larger format on screen.

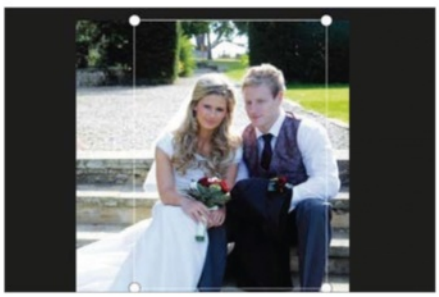


02: Rotate the image

Right-click the screen and click the Rotate icon until the desired rotation is met. The system will save the changes automatically.

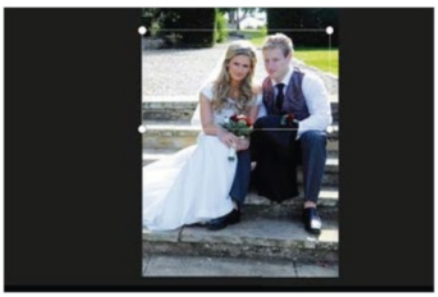
03: Cropping an image

Select the Crop icon. A box will appear with four circles in the corners. These 'handles' are required for the cropping process.



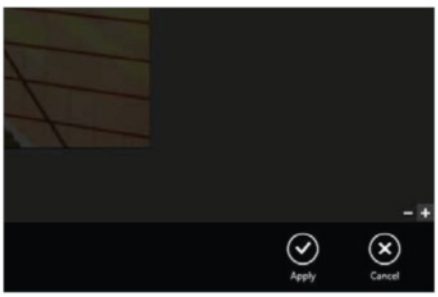
04: Crop positioning

First, move your cursor to the centre of the image, hold the left mouse button and drag the box to a new area.



05: Drag and drop

Move to one of the corner handles and the cursor changes to a double arrow. Hold the left mouse button and drag across to resize.



06: Zoom in/out

To make it a little easier, select the '+' icon to the right (just above the menu bar). This allows you to zoom in/out of the image.

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Cropping tool

Cropping can be useful for improving an image

Save or undo

When you 'Apply' the changes, you are given the choice to update the original – so it gets replaced with the crop – or the option to save a copy. Alternatively, you can undo the changes and go back to the start to adjust the crop

Zoom in or out

If you want to fine-tune your cropping, you can take advantage of the zoom controls in the shape of the '+' and '–' icons positioned directly above the menu bar. This will allow you to zoom into an image (or out) to fine-tune the exact area that you want to crop

Grid system

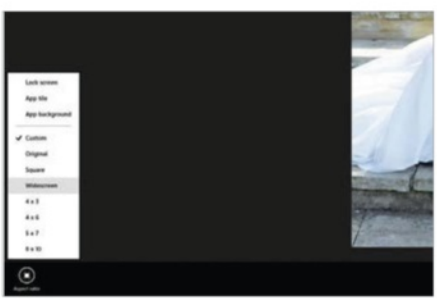
When you click on the Crop icon, you will get a grid system appear with a circle at each corner. You can then use either your mouse or finger to manipulate the grid system to locate areas of the image that you want to crop

Aspect Ratio

Customising the grid to crop to your needs can be time consuming. As an alternative you can use the 'Aspect Ratio' icon which has a series of pre-set crop grids (such as Widescreen) which can be chosen to speed up the process

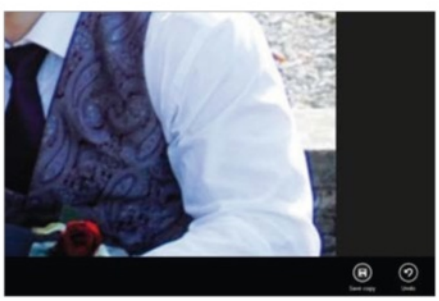
Create a lock screen slideshow

One of the cool new features of Windows 8.1 is the ability to set your lock screen as a slideshow. To set this up, bring up the Charms bar in the usual way, choose Settings>'Change PC settings'>'PC and devices'>'Lock screen'. Then switch the slideshow option to 'On' and specify a local/SkyDrive folder from where to source the images.



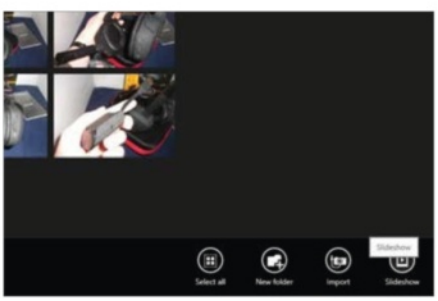
07: Aspect ratio

While cropping, you can select various preset effects. Choose the Aspect Ratio icon to the side, to experiment with the results.



08: Save a copy

When happy with the cropped image, click on Apply at the base. Now choose 'Save a copy' just in case the original file is needed.



09: Running a slideshow

In the Photos library, select a folder with images. Right-click and choose Slideshow to display the images automatically.

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Download and watch videos

We look at Windows 8.1's Video app and showcase how to download and watch videos through it

Like many multimedia-rich platforms, Windows 8.1 comes with a built-in video store/player that allows you to download or rent the latest titles circulating the movie world and then play them back in either SD or HD quality.

However, its Xbox Video app is similar to the one used with the Xbox 360 and Xbox One games consoles. So if you already have a Microsoft/Xbox account and have purchased videos through this medium, you can essentially view the same content from your PC (we cover this process in a separate boxout in this tutorial). Speaking of which, we will assume for the purpose of this tutorial that you have a Microsoft account already, otherwise you will be required to create one.

The main aim of this tutorial, though, will be to guide you in how to search the store to download and purchase or rent a video. In fact, we focus on the rental aspect; however, the good thing about rentals is that you can stream the content to cut down use of your precious hard disk space.

We will finish off by showcasing how to control the video playback.

"Download or rent the latest titles circulating the movie world"

Playing back videos

The Video app offers standard video playback controls

Going back a step
You can use the back arrow at the top at any point to return to the previous screen – or, if you're in the store and choose to play a trailer, the menu icon at the base of the screen can be used to return to the source

Right-click options
You can uncover extra options from the video playback screen by right-clicking. From here you have a Playback Options icon for adding a repeat function, and there are forward/backward skip icons

Video playback
As soon as you launch a video, it'll start to play. The pause icon will appear briefly, alongside the slider at the bottom of the screen. Selecting the pause icon and repeating the task will pause/play the video

Slider adjustment
At the same time as using the pause/play icon, you can also manipulate the video playback using this handy slider. By simply holding your mouse/finger over the circle clasp, you can then drag the timeline backwards/forwards to your heart's content

Restore purchased content
If you've bought content on a different Microsoft platform, eg Xbox, using the same email account, you can restore the purchases to your PC. In the Video app, select My Movies, then bring up the Charms bar. Choose Settings>Preferences, then click the Restore icon. Note there are restrictions: rentals can't be restored, as they are tied down to a single platform.

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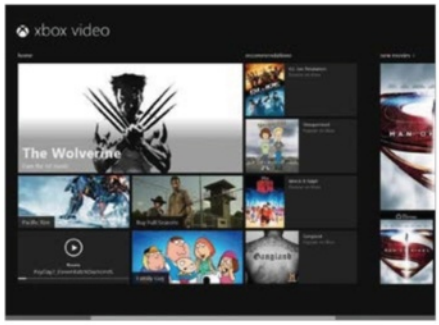
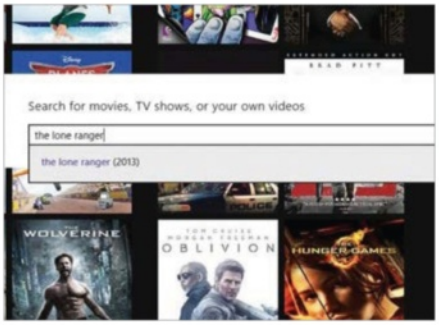


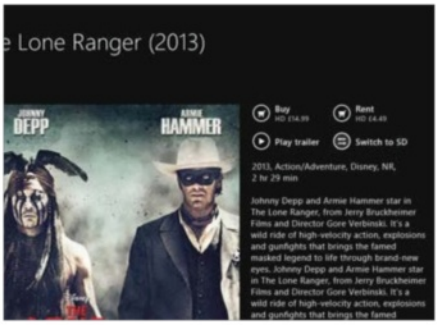
01: Launch Video app

Launch the Video app or download it from the Store if not installed. Once loaded, you should be presented with the video store.



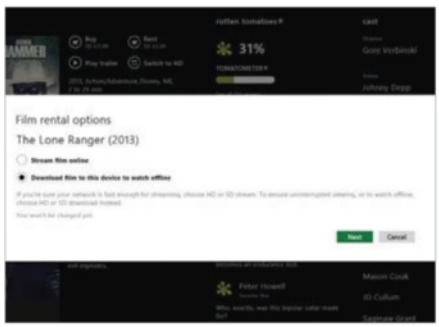
02: Search for movie

The easiest way to find a video is to select the search bar and start typing in a movie title, then select a suggestion beneath.



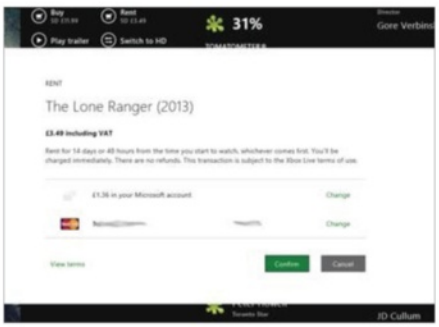
03: SD or HD quality

Select the film and click 'Switch to SD' if you want to reduce the cost of the video or its quality for your screen (HD is 1280x720+).



04: Rent or buy

You can choose to Rent (as here) or Buy the film. Next decide if you want to stream the content or download it (as we chose).



05: Log in & purchase

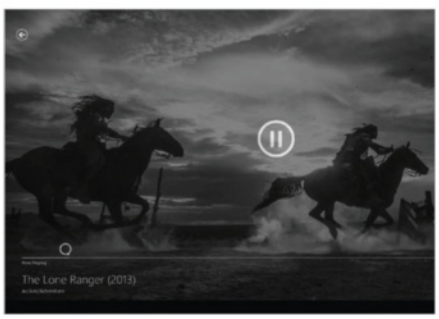
Click Next, then log in with your Microsoft account password. Select your payment method and click Confirm to purchase.

06: Add payment card

If you don't get the Confirm icon, you may have to add a card to your account. Click the option and follow the on-screen guide.

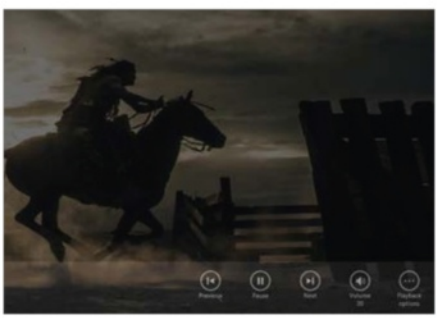
07: Play your video

The video will now start to download. Once the download completes, select the Play icon to begin playback.



08: Basic playback controls

Hover your mouse over the video to pause playback. Use the slider to advance/rewind. Right-click the screen for extra options.



09: Further controls

Here, adjust the volume, choose Playback Options to repeat the video, or skip forward/back through it via Previous/Next icons.

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Create a film with Windows Movie Maker

We show you how to take imported video and create a basic movie using Windows Movie Maker

Windows Movie Maker is an app that you can download for free: just press ⊞+Q to bring up the search bar and then do a search for the software to download and install.

As the name suggests, the app allows you to create a small movie out of your imported video/photos (see page 106 for a tutorial on importing them).

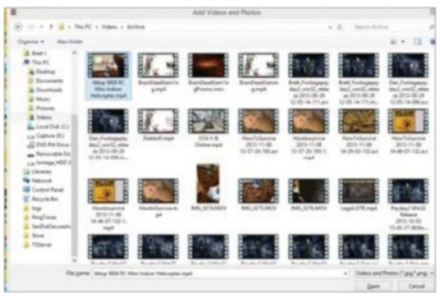
Note: Use the following link to see what video formats are supported: **bit.ly/1a3gBeu**

For example, you may have several videos taken on holiday that you would like to turn into a mini movie by adding subtle music and making splits/cuts – trimming existing footage to make it smaller or to remove the parts of the video that you don't want any more.

While you won't have access to the same video we have, the tutorial will give you ideas of how to create a movie using the software.

It's not too tasking, but make sure you check out the boxout for additional tips as there's far too much to cover in the tutorial itself.

"You may have several holiday videos you'd like to turn into a mini movie"

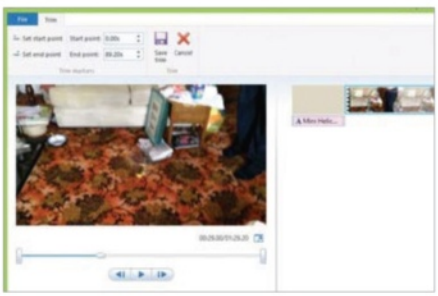


01: Browse for content

In Movie Maker, click on 'Browse for videos and photos'. Navigate to where the video is stored and double-click the file.

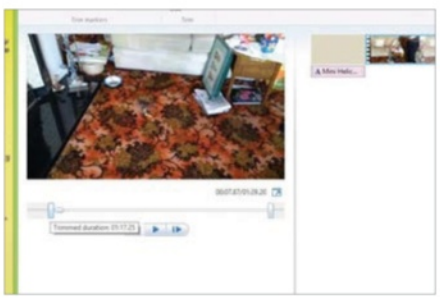
02: Add title

Wait for the video to process, then select Title. Type a suitable title. Note: Use the Format tab to add various text effects.



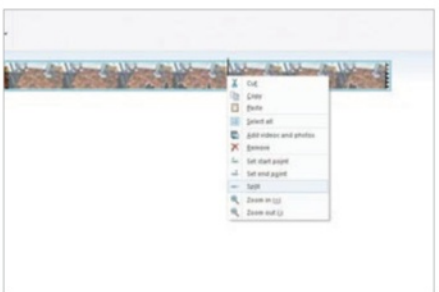
03: Trim video

Select the video in the timeline bar. Click the Edit tab, then the Trim tool. Note the preview footage on the right with bars.



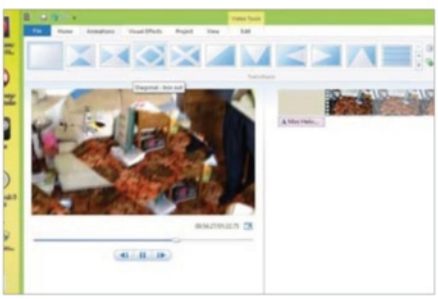
04: Trim start & end

Drag the left bar to a starting point in the video, then the right bar to where you want it to end. When happy, select 'Save trim'.



05: Split video

Select a point on the timeline so the black bar is running down the video thumbnail. Right-click the bar and choose Split.



06: Add animation fade

With the video split in two, go to the Animations tab and choose one. Play the video to see the effect of the split footage.

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Editing interface

The Movie Maker interface is intuitive for editing videos

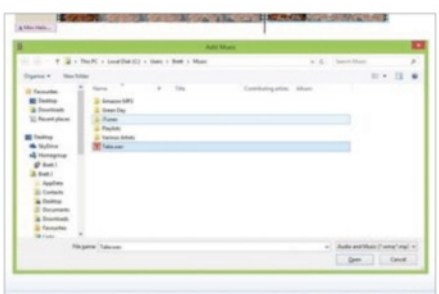
Timeline
Once you start to import media into the software, everything gets added to the timeline. Adding effects to the timeline is also a simple case of selecting the thumbnail from the timeline and then choosing from one of the top menus

Share with social sites
From the Home tab you will see a series of large thumbnail icons above the Share heading. These will allow you to share the movie you have created straight to the main social sites on the internet, such as YouTube and Facebook

Preview window
This lets you see how the text or effects you've added will look, when you play Play. You can also enlarge the video preview box – before saving – to make it easier to see

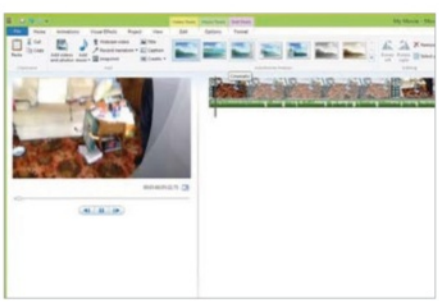
Theme effects
With the software you have plenty of manual ways to add text and various visual effects. However, you can also choose from a series of preset themes via the Home tab which will automatically adjust the look of the video for you

Get more from Movie Maker
As well as videos, you can use the Home tab to add other media such as pictures. Once imported, you can drag them into position and use the Animations tab to add a nice fade effect. Likewise, you can use the Edit tab to add audio fades. Fades are a great way to bind dissimilar video/audio. The key is to keep experimenting, as the tutorial only covers a small portion of what the software can do.



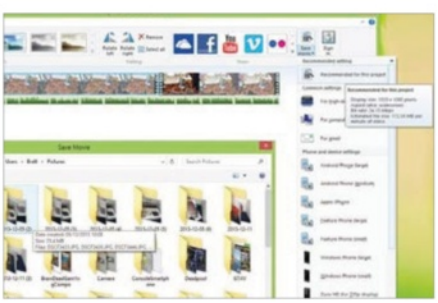
07: Add music

Select the Home tab and choose Add music>Add music. Now browse to your music folder and double-click a music track.



08: Add theme effect

The track will appear under the video. Via the Home tab, you can pick a preset theme to adjust the look of the video automatically.



09: Save movie

Select the Save Movie icon from the Home tab and choose 'Recommended for this project'. When prompted, click Save.

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Download tracks from Xbox Music

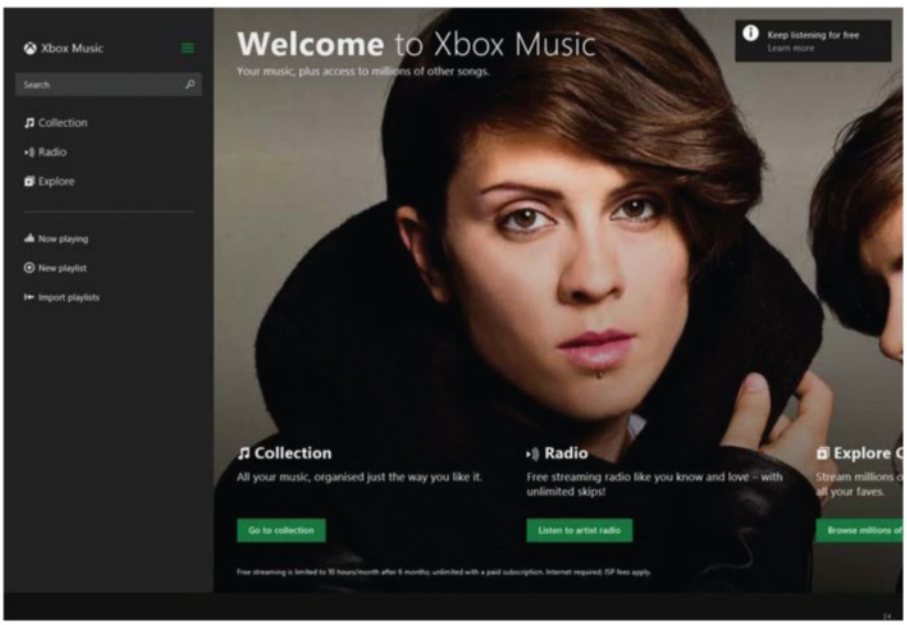
Using the Windows 8.1 Xbox Music app, you can download tracks to your computer or stream them online

Windows 8.1 comes with the Xbox Music app, which allows you to stream music online or download it to your computer.

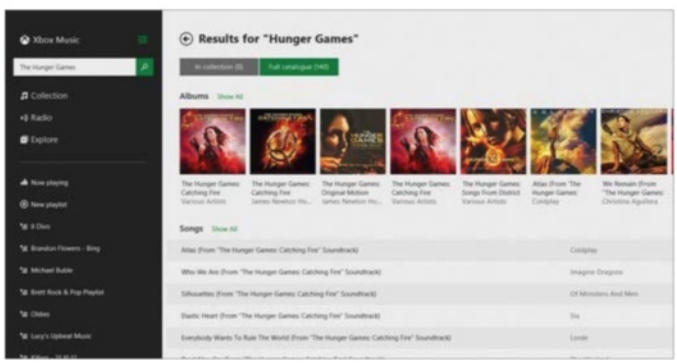
By default you can gain access to millions of songs for free! Well, technically there are limitations. For example, with the Windows Xbox Music app you get either a small snippet of the song or a limited time frame where you can stream (ad-supported) music. Normally this is ten hours per month after the initial six-month trial has elapsed. However, you can take out a premium subscription for £8.99 a month (see the boxout) to gain access to unlimited streaming. This is quite expensive but when you consider that tracks are usually charged at £0.99, or £8.99 for an album, it could be worthwhile. Still, for this tutorial you won't need to take out a subscription.

So, to keep things on track, we will be showing you how to browse/stream the content from the store, listen to the radio function and also how to download a music track so you can keep this permanently.

Note: You will need a Microsoft account with a credit card attached to purchase music from the store.

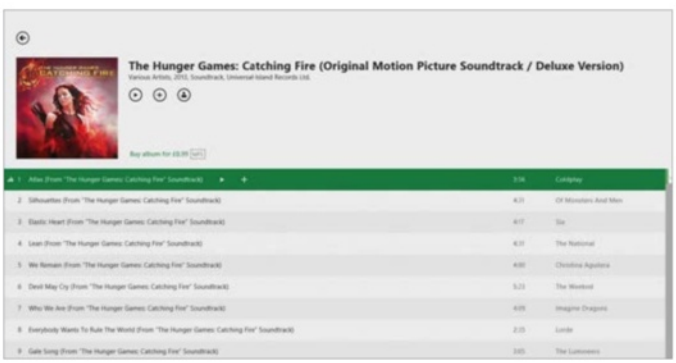


"By default you can gain access to millions of songs for free"



01: Browse the catalogue

In the Xbox Music app, click Explore in the left menu. Browse for music by selecting the thumbnails or title headers. Alternatively, use the search bar to the side and type in a request; now select the search icon and pick out the song/album from the resulting list.



02: Stream selected

Now select the track so it's highlighted in green, then click the play button to start the streaming. You can then use the playback icons at the base to control the playback or select the '…' icon to choose from Repeat/Shuffle. This will affect how the music is played back.

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Xbox Music interface

The interface provides simplicity for playback

Playing songs

Hit the play icon here in order to start streaming the album tracks. Alternatively you can select an individual song and play that instead. Standard playback controls will then appear at the bottom

Purchasing songs

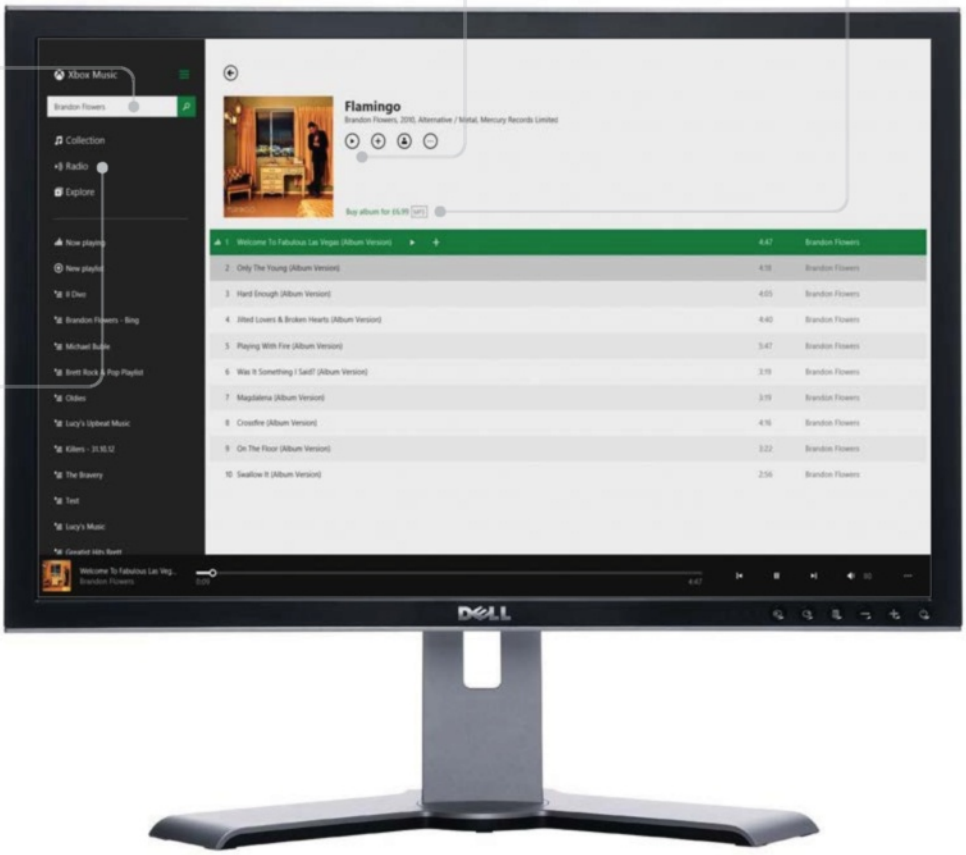
While streaming songs is limited on the free account, you can still buy tracks or albums. By right-clicking a track, you can purchase the song individually; however, the price is not shown until the checkout process

Sidebar

The left side of the interface provides the main options you can select for accessing your music library and the Xbox Music store (via the Explore icon). However, the easiest method of finding music is by using the search bar

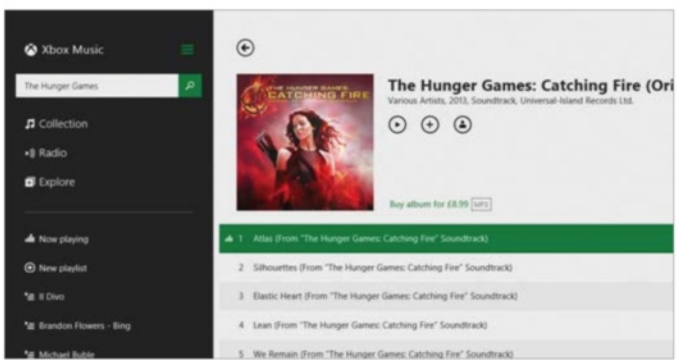
Radio stations

The 'Radio' menu option allows you to play music from a given artist and similar ones. For example, if you want to listen to Metallica-style music, enter 'Metallica' and the app will automatically create a playlist of heavy metal tunes



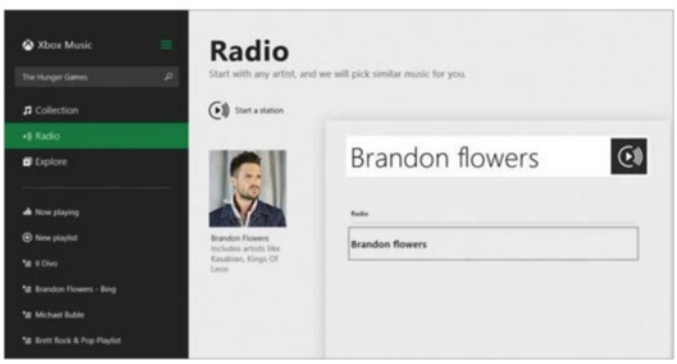
Xbox Music Pass

This monthly subscription service works in a similar fashion to Spotify. So, for £8.99/$9.99 a month you can get access to unlimited ad-free streaming/offline downloads on all your Microsoft-based devices. The tracks can be synced across the range too, so you can listen to one track and then continue playing on another device. A 30-day trial is available from: **www.xbox.com/en-GB/Music/music-pass**



03: Download song

To buy the song or album you are listening to, either click on 'Buy album' at the top or right-click the track name to bring up the bottom menu bar. Next, select the Buy icon and sign in with your Microsoft account. Click on Confirm to make the purchase.



04: Play radio

Select the Radio menu option on the left, then on the right select 'Start a station'. Type in the artist name and select it from the resulting list. Once you select the artist, the app will automatically start to play a series of music tracks from them and similar artists.

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Add music to your library

Here we showcase how to add your own music tracks to the Xbox Music library collection

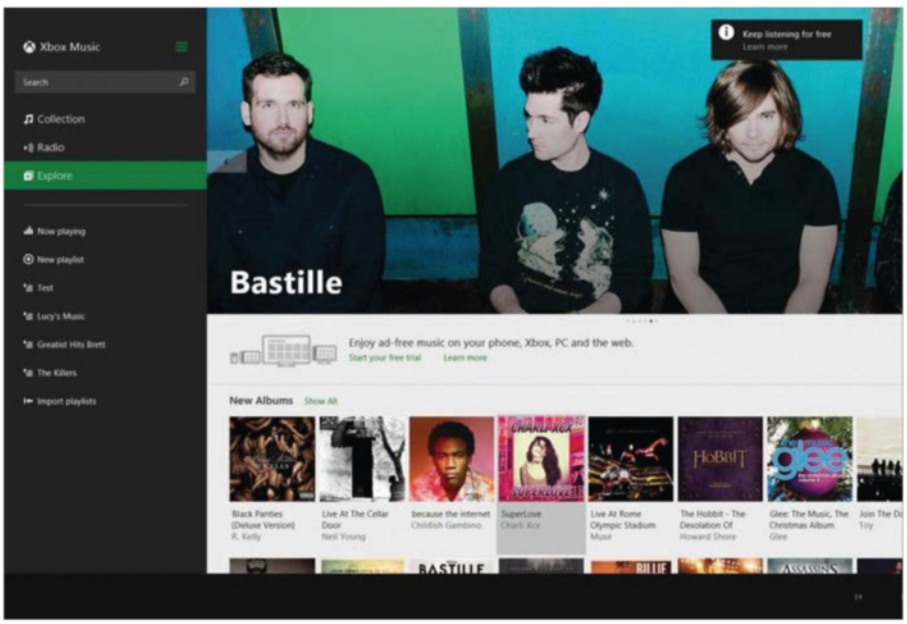
As well as streaming and downloading tracks, the Xbox Music app can be used to add your existing music collection to your library.

Unfortunately, this does not include music stored on physical CDs – unless they have already been 'ripped' (a process which we look at in our Windows Media Player tutorial on pages 116-117).

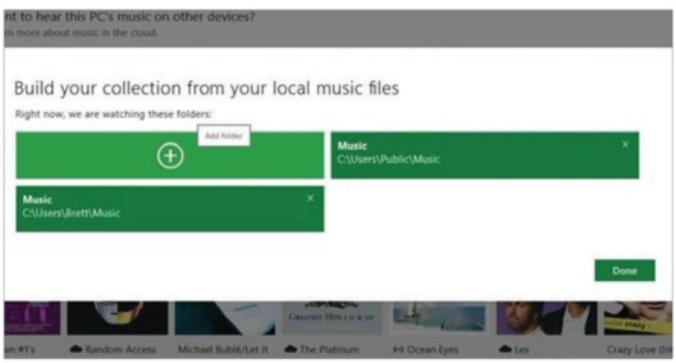
This is because the app handles digital files only, such as MP3, but as an added bonus it can at least import music that is stored in your local iTunes library.

By default, most of the work of importing music is done for you. So as long as the music is already locally stored on your computer, the app will automatically add the files as soon as it's launched.

Usually this is the case because most of your music is stored in the standard Music folders on your PC – ie C:\Users\YourName\Music – making the process stress-free. However, for the purpose of this tutorial we will show you how to add more locations from your computer, which can include external drives or even your online SkyDrive storage if you desire.

