DISCOVER WINDOWS 8

ASK PC Academy

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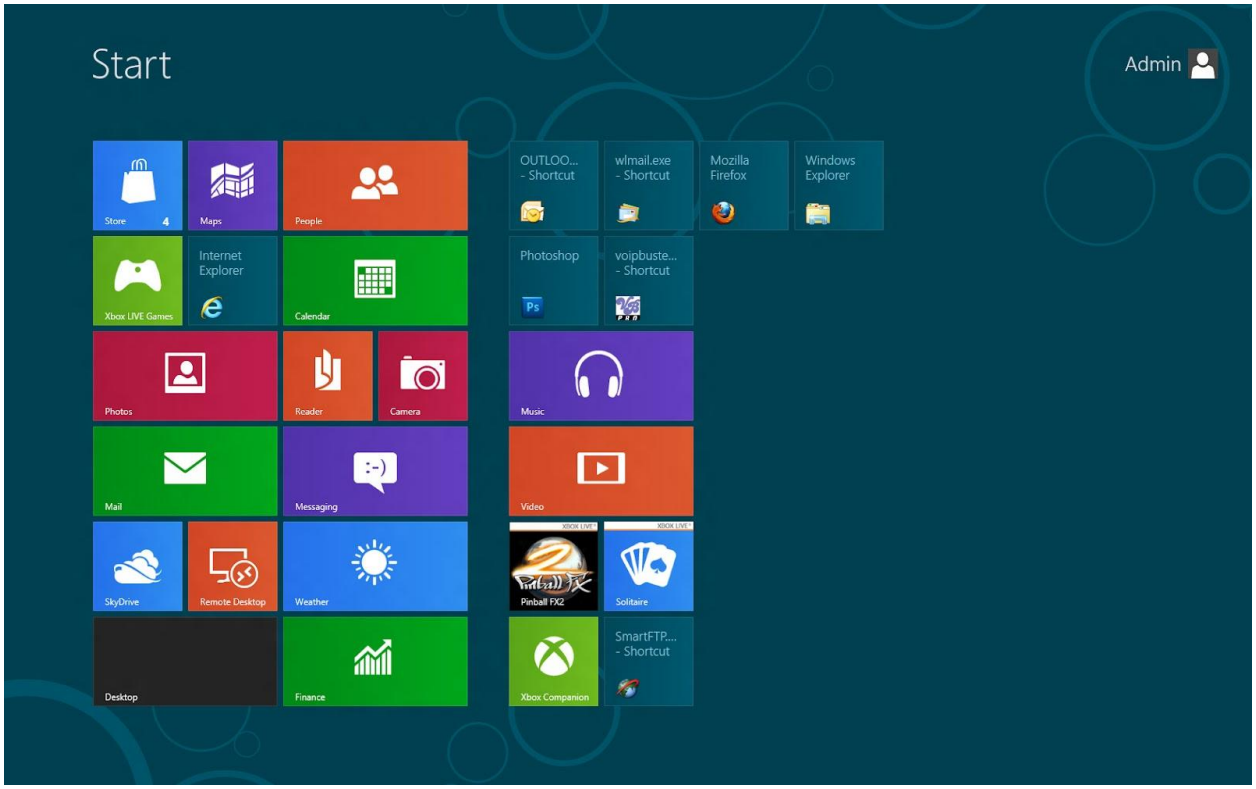
What's Microsoft Windows?

Microsoft Windows is a series of graphical interface operating systems developed, marketed, and sold by Microsoft.

Microsoft introduced an operating environment named *Windows* on November 20, 1985 as an add-on to MS-DOS in response to the growing interest in graphical user interfaces (GUIs). Microsoft Windows came to dominate the world's personal computer market with over, overtaking Mac OS, which had been introduced in 1984.

The most recent client version of Windows is Windows 8; the most recent mobile client version is Windows Phone 8; the most recent server version is Windows Server 2012.



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What's Windows 8?

Windows 8 is the most recent **operating system** designed by **Microsoft**. It introduces a lot of new changes, so if you're thinking of upgrading from a previous version of Windows, you should carefully look at these changes to decide whether upgrading is a good idea.

There have been many different versions of windows over the years, including Windows 7 (released in 2009) Windows Vista (2006) and windows Xp (2001).While previous versions of windows mainly run on desktop and laptop computers, windows 8 is also designed to run on tablets. Because of the interface has been simplified so that it will work with touch screens.

* An **operating system** manages all of the hardware and software on a computer. Without it, the computer would be useless.