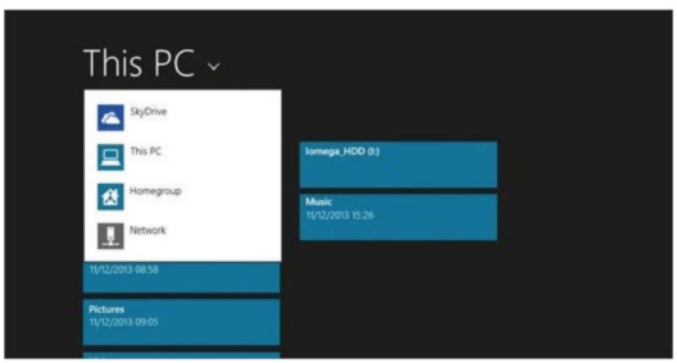


"We will show you how to add more music locations from your computer"



01: Add another location

When you first start the app, it automatically scans your PC for music. Once this is finished, click Collections to view the music it has found. It will display the folders it has already added. We want to add another folder, so click on the '+' icon.



02: Locate music

When you click '+', a drop-down appears at the top (usually with SkyDrive as the default). Click this to select the location of your music; eg 'This PC' (it may called something else). This should list all the common folders on your PC, including the main hard drives.

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Importing music

When it comes to importing music, the process is quite simple

SkyDrive storage

With Windows 8.1 you do get access to 7GB of online storage with SkyDrive and you can add this as a folder. The great thing is that you can add files to the folder from different machines and the app will still have access to it

Adding folder to library

After choosing the location of your new music files, you need to tell the app that you want to use the folder. Select the 'Add this folder to Music' option. The software will then automatically add any files it finds to the library

Choose your location

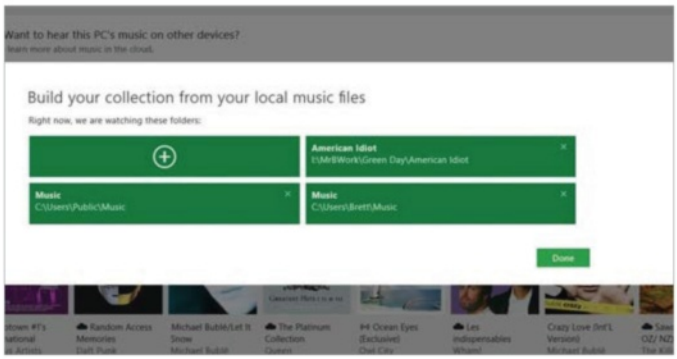
When the app first starts, it will automatically scan for music in the PC's default Music folders. However, if you have music tracks stored in a different location, you can select the drop-down box to choose an alternative

Network or external storage

You can also add external storage devices, including those on a local network, but you have to remember that if the drive is not connected, your music won't be either!

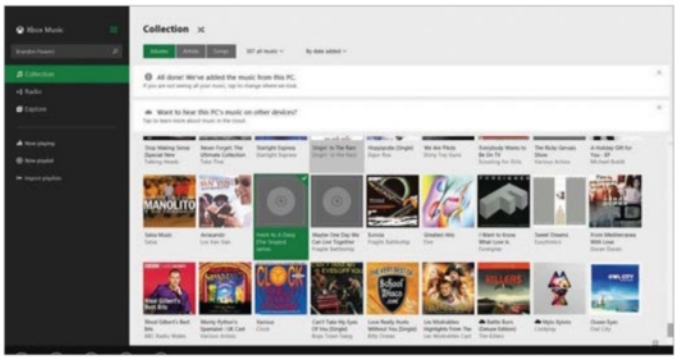
Cloud matching & manual import

The Windows Music app has a cloud matching service (similar to iTunes Match). The benefit here is that when the feature is enabled, it will attempt to match any of your locally stored files to its online database and then these can be accessed on another Windows 8.1 PC/tablet (using the same account) or other devices via an Xbox Music Pass subscription. You can learn more about the service via the Settings>Preferences charm (look under the 'Cloud collection' section).



03: Select files

Now navigate to where your files are located. In this example it's a folder on our external hard drive. Now, at the base of the screen, choose the option 'Add this folder to Music' and it will then appear in your folder location list. Simply click OK then Done to add the tracks.



04: Restore missing album art

If you are lucky, all of your library music will include album art. If not, you can try right-clicking the greyed-out thumbnail and choosing 'Match Album info'. This will then scan online for a match. If it finds one, you can select the cover to restore the artwork.

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Create a music playlist

Creating a playlist is the best way to make your own custom album with the music you want to listen to

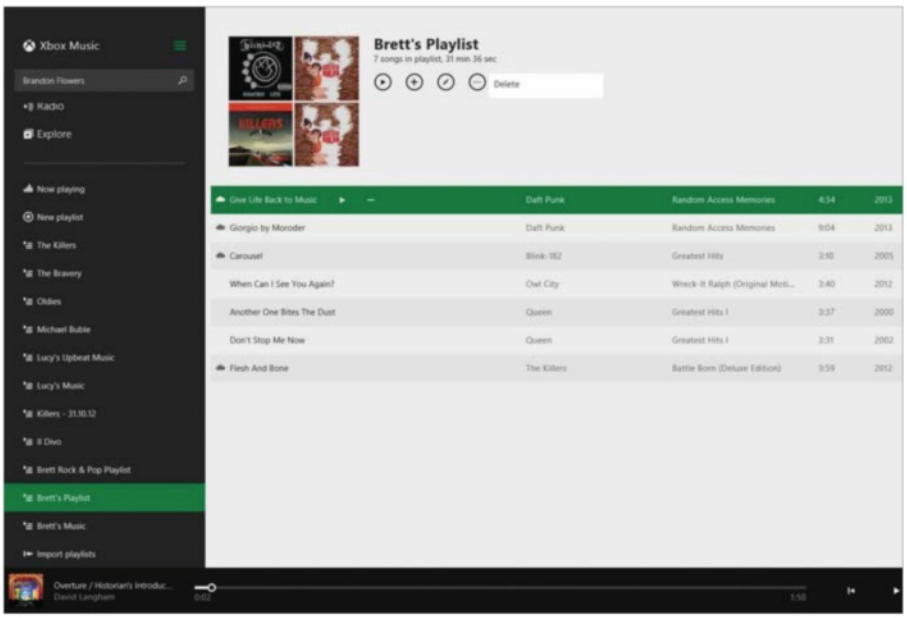
In previous tutorials we've looked at how to get music from the Xbox Music app and how to add your own local music.

This time we look at another feature of the software: playlists. You can think of a playlist as if it were your own custom album, featuring all the music tracks that you want to listen to under the one roof. It's a bit like the old-fashioned mixtapes of yesteryear!

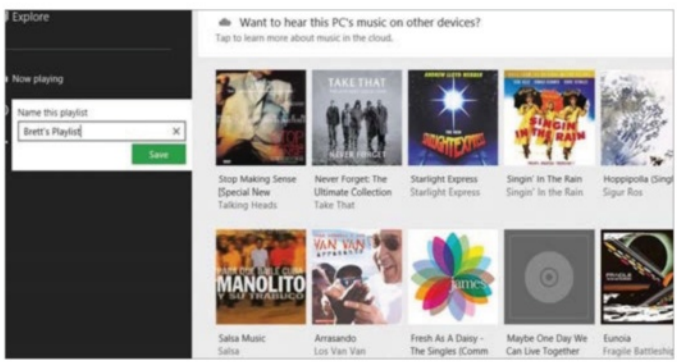
Playlists are a godsend really because, let's face it, even the best albums have some songs you don't like all that much (though if you have found the perfect album, do let us know). By taking the best tracks from various albums, you can add them to a playlist and the app will allow you to play the songs included in it.

If you have enabled the cloud matching service (which we spoke of in the tutorial on page 112) then you can also create playlists in the cloud so that your other devices can access them.

However, for the purpose of this tutorial we will be focusing on the local side. So we will be showing you how to create a playlist and add music tracks to it. Additionally, we will look at how to import playlists from other sources such as iTunes.



"You can think of a playlist as if it were your own custom album"



01: Creating the playlist

There are a couple of ways you can create a playlist within the Xbox Music app. To save confusion, we'll focus on the common method. Choose 'New Playlist' from the left side. A box will now appear; inside it, type a name for your playlist and then click Save.

02: Add music to playlist

Click on Collection (on the left) and select an album or song. At the top you can click '+', or select an individual track beneath and click '+'. Next, choose your playlist from the list and the music will be added. Repeat the process for the other tracks you want to add.

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Xbox Music playlists

You can add playlists easily to Xbox Music

Editing or deleting playlists

There could come a time when your playlists get as stale as some of your album collection. Fortunately, you can use the interface's intuitive editing and deleting controls to rename your playlist or to delete the tracks from within it (via '…' and '–')

Importing playlists

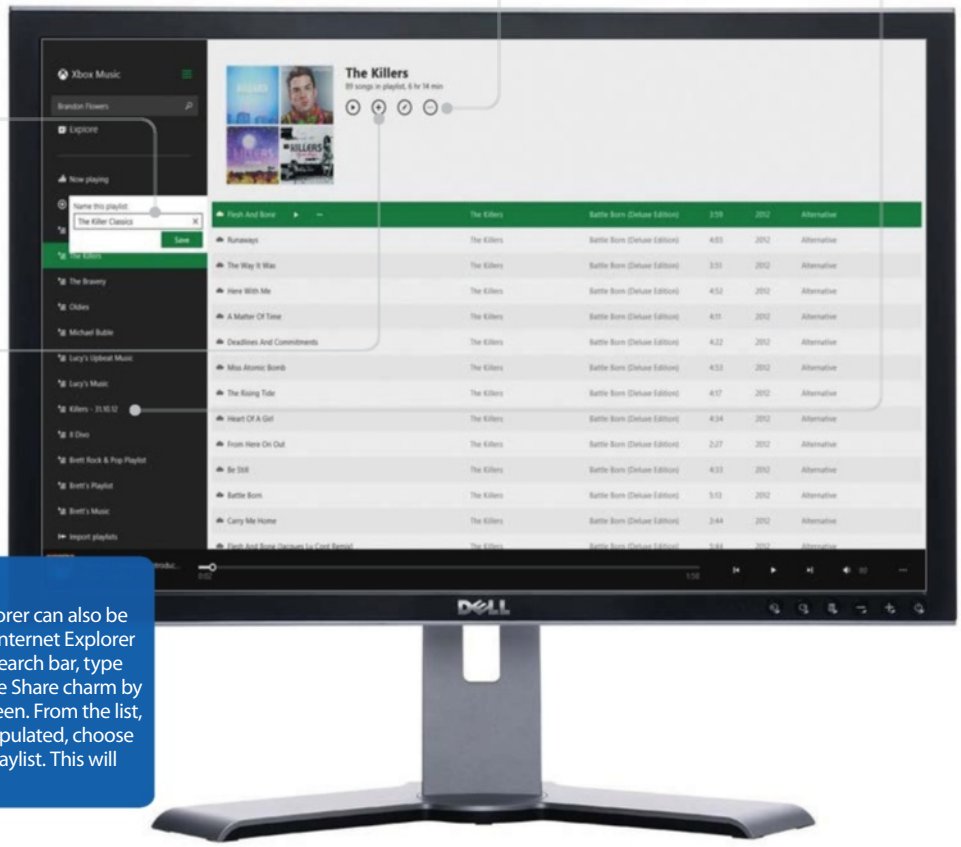
Instead of creating playlists from scratch, you can use the software's import function. This will then scan your existing music library, such as iTunes, and import these to the left menu for you to access

Creating playlists

Windows 8.1's Xbox Music app makes it easy to add playlists. You can use the New Playlist option on the left and name your playlist to whatever you want. This way you are effectively creating your own custom music album to enjoy!

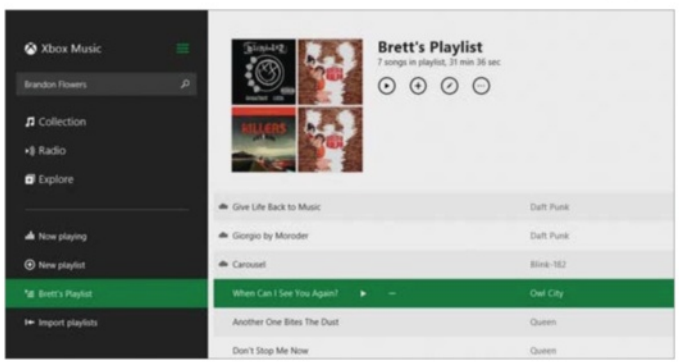
Adding music

Within the collection library you can quickly add music tracks, either individually or as a group, by using the '+' icon. This can also be used to create new playlists on the fly, just in case you don't want to use the main menu option



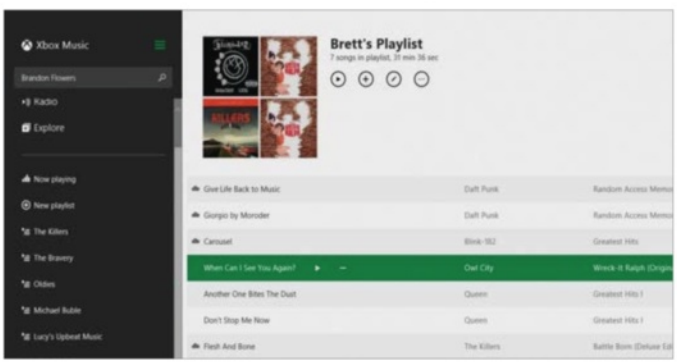
Create playlists from Bing

The Bing search facility within Internet Explorer can also be used to create playlists. To start with, open Internet Explorer (not the desktop version), then in the Bing search bar, type in your favourite artist. Next, open/select the Share charm by hovering your mouse to the right of the screen. From the list, choose Music and once the list has been populated, choose the artist and then, at the top, pick Create Playlist. This will then be accessible within the music app!



03: Edit or delete tracks

You can select your playlist once it's created via the left menu. Play your playlist via the Play icon or use the '…' to delete it. You can also tap Edit to rename the playlist; or, if you select a track, you can use the '–' icon to remove it individually from the playlist and start again.



04: Import playlists

If you've already created playlists in other programs such as iTunes, you can use the Import feature to add them. Select 'Import playlists' on the left, then select Import Playlists again. The app will scan your PC for any compatible playlists and then add these to the left side.

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Manage music and videos with Windows Media Player

We take a look at how you can use the Windows Media Player 12 software to play and manage various media files

Windows Media Player (WMP), for the most part, used to be the principal application for playing back media on your PC.

Now, with the release of Windows 8.1, you are steered away from this software and are pointed firmly at the Xbox Music/Video apps.

However, WMP 12 should not be discounted just yet because it does have several useful features – including the ability to view pictures/videos, and play audio CDs and then rip them into a digital format of your choice.

Not only this, but you can create smart auto playlists based on criteria you enter (similar to an email message rule).

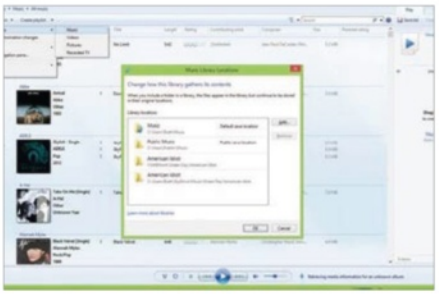
The only thing you can't do is play DVDs, but if you read the boxout on page 117 you will find a useful solution.

For the purpose of this tutorial, we look at how to use WMP, including the ability to rip CDs into digital formats. We also look at how to create smart auto playlists, which we spoke of above.

Note: Technically the software uses the same locations for stored media as the Xbox Music app, so if you remove a location it will remove this from the latter as well.

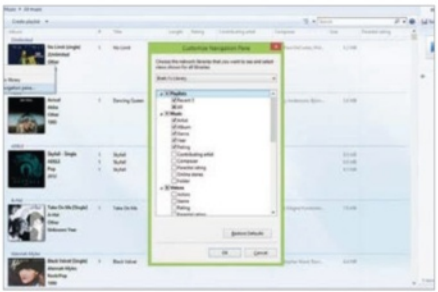
01: Launching WMP

Select 'All apps' on the Start screen and select WMP. Then choose 'Recommended Settings' for a simpler installation.



02: Media location

WMP scans your PC for compatible media. Under Organise, click Manage libraries> Media type, to add/remove locations.

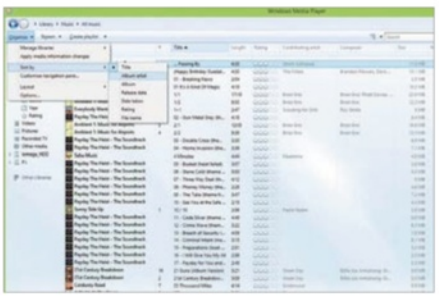


03: Customise nav pane

Right-click any media option on the right and choose 'Customise navigation pane'. Tick the items to include and click OK.

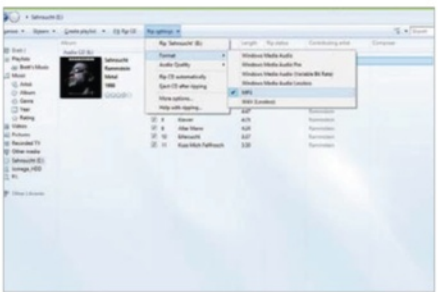
04: Choosing media

Select the media type in the navigation pane (pictures, music etc) and view it based on the criteria set in step 3; eg by 'Year'.



05: Sorting items

Click Music, say, and select a tab in the right pane to sort by type. Or use the Organise> Sort By menu option for further choices.



06: Ripping CDs

Insert a CD, then select Rip settings> Format. Choose the format you want to rip the CD into (eg MP3). Next, click on Rip CD.

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The interface & imported media

WMP Interface makes it easy to manage media

Rip CDs

You can play CDs and also rip the contents into a digital format using the Rip CD option. When you do this, the files should then be usable in other programs – depending on the protection settings you choose during the rip process

Auto playlists

You can create standard playlists, but WMP also has a smarter auto playlist function. So, by using a series of rules, you can program the software to create a playlist based on the criteria you set

Imported media

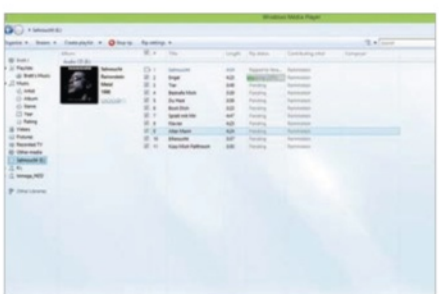
WMP shares the same file locations as Xbox Music/Video, so it will automatically start to import compatible media into the interface based on the default folder locations – typically your user video/ picture/music folders

Media types

WMP is quite versatile in the media it can support and display. So, for example, not only can you listen to your favourite music tracks, you can also watch compatible videos or even view your pictures – all from under the same roof

Get more from WMP 12

If you notice that album art is missing from your music library, you can right-click the track and choose 'Find album info' to restore it. Additionally, you can use the Sync tab on the right side of the interface to drag/drop music into connected storage devices, such as smartphones. Sadly, you can't use WMP to play DVDs. Instead, we recommend downloading VLC Media player for that purpose: **www.videolan.org/vlc/download-windows.html**

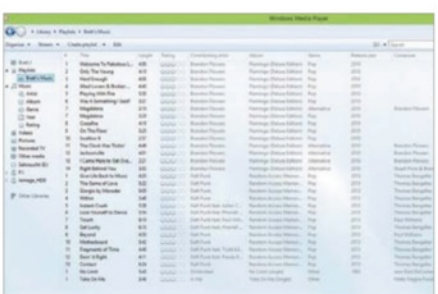


07: Copy protection

You may need set the copy protection for ripped music; do so then click OK. The CD will now start to rip to your local library.

08: Create auto playlist

Select Create playlist>Create auto playlist. Now give the playlist a name and then set the criteria options beneath. Click OK.



09: View playlist

It creates a playlist based on the criteria. You can select the playlist from the navigation pane. Double-click a track name to play it.

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Start a video chat in Skype

Discover how to start and then handle live video chats in Windows 8.1's Skype app

Microsoft's purchase of Skype in 2011 allowed the company to secure one of the biggest real-time communication platforms in the world.

Mind you, the acquisition did provide a touch of confusion because there are actually two versions of the Skype software that you can use on your computer. Our focus is on the Windows 8.1 app (not the desktop version), which you need to download from the Windows Store to attempt the steps.

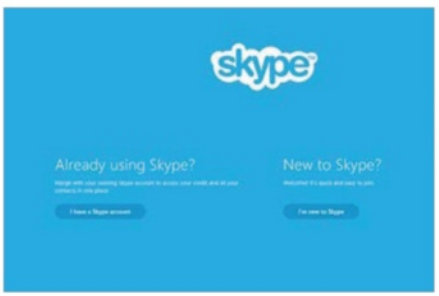
With the Skype app you will be able to send instant messages, call other Skype users online, call LAN lines (if you have Skype credit) and of course perform video chats.

For this tutorial we are going to showcase the latter process, by first showing you how to log in, customise your profile and add contacts. We then look at how to start/use the video chat function. A webcam is required to use the feature – if you don't have one, you can still chat as long as you have a microphone connected to your computer.

"A webcam is required to use the video chat feature"

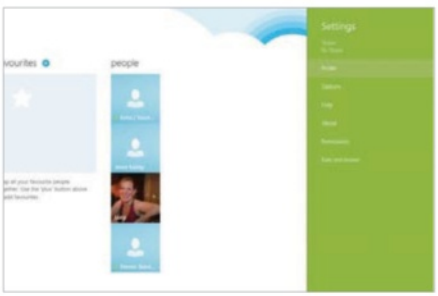
01: Loading Skype

With a webcam plugged in, launch the Skype app. Allow it to use the webcam and choose to run the app in the background.



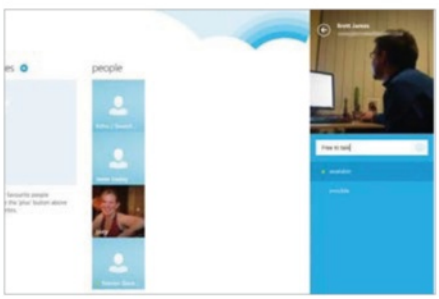
02: Merge account

Either log in with an existing Skype account and merge this with your Microsoft one, or choose to create a new account.



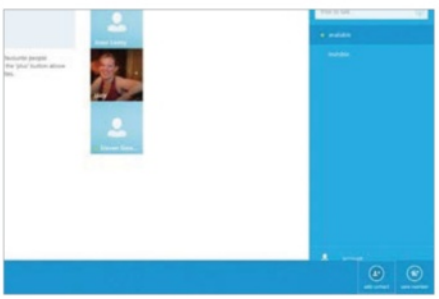
03: Customise profile

Once logged in, bring up the Charms bar (hover your mouse over the right side of the screen) and select Settings>Profile.



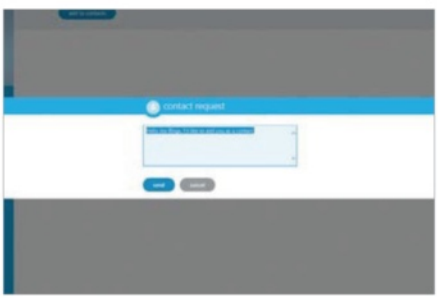
04: Add picture/mood

Click at the top to add an image from your PC. Select one and click Open. Beneath the picture, enter a mood; eg 'Free to talk'.



05: Add contact

Right-click the left side and choose from the base 'Add contact'. Enter their Skype name or email address in the box and do a search.



06: Send request

Select the contact from the list (or do a search). Click 'Add to contact' and key in a suitable message before selecting Send.

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Video chat in Skype

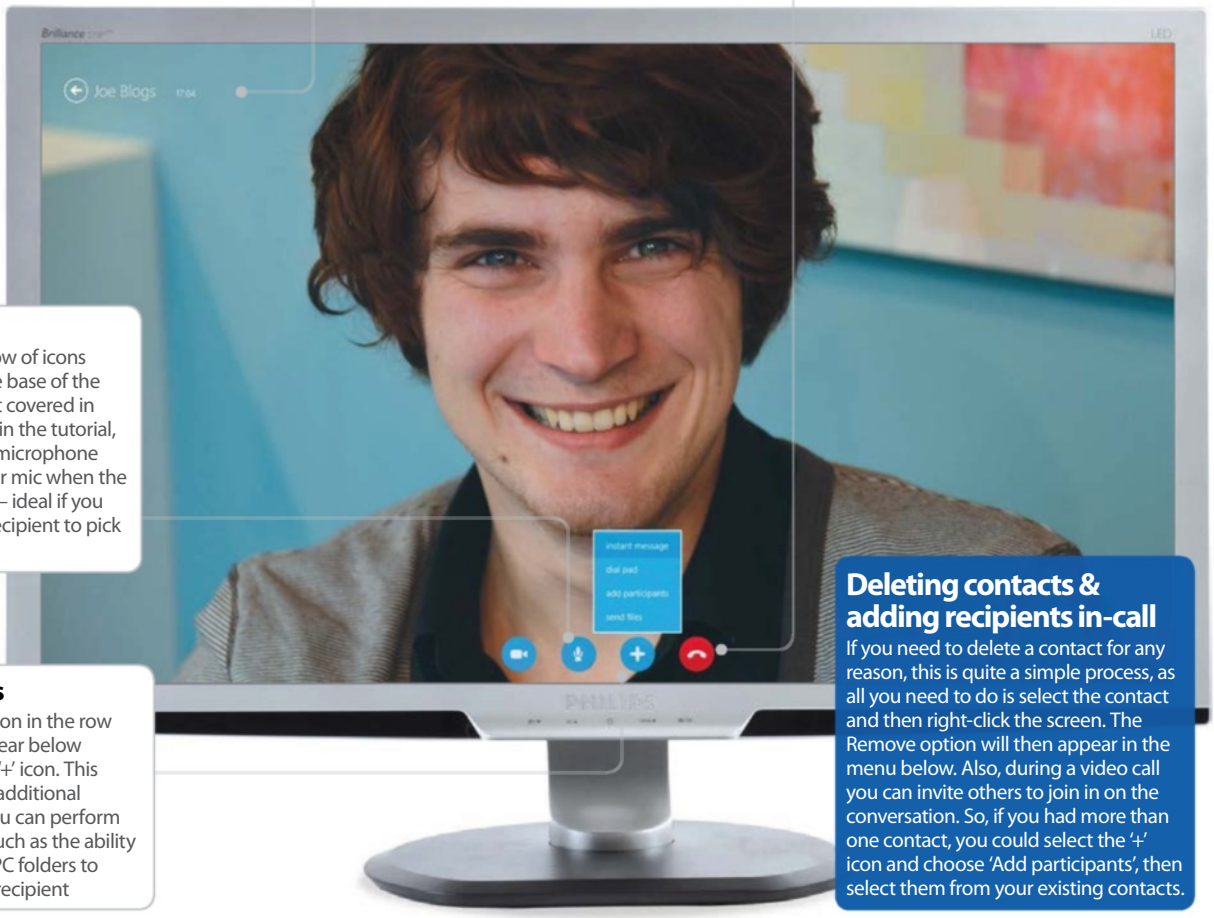
Chat with others using the video chat function

Main viewing screen

If the video icon appears next to your recipient's name, it means you can initiate a video call to that user. When the call is answered, your recipient should then appear on the screen – which makes the call a lot more interactive

End the call

When you have finished making the call, use the familiar red call-end button to disconnect from the video chat. After this is done, your call history (ie when a call was placed) will appear in your contacts profile window



Mute audio

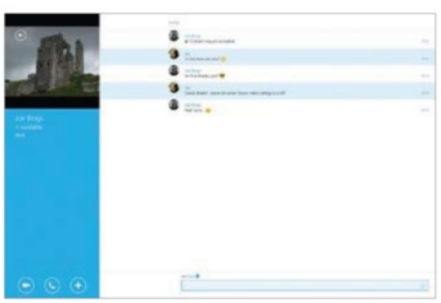
During a call, a row of icons will appear at the base of the screen. While not covered in great depth within the tutorial, you can use the microphone icon to mute your mic when the call is in full flow – ideal if you don't want the recipient to pick up your voice!

Extra options

Another useful icon in the row of icons that appear below the screen is the '+' icon. This contains a list of additional functions that you can perform during the call, such as the ability to tap into your PC folders to send files to the recipient

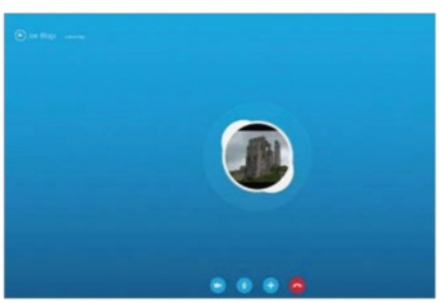
Deleting contacts & adding recipients in-call

If you need to delete a contact for any reason, this is quite a simple process, as all you need to do is select the contact and then right-click the screen. The Remove option will then appear in the menu below. Also, during a video call you can invite others to join in on the conversation. So, if you had more than one contact, you could select the '+' icon and choose 'Add participants', then select them from your existing contacts.



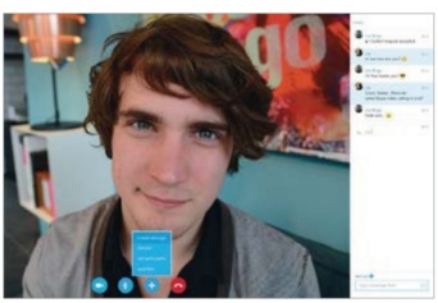
07: Instant messaging

Once they've accepted your request, use the chat bar at the base to send messages. Or click the smiley icon to send emoticons.



08: Video chat

Select the video icon at the bottom left of the user's profile. When the call is answered, you should see them on the screen.



09: In-call options

During a call you can select the mic icon to mute sound, or the '+' to see options such as sending files. To finish, click the red icon.

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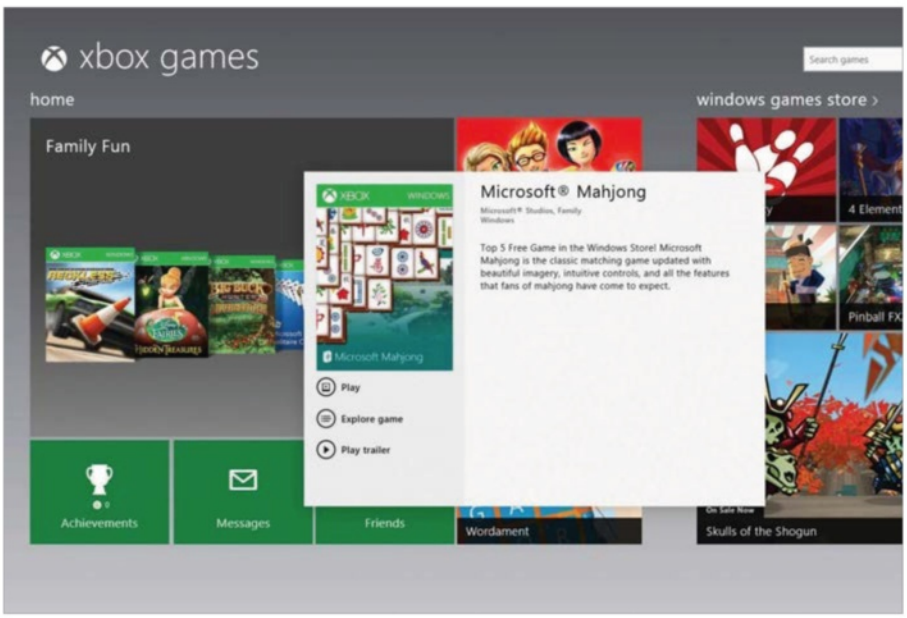
Get to know the Games app

An overview of what the Games app can offer and how you can access a range of leisure titles

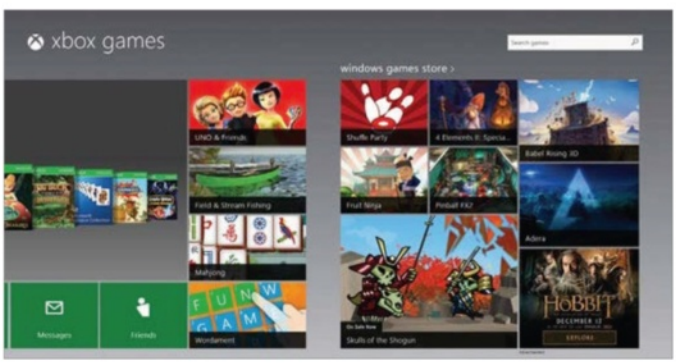
There is a lot of talk about new games consoles, such as the PS4 and Xbox One, at the moment. In addition to that, there is excitement around the development and evolution of numerous tablets and smartphones that are said to become the mobile gaming platforms of the future. Just look at the hardware accessories out there for proof of industry investment. While these debates progress, much of the media has ignored one of the largest gaming platforms around with a history and tradition that exceeds all of the current platforms put together: the PC. The PC never receives the media attention it should because it is never 'new' in terms of wholly new hardware or formats. Because of the open-ended aspect of the PC, there is never a hard-hitting marketing campaign to wow journalists.