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How is Windows 8 Different from Earlier Versions?

There are many new features and changes in Windows 8, both small and large. These changes include **designed interface**, **online features**, **improved security**, and more.

Start screen: The main screen that you'll use is called the **Start screen**, and it displays all of your apps as **tiles**. You can personalize your Start screen by changing the color scheme, choosing a background image, and rearranging your tiles.

Apps on the Start screen

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Touch, keyboard, and mouse: seamless integration Windows 8 is hands-on and designed to eliminate the need to choose. You don't have to "work" on your PC and "play" on your tablet. The most efficient way to get stuff done is immediately available. Whether you're browsing apps, reading a book, or typing on the go with touch, creating a project that requires the more productive horsepower of a traditional mouse and keyboard, or doing everything at once, Windows 8 makes it easy. You use whatever works best, whenever it works best. No tradeoffs. On new, touch-enabled PCs, the things you can do with a mouse and keyboard are just as easy to do with touch. You can switch between apps, organize your Start screen, and pan and zoom. With the touch keyboard, you can navigate, type, and interact on the go. Because you work in different ways depending on which app you're using, Windows 8 makes it easy to use whichever method works best. The touch keyboard has two modes designed to suit the way you work. You get a full-sized keyboard with large buttons, or a handy thumb keyboard that splits the keys on either side of the screen, making it easy and more comfortable to use on the go. Typing feels natural whether you're sitting down or walking around.

Type naturally with the touch keyboard

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Live tiles: Some apps use **live tiles**, which let you see information without even clicking on the app. For example, the Weather app displays the current weather on its tile, and you can click on it to see more details.

Live tiles

Hot corners: You'll navigate through Windows 8 by using **hot corners**. To use a hot corner, just hover the mouse in the corner of the screen, and it will open a toolbar or tile that you can click. For example, to switch to another open app, you can hover the mouse in the top-left corner and then click. If you're using a tablet, you'll swipe from the left or right instead of using hot corners.

Hot corners

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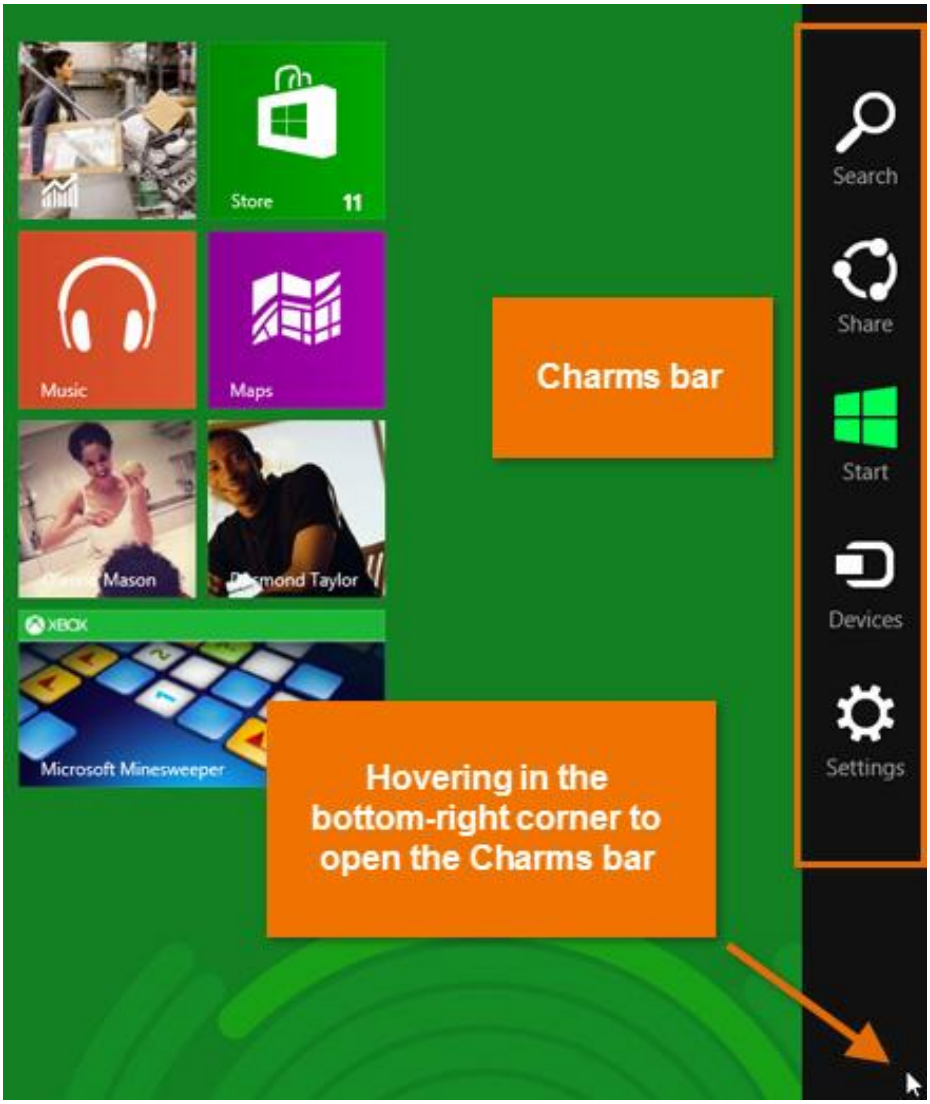
Charms bar: Many of your computer's settings are now found in a toolbar called the **Charms bar**. You can access it by hovering in the top-right or bottom-right corner of the screen. If you're using a tablet, you can swipe from the right to open the Charms bar.