The gaming PC has always improved in careful stages, piecemeal and with a steady degree of support from third-party developers. In terms of flexibility and solidity, there is nothing to beat a PC for gaming.

The latest iteration of the gaming PC, via Windows 8.1, is just the latest in a long evolution of the PC as a gaming powerhouse.

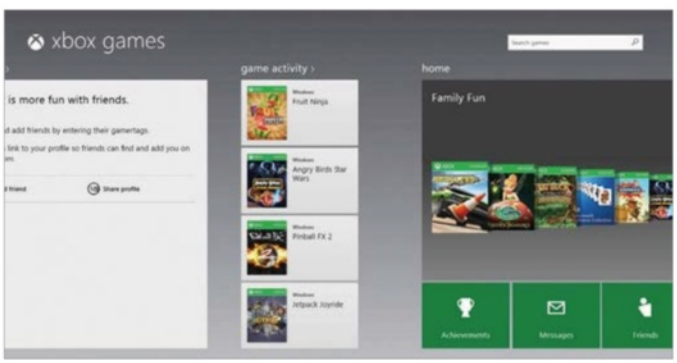


"In terms of flexibility and solidity, there is nothing to beat a PC for gaming"



01: Go to Games

On the Start screen, click on the Games icon. You will then enter the Games interface. Use either the scrollbars at the bottom of the screen or a mouse scroll-wheel to move left and right to see more of the Games app interface. You can also browse the games.



02: Profile & Activity

You are advised to set up an account. You can use a current Xbox profile if you have one, or create one from scratch here. In the app's Games Activity section, you can track your progress and compare with friends who play the same games.

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Get gaming

Explore the wonders of the Windows Games app

Home

Here you can find games to play and also social media-like buttons that provide direct links to your Achievements, your current list of Friends, as well as giving you the chance to monitor their progress and receive messages and in-game alerts

Search

If you have a list of games stored on your PC then you can find the game you want to play now by entering it in the search box. As you type, the intelligent search system will guess which game you are looking for with every key press

Game Activity

Any games that you are currently playing are listed in the Game Activity box. Here, you can monitor your progress by clicking on the games of your choice. Any Xbox-like game achievements will also be listed on the screen

Game tile

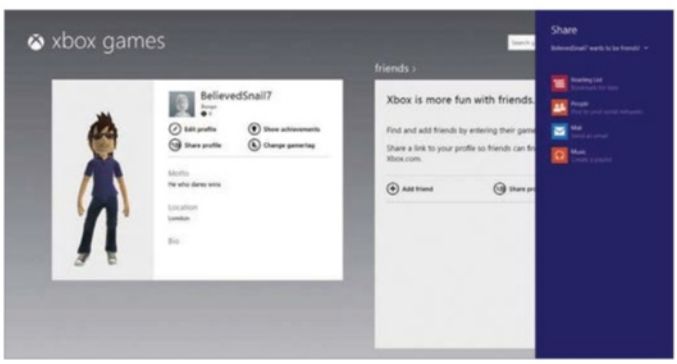
An immediate way to browse and load games is via the game tiles. Click once on your chosen game and it will open a new window, providing details of the game synopsis, a chance to look at its technical details, play a trailer or play the game itself

Your profile

To assist you within the social networking area of the Games app, you are given a profile that you can edit. In the app, scroll to the profile and click Edit Profile. You can then fill fields such as your name, a witty (or otherwise) motto to declare to your friends, your location and a bio to provide further information. Click on Save to retain your modifications. You can also change your Gamertag or nickname.

03: Games available

The Games app helps to filter the PC games that you can access to allow you to get the ones you want. Here, you can see a selection of games that are available on Windows 8.1. These games have achievements and awards, as seen on the Xbox consoles.



04: Friend & Profile

Here you can find out what your friends are playing and their progress. You can click Share Profile and share a request using any of the apps that appear in the menu that appears on the right. Friends who want to share with you click a link to accept your share request.

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Introducing Microsoft Word

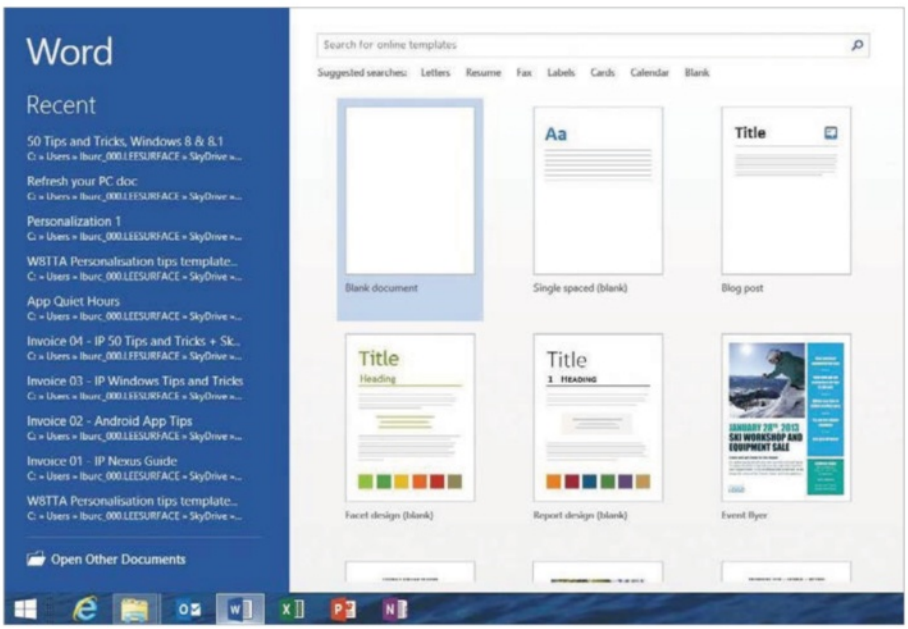
MS Word is the perhaps the best-known word-processing platform, used by millions the world over

Word provides a wide range of formats in which to save your documents. This ensures that you should be able to open them with any device, be that a Windows PC, Apple Mac, tablet device, smartphone or web browser. The tutorial will show you how to save your document, select the format, choose the location and name the file.

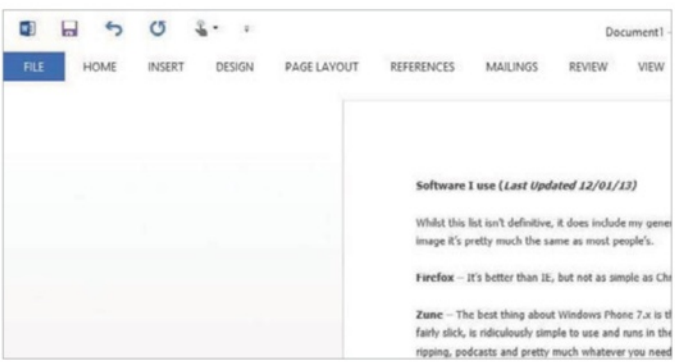
Office applications such as PowerPoint, Word and Excel not only allow you to save documents on your PC or external device, but also to a network drive or cloud service.

With Word 2013, Microsoft has somewhat changed the general layout and look by hiding the original ribbon bar and putting in its place the name of the tabs where you can access the ribbon information instead, giving a cleaner, fresher and less distracting look while you are working. You can of course change the view so that the ribbon is once again present, with all the usual options shown, and you can even hide it all together so that all you see is the white paper you are working on, enabling complete focus on your part.

You can buy Microsoft's Office suite from **office.microsoft.com/buy/.**



"With Word 2013, Microsoft has changed the general layout and look"



01: The front screen

When using Word, you'll spend most of your time on the main word-processing screen. Across the top are a series of tabs and icons. In order to save a document for the first time, you will need to navigate to the top-left corner of the screen and click on the File menu.

02: The File menu

You'll then be taken to a new page detailing information about the document, such as its size, properties, who authored it and when it was last modified. To the left of the screen are a number of submenus; we are going to select the one that says 'Save as'.

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Exploring the ribbon

The ribbon holds all your editing tools

Touch enable

Word 2013 has been designed with touch devices in mind. Click the hand icon and you can change the view so the options and tools on the ribbon are spaced out to be more touch-friendly

Bullet points and lists

To use bullet points or create a numbered list, click on these icons. A bullet point or number will appear; enter your text next to it and press Return. A new bullet point or number will be created underneath

The Home tab

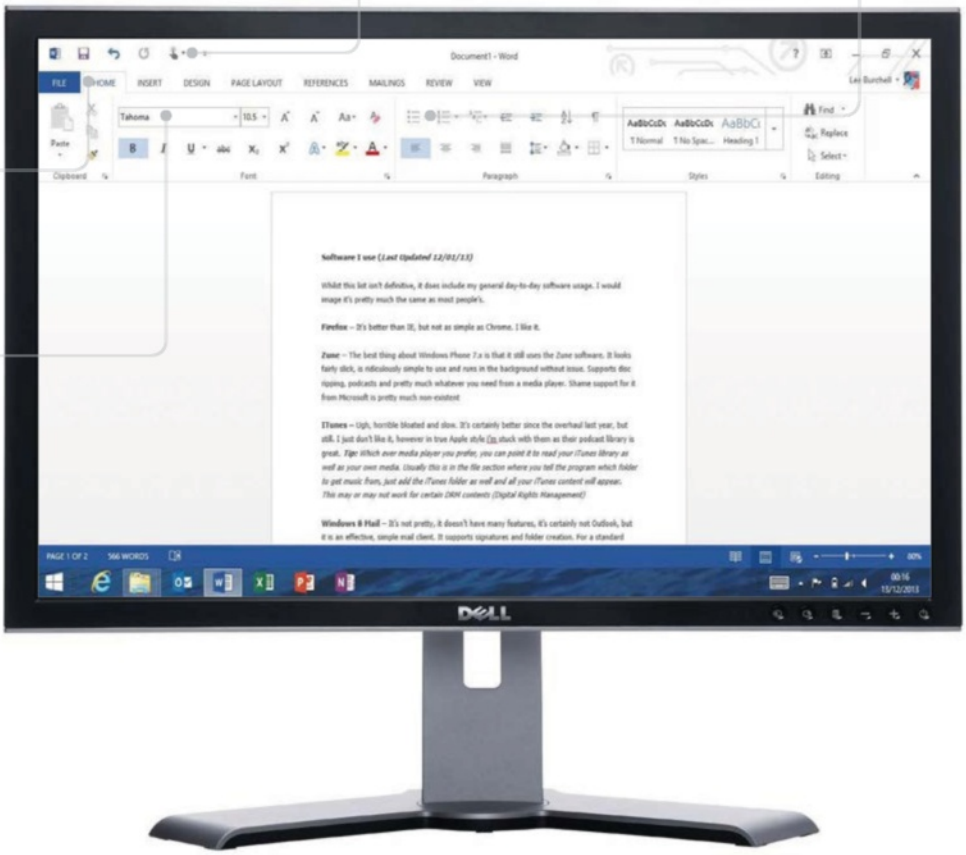
The tabs at the top of the screen provide you with a huge array of tools to edit, design and personalise your document. The one you will be using the most is the Home tab, which holds the most commonly used tools

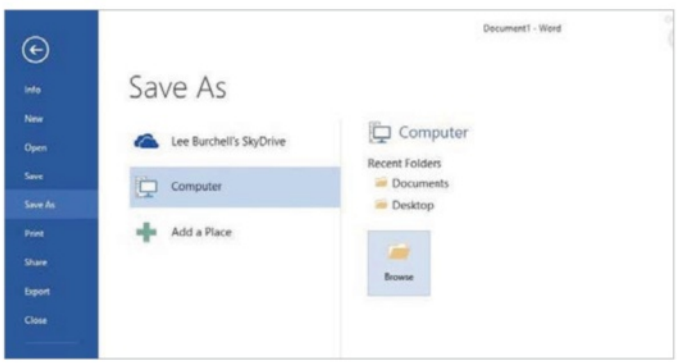
Fonts

At last count, Word 2013 comes with 67 fonts. That does not include fonts that were already installed on your computer, or that you have manually installed yourself. Click the text field to a drop-down of the previews

Six icons

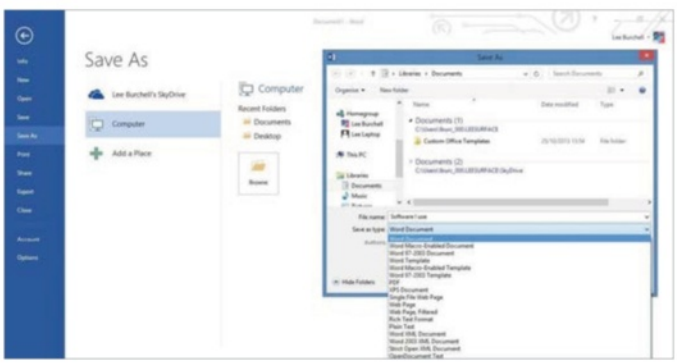
Along the very top of the page are six icons. The Word icon allows you to close the session. The small disk makes a quick save. The left arrow undoes your last command or entry, while the circular one redoes it. The touch icon customises Word for touch devices. Finally, the small down-arrow provides a drop-down menu of quick commands.





03: Save as

The save menu has two sections. The first has locations detected where you can save your document. The second has the recently accessed folders within the selected location. We are going to choose the Computer location, followed by the Browse folder.



04: Name and file type

In the pop-up, you can select the destination folder for your document. Once selected, use the text field 'file name' to enter the name you wish to give the document. Lastly, click the drop-down to choose the file type you wish to use, then click Save.

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Embed media into a document

Use Word 2013 to enhance your documents, by embedding online video content into them

Microsoft Word 2013, or MS Word used in conjunction with Office 365, has several powerful tools that let you tailor your documents. With the huge library of video content available online, Word 2013 enables you to embed videos directly into a document. In addition, once the Word document has been downloaded via email, your server, or wherever it may be kept, the video will still play on devices that are no longer connected to the internet. This enables you to create your bespoke documents and view them on any device you wish, whether the internet is available or not.

You can of course add as many videos as you wish to a document, turning it a truly multimedia briefing or presentation, however remember that adding videos will increase the size of your document, and many email providers have a set limit on the size of attachments you can send.

This tutorial will show you how to embed a video from a website, how you'd like the video presented in the document and how it interacts with the text surrounding it, plus how to play the video from within the document.

"Word 2013 enables you to embed videos directly into a document"

Search YouTube for a video

Embed a video directly from YouTube in Word 2013

Preview the video
Select a video and a small magnifying glass appears. Click this and a small pop-up window enables you to play the video from within the search results to ensure it's the one you require

Search field
Rather than search YouTube in your browser and copy/paste the embed codes, you can search directly from Word 2013 here. Type in the name of the video, then select it in the results

Search results
Your search results appear within the search screen's main window in a grid-based layout in order to make it easier to find the video you have searched for by image. If there are many results, you can scroll down with the mouse wheel

Video information
Once you have highlighted the video you wish to use, its information will be provided at the bottom of the search screen. This info includes the length of the video, the title and the username of the person who owns the video

Embed codes
Websites enable users to share videos via a number of means: the link or URL to the video itself, embedding automatically within an email from the site, a cut version of a URL to share on social networks, and embed codes. Sites like YouTube, Vimeo and Vevo offer embed codes for users to share media content with others.

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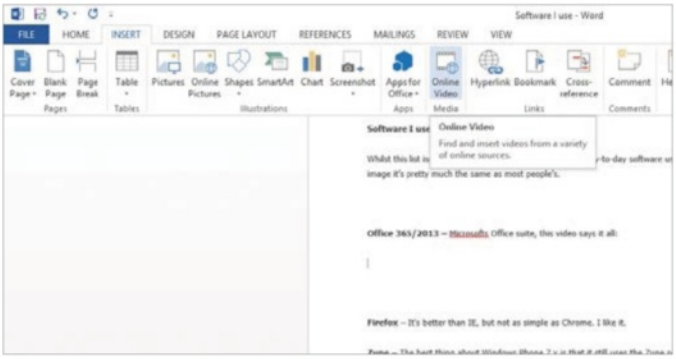
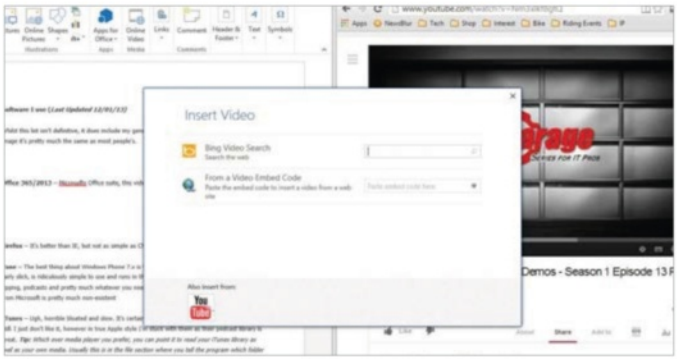
01: Your document

First, open a new page, or an existing document, and select the Insert tab to show the ribbon and its tools.



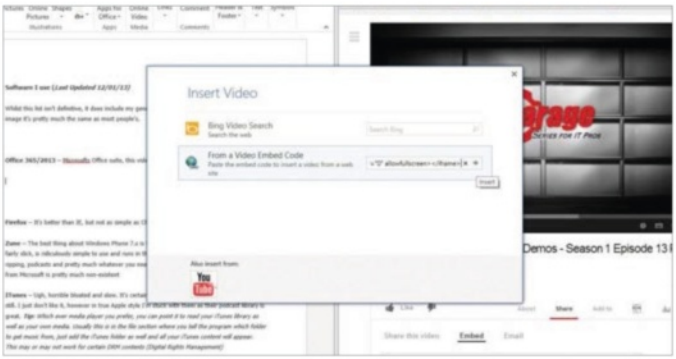
02: Insert ribbon

With the Insert ribbon enabled, you have a large number of options to add media. We are going to select the Online Video button.



03: Insert video

A pop-up will offer options to search for a video using a search engine, enter an embed code for your video, or search YouTube.



04: Add your embed code

In the web browser, find the video you want to use and look for an embed code. Copy and paste the code into the embed box.

05: Layout options

Place the video where you wish, amend the preview size, and use the icon to the right to decide how it interacts with text around it.

06: Play!

With the video embedded and positioned, all that is left is to press Play. The video will pop out individually with in-video controls.

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Create a spreadsheet with Excel

With Excel 2013, Microsoft places the most powerful spreadsheet software available at your fingertips

Excel is a spreadsheet program like no other. You can create tables, analyse and calculate data, create accounting spreadsheets, rotas… anything you can think of that involves lists, numbers or any data that needs to be compiled.

Some of the most useful parts of Excel lay within the formatting and formulas. These enable you to create highly complex graphs and tables, pull data from other workbooks stored on the network and use it within your current workbook.

This tutorial will focus on getting you started with Excel, using preset templates. Rather than design your own spreadsheet, graph, etc, Microsoft has put together a vast array of graphically impressive and highly intuitive templates for you to download for free, to cover almost any scenario.

Shopping lists, holiday budgets, planning a meal, blood pressure, personal or family accounting, even graphs and pie charts… There really is a template that you can download and customise within Excel for everybody to take advantage of, and that's just scratching the surface of what Excel can do.

"A vast array of graphically impressive and highly intuitive templates"

Enter your data

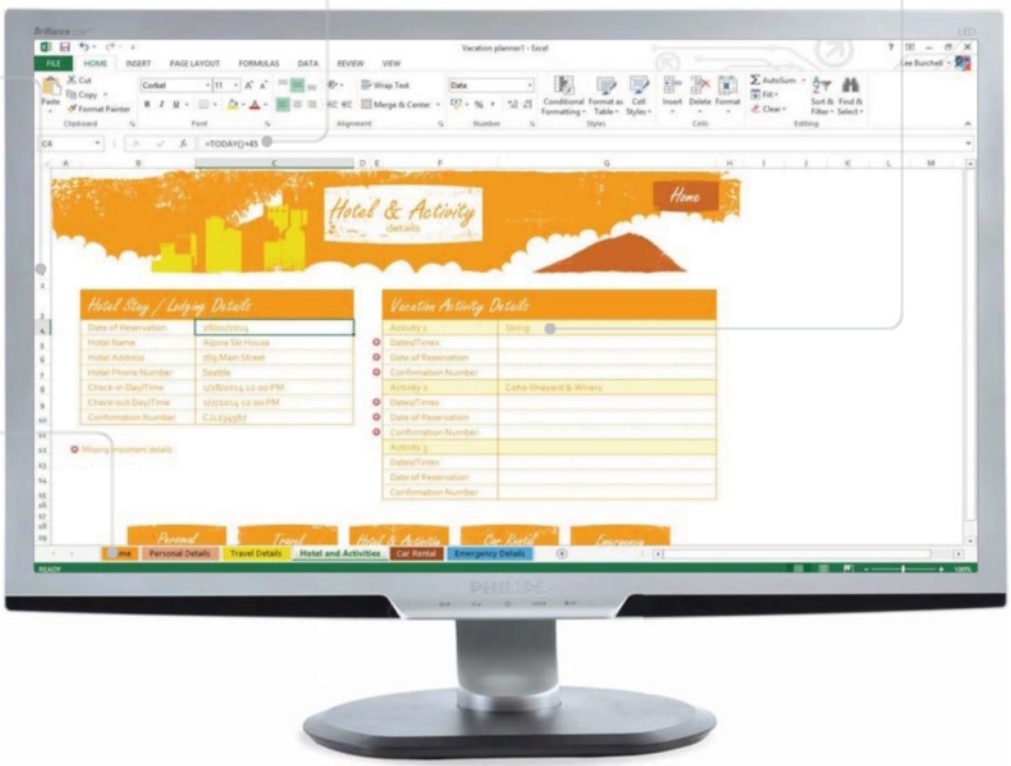
Use templates to make data come alive

Formulas
Excel uses formulas and formatting to make the spreadsheet interactive, enabling you to make calculations and present the results in conditionally formatted cells if you want

Change cell names
While this template has its own default titles and info, you can change these fields to suit your own needs. For example, where the activities field states 'skiing', this can be altered

Add extra data
If you need to add more info, or rows, to the spreadsheet, right-click on one of the numbered rows to the left and select Insert. You can now add a row and Excel will add correct formatting

Work tabs
At the bottom of your workbook are several tabs to navigate to sheets. These can be renamed and rearranged, in addition to being deleted or copied. Adding data on these tabs will amend data to the first tab on this template



More templates
You can use a web browser to find even more templates. Go to **office.com** and click the Templates tab to find templates for Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Publisher, etc. Select one and click Download. Now open it from your Downloads folder.

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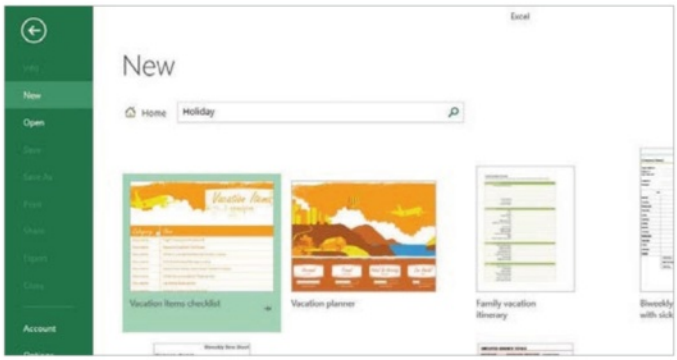
01: Start Excel

To access templates, you will of course need to open a session of Excel. Do this by launching it from where you decided to install it.

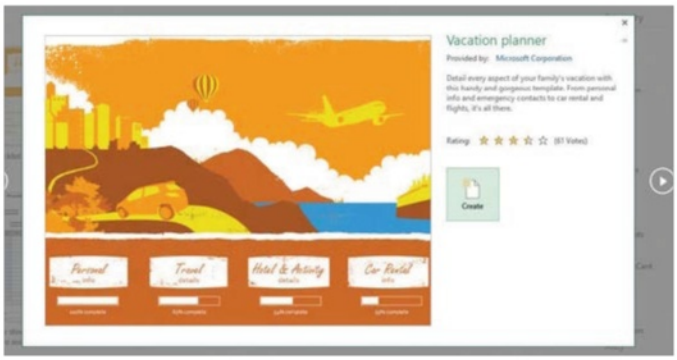
02: New workbook

The 'New' screen provides a number of templates by default. In the search bar, enter 'Holiday' and press Return.



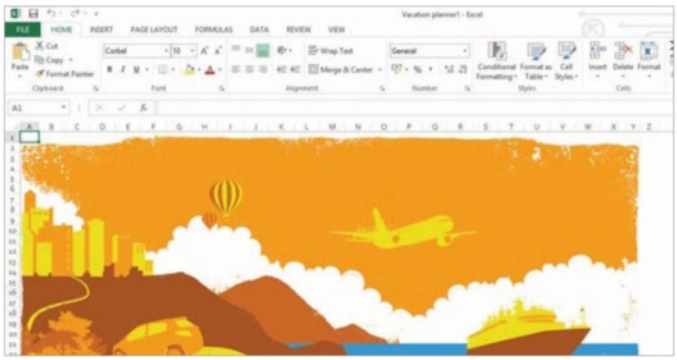
03: Search results

Your search results will now show all templates available designed for holidays, from checklists and planners to budgets.



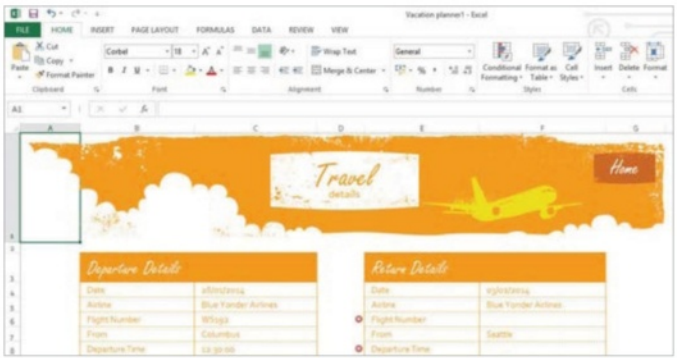
04: Template preview

Select the 'Vacation Planner' template. This will bring up a pop-up window with a preview of the template and a description of its uses.



05: Create template

Once happy with your template choice, click the Create button to use it in Excel. It will then open in a full document.



06: Your new workbook

Your template will now be a fully usable spreadsheet where you can adapt to your needs and enter your own data.

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Use basic Excel functions

Excel features a function that enables you to add a large number of figures automatically

Where Excel shines is within its functions, formulas, and the sheer adaptability with which it can manipulate numbers.

Once you have input all your data into your worksheet, Excel has the ability to provide graphs, averages and other ways in which to visualise your data.

One of the most useful, and commonly used, features in Excel is the 'Autosum' function. With Autosum, you will be able to take a long list of numbers, no matter how big, and add them all up quickly and efficiently. No need to use a calculator!

The following tutorial will provide you with a step-by-step guide showing you how to go about inputting your data, then select the fields required to aggregate the data and use Autosum to automatically calculate the total.

You will be able to change these numbers, or add extra ones, and the total you have created will amend itself accordingly. With this in mind, Excel is perfect for doing accounts and creating rotas, spreadsheets and any number of other tools involving data with numerical values.

"One of the most useful features in Excel is the Autosum function"

Spreadsheet options

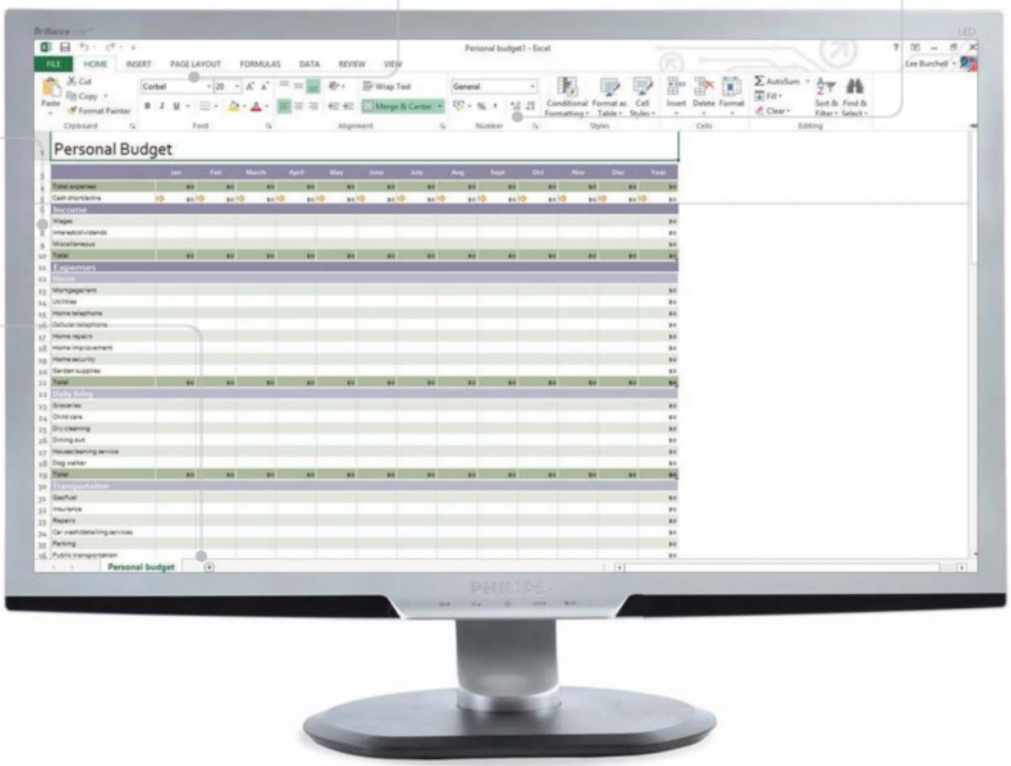
Using the spreadsheet and the ribbon functions

Fonts
A large number of fonts are accessible from this drop-down menu. It also shows a preview of how the typeface will look when used within Excel

Number
This section enables you to move the decimal place of a highlighted cell's number, show it as a percentage, date, fraction or change the type of currency

Cells
The letters and numbers along the top and side of the Excel workbook are at the core of everything that Excel does. The cells are fully customisable: you can move them, delete them, insert them, and hide them if required

Sheets & tabs
You can add as many sheets or tabs to your workbook as you need by simply pressing the small '+' button here. You can right-click on the sheet to open additional options such as move, copy and delete, among others



Individual addition
As you get used to Excel, you may want to add the values of individual cells together. One way is to enter '=SUM(cell letter/number+cell letter/number)' and hit Return. This will add the fields together. You can also enter '=SUM', click the first cell you want, then hold Ctrl and click on another cell, then press Return.

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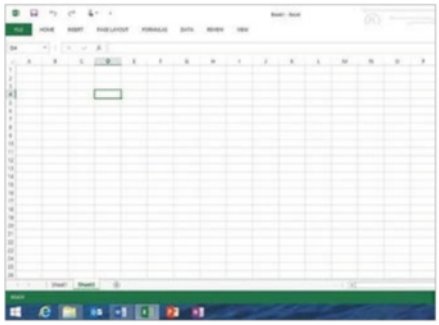
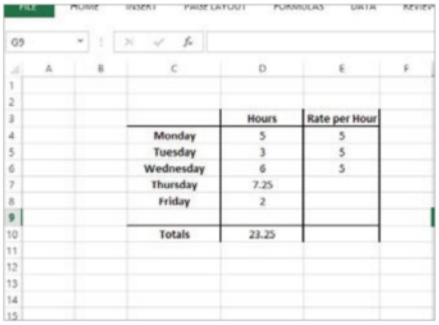


01: Blank workbook

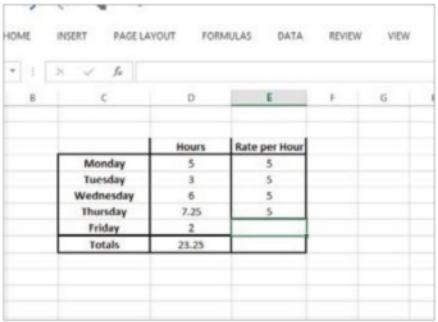
To start, open Excel and select a blank template. Once open, make sure you save the template before entering your data.



	Hours	Rate per Hour
Monday	5	5
Tuesday	3	5
Wednesday	6	5
Thursday	7.25	
Friday	2	
Totals	23.25	

02: Input data

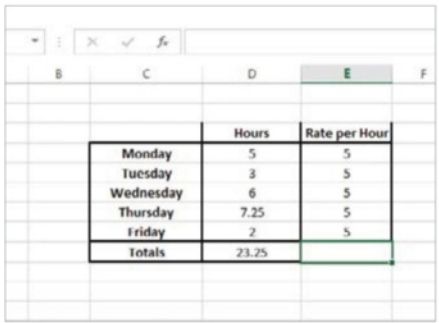
Now that you have the blank template, enter the information similar to what's above, in order to set up the spreadsheet.



	Hours	Rate per Hour
Monday	5	5
Tuesday	3	5
Wednesday	6	5
Thursday	7.25	5
Friday	2	
Totals	23.25	

03: Enter data

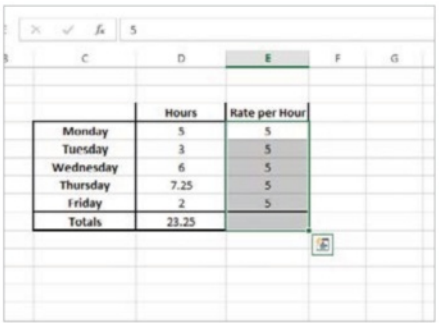
With the table laid out, select cell 'E7' and enter the number 5 into the field and press return. The highlight will now move down.



	Hours	Rate per Hour
Monday	5	5
Tuesday	3	5
Wednesday	6	5
Thursday	7.25	5
Friday	2	5
Totals	23.25	

04: Enter more data

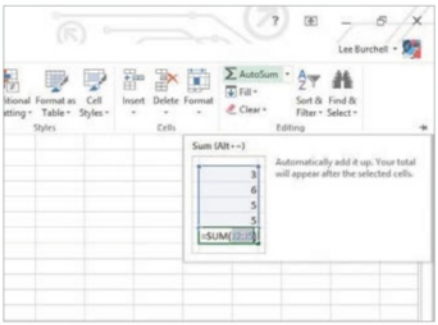
Your highlighted cell should now be cell 'E8'. To continue, enter into the cell the number 5 as you did the prior cell.



	Hours	Rate per Hour
Monday	5	5
Tuesday	3	5
Wednesday	6	5
Thursday	7.25	5
Friday	2	5
Totals	23.25	

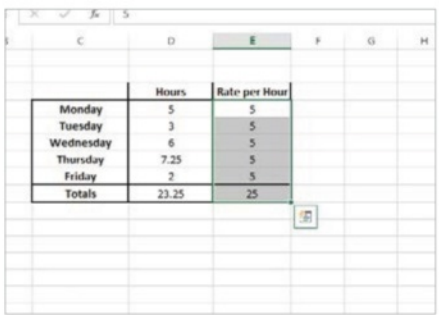
05: Highlight your data

Place your cursor on cell E4. Now hold the left mouse button and drag down to E9. The selected cells should remain highlighted.



06: Autosum

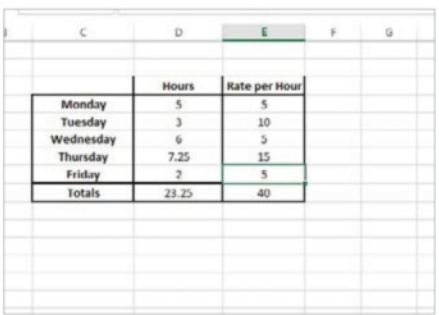
Now select Autosum from the ribbon. This will add all the data you have highlighted and place the result into the bottom cell.



	Hours	Rate per Hour
Monday	5	5
Tuesday	3	5
Wednesday	6	5
Thursday	7.25	5
Friday	2	5
Totals	23.25	25

07: Total added

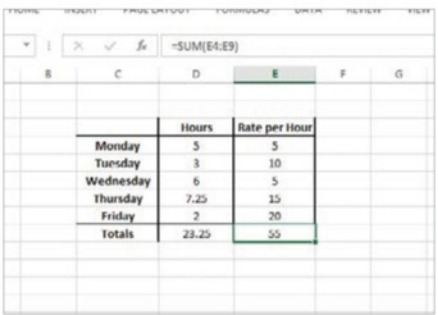
The cell E9 will now be populated with the overall mathematical total of cells E4 to E8. All with just the click of a button.



	Hours	Rate per Hour
Monday	5	5
Tuesday	3	10
Wednesday	6	5
Thursday	7.25	15
Friday	2	5
Totals	23.25	40

08: Change data

Now Autosum is in place, you may change the numerical values within the defined cells and the total will automatically update.



	Hours	Rate per Hour
Monday	5	5
Tuesday	3	10
Wednesday	6	5
Thursday	7.25	15
Friday	2	20
Totals	23.25	55

09: New sum

Change the number within the cell E8 for Friday from 5 to 20 and press Enter. The total will now auto-update for you.

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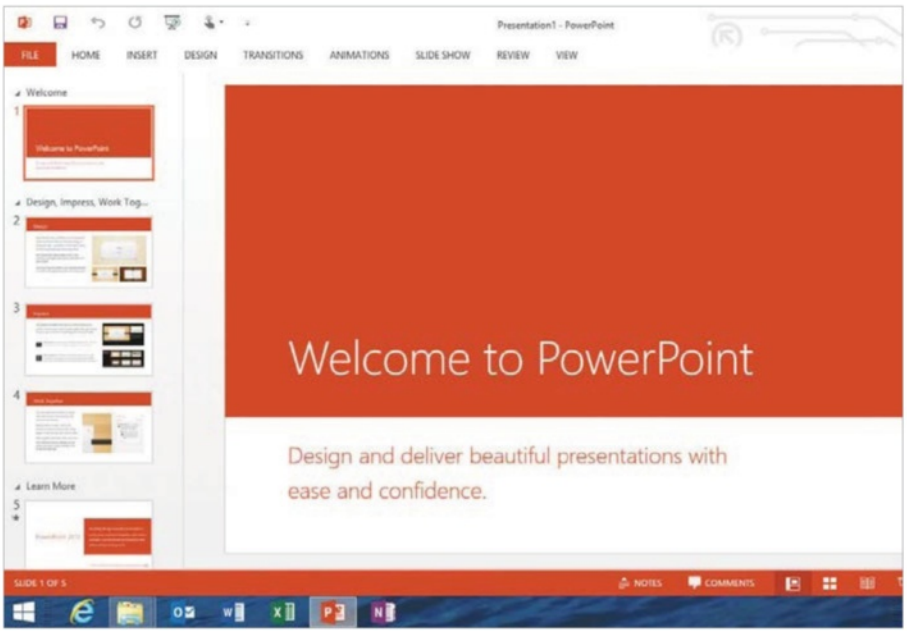
Get started with PowerPoint

Create your slideshow or briefing for work both quickly and easily with the latest version of Microsoft PowerPoint

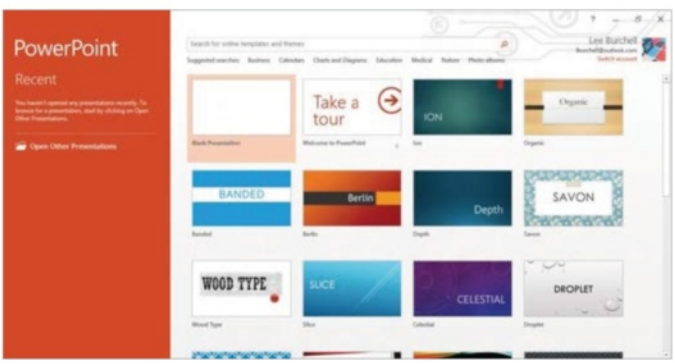
PowerPoint enables you to create slideshows and presentations with ease. Ideal for use on projectors, computers, tablets and also printouts, it enables you to create colourful presentations, including video, photos, drawings, illustrations, tables and graphs. All of this information and imagery transitions seamlessly from one slide to another and can be controlled remotely, using a wireless mouse, keyboard, or remote software package.

The following tutorial will provide you with a step-by-step guide to selecting a template background for your presentation, adding text to the existing slide, and adding new slides to the presentation. PowerPoint also has a Presenter view which enables you to stay organised from a behind-the-scenes point of view; this enables you to keep your audience focused on the presentation. You can also use grid view to preview your place in the presentation and continue where you left off.

Lastly, PowerPoint automatically supports 'second screen' presentations. PowerPoint will detect the primary screen and place the presentation there, with the Presenter view defaulted to the second screen.

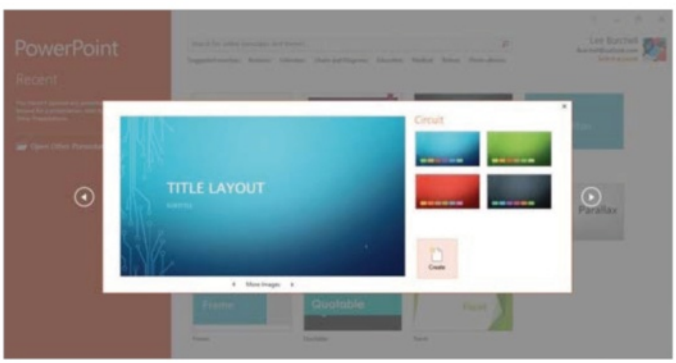


"PowerPoint automatically supports 'second screen' presentations"



01: Open PowerPoint

Upon launch, you're presented with a 'Create new' screen that also has a selection of templates you can use, complete with background wallpapers and animations as you transition between slides. To the left is a column of your recently opened documents, for quick access.



02: Select a template

From the template screen we're going to select the Circuit template from the grid. Once the template has been selected, a pop-up will appear providing a preview and the ability to change the colour of the template. Click the Create button to continue.

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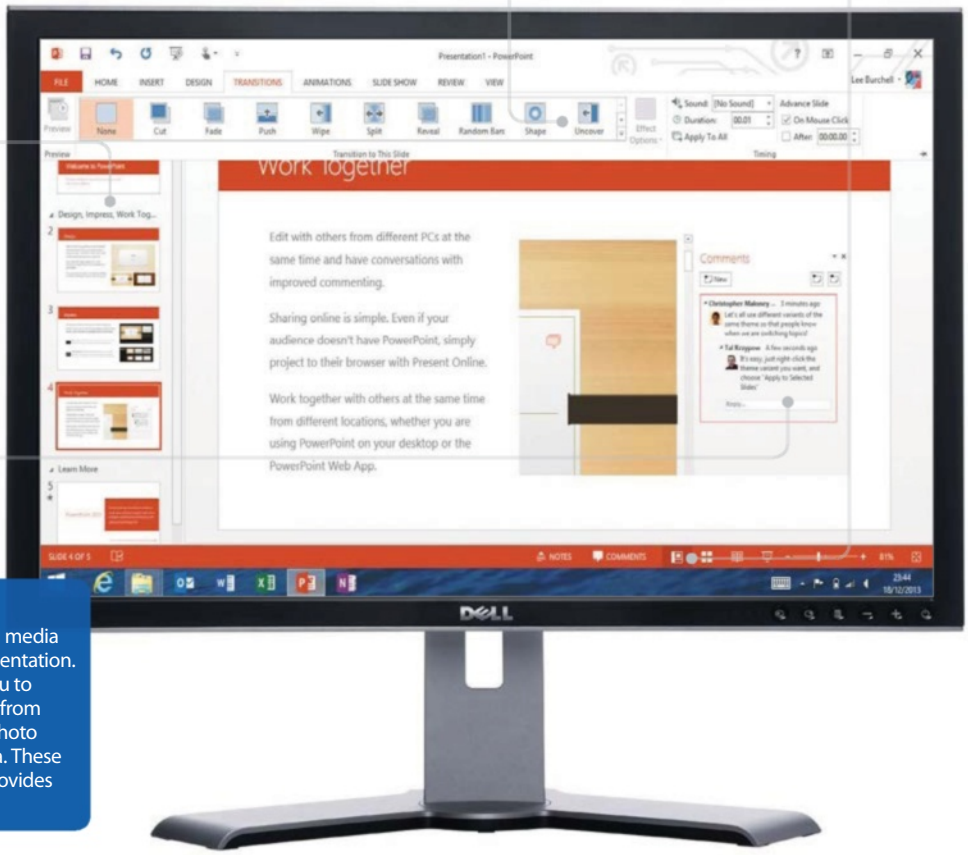
PowerPoint tools

PowerPoint has numerous tools you can make use of

Transitions
The main ribbon holds all the tools you'll need to create, edit and present your presentation. The Transitions tab offers several options to change how each slide transitions to the next

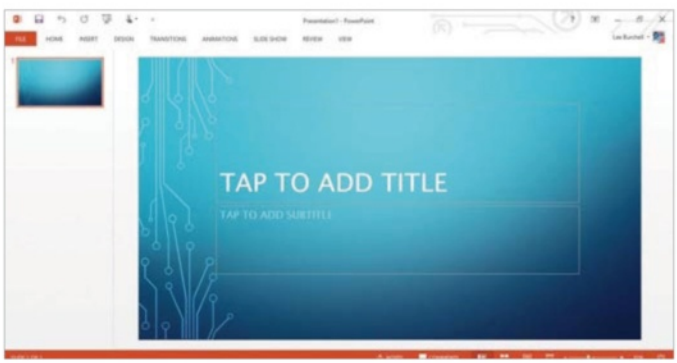
Grid icon
This will change the current view to a small preview at the top of the screen with a numbered horizontal grid of panes at the bottom, for you to view as an enhanced preview

Preview pane
The column to the left of the main slide provides you with a preview of the slideshow in an ascending numerical order. You can rearrange slides from here, in addition to creating new ones and deleting unwanted ones



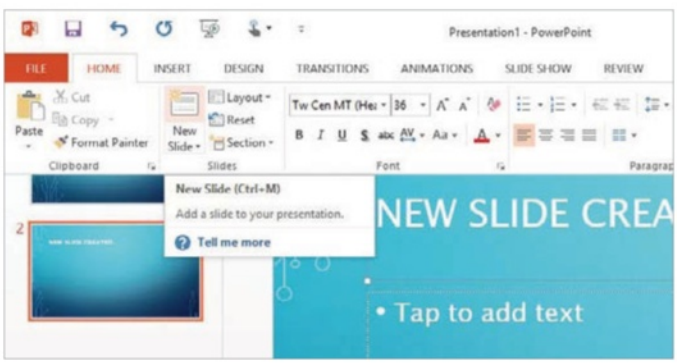
Comments
If you want another person's opinions on your presentation, they can enter comments in to a special comments bar that appears to the right hand side of the main slide. This provides you the option of changing the slide should you wish to

Add media
PowerPoint provides options with which to add media from a number of sources to enhance your presentation. By selecting the Insert tab, the ribbon allows you to insert a table with which to enter data, pictures from your own library, pictures from the internet, a photo album, as well as videos and other digital media. These are just some of the options that PowerPoint provides for you to add content to your presentations.



03: Add text

With the new template opened, the main screen provides the editable portion of the slide while the left pane shows a small preview of it. Select the text box in the main part of the slide to present the text cursor; now enter whatever text you wish.



04: Add a slide

After entering the text, you will no doubt wish to continue to make your presentation – and for that you will need to create a new slide. Select the Home tab from the top left and from the ribbon select New Slide. A new slide will now appear under the original.

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Control your PowerPoint slideshow

Create an advanced slide show and present your briefing, presentation or photo album with PowerPoint

In days past, Microsoft PowerPoint was great for creating a slideshow, and for printing out presentations. However, there weren't really any interactive elements and it depended on the speaker more often than not having to control the presentation while the audience simply observed. In this day and age of technology, though, people expect a seamless presentation with few to no pauses between transitions.

PowerPoint 2013 has several powerful tools built into it to allow you to create an interactive, smooth and professional experience that can be controlled either directly, on a timer, remotely, or via a second screen.

In addition, if you are using a Windows Phone, then you can also control the whole presentation from your mobile device. In fact, PowerPoint – along with the rest of Office 2013 – has been tweaked and optimised for ease of use on mobile devices, and this is where PowerPoint 2013 can truly make your presentations shine.

The following step-by-step guide will show you how to open a slideshow, enter into the slideshow mode, and how to navigate with it. Later we will look at the second-screen experience, using two displays.

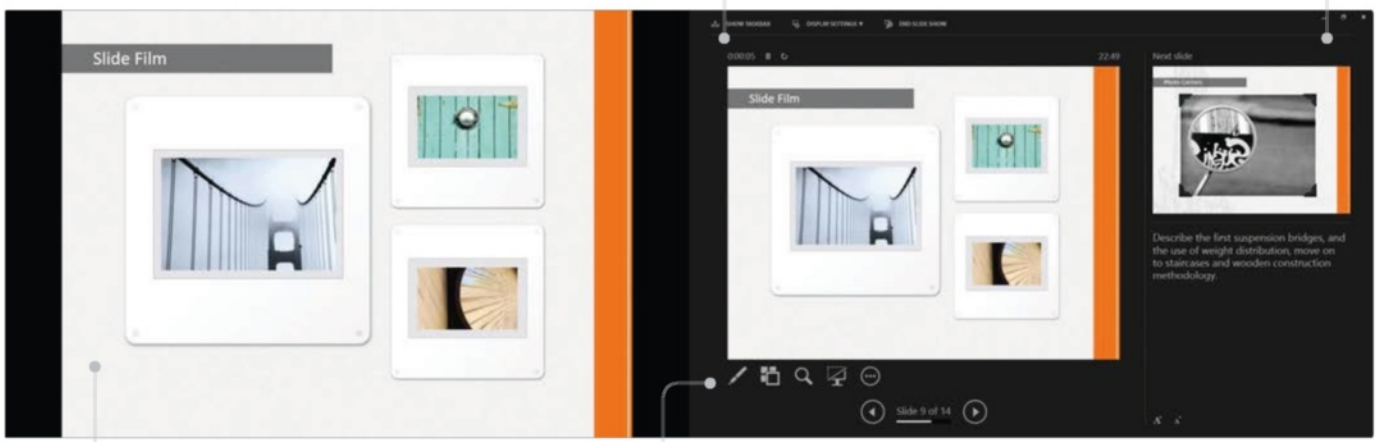
> "Control the presentation directly, on a timer, remotely or via a second screen"

Presenter view

Use dual screens to employ Presenter view

Secondary screen
This is the second screen; ie the presenter's view. Here you can control what is seen on the primary screen. The main area of the second screen mirrors what's on the first, so you can see where you are in the presentation

Next slide & comments
To the far right of the second screen are two boxes. The top provides you with a preview of the next slide, so that you are aware in advance. The bottom section shows notes for the current slide, for prompting or presenting purposes



Main screen
The primary view is what your audience will see as you give your presentation, be that on a projector or a monitor you have connected. Whichever monitor is the default primary will show the main slideshow

Tools
The tools under the main preview allow you to use an on-screen pointer or add notes, zoom out to a grid view to quickly select other slides, zoom into a part of the slide, black out the screen and access additional tools.

Timing
If you are creating a slideshow, or have a presentation that can be used as a timed slideshow, then remember that PowerPoint has additional tools to aid you in setting that up. Under the Transition tab to the far right of the ribbon are options to add sounds to the slideshow, set the duration the slide stays on screen, and to change slides after clicking the mouse button.

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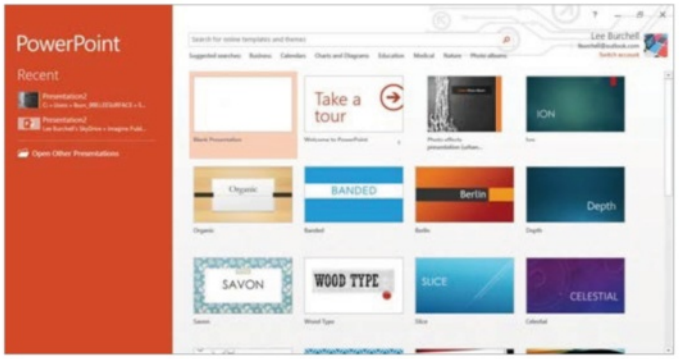
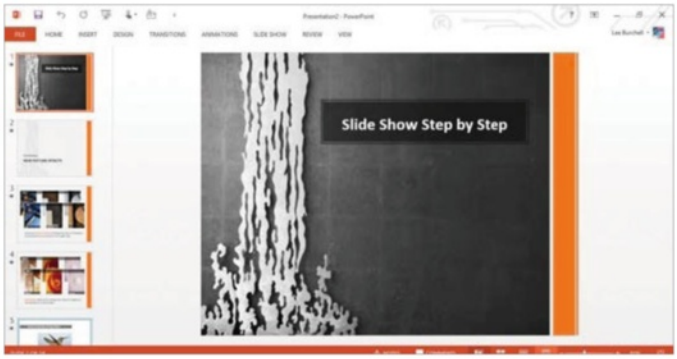


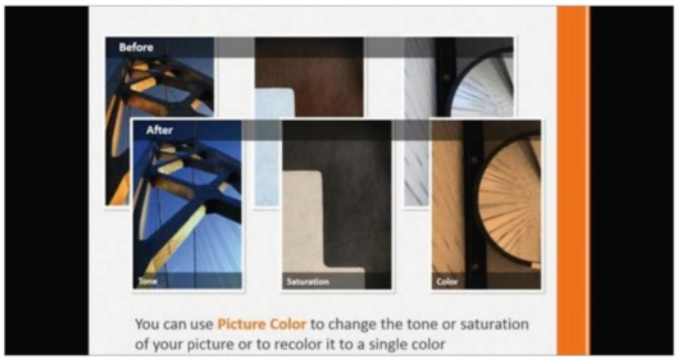
01: Open PowerPoint

Upon launch, you will be presented with a number of templates. To the left, select your last opened PowerPoint presentation.



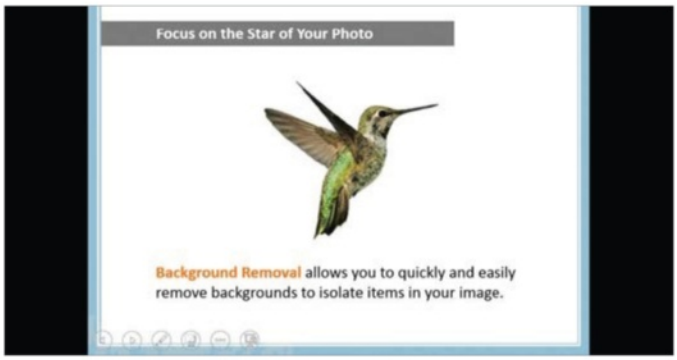
02: Select slideshow

With your presentation open, select the Slideshow icon at the bottom of the screen to begin the automated presentation.



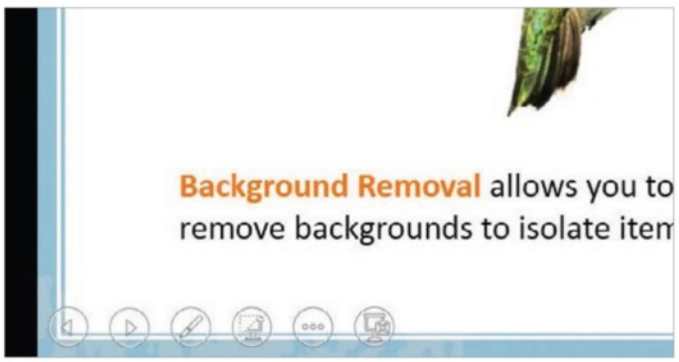
03: Active slideshow

With the slide show playing, all controls have disappeared to present a crisp, clean look so your audience isn't distracted.



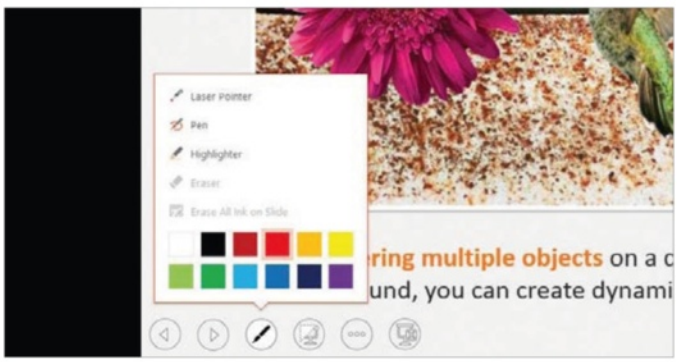
04: Slideshow controls

To access the slideshow controls, left-click the mouse or tap anywhere on the screen. A series of controls will then appear.



05: Change slides

If you've set up your presentation to manually change slides, you can advance them using the arrows on the controls at the bottom.



06: Presentation options

While in slide mode you can use a laser pen option to present a laser dot upon the main screen, drawing attention where required.

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Create a personal news feed

Windows 8.1's News app offers a platform where you can read the latest headlines from around the globe

As you'd expect from a multimedia-centric operating system, the range of default apps include a method for showcasing the latest news stories.

The News app features slick presentation and by default you have a handy offline mode so any news that you view can be read later when offline. Also, news can be synced across all the Windows-based devices you own.

However, most of the topics are hand-picked for you and this may be a bad thing, especially if you don't want to have to wade through several screens of content that you are not interested in.

Fortunately, the app does provide several layers of customisation, so you can effectively create your own personal news feed tailored to your specific requirements and this is the main focus of our tutorial.

For the tutorial we have created several steps to show you how to customise the app and add extra third-party news feeds (so you can add the news from your favourite website). All you need is the News app, which should be included as standard. If not, you can get this app from the Windows Store.

"Create your own personal news feed tailored to your requirements"

Customising the News app

You can tailor the News app to your heart's content

Drag & drop

The intuitive interface allows you to quickly drag and drop the news thumbnails into the preferred order. This way you can get access to the news feeds you want at the front without having to scroll across to the far end

Adding topics

While you have a range of default news topics available, you can also tap into the software's 'Topics' feature which allows you to search for a wider range of source material, eg Games, and then display these on the home screen

Searching for news

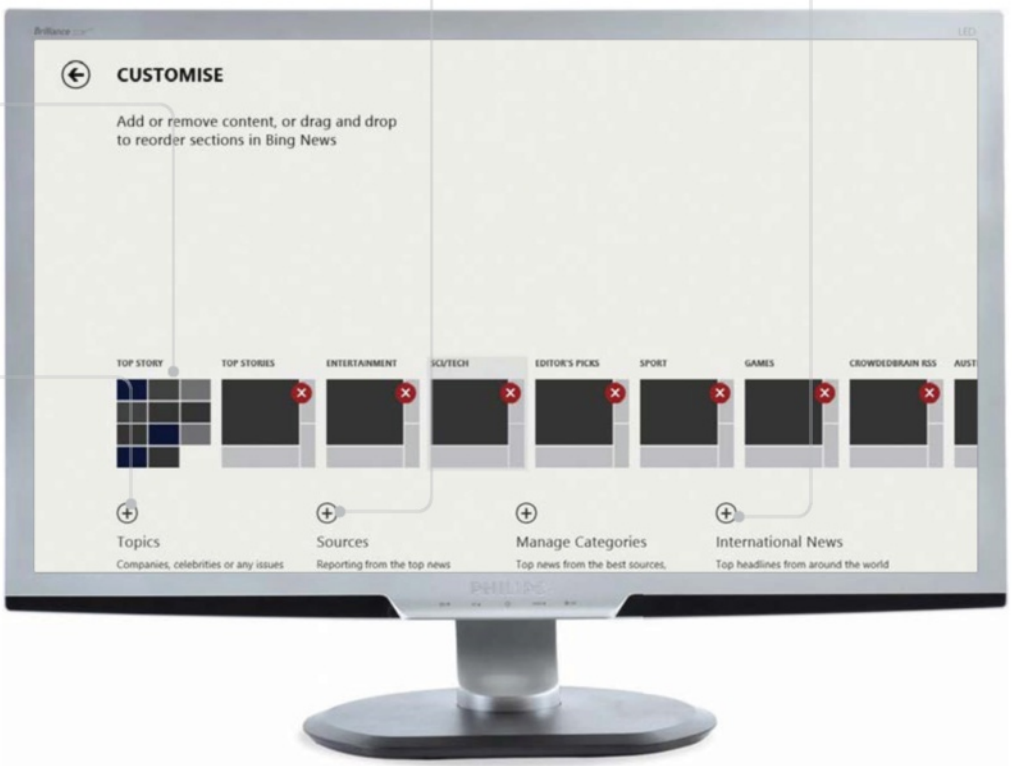
Use the search bar at the top and then right-click the results to add the news as a 'Section' so you can access it from the home screen in the future, or even pin the news to your Windows Start screen as a tile. Also, if you bring up the Charms bar by hovering the mouse to the right of the screen, you can head to Settings>Options to toggle the offline reading option on/off.

Sources

Sources are the places where the news is taken from. If you know the RSS feed URL, you can key this in and start getting news from your favourite website

International news

Use the International News icon to pick news from other countries, such as Australia. This way, if you are away from your chosen country you can still keep up-to-date



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01: Customise your news feed

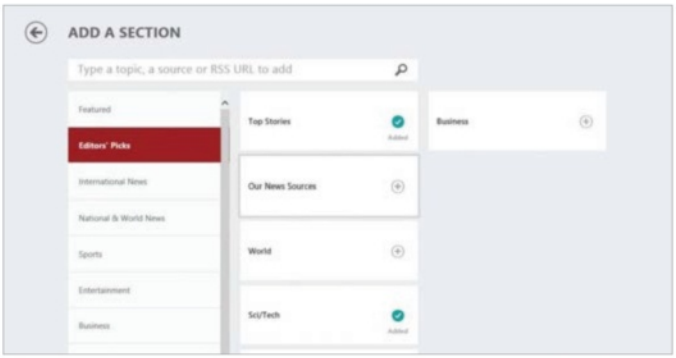
Launch the News app and after a while the news content will appear. Click on 'Customise your news' under the 'Getting Started' section.