Charms bar

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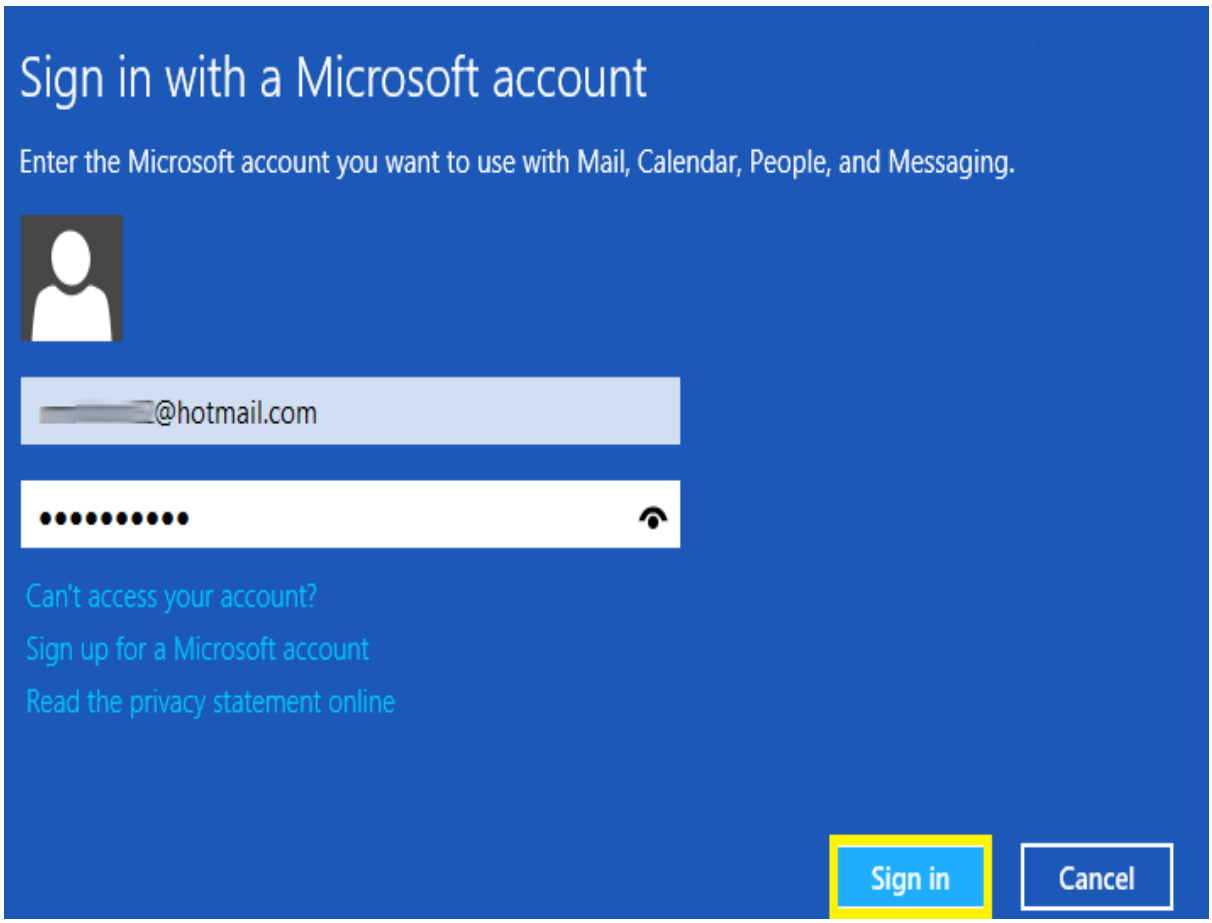
Online Features in Windows 8:

Many people are starting to save their files and other information online (also known as the cloud). One way to do this is with Microsoft's **SkyDrive service**. Windows 8 is designed to connect seamlessly to **SkyDrive**, as well as other online services like Facebook and Twitter.

Sign in with Microsoft account: Instead of creating an account on your computer, you can sign in with your free Microsoft account. This will bring all of your SkyDrive files, contacts, and more into your Start screen. You can even sign in to a different computer that has Windows 8, and all of your important files will be there.



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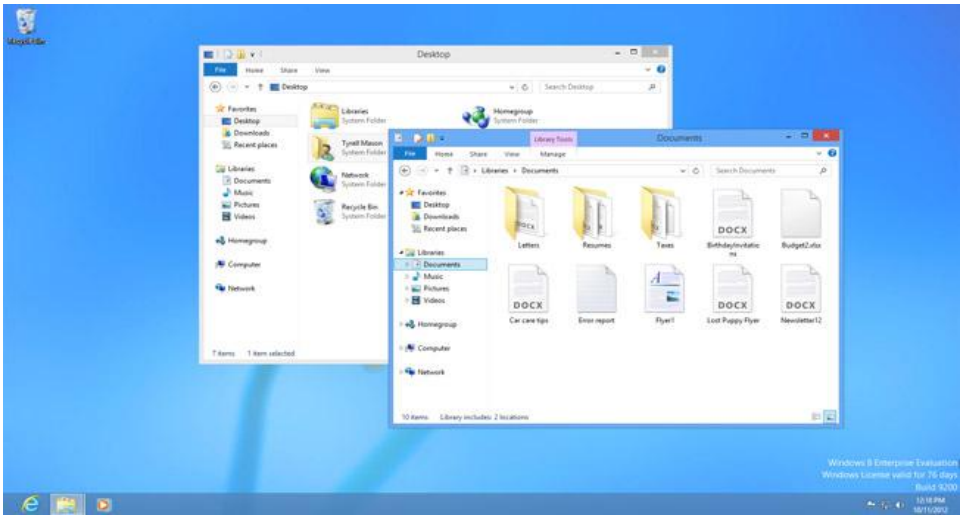
Social networking features: You can connect your Facebook, Twitter, and Flicker accounts to Windows 8, allowing you to see your friends' updates directly from your Start screen or from the built-in **People** app.

Simplified Desktop for increased speed: Microsoft hasn't removed the Desktop, and you can still use it to manage your files or open many of your existing programs. However, it has removed some of the transparency effects that often caused Windows 7 and Vista to run slowly. The new Desktop should run more smoothly on most computers.



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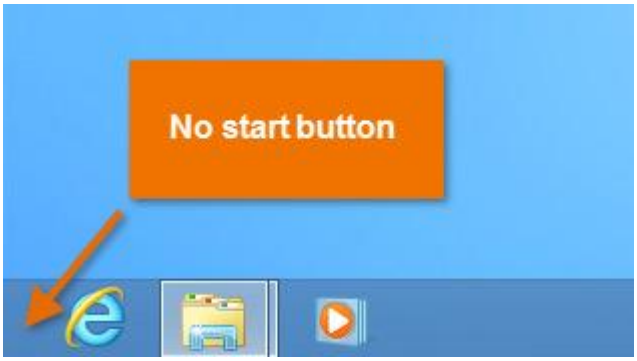
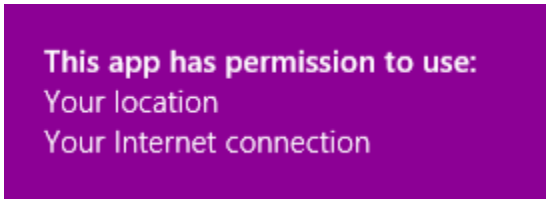
No Start button: The biggest change to the Desktop is that there is no Start button. In previous versions, the Start button was a very common place to go to launch apps, access settings, or search the computer. Although these features are now accessible from the Start screen, many people may find it disorienting to use Windows without the Start button.