02: Deleting content

By holding the left mouse button, you can drag items into a new order. Or tap on the 'X' of the thumbnail to delete a news header.

03: Add topic

Select the Topics icon. Now type in a new topic, eg games, and select one of the results in the list to add this to your news feeds.



04: Add source

Now select Sources or 'Manage category' to add/remove content. Select a heading on the left and use the '+' icon to add content.

05: RSS feed URL

You can use the search box to enter a news feed URL and then click the search icon followed by the '+' icon to add the feed.

06: Add international news

Return to the customise screen and tap on International News. From here, click on the '+' icon to add news feeds from other countries.

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Navigate the Weather app

Discover how to keep track of local and remote weather conditions using Windows 8's built-in Weather app

Powered by Bing, the Weather app is actually pretty useful as it provides a ten-day weather forecast for your chosen location.

Of course, the accuracy is only as good as the source. However, on the front page of the Weather app, it does pull information from two other sources (such as AccuWeather) to give you a broader and more accurate overview of the conditions.

Additionally, you can drill deeper into the weather conditions since the software will supply wind, humidity, UV index info and even the times at which the sunrise and sunset are likely to occur.

For the boffins out there, you can glean some basic historical information from the supplied weather forecast or you can tap into a handy graph on the front page to view the temperature, rainfall or snow conditions over the past year.

In the tutorial we look at how to set your home location, add different locations and switch between them. We also dabble in the Maps feature, which offers a more graphical view of the weather conditions.

"It will supply wind, humidity, UV index info and even the sunrise/sunset times"

The Weather view

The interface displays weather forecasts for up to ten days

World Weather
Use this to see a snapshot of the temperatures for various countries. You don't have any direct control because the temperatures rotate randomly, but it may have its uses

Maps view
View the weather in a graphical format, to see how the temperature or cloud cover is affecting the selected region. Switch regions to see the conditions elsewhere

Favourites
Use the Place icon to view the currently selected Home location and to add locations. You can then quickly switch between them by selecting the Place drop-down arrow (next to the icon)

Selecting weather
This shows a snapshot of the chosen location's forecast for ten days. Each thumbnail can be selected to view additional info such as the wind, humidity and sunrise/sunset times

Pin to Start
Selecting a different location provides some extra options for you to select. For example, when you right-click the screen, you can delete the location quickly using the bottom Remove icon, or you can chose the option 'Pin to Start'. This will then add the weather for the selected location to your Start screen (it will also support the live tile functionality).

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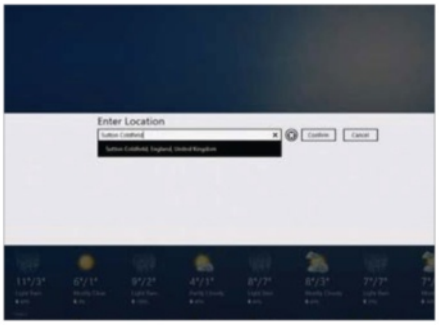
01: Set your location

Right-click the screen and at the base choose 'Current location'. When prompted, 'Allow' the app to access your location.



02: Confirm location

If the current location provided is correct, select Confirm; otherwise type in your location and select the result from the list.

03: Viewing weather

Right-click the main screen to 'Change to Fahrenheit' if you want. Select a day thumbnail to view the weather forecast.

04: Viewing the map

Click the back button, then scroll to the right and click on the large map. From here, hover your mouse at the top to view the modes.

05: Changing map modes

Select the Cloud icon, say, to view the cloud cover for the selected region – to alter it, click on Change Region at the top right.

06: Historical Weather

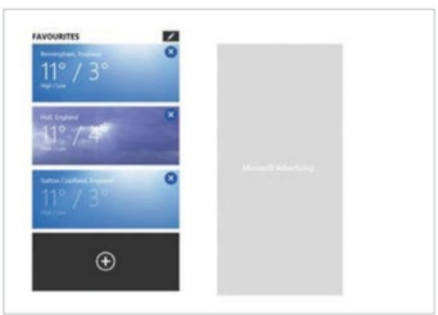
Click the back button, then select the icons under 'Historical Weather' to switch between temperature, rainfall and snow days.

07: Change Home location

Right-click and choose Places. Select the Home icon and then type/select your new Home location to confirm the change.

08: Switch locations

If you right-click the main screen and use the drop-down arrow next to Places, you can switch between locations.



09: Remove/add locations

Right-click and select Places. In here, select the Pencil icon (under favourites) to remove a location, or use the '+' icon to add one.

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Use the Bing Smart Search

Learn how to utilise the new Bing Smart Search facility that is integrated into Windows 8.1

Bing Search was a popular app on Windows 8 as it provided a converged solution for searching/accessing web content or to view the latest trending news.

You may be wondering at this stage why we are talking about the app in a past tense? Well, Microsoft decided to scrap the Bing app in Windows 8.1.

However, the good news is there is a way to access the old Bing-style search system (which we talk about in the boxout), but for the most part you will find that Bing is now an integral part of the operating system's infrastructure (aptly named Bing Smart Search).

What this means in English is that when you bring up the Search charm, you can not only search for content on your local machine, but on the web too. This can include standard websites, images or videos.

Web images and videos are presented in the same standard Windows-style interface, so there is a sense of continuity. Better still, you can also pick the best image to add to your lock screen. This process and the ability to use the Smart Search facility to look for web content are covered in the tutorial.

> "Bing will now search for content on your local machine and on the web"

Sorting the images

The images you search for can be sorted

Size of images

A useful function is the ability to adjust the displayed results based on size. For example, the Size icon will list various options such as Small, Medium, Large or Wallpaper sized images

Change the colour

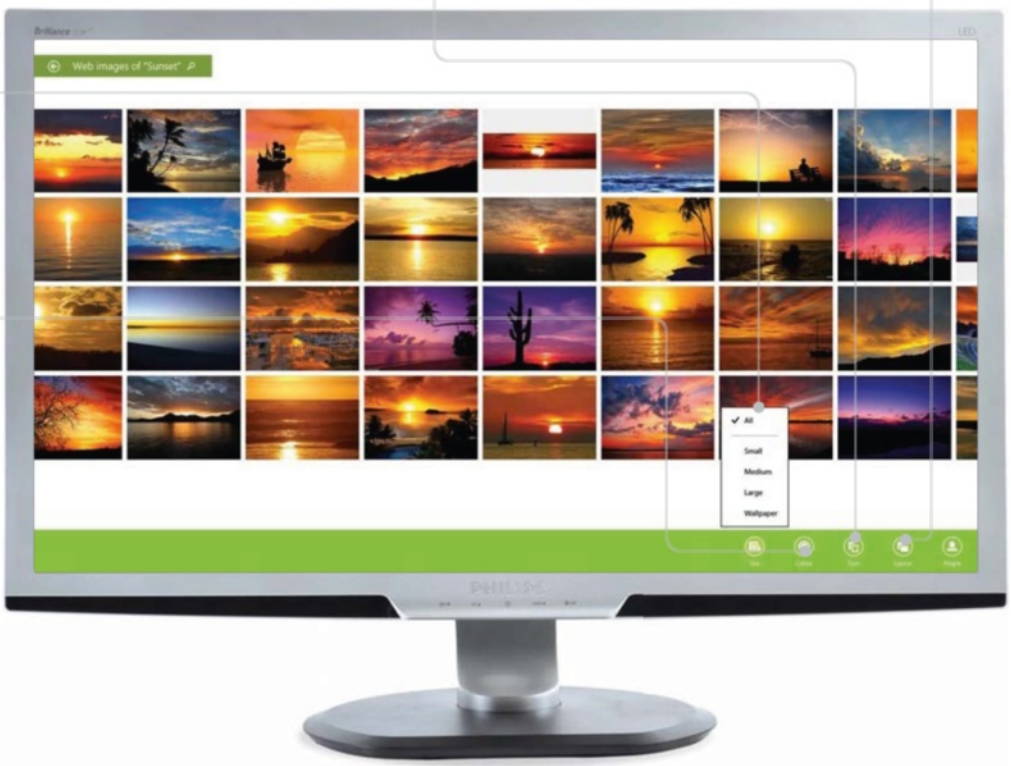
You can use the Colour icon to adjust what images will appear in the returned results. For example, if you pick the colour 'yellow' it will try to display only those images featuring this shade

Change image type

The image type icon can be used to fine-tune the results. You can choose to display photo-quality images or switch these over to line drawings or clipart-style images

Adjust Layout & People

Click the Layout icon to select image proportions: Square, Wide or Tall. The People icon can be used to set what the picture should include (eg faces, head & shoulders)



Searching for news

If you miss the old Bing search app, there is a way to use it. First, launch Internet Explorer (not the desktop version) and go to **www.bing.com**. From here, right-click on the page and set this as a favourite (by selecting the star icon). Now choose the 'Pin' icon and finish by selecting 'Pin to Start'. You can now launch Bing from your Start menu like you would an app.

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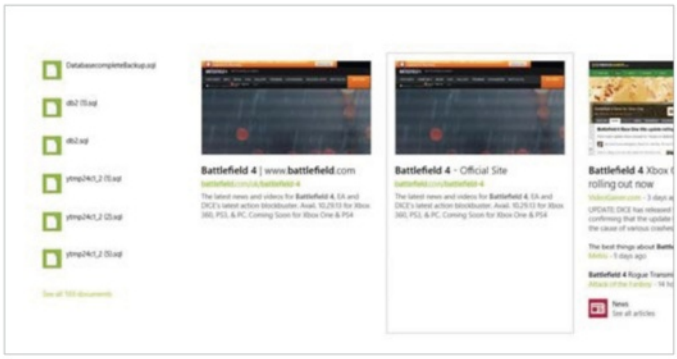
01: Bring up the Search charm

From any location on your Windows 8.1 machine, press ⊞+Q. This will bring up the Search charm.

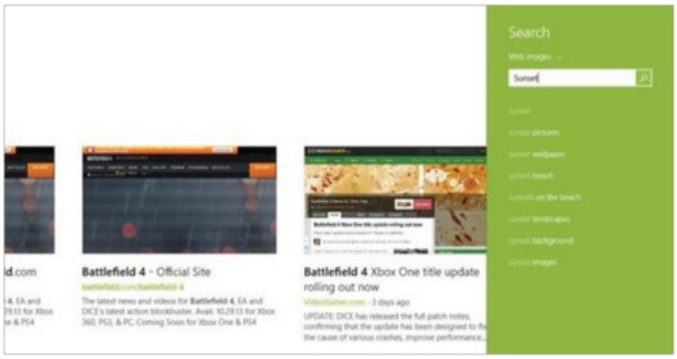
02: Search for content

Leave the drop-down tab set to 'Everywhere' and type your search term into the box, then click the search icon.



03: Viewing content

The results show locally sourced files to the left and the web ones to the right. Select a large thumbnail to view the available content.

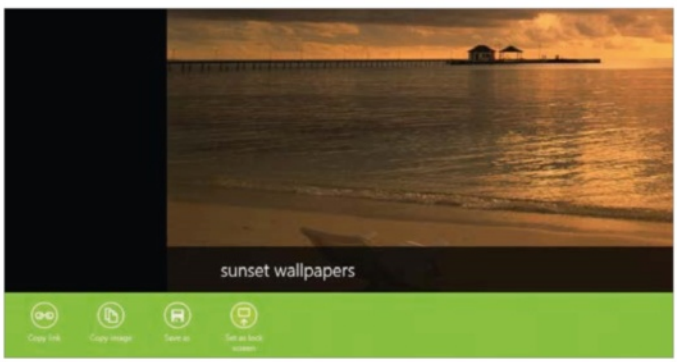


04: Search for images

Bring the Search charm back up and this time select the 'Web images' from the drop-down. Type a term and click the search icon.

05: Sorting images

Right-click the screen and note the icons at the base. These will allow you to change the parameters of the searched content.



06: Add image to lock screen

Select a thumbnail to show a larger version. Right-click on the latter and, at the base of the screen, select the 'Set as Lock screen' icon.

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Set a favourite team in Bing Sports

Use the Bing Sports app to gain access to a wide range of sports-related content and set your favourite teams

If you're a sports fan and like to keep track of your favourite team then the Bing Sports app is a useful stopping point. The app starts by displaying a large sport headline, then fills the rest of the page with top sporting news for your current location. Right-clicking the screen allows you to browse for specific sports and gain extra news, access to league tables, latest scores and upcoming features.

Most of the content is selected for you, but you can customise the sports choices (one of the areas covered in the tutorial) and there is quite a diverse range of additional sports you can select, such as European football teams, baseball and American football.

The search bar can also be used to find teams and even player names, though this does tend to be skewed towards American sports and teams. But if this is your poison, you can glean player bios; for instance, with American football players you can learn how many tackles and interceptions they made.

For the tutorial we will take a general look at how to access the content, pin the best news to your Start screen (via the boxout), customise the sports that you want to gain access to and, of course, add your favourite team.

"The search bar can be used to find teams and even player names"

01: Customise the view

From the front page of the Bing Sports app, select a news article. Within the news story, right-click the screen and at the base select the text style and size icons to improve legibility. You can also use the Share charm to pick an app (eg Mail) to send the story to others.

02: Customising the sports

Right-click and you can select from a range of sports. To customise these, select 'More sports'. A list will appear. Click on the '+' next to a sport to add it to your list – or select the tick icon to de-select the sport. The selected ports can then be accessed from the front screen.

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Picking your favourite sport

Glean content from a variety of different sports

A choice of sports

A right-click elicits the menu bar of preset sports. Using the icons sidebar, you can view the top stories for that particular sport or use the More Sports icon to customise what sports are displayed

Best of the Web

The Best of the Web feature displays some of the best sports sites. Sadly, selecting one of the links does not display the results in an embedded window – but in your web browser

News headlines

The software will automatically display the pick of the crop of sports headlines for your location and the thumbnail snapshots can be selected to view the full story and any accompanying source material (eg click/view images)

Refresh content

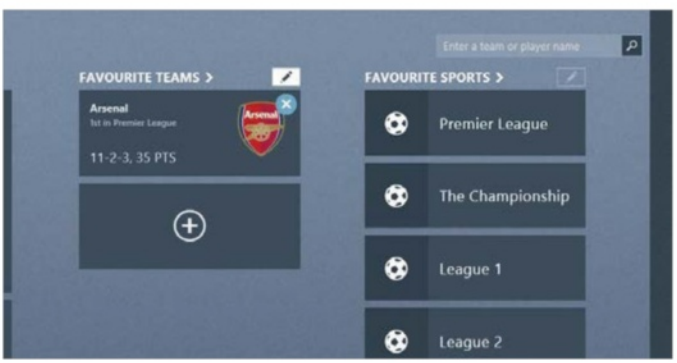
If you want to know the latest results or see any further developments on the news you are currently reading, then the 'Refresh' icon down at the bottom-right corner of the screen will update the content for you

Pinning team to Start

Viewing content via the Bing Sports app is straightforward but if you are only interested in reading about your favourite team, you can make life a lot easier by adding the content as a tile on the Windows Start screen. To do this, first head to your favourite team and then right-click the screen. The 'Pin to Start' option should then appear at the base. Once this is clicked, return to the Windows Start screen to view your tile.

03: Searching for teams/players

Click the back button at the top left to return to the front page. Click the search bar, input the team or player name, then select one from the list. Depending on the sport, you can click on the thumbnails to glean additional info, such as the results of a particular match.



04: Adding team to favourites

You can add teams to your favourites via the front menu, but if you have searched for a team already you can right-click and select the Add icon. Your favourite team will then be added to the front screen. You can remove the team by clicking on the pencil edit icon.

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Improve your fitness with Bing Health

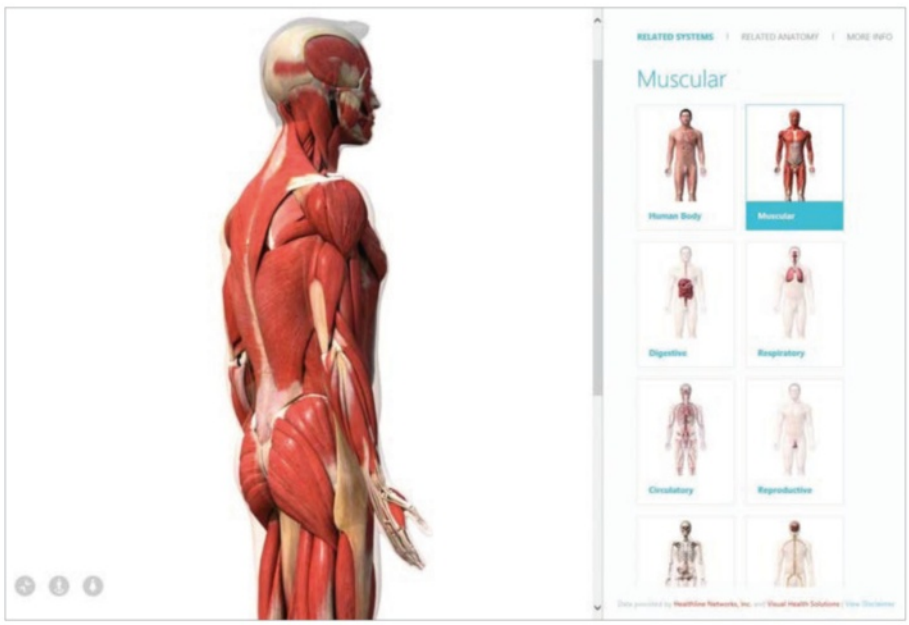
Keep track of your wellbeing using Bing's Health & Fitness app

It's a good idea to stay healthy by doing exercise, eating well and diagnosing any problems before they escalate. While self-diagnosis is never a good thing (better to see a qualified doctor), a little bit of help is not to be sniffed at, which is why Microsoft released the Health & Fitness app.

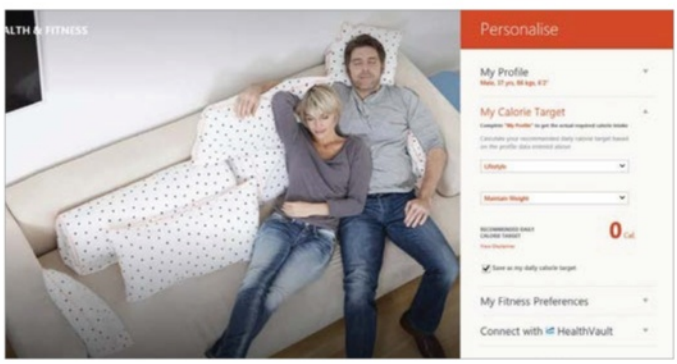
You begin by inputting your profile info (which is something we'll go through in our overview of the app) and setting your goals; eg to burn fat. Then you can use various tracking tools, such as the Diet Tracker to input your calorie intake to see how the food you eat is contributing to your weight gain/loss.

Likewise you can track the exercise you do and even view a series of pre-installed workouts that they recommend you undertake. Additionally, you have various symptom and condition tools to tap into, including a 3D render of the human body to help you diagnose health problems.

We will cover all of the above in our tutorial, which is more of an overview of how the app works due to the way that the information you enter is more of a personal affair. However, by the end you should get an idea of what the app can offer.



"A 3D render of the human body helps you diagnose health problems"



01: Keeping track

First, enter your profile info such as your current weight, height and goals; eg 'Lose weight'. Once you've saved this, you'll find various tracking tools on the right, such as Diet, Health and Exercise. These can be used to monitor calorie intake, blood pressure and weight.

02: Nutritional information

From the main menu, select 'Nutrition and Calories'. Enter a food type and select it from the list to view the calorie/nutritional info. You can also add items directly to the Diet tracker or use the Compare function to compare an item against other food types.

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Keeping healthy

Use various tools to track your well-being

Nutrition & Calories info

This option lets you search for food types to glean their nutritional and calorie info. Especially useful is the option to add the food types directly to your Diet tracker. Comparing foods is also an option

Diet tracking

The Diet Tracker offers an intuitive search system to add food types/quantity for the day's meals and then compare the calories to the allowance calculated by your profile that you created at the start

Exercise tracking

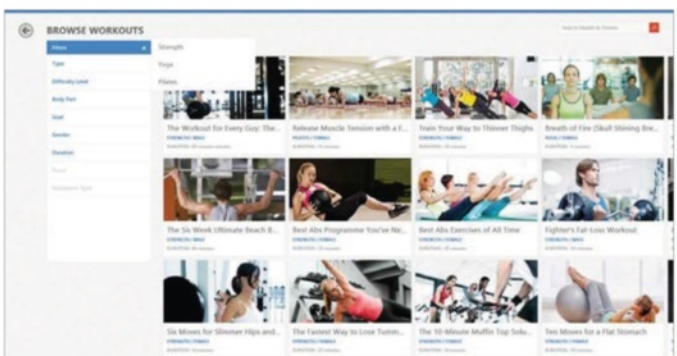
The Exercise Tracker can be used to monitor your daily exercise routines. It can handle both cardio and strength-based exercises. After doing them, you can enter your details into the system and view graphs based on the outcome

3D Human Body

The 3D Human Body section is particularly interesting to use. In here you can rotate a 3D representation of a humanoid figure (male/female) and click on, say, the arms to view additional analysis

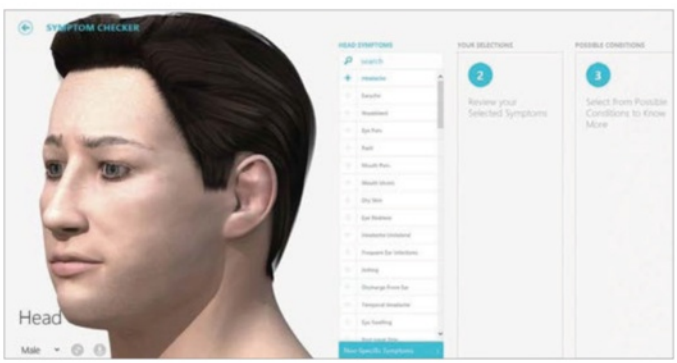
HealthVault

HealthVault is an online service that can be used to store and maintain health and fitness information – visit **https://account.healthvault.co.uk/help/en-GB/default.htm**. You can use your existing Microsoft account to connect to this free service and sync your Health & Fitness data to it (not the profile). To activate the connection (from within the app) just bring up the Charms bar on the right and then select Settings>My Profile and follow the instructions on how to connect.



03: Workouts

Select 'Browse Workouts' from the main menu and you can access and filter a range of exercises. Selecting an exercise provides all the info on what is required and there are also instructional videos to access by selecting the exercise type, such as 'Chin-up'.



04: Symptoms & Conditions

The 3D Human Body option on the main menu lets you rotate a model of the human body and select various parts. The Symptoms option allows for basic self-diagnosis. You'll find that the Conditions option also contains several informative videos.

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See the world with Bing Travel

We take a look at the Bing Travel app, an inviting platform that enables you to view places all around the world

Travelling to local or far-flung destinations can be an exciting adventure. But knowing where to go and what to do when you get there is also part of the equation. The Bing Travel app is an ideal travel partner to help you plan your trips.

For example, the moment you start the app you have a handy 'Trip ideas' section which immediately offers you a range of some of the most popular destinations. Alternatively, you can scroll across to view places that are local to you or go further afield.

Each destination also provides background info, such as planning your trip, local weather and currency conversion. Plus you will find the best attractions to go and visit (with sources taken from various third parties such as Lonely Planet and TripAdvisor), so you know what to do when you get there.

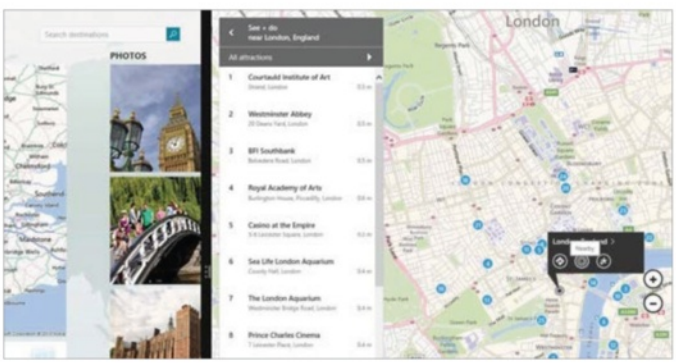
Additionally, you can tap into the Bing Maps integration to find points of interest local to the destination or choose some 360° panoramic photos to view. This gives you a taste of what to expect when you get there!

We cover the News, Flight and Hotel info in a separate tutorial (see page 146), but in this one we take a look at the core features.

"The Bing Travel app is an ideal travel partner to help you plan your trips"

01: Local destinations

When prompted to use your location, select Allow. You can then scroll to 'Local Destinations' to see a snapshot of places to visit or use the search bar at the top. Alternatively use the 'More local destinations' option to show places grouped by distance.



02: View Bing Maps attractions

After selecting a destination, you can read a basic description and click on a map. This will snap Bing Maps into place; from here select the 'Nearby' icon and choose 'See + do'. A list will appear allowing you to find attractions shown on the map with a website link icon.

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Destination page

Each place's page provides a range of useful info

Viewing photos

A photo often grabs the essence of the place you are visiting. With the software, you can pick from stock images, photos uploaded by users and 360° panorama shots

Search destination

While you can view and browse for destinations within the app, the top search bar is a faster way to get results if you know what destination you are looking for

Overview

The Overview section is usually provided by one of the third-party sources (Frommer's, Michelin, Lonely Planet and Trip Advisor). It contains a taster of what the destination is like to visit and sets you up for the rest of the section

Bing integration

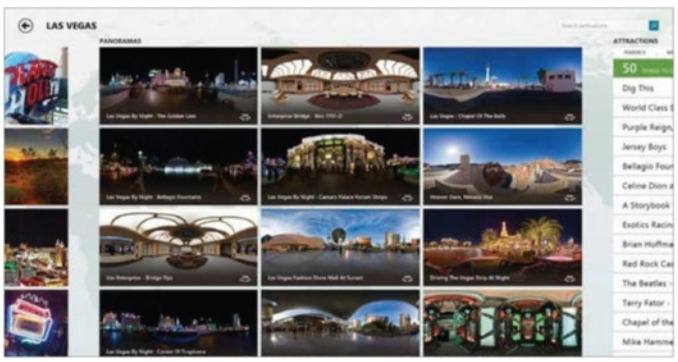
Because the app is part of the Bing family, it provides integration with several core apps. For example, you can select the map view to launch a snap view of the Bing Maps software or choose Weather info to open the Weather app

Fast access to destinations

If you find something of interest, you can return to it later by setting the destination as a favourite, or even pin it to your Start menu. To add a favourite, simply right-click the destination to select the corresponding option (the favourite will then be accessible from the main app screen). Alternatively, you can right-click the destination and choose 'Pin to Start' in order to add a tile for it to your Start screen for even faster access.

03: Detailed attractions

Close down Bing Maps (by hovering at the top, then dragging the app to the bottom). Back at the main view, scroll across to attractions or restaurants and use the tabs at the top to view third-party recommendations. Select an attraction/restaurant for more info.



04: Global travel

From the main screen, scroll to World and select the header. You can pick destinations from around the globe and tap into the same features as before. As with local destinations, you can select photos and 360° panoramas – use your mouse to scroll around these.

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Book hotels and flights with Bing Travel

Organise your trips with ease, booking hotels and flights from within the Bing Travel app

In our previous tutorial (page 144), we provided an overview of the Bing Travel app. Finding out about all of the destinations you can visit – with attractions, restaurants and photos – is a great way to decide where you want to go, but there is a key area that we are yet to explore within the app. This is the ability to search for flights and hotels. After all, a destination may be tempting, but if the flights cost £1,000 per person (without including the cost of the hotel) then you need to take this into account.

Fortunately, you can use an intuitive search engine, which is powered by the Kayak comparison site, to fine-tune your search results. So, for example, you can specify the type of flight you want, the dates of travel, the number of passengers and of course where you are flying from and to.

Likewise, the hotel search taps into the same style of presentation of the main interface so before you make a booking you can gain additional insight about the hotel, including photos of the rooms. In the tutorial we cover this process and then quickly go through some of the flight search's additional options.

> "The hotel search taps into the same presentation of the main interface"

Hotel search info

Learn about the hotel before you make a booking

Nearby traveller photos
The standard photos are usually marketing ones. To the right of the main photos are a series of traveller photos that offer a more realistic view of the surrounding areas that you can explore

Booking a room
Use the Book From option to start the booking process. This takes you to an extra screen with multiple room options and various third-party firms to choose from, which may offer a better deal

Hotel reviews
After searching for a hotel, you can find TripAdvisor reviews. By default these are shown as a thumbnail snapshot, but you can select a review to open a Windows snap view of the website for a closer look

Photo views
As with the core app, you can explore a range of photos. However, these are more hotel specific, so for example you can click on a photo to see some of the rooms and then choose to view the photo location on the embedded Bing Maps

Flight schedule and status
A very useful feature is the ability to check flight schedules/status. You can specify a 'From' and 'To' airport to check the schedules of airlines, including the days they travel, number of stops made and flight duration. You can input airline/flight numbers to check when a flight departs/lands – handy if meeting someone at the airport.

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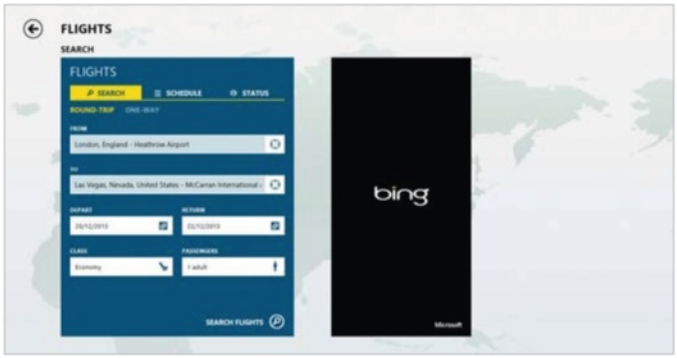
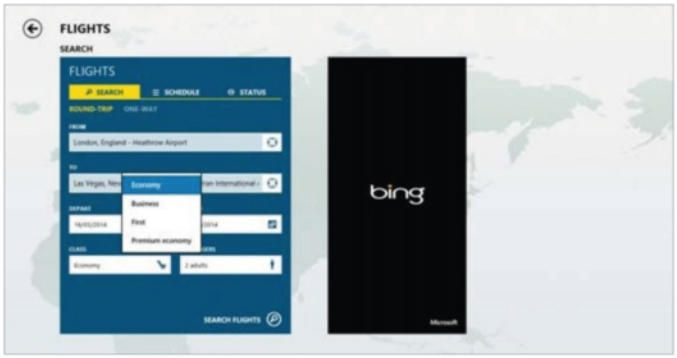


01: Input destinations

Select Search Flights. Now select the journey type (eg return) and fill in your 'From/To' airport destinations in the spaces provided.

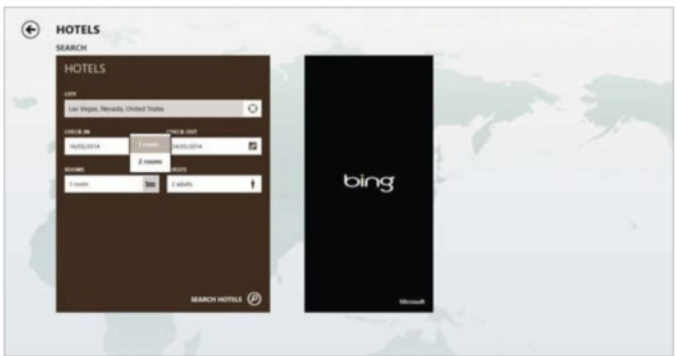


02: Search for flights

Fill in the 'Depart' and 'Return' dates, then choose the flight class and number of passengers. When finished, select Search Flights.

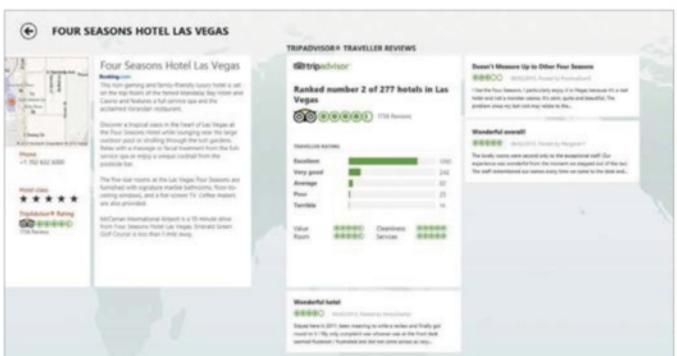
03: Book flights

A list of flights and prices appears. To book a flight, select it to view more info and, if happy, click on Book to make a booking.



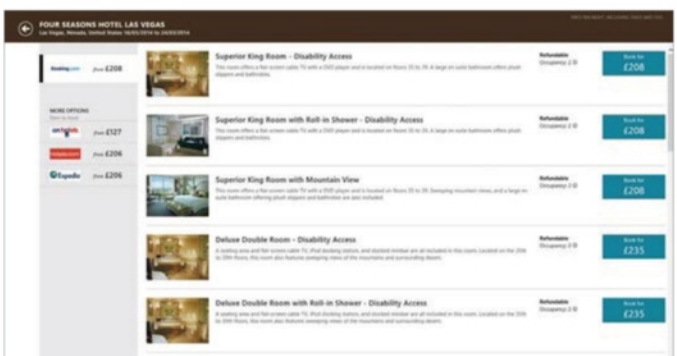
04: Search hotels

Return to the front screen and select Search Hotels. From here, fill in your preferred booking details and click the Search Hotels option.



05: Info & photos

A list of hotels appears. Pick one from the results to view additional info; scroll to the right to see reviews and hotel-specific photos.



06: Book hotel

To book the hotel, click on Book From. You are then given the choice of room type, plus the option to purchase from other third parties.

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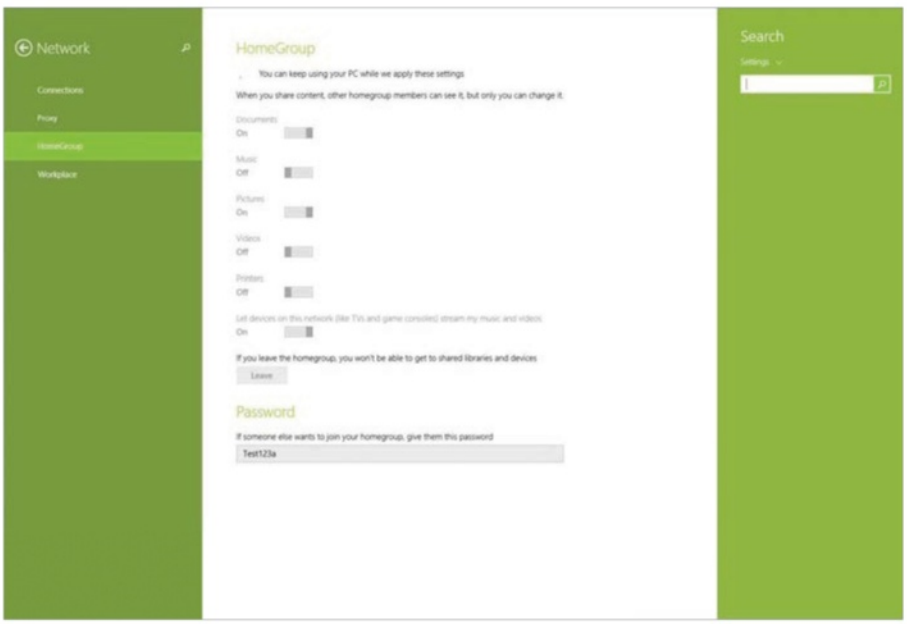
Set up a HomeGroup

We delve into HomeGroups, explaining what are they, how they work and also how to create and join one

Long-time Windows user may be familiar with the term 'Workgroup'. The latter allowed you to share your files and devices (eg printers), with others on the same network without having to be connected to a server. You may be thinking this sounds really complex and suited to the business world – which is possibly what Microsoft was thinking when it rebranded Workgroups as HomeGroups for Windows 7 and 8.

The name change was also a reflection that households are now more likely to have multiple devices running. So if your PC and laptop are able to get internet access from the same location, you technically are already part of a network without realising it, and with a few tweaks, you can share your computer's resources (files/printers) with others. Mind you, the process of sharing works both ways, so if person A creates the HomeGroup, person B can join and share their resources too.

Hopefully by now you can start to see why this is a neat feature and while it sounds complicated, it's not. In this tutorial we start with the basics, covering the initial creating and joining process. The actual sharing part is covered in the tutorial on page 150.



"With a few tweaks, you can share your computer's resources with others"

01: Turning Network Sharing on

Before creating a HomeGroup, check that Network Sharing is on. To do this, bring up the Charms bar and choose Settings>'Change PC settings'>Network>Connections and then select your network device. Finally toggle 'Find devices and content' to On.

02: Create HomeGroup

Click the back button, then choose HomeGroup from the list. Now click Create (unless the group already exists). You can now toggle the content (documents/printer) you want to share with others. Note: the tutorial on page 150 covers the ability to share files in more detail.

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HomeGroups

Creating a HomeGroup is pretty straightforward

Find devices & content

Under Network Connections, you can turn on Find devices and content. The PC will scan for other devices and automatically connect to them

What to share

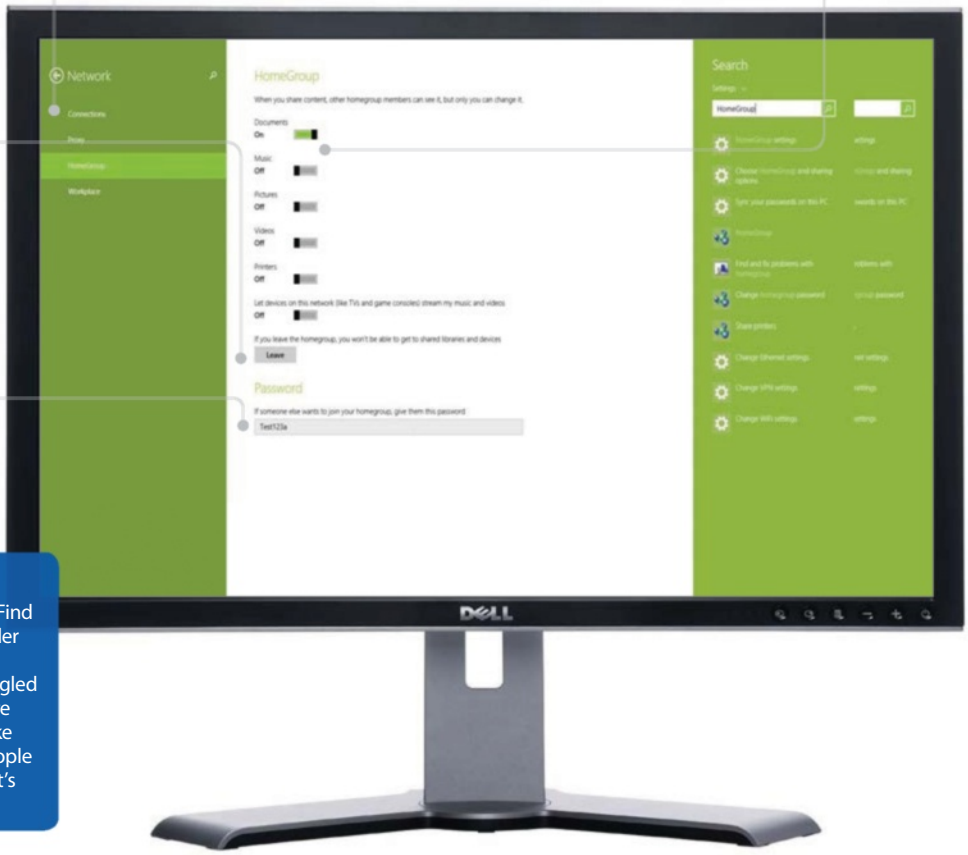
Use the switches to tell the system what to share. However, if you share your folders with others, only you as the host can adjust the share

Leaving the network

If you don't want to use the HomeGroup any more, just select Leave. You just need to make sure that nobody is relying on a connection to your machine first, otherwise this could cause problems

Default password

When a HomeGroup is created, a default password is supplied; other users will need this to connect to the group. You can use the Search charm to access the HomeGroup to change the default password



Public Vs Private

When creating a HomeGroup we spoke of the 'Find devices and content' option which is found under the PC Settings>Network>Connections> Network device option. This should only be toggled in a private environment ie at home, so if you are using a laptop and are out in a public place make sure you toggle the option to off first. While people will still need your password to join the group, it's still advisable to disable this away from home.

03: Change password

At the base of the screen is the password you need to give to others who want to join the HomeGroup. To change it, click on the Search charm, type 'HomeGroup' and then select it from the results. Now choose 'Change the Password' and follow the on-screen guidance.

04: Join HomeGroup

On another Windows 8 PC, go to Settings>Change PC settings> Network. Now select the HomeGroup icon. From here, type in the password for the HomeGroup, then click the Join option. You can now choose what you want to share with others – similar to step 2.

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Share files using HomeGroup

Use the HomeGroup feature to share files and devices with other users on the network

In our previous tutorial we showed how to create/join a Windows 8.1 HomeGroup (page 148), but in this section we will be focusing on the sharing of files and devices.

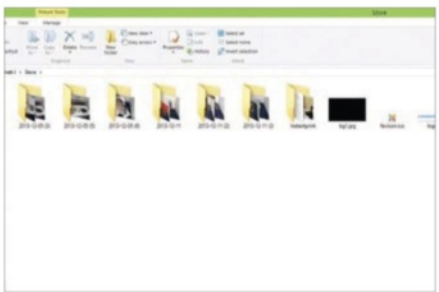
When you create a HomeGroup, you can toggle on the standard folders/devices – eg Documents, Videos and Printers – that you want to share. However, the OS does provide additional methods of allowing you to add shares via the desktop and also the ability to set security once the share has been created.

For example, once users have logged in with a Microsoft account and then joined the HomeGroup, you can specify which users can write and connect to the shared folder.

We cover the above in the tutorial and also showcase how to set up an editable share, access the files and also how to save to them, using shortcuts. Additionally, we look at how to print files using a shared printer.

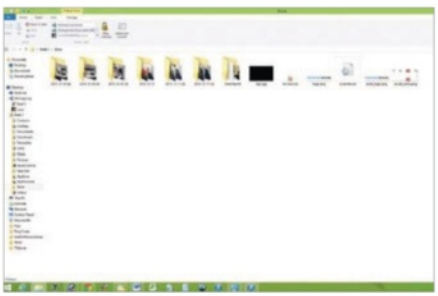
The boxout on page 151 also has a handy tip if the users on the network want to share videos with an Xbox console.

> "You can specify which users can write and connect to the shared folder"



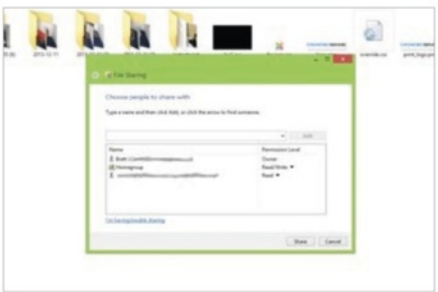
01: Share a folder

From the desktop, select File Explorer and use the navigation pane to browse to documents or a folder you want share.



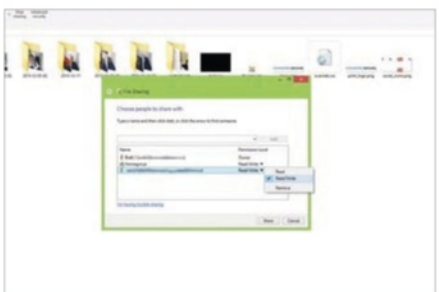
02: Set global permissions

Select the folder, click the Share tab, then choose 'HomeGroup (view & edit)'. Your folder should now be shared/writable.



03: Set specific people

Or select 'Specific people' from the drop-down next to 'HomeGroup (view & edit)'. Select a user to share the folder with.

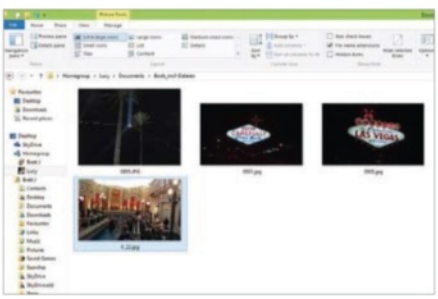


04: People permissions

Now choose how they can access the share; eg 'Read/Write' to let them write to it. Repeat for other users, then select Share.

05: Access a shared folder

From a PC on the network, use File Explorer and click on HomeGroup (on the left). It should list all the users on the network.



06: Opening files

Double-click the user's name to view shared folders. Keep drilling down until you reach the file you want and double-click it to view.

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Navigating to shares

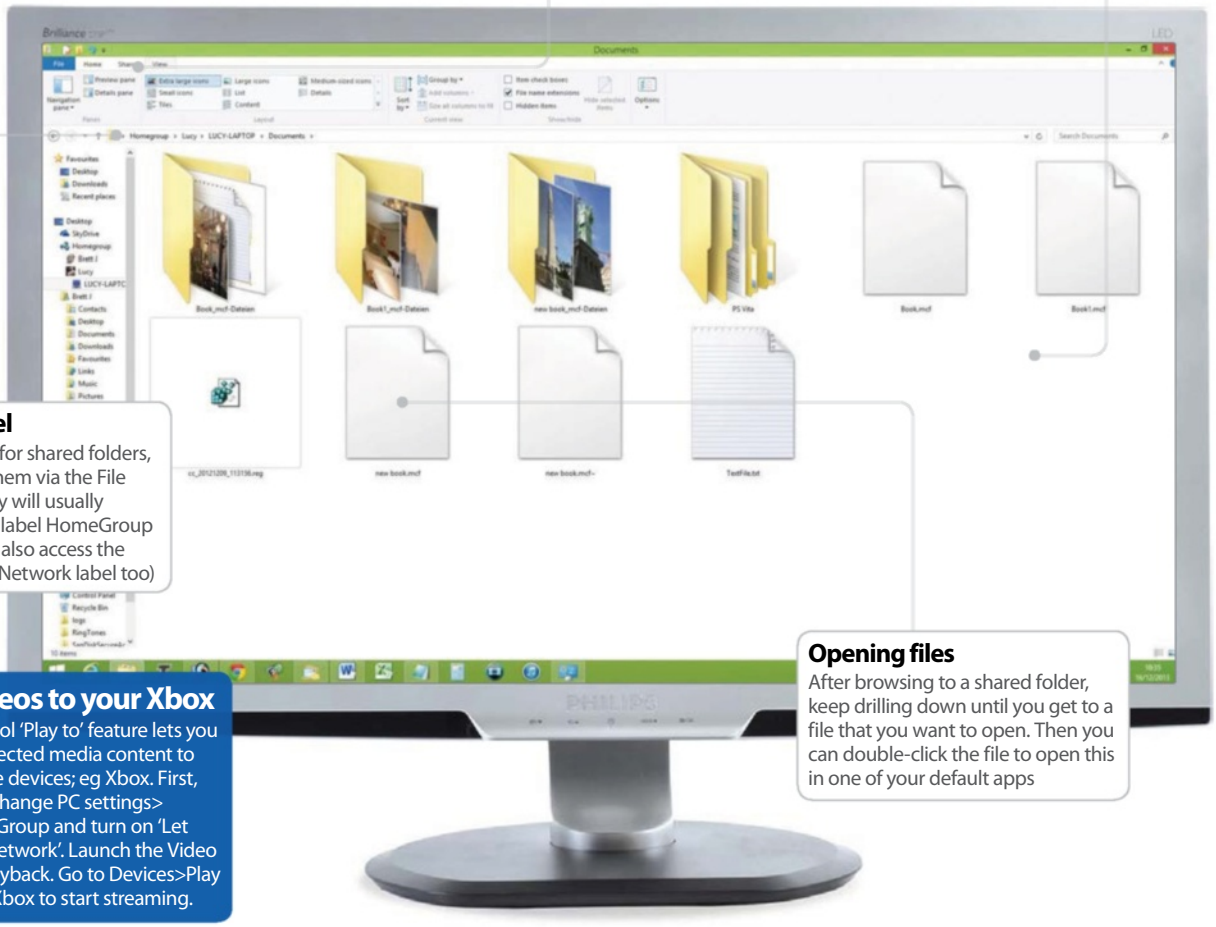
The File Explorer provides access to the shared folders

Share tab

By default the PC's main documents/pictures/videos folders are sharable, but you can set up a custom folder and use the Share tab to make it editable so others can write to it

Create desktop shortcut

For quicker access to a share, create a desktop shortcut to it. Then when you want to save to the folder you don't have to drill through multiple paths to reach the save destination



Network label

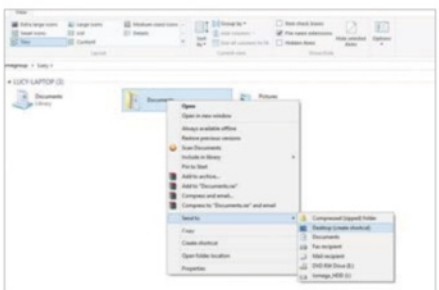
When searching for shared folders, you can access them via the File Explorer and they will usually reside under the label HomeGroup (though you can also access the folders from the Network label too)

Opening files

After browsing to a shared folder, keep drilling down until you get to a file that you want to open. Then you can double-click the file to open this in one of your default apps

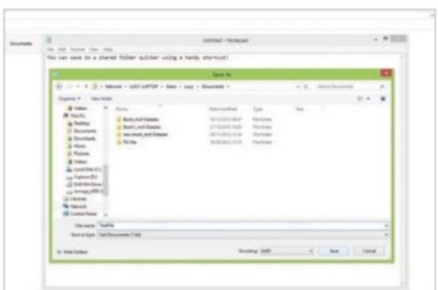
Stream videos to your Xbox

Windows 8.1's cool 'Play to' feature lets you stream non-protected media content to other compatible devices; eg Xbox. First, go to Settings>Change PC settings>Network>HomeGroup and turn on 'Let devices on this network'. Launch the Video app and start playback. Go to Devices>Play and select your Xbox to start streaming.



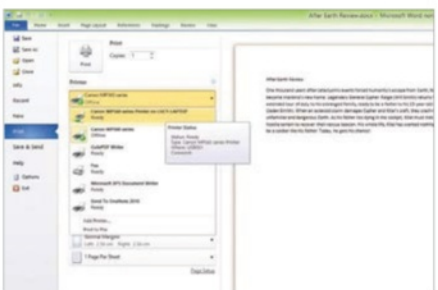
07: Shortcut to share

Right-click on a shared folder and select 'Send to'>Desktop. You can now double-click the shortcut to access the share faster.



08: Save to shared folder

Open Notepad, for instance, and add some text. Click on File>Save As, navigate to the shared folder and choose Save.



09: Send to shared printer

From an app, open a file and press Ctrl+P. You can now browse the list of printers. Select the shared printer to print the file.

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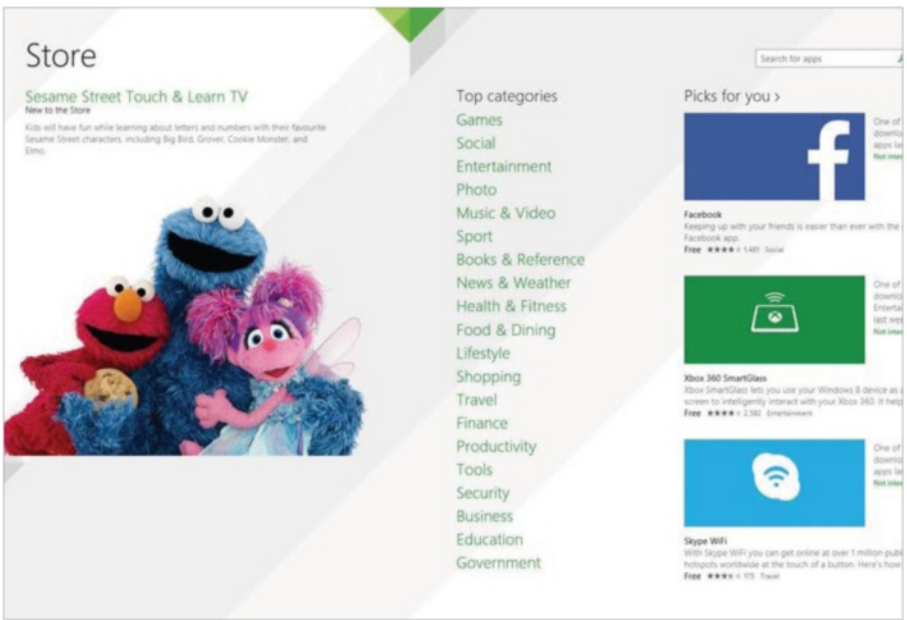
Use the Windows 8 Facebook app

Looking to join the social networking fraternity? Download and use the Windows 8 Facebook app

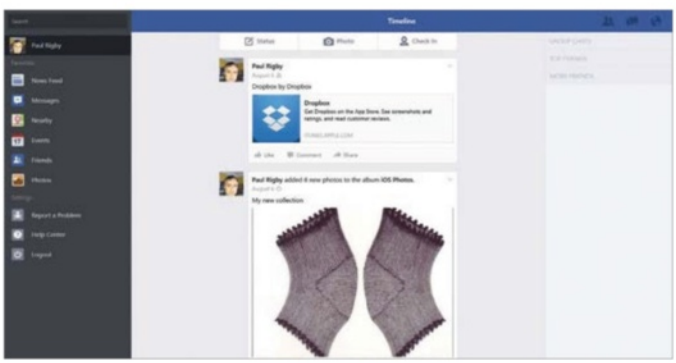
Social networking has become one of the dominant communicational features in all computing. In fact, it has grown to such a degree that it often forms an integral part of many people's lives. Users often declare that they cannot live without it. Social networking does, indeed, allow you to keep in touch with people and events like never before. No matter where you are, you can be part of the complex web that is social interactivity.

Of all the services and apps that relate to this area of communication, Facebook is arguably the king of all social networking, being ubiquitous in the field. In fact, it is becoming a universal term, a bit like Hoover has become for vacuuming. As such, any social networker worth their salt will not want to be without the Facebook app when they boot up their computer. This you can easily do with Windows 8.1. The app is easy to install from the supplied Store marketplace and presents a host of features for you to use that we will detail in this tutorial.

So, load up and let us provide you with an overview of the Facebook application. Then you can proceed with some serious chatting.

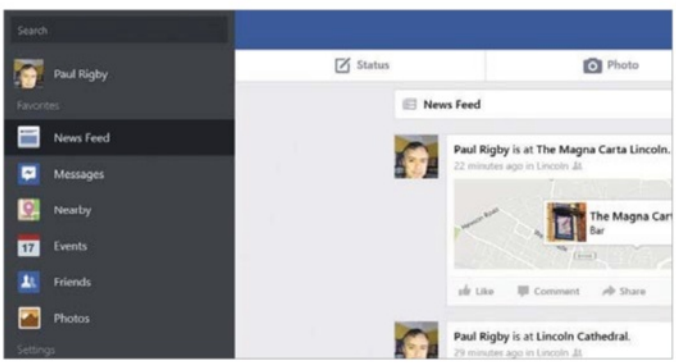


"Any social networker will not want to be without the Facebook app"



01: Install Facebook

From the Start screen, click on the Store tile. Once you are in the Store, enter 'Facebook' in the search bar or click on the Facebook tile present on the main Store screen. Click on Install and wait for the installation routine to complete. Click on the Facebook icon to load.



02: Newsfeed updates

Click on Newsfeed in the menu on the left, where you will be able to keep your readers and friends informed as to your movements and also what is going on in your life. This can include text, images and maps with included options that allow your friends to respond.

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Navigate Facebook

Get to know your Windows 8 Facebook app

Main area

Here you can design your own Facebook page. It is also where your Newsfeed appears, showing updates from Friends. There's usually a lot of info here, so you may have to scroll down to see it all

Requests, messages & notifications

These three icons are for frequently used features. They allow you to see Friend requests, any notifications that may have been passed your way, or any private messages that another Facebook user may have sent to you

Search bar

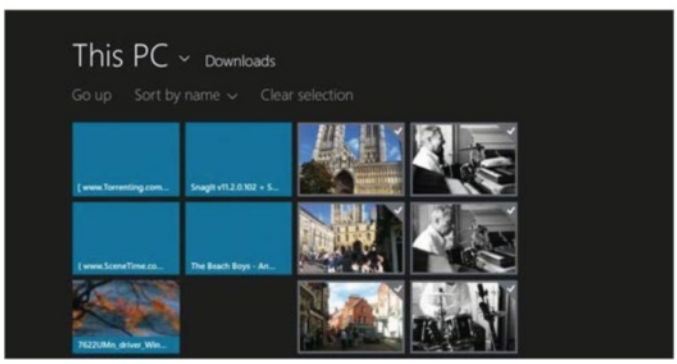
The search bar can be used to search the entire Facebook world, enabling you to find old friends to connect with. As you type a word, it predicts what you're typing underneath; click on a desired search suggestion to access it

Menu bar

The left side of the Facebook screen shows the principle menu commands. These allow you to navigate around the many facilities that this social networking app offers. Click on each to change the screen shown on the right

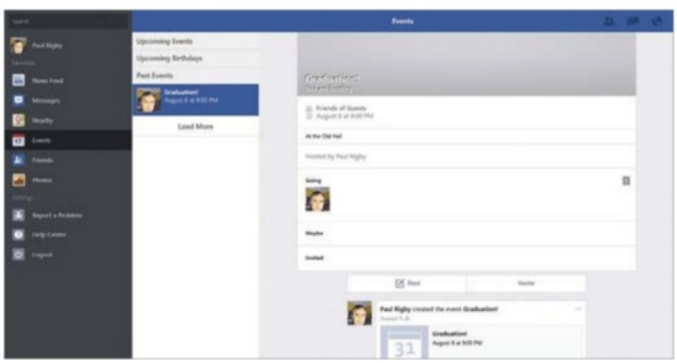
Settings

On the lower left side of the screen you will find the Settings help section. This allows you to learn more about managing your account, as well as getting started and how Facebook works. To change the actual settings on Facebook, move the mouse cursor to the top right of the screen to open the menu bar, click on Settings and a new menu bar will show a range of options for you to tweak, such as Account and Privacy Settings.



03: Viewing and importing photos

Photos are an important aspect of your Facebook page. Click on the Photos tab on the left to view your collections. Right-click then select Add Photos to take a photo or import images from your library: click Choose From Library to navigate through your PC folders.



04: Create events

The Events option can be used to announce a party, family gathering or other important occasion you'd like people to know about or be invited to. Here, you can also post the time and date of the event plus the location and any other material that is deemed appropriate.

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Essential apps

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100 Essential Windows Apps

Get the most out of your Windows 8 PC with these must-have apps

Every modern computer operating system worth its salt comes with a built-in online app store these days, and Windows 8 is no exception. The excellent Windows Store that takes pride of place on your Start screen is ready to take you gently by the hand and lead you through an exciting and enticing assortment of apps spread around 20 different categories. You can download them to your computer (in a lot of cases completely free of charge) and enjoy them for a multitude of different purposes.

In this feature we carefully go through each category in the Windows Store and hand-pick five of the very best apps to help you get the most out of your PC. As you will soon discover, there most definitely is something for everyone and buying and downloading the apps is a quick and easy process that involves setting up a payment method and clicking on the price. Whether you're looking to use your Windows 8 system for gaming, entertainment or even as an educational tool, there's sure to be several apps out there for you. Now, let's roll out the software…

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5 essential apps

01 Kindle

Developer: AMZN Mobile

The app provides an extensive online bookstore and some effective tools to help you read on your PC, bookmark pages, make notes and change the display. Cloud syncing means your collection is always available and you can pick up on your PC where you left off on your smartphone.

02 Audible – Audiobooks

Developer: Audible

If you haven't the time to read a book, listening to one is the next best thing. Audible provides an online store full of audiobooks for you to download and enjoy on your PC. What's more, you can also get them downloaded to your mobile device to listen to on the move.

03 Wikipedia

Developer: Wikimedia Foundation

The sprawling online reference tool generally lends itself perfectly to app format, bringing at-a-glance and in-depth info straight to your PC, bypassing the usual Internet Explorer route. It's a shame the search function isn't in-app and not only accessible via the Charms bar, though.

04 Dictionary

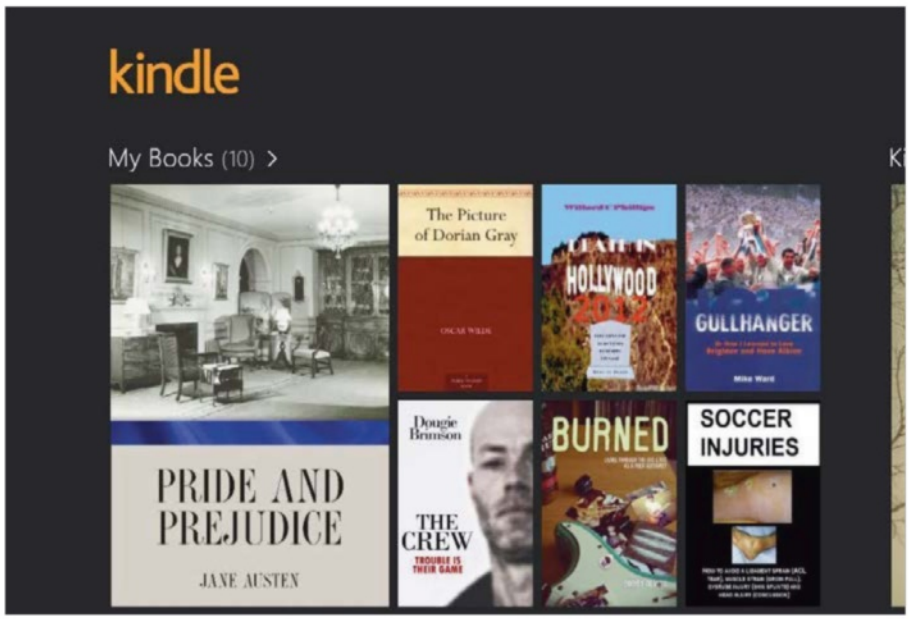
Developer: Farlex

If you're composing an email and your imaginative conjuration of a word isn't being autocorrected, then rather than launch your web browser to look it up, this app is dedicated to the cause. It goes into staggering detail when defining the origins and meanings of words.

05 NOOK – Books, Magazines, Newspapers

Developer: Barnes & Noble

The NOOK app provides a huge amount of digital content. There are over three million e-publications to download and enjoy, as well as over a million free books. The swagger extends to over 1,000 magazines and newspapers too.



Kindle makes reading natural on your PC

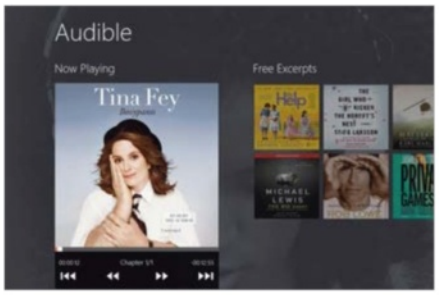
Books & Reference

Read digital books and reference guides on your PC

Slowly but surely, folks are ditching their old-hat paperbacks and making the leap to digital eBooks – and why not? The benefits are plain to see – you can browse and purchase new books on the move, you can carry your entire book collection around with you everywhere and it helps protect the trees that otherwise would have been felled to make the paper. What's more, eReaders come packed with options that allow you to personalise your reading experience by changing the font, the colour of the page and the brightness of the screen. You can also bookmark as many pages as you want, add your own notes and get all of your settings synced across devices so that you can start reading on one device and then continue on another later on.

Here we introduce some of the best eReader apps in Windows Store, as well as other cool apps and reference tools that you can download to your computer.

"You can carry your entire book collection around with you everywhere"



No time to read books? Listen to them on Audible

A megastore of content at your fingertips…

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Business

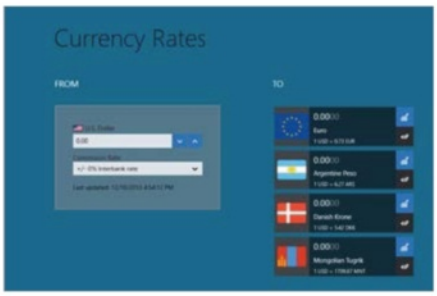
Improve your productivity with apps

The Business category in the Windows Store throws up a very broad range of apps that can assist you in your working life. These include numerous cloud storage services, most of which offer up to 5GB of cloud storage absolutely free, so sign up to as many as you can to utilise the services to transfer your files and share them with other people to collaborate on.

You will also discover various news apps that cater specifically for the business market.

Then there are task management apps to help ensure that every day in the office is a productive one, along with apps to help you search for a new job if you fancy a change in career or are just desperate for employment of any kind.

So, whatever your business is, take time to trawl this section of the Store and you'll undoubtedly find a cluster of cool apps to help you climb a rung or two up the employment ladder.



Convert your money into any currency in the world

Download TED talks to your device to watch offline

Enter your job criteria and getHired will do all of the legwork for you

5 essential apps

01 Currency Rates Converter

Developer: Kirsanov

This app converts money into any world currency. Enter the amount, then scroll through the long list of currencies to choose one. Your most-used currencies are stored and the exchange rates can be updated at any time. Ideal for those doing business abroad or importing items.

02 ShareFile

Developer: Citrix

This secure file-sharing service allows you to store and sync content, then give colleagues or clients full or partial access to files so they can collaborate on projects. Once you've set up your account online, the app offers a handy portal to access and upload files whenever you need to.

03 getHired

Developer: AppSplice

Enter data, such as the type of job you're after and your local postcode, and the app will trawl all of the job sites and relay all of the roles that match your criteria. It takes a lot of the legwork out of job hunting, giving you more time to polish your covering letter for the application.

04 Ted Talks Viewer

Developer: Paubus

Though not an official TED app, this free offering allows you to watch videos from the TED conferences, share them with other people and even download them to your device so that you can still get inspired when you don't have an internet connection.

05 Box

Developer: Box, Inc

This cloud computing service provides 5GB of free storage space and makes it easy to access and edit your files and share content quickly and conveniently with your work colleagues. With so many cloud services on offer, why not use them all?

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Education

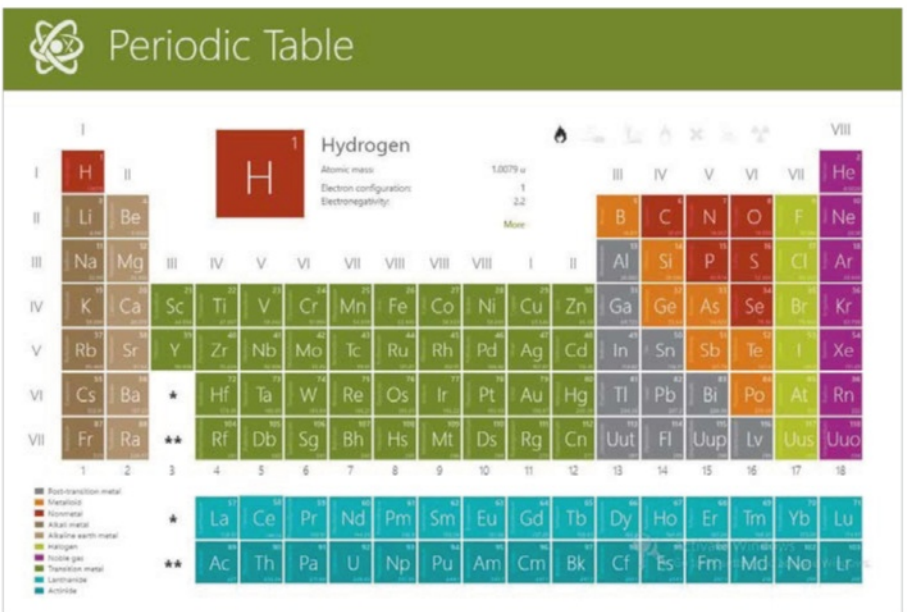
Learn new things with educational apps

Why not learn something new today? Or why not seek out the tools to help inspire and teach other people? This is the beauty of the Windows Store – you can find all of the tools you need to learn new skills and capture the imagination of other people. For example, you can explore the outer reaches of our Solar System without ever stepping outside, you can paint a masterpiece without getting paint on the floor, or you can look up and learn the meanings of new words without losing your train of thought. But that's merely the tip of the gigantic iceberg because there are also apps to help you compose flashcards, apps that make complex sums seem easy and even apps to make getting around your PC much easier. Better still, many of these brain-enhancing apps are totally free, so there really is no excuse not to open your mind to these gems.

■ Explore the wonders of the universe on your desktop

■ Kids will be enchanted by the effects and features

"All of the tools you need to learn new skills and capture the imagination of others"



■ Get the low-down on the elements with this simple, free app…

5 essential apps

01 Star Chart

Developer: Escape Velocity

Explore the heavens and click on stars to find out more. You can also enjoy tours of all of the planets and see eye-popping views of our universe. The amount of detail is staggering and although it lacks the wow-factor of similar apps for phones, this is still an impressive free offering.

02 Paint Sparkles Draw

Developer: TabTale

Apps such as this take the mess and stress out of painting. A wide selection of colours, brushes and colouring tools are supplied, while there's an enchanting sparkle effect as paint is applied. Kids of all ages will be able to unleash their inner creativity with this must-have freebie.

03 Dogs Training

Developer: Debbas

This app offers essential info on how best to train and understand dogs. For example, did you know that most of the communication with a dog is via the eyes? A greater comprehension of your dog's body language will help you better understand their mood and their needs.

04 Math Games

Developer: Jujuba Software

Learning is made fun with this simple app. Through the intuitive interface you can configure which operations you wish to practice – from addition, subtraction, multiplication and division – and set time and error limits for kids to adhere to. The more they get right, the more problems will be made available.

05 Periodic Table (Chemistry)

Developer: Asparion

This is useful as a quick reference tool to view the elements in the periodic table with their atomic mass, electron configuration and more. It shows the different groups in different colours and lets you zoom in and out effortlessly.

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Stream a vast range of movies and TV shows with Netflix

"This is certainly one of the more varied sections in the Windows Store"

Entertainment

Forget work – let these apps entertain you

It's not all work, work, work you know! Your Windows 8 PC is also a perfectly able entertainment system that you can use to watch HD movies, stream live TV and generally kick back, relax and have fun with. The Entertainment section of the Windows Store is full of curiosities to keep you enthralled, such as sophisticated painting apps, apps to give your desktop a seasonal theme and apps to help fuel your hobbies. The Entertainment section of the Store is also packed full of great free apps to help keep the kids entertained while you attend to other things.

This is certainly one of the more varied sections in the Store, which throws all manner of random and obscure apps together, and is a great place to shop for curiosities to help you leave the office well behind.

Get informed about the latest cinema releases

All of your favourite Nick toons in one place

5 essential apps

01 Discovery Channel

Developer: Discovery Communications

Entertainment can be stimulating and educational too. This official app provides a portal to watch clips and selected full episodes from a wide range of shows, such as *Deadliest Catch*, *Gold Rush* and *MythBusters*. You can also check the schedules to see when your favourites are on TV.

02 Flixster

Developer: Flixster

For cinema-goers, this app provides an essential guide to what's on and where, plus at-a-glance info on films. Click on one to see the rating and running time, read a plot synopsis, get local show times and watch the trailer. You can also visit the store to buy/rent movies to watch in-app.

03 Nick

Developer: Nickelodeon

A great app for keeping youngsters amused, Nick offers a wide range of animated shorts, games and photos from the Nickelodeon stable, all via an engaging interface. A Featured section shows the must-see content and then you can scroll through the various sections to access other content – so easy, a child could operate it!

04 Free Movies Box

Developer: Hipgnosis Vision

This service lets you stream a wide range of HD movies to your desktop for free. While it's true that many of the films here you probably wouldn't have heard of (and for good reason), there are certainly a few gems to sniff out and stream.

05 Netflix

Developer: Netflix

If you are a Netflix subscriber then this app allows you to log into your account and watch streamed movies and TV shows on your PC. The Netflix service has grown in stature over the past year or so and now boasts some cracking products to view on demand.

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Finance

Keep track of money matters

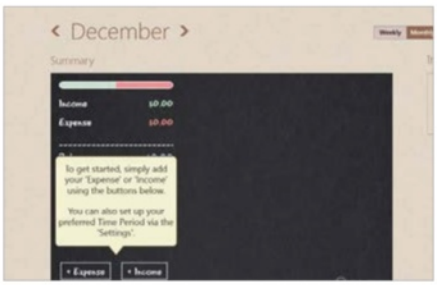
In our current dour economic climate, careful budgeting matters more than ever and so apps that can help you better manage your finances virtually pay for themselves.

In this section of the Windows Store you can find apps that deliver up-to-the-minute financial news, apps for internet banking, apps to convert currencies and apps to help you monitor your stocks and shares.

As you will soon discover, though, the majority of the apps on offer are designed to help you get your finances in order, monitor your incomings and outgoings, and set yourself budgets to ensure that you stay safely in the black.

As is always the case, many of the best apps are completely free or at least present the most essential features for free (requiring paid-for upgrades to unlock additional content) so you can grab yourself a bargain, which is the first step towards getting your bank account in order.

Monitor the markets with ease through the Yahoo! Finance app



Stay on top of your finances with Spending Tracker

Start earning Bitcoins through your PC

Convert more than 150 different global currencies

5 essential apps

01 Spending Tracker

Developer:
MH Riley

With an intuitive interface, this app lets you quickly log your incomings and outgoings, then track them over time. It provides all the tools you need to stay on top of your finances. Extra features, such as Dropbox backups and the option to export transactions, require an upgrade to the paid-for Pro version.

02 High Contrast Calculator

Developer:
Jojitech

Of the numerous calculator apps available, this one boasts a large, high-contrast display that fills the screen. The large buttons and no-frills appearance make this perfect for quick and easy calculations without having to reach for your glasses. It is also completely free, so there is no reason not to give it a try.

03 Currency Converter +

Developer:
Bessonov Kirill

This app provides a convenient currency converter that supports nearly 150 monetary units and major precious metals. Get the current rates and view their history and charts. You can also prioritise the order of the items displayed and share the content. If you deal with global currencies, this free app is a must-have.

04 Bitcoin Miner

Developer:
GroupFabric

Through this app you can let your computer make you money in the form of Bitcoins, which can then be exchanged for real-world currency. Bitcoin miners perform complex calculations known as hashes and each hash has a chance of yielding Bitcoins. Best used in conjunction with a pool, this app could make you money.

05 Yahoo! Finance

Developer:
Yahoo!

This app provides a combination of market and stock info, financial news and access to your investment portfolios in a single package. It's a convenient way to stay abreast of the financial world and provides hot-off-the-press news across various categories, along with attractive interactive charts to help you digest the data.

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5 essential apps

01 CookBook

Developer: Slow Sense

Browse over 300,000 delicious recipes from a range of sources and pick dishes by categories such as starters, main courses, etc. All the recipes can be easily printed or shared and the interface is easy to use – just enter keywords and possible matches will be relayed in seconds.

02 Epicurious

Developer: Conde Nast

This offers a fast track to the award-winning food site **epicurious.com** and allows you to search over 30,000 professionally created recipes from top chefs. You can save favourites and share them with friends, as well as read recipe reviews from fellow Epicurious members.

03 Brew Finder

Developer: StructureTooBig

This is the perfect way to find local breweries, learn about their beers and find their social network sites. Search by location, beer name or brewery. It's great for finding out more about each brewery's booze and reading other users' reviews before you sample it yourself!

04 Alcohol-Free Drink Recipes

Developer: Caplottier

If you're off the sauce or just fancy a healthier alternative then this app provides over 200 alcohol-free drink recipes to suit all tastes. A simple interface lets you browse by keyword or category and you can save your favourite recipes to refer back to quickly and easily whenever you need to.

05 Cookbook for Kids

Developer: Calicowind

If you want to entice your kids into the kitchen and open their minds to cooking and preparing food then this app provides a selection of simple recipes to help them get started. There are several sections to pick recipes from and they range from cakes to fruit smoothies – delicious.

Rustle up healthy, alcohol-free tipples with this handy app

Food & Dining

Serving up tasty treats for the kitchen

You only have to switch on your television to realise how popular cookery is these days, with kitchen programmes dominating the schedules, top chefs enjoying celebrity status and whole channels dedicated to cooking good food. The fact of the matter is that absolutely anyone can cook and the Windows Store is stacked full of apps to inspire you to get creative in the kitchen, regardless of whether you're an expert or a beginner.

There is certainly no shortage of recipe apps that provide ingredient lists and simple step-by-step instructions to help you through every stage of the process and these extend to all styles of cooking – very helpful if you're using a Windows 8 tablet.

There are also apps dedicated to sweet treats, healthy menus, and exciting and exotic tipples – with or without alcohol.

Many of these apps also come with videos that make it even easier to rustle up what is being prepared on screen – just make sure you don't spill any of the ingredients on your keyboard or screen!

Search for culinary inspiration through CookBook

Get your kids inspired to cook with Cookbook for Kids

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5 essential apps

01 Longbow
Developer:
Driftwood Software

This simple game invites you to hit several targets from varying distances. You have to take into consideration the wind direction and speed as well as the distance when aiming your bow and the only real goal is to beat your previous high score. To add variety, there are a few locations and you even get to shoot on horseback.

02 Hill Climb Racing
Developer:
Fingersoft

The simple aim is to get as far as possible in a 4x4. The only control is via the acceleration and braking pedals: you have to quickly learn when best to use these in order to keep your vehicle horizontal on the curvy terrain. You're set challenges and there are coins to grab for upgrades, plus fuel to keep going.

03 Logos Quiz+
Developer:
Bernado Zamora

A great way to waste time, this simple quiz app is at least reassuring in that all of those hours spent staring at the TV haven't been in vain. You trawl through screens of popular logos with key details removed and you have to identify them. By getting them correct you will be awarded hints that you can use on the trickier ones.

04 Angry Birds Star Wars
Developer:
Rovio Entertainment

By brilliantly aping the locales and characters from the sci-fi films, *Angry Birds* feels refreshed and full of the addictive qualities that have made the series so compelling. You get to destroy the scenery and wipe out those imperial pigs in ever more imaginative ways with blasters and lightsabers.

05 Jetpack Joyride
Developer:
Halfbrick Studios

Armed with a jet-pack and an assortment of power-ups, your aim is to avoid crashing into obstacles for as long as possible – the distance you manage to cover is essentially your score. You can only control your altitude, not the speed, so you will need sharp reflexes to survive in this addictive freebie.

Use The Force to full effect against those imperial swines!

Games

Play around with these apps

Forget the latest blockbusters – there is enough gaming gold in the Windows Store to keep even the most avid of gamers engrossed for weeks on end. Whether it's puzzle games, physics-orientated games or level-grinding role-playing games, there really is something for everyone and a lot of it is free to download and play. Often the only downside to free apps is the inclusion of pop-up ads, but you can try most games out with a free version that may exclude a lot of the content and then upgrade to the paid-for version later on. If you're hot on your Xbox Achievements then game apps you buy through the Store often throw up accolades to add to your score – perfect if all of the TVs in the house are being used. So explore the free and paid-for game sections and you'll undoubtedly find some bargains to help you to while away a week or two.

Can you defy the elements and get it in the gold?

Hill Climb Racing is much harder than it looks…

How long can you go? Sharpen your reflexes!

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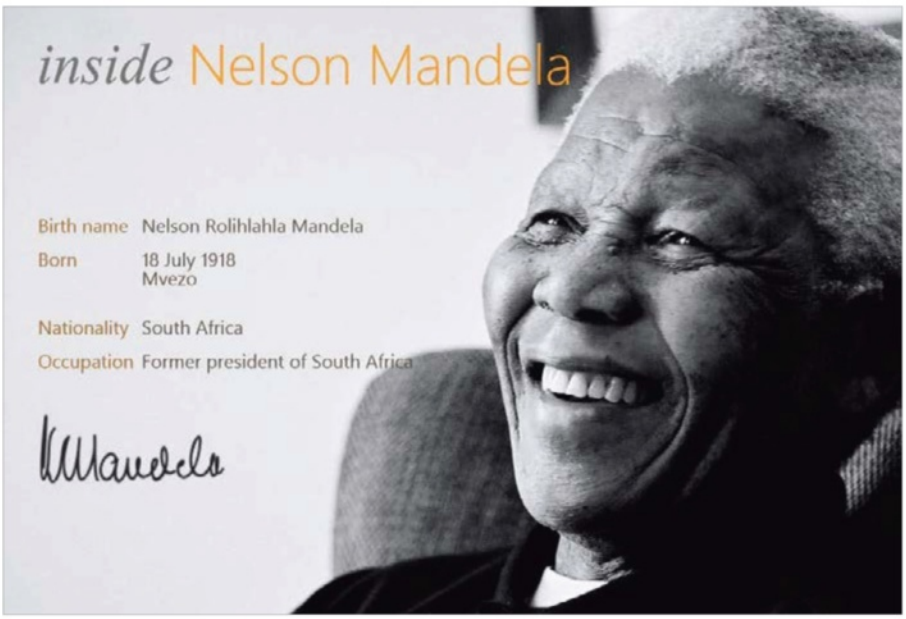
Government

A strange section full of surprises

This is by far the most curious of all of the Windows Store sections. Mainly US-centric, the Government section throws up a variety of apps that range from teaching you the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights to telling who's on the FBI's Most Wanted list. There is also a real-time tracker for the world's population (you'll be alarmed at how quickly it clocks up new arrivals before your eyes, to such an extent that you can almost feel the Earth's crust creaking!) and plenty of armed forces apps that teach you about the work that the Navy and the Air Force carry out across the world. You will also find apps dedicated to significant politicians such as Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama, as well as party policies and environmental issues. So while you probably won't come to this section looking for anything in particular, you'll be surprised what you discover.



■ Learn about the legend with Inside Nelson Mandela

"Mainly US-centric, the Government section throws up a variety of apps"

■ See which presidents charmed which states

■ Learn more about the US Navy with its official app…

5 essential apps

01 U.S. Presidential Elections

Developer: Silver Dollar Software

This app tracks the past two decades of presidential elections. Explore complete state-level data for the popular and electoral totals via an interactive map. There isn't much else to it, but the app is easy to use and a handy reference tool for those interested in US politics.

02 Inside Nelson Mandela

Developer: Mpondo Ndamase

With the recent passing of South Africa's first black president, this app provides an insight into the life of the legend, charting his early years, his political career and more. Aside from bios and news feeds, it also offers an assortment of Mandela quotes and some desktop wallpapers.

03 The U.S. Navy

Developer: Intermedia Development Corp

This official app delivers up-to-date news and info for sailors, their families and the general public. Its well-designed sections make it easy to find the info you need. You can view and share stories, videos and photos from around the US fleet and explore an interactive map.

04 Stuff they don't want you to know

Developer: Paubus

Though pulling its content from **howstuffworks.com**, this app is nevertheless an intriguing playground for conspiracy theorists that is packed full of thought-provoking content across a wide range of topics. It's just a shame that the presentation is severely lacking.

05 Population Clock

Developer: GadgetWE

If you ever need to know how many people there are on the planet then this simple app will tell you the real-time population and display how the figure has risen over the previous decades. What's really eye-opening is how quickly the real-time counter continues to clock up.

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5 essential apps

01 Active Life
Developer:
Antara Software

You can use this one-stop solution for all your health monitoring needs. Create a profile for each member of your family and track their diet, exercise and medication. For specialised needs – such as to monitor blood, glucose, weight and blood pressure – you can activate the relevant tracker.

02 Active Fitness
Developer:
Summit Data Corp

This fitness, health and activities tracking app doubles as a social network. The real beauty is that you can import and export data to other fitness apps such as Strava and RunKeeper. Develop your own personal training plans, share your activities and track your progress on leaderboards.

03 Improve Brain Power
Developer:
Chaithanyaa

While this app won't help you train your brain, it does provide an insight into the type of food you should eat to help give your brain power a boost. All of the more beneficial food types can be found via the main menu; click on one to find out more about its benefits.

04 Sleep Bug
Developer:
Panzertax

If you need a little ambient noise to help you relax and get a good night's sleep, this app provides 24 different scenes and 83 sound effects. You can enable and disable sounds within a scene to suit your needs, to get the perfect ambient combination to ease you into a slumber.

05 BMI Calculator
Developer:
New Epicenter

This app helps you determine your Body Mass Index and your ideal weight range. It can also calculate weight and height percentiles for babies and children and supports a range of units to suit your needs. The app is well produced and very easy to use.

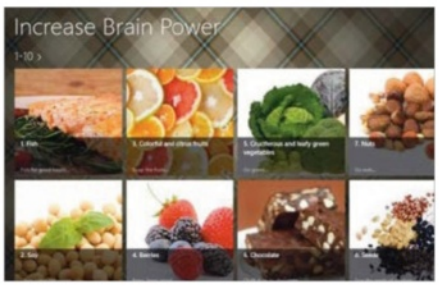
Health & Fitness

Improve your well-being

With the excess of the Eighties and the self-indulgence of the Nineties distant memories, getting fit and staying in shape is undoubtedly the new rock 'n' roll and the Windows Store is full of apps to help you drastically alter your lifestyle and craft yourself a brand new body. The clear majority of apps available in this section focus on workouts and provide all of the information, guidance and, in some cases, videos to help you plan out a fitness regime and have fun sticking to it. And it's not just your body that is catered for either, with plenty of apps available that help you sharpen your mind by eating right and getting a good night's sleep. If you intend to make this the year that you kick those bad habits, you'll find all of the motivators you'll ever need here.

"The clear majority of apps available in this section focus on workouts"

Set the scene for your perfect night's sleep



Find out what foods stimulate your brain…

Develop your own fitness plans and challenge others to undertake them with Active Fitness

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Get all the benefits of a real log fire except for the shovelling of ash (and the heat)

Lifestyle

A wide range of apps to explore

Seeing as most of the apps in the Windows Store undoubtedly enhance your lifestyle in some way, what can you possibly expect to find in this section of the Store? Whatever it is you're thinking of, it probably won't include burning fireplace simulators, personal makeover apps and the teachings of Bruce Lee. What you'll no doubt be expecting are endless journal-writing and horoscope apps. Well, they're certainly all here in abundance, but the point we're making is that there are plenty of unexpected apps to discover here too, such as ones to help you read palms and learn about various breeds of dog. It's an eclectic mix and you will really have to trawl through a lot of junk to unearth the true gems, but we can help to give you a head start by outlining five of the best lifestyle-related apps right here.

Get quotes delivered to your Start screen with Think

Store your precious moments with Story of My Life

"It's an eclectic mix and you will really have to trawl through a lot of junk to unearth the true gems"

5 essential apps

01 Story of My Life

Developer:
CyberPhone

This app provides a simple interface into which you can write your memoirs. Add extra substance to your words by attaching photos and video. You can password-protect your journals and search for significant entries. More features, such as cloud syncing, are promised with forthcoming updates.

02 Burning Fireplace

Developer:
Inphonite

This log fire simulator is just that: a moving, crackling indoor fireplace that can be used to enhance the mood as the winter nights draw in. So while you can't toast marshmallows on it, this can still provide the missing vital ingredient during those cosy nights in on the sofa.

03 Sleep Tracker

Developer:
Vakrilov

If you're obsessed about getting a good night's sleep, this app lets you keep track of how much you're getting and observe patterns. It provides tools to view daily, weekly and monthly stats and entering info is quick and easy. You can even rate your sleep out of five to track how the duration affects the quality.

04 Think

Developer:
Rafaelrabelo

This simple free app delivers random daily quotes from real-life inspirational figures – or movies, comics and songs – to display on your Start screen. Obviously, the benefits of this are open to scrutiny, but if you read something that gets you to think in the morning, is that such a bad thing?

05 TEDTalks HD

Developer:
Krzysiek Kozak

This app provides a simple interface through which you can find and watch the best talks and performances from the popular TED conferences and partner events, all in glorious HD. The front-end is fairly uninspiring, but by clicking on each link you'll be able to read an overview and watch the presentation.

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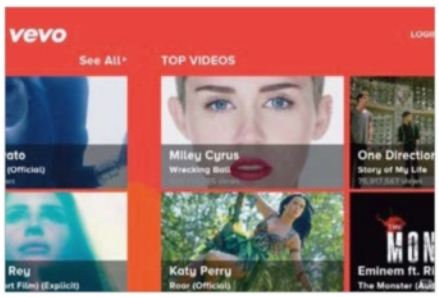
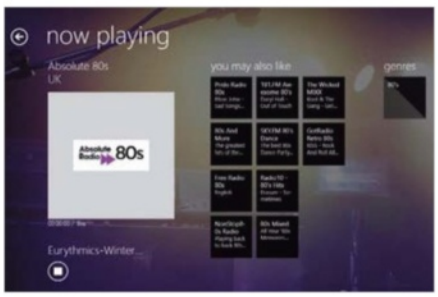
Music & Videos

Listen to music and make your own

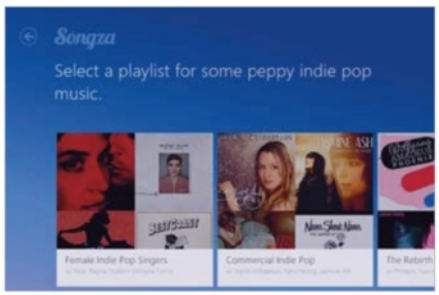
There are some supreme music-related apps available in the Windows Store that can deliver exactly what your eyes or ears crave within seconds. Old favourites such as VEVO, TuneIn Radio and Shazam are present and correct (and still highly recommended by us), but what about actually making music? Through apps you can turn your PC into a virtual guitar, keyboard or a fully functioning recording studio or DJ mixing booth and let your sonic creativity flourish. The possibilities are endless as there are a wide range of paid-for and free apps to help you explore and discover new music and get those strange noises in your head recorded and mixed into Ibiza's next dance craze (perhaps). If it's the enjoyment rather than the creation of music that your crave, though, then you'll find an endless array of apps through which you can enjoy all of the latest pop videos.



■ Watch your favourite pop videos on VEVO

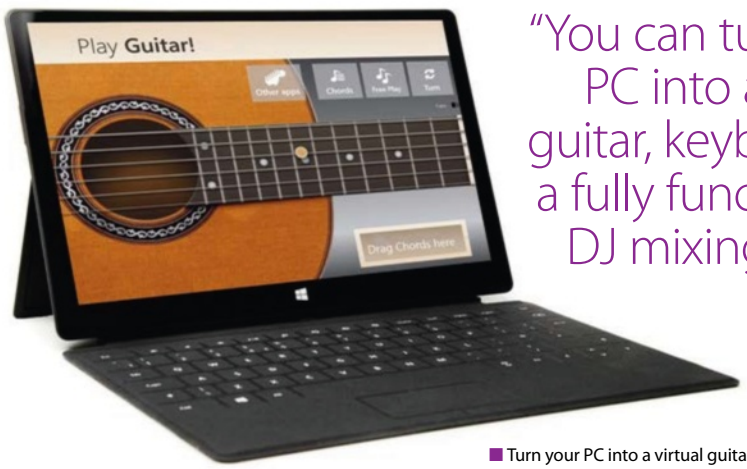


■ TuneIn Radio lets you listen to whatever you want



■ Get music for any occasion streamed to your PC

■ Discover new music through Shazam's service



■ Turn your PC into a virtual guitar and get strumming

"You can turn your PC into a virtual guitar, keyboard or a fully functioning DJ mixing booth"

5 essential apps

01 VEVO

Developer: VEVO

This fantastic free app lets you watch music videos, stream live concerts and discover new artists. Over 20,000 artists are featured, each with an impressive catalogue of promo videos and live recordings. You'll have to contend with ads when streaming videos, but it's worth it.

02 TuneIn Radio

Developer: TuneIn

Listen to music, sports and news from every corner of the globe. With over 60,000 radio stations and two million on-demand programs, you simply search for what you want to listen to and the app will toss out a range of possibilities that can be instantly streamed to your computer.

03 Songza

Developer: Songza

Songza's purpose is to play the right music at the right time. Via its simple interface, pick what you're currently doing (working, relaxing, etc) followed by a genre of music and Songza will provide playlists that you can stream through your PC. It's also a good way to discover new music.

04 Play Guitar!

Developer: Davilovick

This app turns your PC into a virtual guitar that you can strum and shape chords on, just like a real one. It's a good reference tool for getting used to the various notes on the fretboard and although it's obviously not a patch on a real guitar, it still provides plenty of enjoyment.

05 Shazam

Developer: Shazam Entertainment

Shazam makes it easy to discover new music. If a tune is playing in the background, click on 'Touch to Shazam' and within seconds the app will identify the song and artist and provide options to buy it, share it, watch the video and get the lyrics. Modern-day witchcraft!

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News & Weather

Keep on top of current affairs and forecasts

Whether it's current affairs or specialist news, you can get it beamed straight to your desktop through a rich assortment of apps available from the News & Weather section. This cuts out the need to fire up Internet Explorer and then navigate to your chosen news source – you simply launch the app from your Start screen and the news will be up before you can even flick the kettle on. As the name suggests, this section of the Store also features an impressive assortment of weather apps. These provide new and imaginative ways of delivering reports and forecasts for your local area as well as other at-a-glance information that could prove useful in determining how you dress to go out on a particular day.

Here are our favourite News & Weather apps, at least two of which will ensure you are never ill-prepared for a downpour ever again!

■ Get the weather delivered to your desktop

■ News delivered through a no-nonsense interface

■ If you want unbiased news then sniff out TheOnion

■ Get the latest news delivered straight to your desktop

"This section of the Store also features an impressive assortment of weather apps"

■ The WeatherBug delivers accurate weather reports

5 essential apps

01 The Weather Channel

Developer: The Weather Channel

Over 200 meteorologists and ultra-local TruPoint technology ensure accurate weather reports. Tiles are provided that sit on your Start screen to present the essential info, but much more detail is available when you click to launch the app. It's still free and improving all the time.

02 CNN App for Windows

Developer: CNN Interactive Group

This provides an excellent means to read breaking news stories via a simple interface. By scrolling through the front-end, you can click on the stories for more info, while categories help you find the news you want. You can also watch videos and get links to *Piers Morgan Live*! Erm…

03 TheOnion

Developer: The Onion

If you wish to read unabridged news, The Onion will no doubt already be on your news radar. This app provides access to the last bastion of unbiased, reliable and definitive news within an interface that has all of the charm of a classic British broadsheet.

04 Sky News

Developer: British Sky Broadcasting

This tidy app brings you the latest breaking news and top stories together with live Sky News TV to provide a well-rounded perspective of what's going on in the world. The interface is suitably loud and brash, but there is certainly no knocking the content.

05 WeatherBug

Developer: WeatherBug

With access to the largest global network of real-time weather sensors to get the most accurate info available, WeatherBug is ideal for getting detailed reports and forecasts. You can also save locations that you regularly frequent to find out what the conditions currently are.

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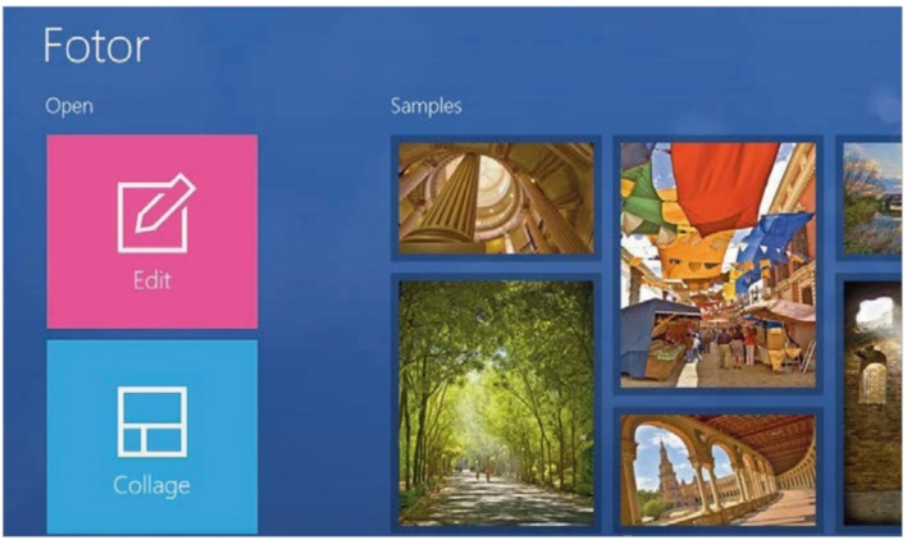
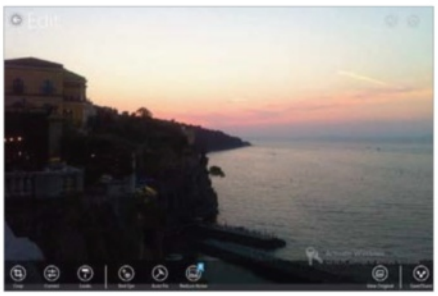


Tweak your pictures to perfect with Fotor's simple set of editing tools



Make your photos fabulous with Adobe's editing tools

Arrange your images into attractive collages

Sort through stunning Bing images

Photo

Create and edit stunning pictures

With the advent of smartphones with built-in high-resolution cameras, everyone fancies themselves as the next big duke in the world of photography. However, scrolling through your camera rolls will no doubt reveal the odd less-than-perfect pic that is in need of some urgent doctoring if it is to saved at all. Enter the Photo section of the Windows Store. Here you will be spoilt for choice with a wide array of photo-editing apps that you can use to straighten and crop images, balance the colours, reduce red-eye and much more besides. You will also find apps to present your pictures in attractive collages before sharing them with other people, and apps that provide varied selections of filters that you can apply to give them a particular look. The options are endless, as is the fun you will have pimping your pictures and showing them off to an admiring audience.

5 essential apps

01 Fotor

Developer: Chengdu Everimaging Science

This easy-to-use suite provides a surprisingly powerful set of editing tools to help you enhance your photos and apply a wide range of effects and borders to make them stand out. For a free app, this is certainly one of the best packages out there for casual snappers.

02 Picasa HD

Developer: Frozen Volcano

This app lets you browse your Picasa albums and photos. You can use it to make beautiful slideshows, create, edit and delete albums and manage your pictures. It presents all of your images in glorious HD and you can make it fill the screen to see your pictures in vivid detail.

03 Photoshop Express

Developer: Adobe Systems

Editing photos has never been so fun, fast and cool. Via its flashy interface you can crop, straighten, rotate and flip your photos, remove red-eye, auto-fix the colour levels, adjust the brightness and exposure, and tweak the contrast and clarity to make your pictures perfect.

04 Phototastic

Developer: Thumbmunkeys

If you want to give your photos some extra lift then this app helps you create fantastic-looking collages of your best images to display them in new and imaginative ways. With over 100 collage templates to choose from, you will find something here to suit all occasions.

05 Daily Beautiful Pictures

Developer: Hongsong Li

If you wish to start the day inspired, this app will help. It automatically downloads beautiful background images from Bing straight to your machine, which you can then set as wallpapers. The offerings are incredible and there are hundreds to browse through.

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5 essential apps

01 Dropbox
Developer:
Dropbox

This app for the popular cloud service enables you to access all your files, upload and download them, as well as rename, move and preview them. If you have a lot of stuff stored in Dropbox, the built-in search engine helps you find what you want quickly by entering keywords.

02 Evernote Touch
Developer:
Evernote

Evernote helps you remember things across all of your devices. For example, write a note or reminder on your phone (via its Evernote app) and then access it through this app on your PC. Everything is auto-synced and pretty much anything can be added, including pictures and files.

03 Windows 8 Cheat Keys
Developer:
Digitalmason.net

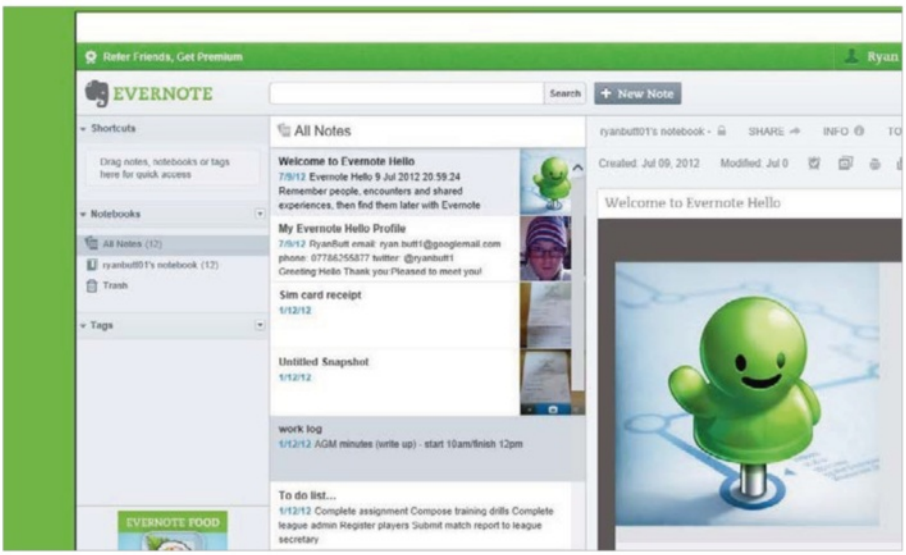
This app comes packed with tips and tricks to help users get around the OS. Included are hotkeys, shortcuts, gestures and features and you can share your findings with friends and family – hopefully eradicating those calls for help from them!

04 WinZip
Developer:
WinZip

This app provides a 15-day free trial of the service's impressive array of file extraction facilities (you can then subscribe) to help you share compressed bundles of files with your friends, family and colleagues. Over 25 compression formats are supported and using the app is a breeze.

05 Alarm Clock HD
Developer:
Antara Software

If you want your PC to double up as an alarm clock or you just need to set yourself alerts then this free app is more can capable. The display also features a barrage of useful information such as exchange rates and the current weather.



Evernote ensures that you never have to worry about forgetting anything again!

Find out how to get around Windows 8

WinZip lets you extract and compress files with ease

Get alerts and essential info delivered to your phone

Productivity

Improve your workflow and efficiency

Productivity is an area where we can all improve in our working lives and there is certainly no excuse for slacking off as far as some of the offerings in this section of the Windows Store are concerned. The main theme in the Productivity section tends to be cloud storage services that you can access through the respective app; set up an account quickly and easily, then upload your files to free allocated storage space in order to share them with colleagues for group collaboration purposes. But that's not all, because you will also find handy utility apps that can help you out in virtually every area of your work and enable you to motor through your working day. To get you started, we have even picked out a useful app to help you get to grips with Windows 8 and learn some shortcuts.

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5 essential apps

01 Bitdefender Insight

Developer: Bitdefender

Bitdefender Insight delivers a wide variety of security news so that you can stay up to date. If you use any of Bitdefender's antivirus solutions on your PC, this app lets you see the current security status and run tasks such as scan, update and fix important issues detected on your computer.

02 Password Padlock

Developer: GkcSoft

Manage all your passwords securely in this app, which encrypts them all (using AES-256) with one master password. It also lets you back up and restore encrypted passwords to SkyDrive and helps you to create new ones. This is a very useful app to aid your online security.

03 LastPass

Developer: Lastpass

The password and data management service offered by LastPass stores all of your logins securely so you can access accounts and services from anywhere. It lets you auto-fill logins and view your stored sites and notes in an easy-to-search vault. All the info you store is also synced to the cloud.

04 Norton Satellite

Developer: Symantec Corporation

This app makes social networking safer by scanning your Facebook and Twitter feeds for malicious links. It also covers your Dropbox, SkyDrive and local PC for anything untoward. Undoubtedly useful for when you don't have full control over what you receive.

05 Network Port Scanner

Developer: Cenix

This app offers full PC port scanning to test your computer's network security. Through its somewhat primitive interface you can see what ports are open on your network and the IP addresses that use them. You can also set up an IP range and port range to scan.

Security

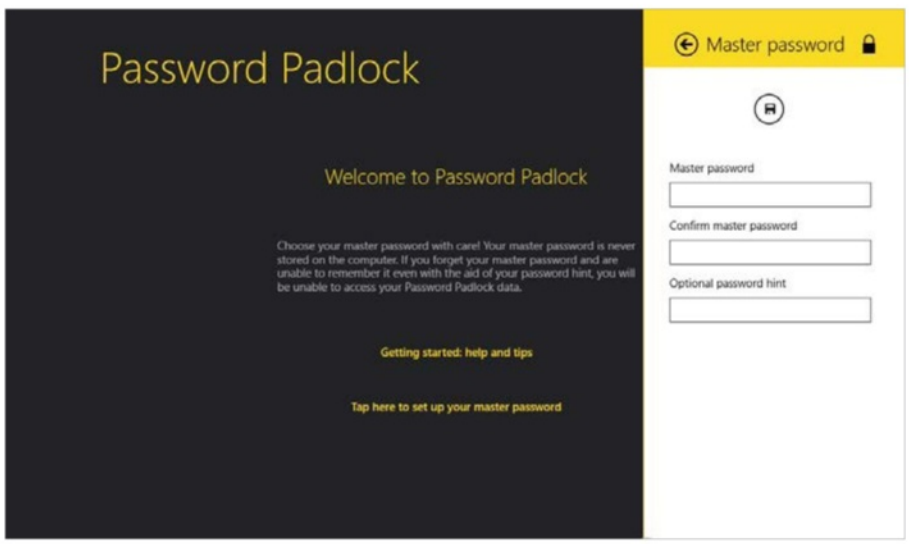
Keep your computer safe

Security has always been a big issue with PCs, since they are vulnerable to all manner of malicious malware. Fortunately, there are hundreds of ways to protect your computer and all of your important files, as well as secure all of your passwords to make your machine completely unhackable.

There are even apps that patrol your social networks to ensure that nothing malicious is making it from Facebook or Twitter onto your machine. A little diligence can go a long way to preserving the well-being of your computer, so make sure that you take time out to shop around in this section and find the right app that meets your security requirements – there are certainly enough to choose from.

As always, five of our favourites are highlighted in the essential apps section.

"There are hundreds of ways to protect your machine and all of your important files, as well as secure all of your passwords to make your machine completely unhackable"



Manage and encrypt your essential passwords and back them up for safekeeping

Store your information securely in one place

Norton Satellite scans your networks for malware

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Shopping

Shop online and get the best deals

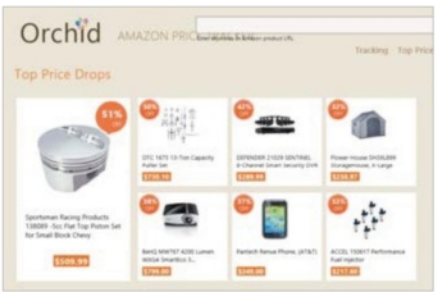
It may be the dreaded death knell to the high street stores, but the fact is that online shopping is quicker, easier and often a lot more painless than braving the elements and the queues when shopping for essentials and gifts. Big hitters such as Amazon and eBay are made to feel right at home on your PC with staggering apps that make the shopping experience an absolute breeze, and long forgotten service directories such as Yellow Pages are also finding a new lease of life thanks to slick operating systems that bypass the conventional 'Google It' method of sourcing contact details and information in your local area.

So while we may miss the chirpy banter of actually engaging with other human beings when buying things, online shopping is taken to the next level through Windows 8 – and there's no way we're going back!

Online shopping really couldn't be easier than through Amazon's dedicated desktop app

Grab yourself a bargain thanks to eBay's interface

The Yellow Pages lives on in a digital format…



Get the best deals on Amazon products with Orchid

5 essential apps

01 Amazon

Developer:
Amazon.com

This app lets you sign into your Amazon account and shop effortlessly. Browse by department or use the search engine and you can buy products easily or add them to a wish-list to share with family and friends. The super-slick interface makes the whole shopping experience relaxing and there are plenty of recommendations.

02 eBay

Developer:
eBay, Inc

eBay helps people to flog unwanted items, grab some bargains and even create their own online shops. This app makes it easy to shop and search for items, make bids and purchases and manage your account. The eye-catching interface helps you to find exactly what you want with ease and it also offers daily deals to highlight price reductions.

03 Yellow Pages

Developer:
Avantar

The popularity of the bulky old-fashioned Yellow Pages book may be on the wane, but there are still times when we need to get our hands on the contact info that the service provides. The database of services that this app lists is easy to navigate to aid you in finding the information that you need with as little effort as possible.

04 Orchid

Developer:
Orchid Studio

If you use Amazon then this app is a fine accompaniment that tracks the prices of products on Amazon and provides alerts when they are reduced. This could help shave pounds off the amount you pay out for the products you have been coveting for a while. It includes email and Twitter notifications so you'll never miss out.

05 Best Buy

Developer:
Best Buy, Inc

The Best Buy app provides a fresh new way to shop for the latest and greatest technology. Through a simple interface you can browse the full Best Buy product catalogue, read reviews and purchase the products that you desire quickly and easily. It's a great way to view and purchase the American retailer's wares.

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Essential apps

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5 essential apps

01 Line

Developer:
Line Corporation

With Line you can make unlimited voice calls and send unlimited text messages – for free. To set up an account you'll need the smartphone app, but once the two versions of the app are linked you'll be able to add friends and text or chat to your heart's content, without having to shell out.

02 IM+ Instant Messenger

Developer:
Shape GmbH

IM+ is essentially a one-stop messaging app through which you can chat to friends on all of your social networks. It supports Facebook, Skype, Yahoo!, Google+, AOL and lots more and makes it quick and easy to communicate with all your friends in one app.

03 Twitter

Developer:
Twitter Inc

Twitter lets you follow the rich and famous, plug your own projects and more. You can share pictures, chat, and post links and comments through a simple interface. The latest update supports multiple accounts, making it easy to switch between your personal and work accounts, for example.

04 Skype

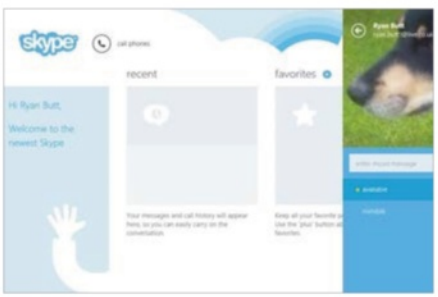
Developer:
Skype

By allowing you to chat face to face with your friends and family from the other side of the planet, there really is no reason to be without the Skype app. Once you sign in, Skype runs constantly in the background, ensuring that you are ready to receive calls in an instant.

05 Facebook

Developer:
Facebook, Inc

This app provides a convenient way to access and monitor your Facebook account without having to go through the web browser. It boasts the same layout and features as the popular tablet versions of the app and you can also chat freely with your friends through the interface.



Communicate as if the other person's in the same room

Keeping up with your friends is easier than ever…

"Post comments, share images and other assorted media, and chat with your friends and family for free"

Social

Get networking with friends

Social networks are a great way to stay in touch with friends, relatives or colleagues online and keep you in a social loop even if you are unable to meet up in person. Most social networks enable you to post comments, share images and other assorted media, and chat with your friends and family for free, so they're often worth investing time in. Obviously, a certain degree of care must be taken when signing up to social networks to configure your settings so as to protect personal information and privacy, but by and large, if used correctly, then social networking apps can be fun places to inhabit.

Here we have outlined the main must-have social networking apps to install on your PC, including the big hitters like Facebook, Twitter and Skype – but there are plenty of free and paid-for alternatives available that may suit your needs better, so be sure to fully explore what's out there before committing.

IM+ makes it easy to message contacts on all your social networks

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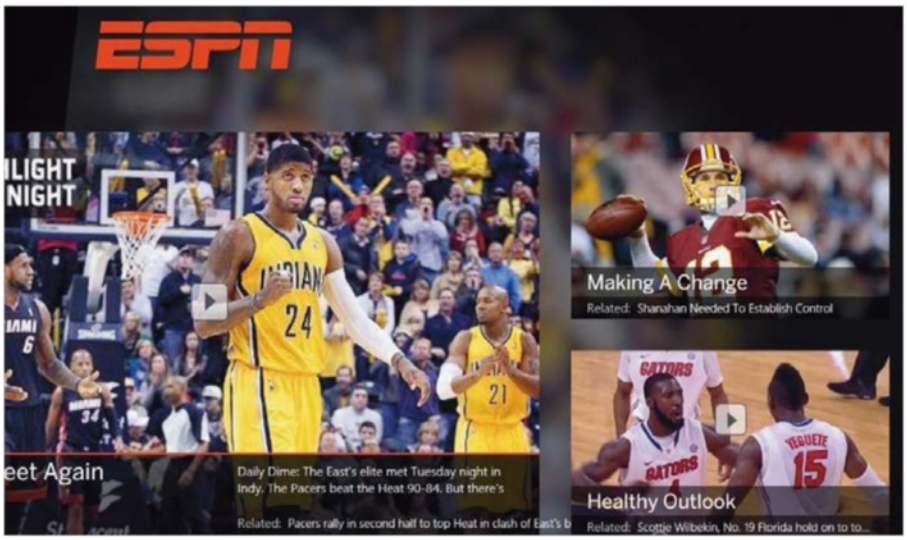
Sport

Keep up with the scores and more

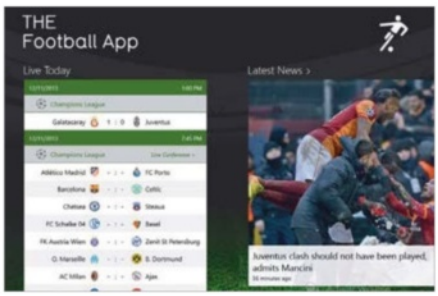
Like the news apps, there are a great many apps available that focus on sports and beam all of the latest scores and stats straight to your desktop with the minimum of fuss. Although the majority of these apps tend to focus on American sports, a little searching will throw out must-have apps for any sport you'd care to mention. And they aren't just all about news and scores either.

There are also coaching apps that can help you improve your golf swing. Then there are apps that review all of the latest products in your preferred sport so you can make an informed decision on what make of football boots to buy next.

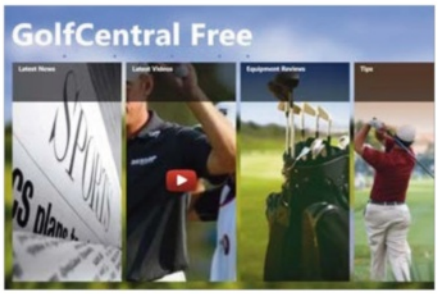
So, for active sports players or armchair fans, the Store has something for everyone, from gridiron to golf and basketball to bowls.



The ESPN App is packed full of insightful content for sports fans to devour



THE Football App lives up to its cocky name…



Get news, videos, buying advice and more

Get the latest courtside news, scores, tweets and bios

5 essential apps

01 The ESPN App

Developer:
ESPN

With up-to-the-minute scores, news and analysis for all of your favourite teams, leagues and players, the ESPN App is packed with US-centric sport info and razzmatazz. It also features video feeds and news updates, plus links to various podcasts to extend your enjoyment further.

02 THE Football App

Developer:
Motain GmbH

This excellent app covers all the major European leagues and international competitions. With videos, tables, squad lists and detailed player info, as well as live match stats and commentary, it's a professionally created love letter to the beautiful game.

03 Cricket Live Score

Developer:
Sanka Bulathgama

Although some cricket fans may want to forget recent scores, this app tugs back your interest like an excited child. Its simple score relay system can sit on your desktop and provide ticker-taped scores as they occur. It lacks pizzazz but delivers the info you crave.

04 GolfCentral Free

Developer:
Kyle Smith Software

This app helps you keep up to date with the world of professional golf, watch the latest videos and get plenty of tips and advice on how to improve your own swing. It also provides expert reviews on the latest equipment and showcases the best golfing resorts.

05 NBA Fan

Developer:
Vishal1310

If you have a keen interest in basketball then this app delivers all of the latest news, highlights, tweets and team info from the NBA. It is bursting with insightful and informative content, all of which is delivered through a stylish and easy-to-navigate interface.

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5 essential apps

01 Sticky Notes 8

Developer: Marco Rinaldi

Stick as many notes as you want and move them freely around the screen with this app. You can select the colour of the note and even pin it to your Start screen, lock it, share it with others and more. Your notes are also synced with your SkyDrive to ensure that they are always close at hand when you need them.

02 Recorder One

Developer: IPT International Technologies

This app serves as a professional voice recorder that is ideal for recording meetings, lectures and personal notes. Once it's set up, just click on the large button to start recording immediately. All your audio notes are listed on the left – click one to play it – and there is no limit on the duration of recordings.

03 Calculator2

Developer: Richard Walters

This brilliant free app includes five calculators: Basic, Scientific, Programmer, Currency Converter and Unit Converter. The large buttons ensure quick, error-free input, while scientific functions, constants, memory items and more are contained in lists that are just one click away. It's all very easy to use.

04 Network Speed Test

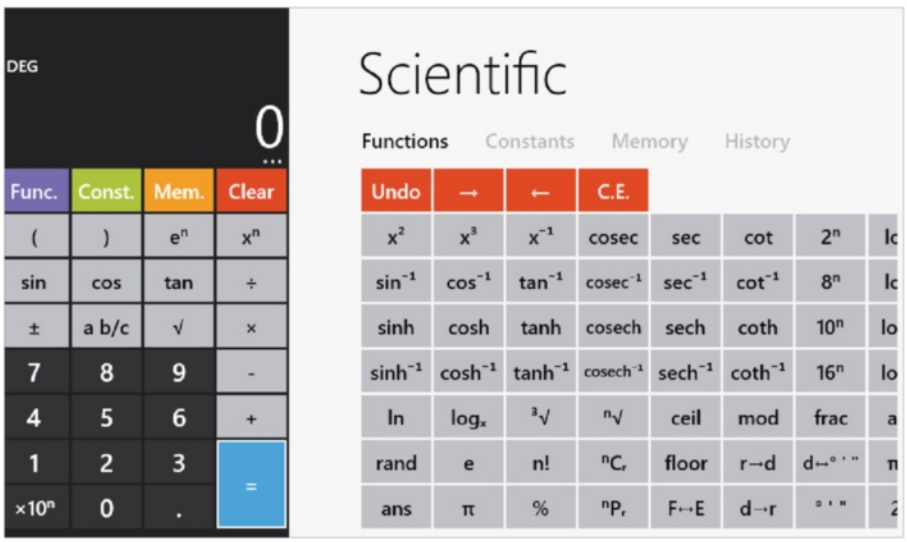
Developer: Microsoft Research

If you want to know exactly how fast your internet connection is then this app will run a test and tell you just that. This is particularly useful in determining whether you're getting what you pay for from your service provider and to highlight any problems that may have arisen on the line.

05 Google Search

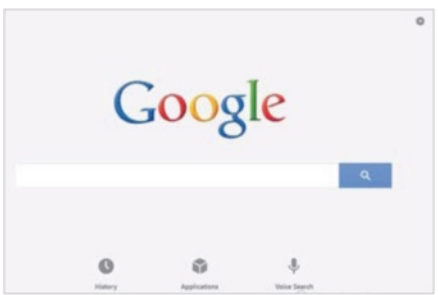
Developer: Google Inc

This app places the Google search engine within easy reach of your desktop, allowing you to enter keywords and make your internet searches quickly and effortlessly. It also supports voice searching using your PC's built-in mic and comes with a Search charm to make it even easier to fire up.

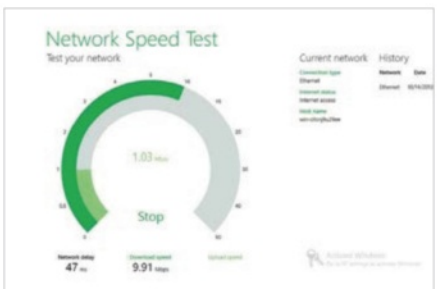


Perform simple or highly complex calculations with this essential download

"The Tools section is the place to find all manner of odds and sods that can serve a purpose in your life"



Searching the internet is now quicker than ever



Make sure you're getting the speeds you pay for

Tools

All manner of useful apps

Perhaps not so much a toolbox, more a disorganised drawer in the sideboard where everything without a natural home is chucked, the Tools section of the Windows Store is the place to find all manner of odds and sods that can serve a purpose in your life. As you can see from the ones we've selected here, they include note-taking apps into which you can jot down whatever you want and pin it to your desktop, voice-recording apps through which you can record dictations, and calculators that can perform even the most complex of tasks in a sniff. Also featured are apps that help you monitor your internet connection speed to determine if you are getting the broadband speeds that you are paying for or to throw up any undetected problems on the line.

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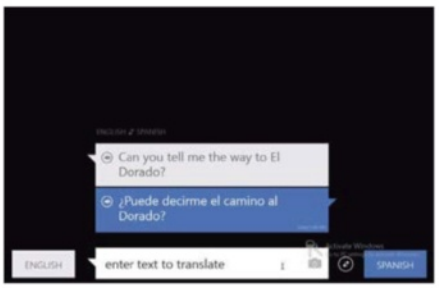
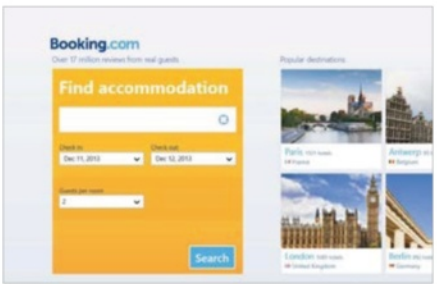
Travel

Everything you need for your trip

Everyone likes to ditch the office in favour of sun-baked beaches and you will find plenty of apps in the Travel section of the Windows Store to help you get there and get the most out of your time abroad. Apps such as TripAdvisor help you plan ahead and get hotel and restaurant recommendations from your fellow travellers, whereas apps such as SkyScanner help you compare the prices of flights to get the best possible deal. All of the stress associated with organising holidays is eradicated because after you find the cheapest tickets and accommodation, you can then go on and book it all straight from the respective app. Of course, once you are away, there are also plenty of apps to help you converse with the locals and work out how much money you are going to be spending.



■ Translate text or camera feeds with Bing Translator



■ Secure yourself a bargain room in top hotels

"All of the stress associated with organising holidays is eradicated"

■ Get the best deals on your flights with the essential SkyScanner app

5 essential apps

01 Bing Translator

Developer: Microsoft

Simply type in the text you want to translate, or even point at it using your PC's webcam, and let the app work its magic. It supports 40 languages and if you take your laptop out and about, you can translate menus, foreign signs and newspapers. It even works when you're offline.

02 SkyScanner

Developer: SkyScanner

SkyScanner searches the routes of over 1,000 airlines to find the lowest prices. When you find the perfect deal, you can order the tickets in-app or, if you're too busy at the moment, email the flight details to yourself to book later. A very useful free app that could save you hundreds!

03 TripAdvisor Hotels Flights Restaurants

Developer: TripAdvisor

If planning a holiday or a short stay away, this app is a must-have. It enables you to scout ahead and check out the hotels and restaurants and see how they have fared with fellow users. You can also compare prices to get the best deals.

04 Skype WiFi

Developer: Skype

If you are out and about and need to Skype a friend or work colleague urgently then this app helps you get online by seeking out public Wi-Fi hotspots that you can access to make your calls. You can pay for everything through Skype Credit, so connecting is nice and easy.

05 Booking.com

Developer: Booking.com

This app provides a quick and easy way to find and book hotels wherever you are planning on travelling to and the service is totally secure so you can book yourself a bargain with confidence. A great tool for planning your perfect holiday.

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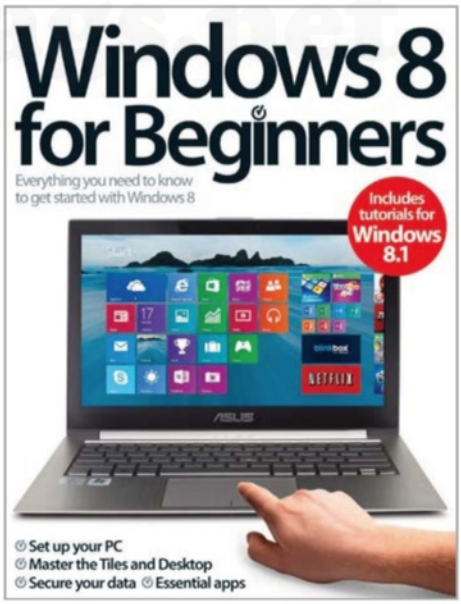

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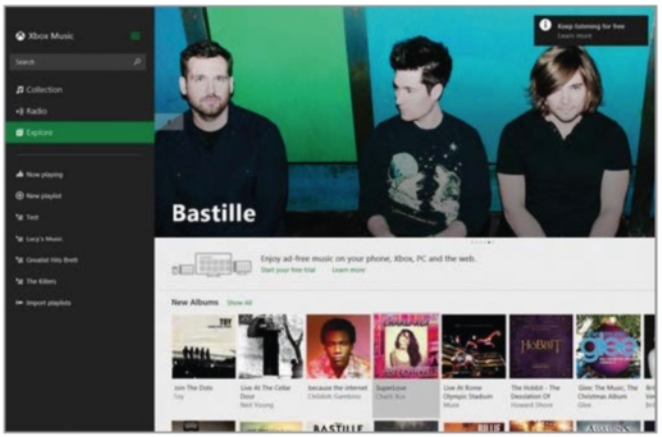
Browse the web, send emails and much more

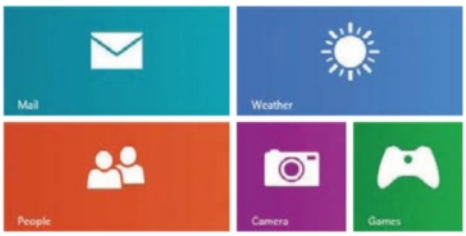


The next step

Master Windows 8's entertainment software

Essential apps

Find out the best apps to download now



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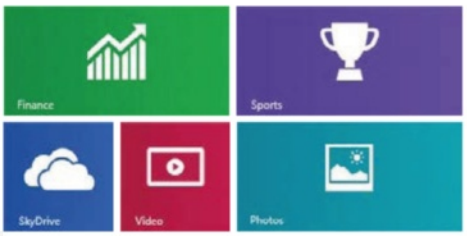

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