The Desktop no longer has a Start button

Improved security: Windows 8 has a built-in antivirus program called **Windows Defender**, which can also protect you from other types of malware such as spyware. The built-in **Windows Store** also helps to keep you and your computer safe by showing you what information each app will have access to. For example, some apps have access to your location, so if you're uncomfortable sharing your location you can decide not to download those apps.



An app that has access to your location and internet connection

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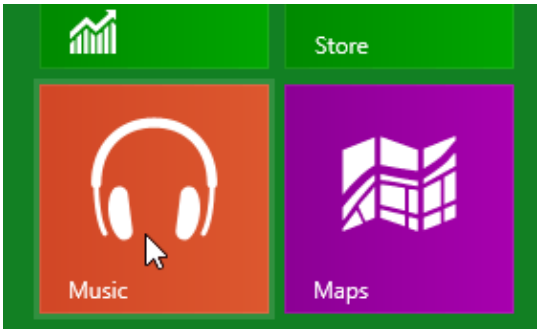
How Will You Use Windows 8?

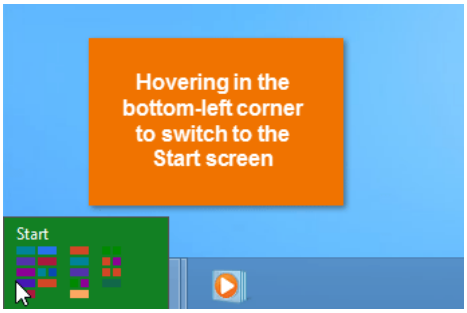
Since Windows 8 is so different, it will probably **change the way you use your computer**. This may take a while to get used to, but keep in mind that these changes are designed to make your computing experience easier and smoother.

For example, if you've used previous versions of Windows, you may be accustomed to launching programs by clicking on the **Start button**. In Windows 8, you'll use the **Start screen** instead. On the other hand, you'll still be able to use the **Desktop** view to organize your files and folders, and to open older programs.



Launching an app from the Start screen

Most people will have to use both the Start screen and the Desktop, depending on the task. You'll probably have to switch back and forth, which may be disorienting at first. However, if you mainly use your computer to browse the web, you may spend almost all of your time in the Start screen.



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In many ways, Windows 8 is the safest version of Windows ever released. There's substantially less risk of downloading harmful software because the apps you'll use from the Start screen are either designed or approved by Microsoft. Windows 8 also includes a number of **security features** to keep you safe.

In this lesson, you'll learn more about how Windows 8 protects your computer. We'll also talk about using the **Action Center** to resolve potential security risks, **troubleshooting** issues with your computer, and how to **restore your system**.

Security Features in Windows 8

Windows 8 uses a wide variety of tools to protect you from **viruses**, **malware**, and other malicious applications that could harm your computer. Many of these services run in the background, so you may not even notice that they're constantly working to keep you safe.

User Account Control:

User Account Control warns you when a program or user attempts to **change your computer's settings**. Your screen will be **temporarily locked** until an Administrator can confirm the changes. This helps to protect your computer against **malicious software** and **accidental changes**. User Account Control also allows you to decide how often you'll receive these warnings.

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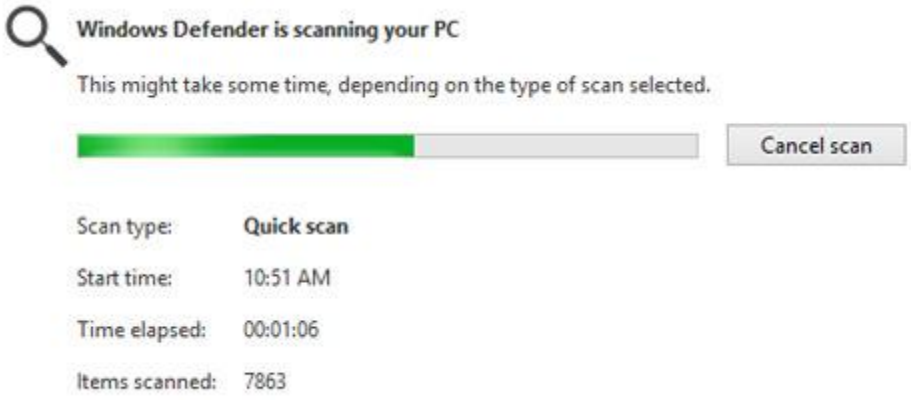
Windows Defender

Windows Defender provides anti-virus and malware protection for your computer. In addition to scanning your computer for potentially harmful applications, Windows Defender also provides real-time protection, double-checking each file or application you open without slowing down your computer.



Windows Defender

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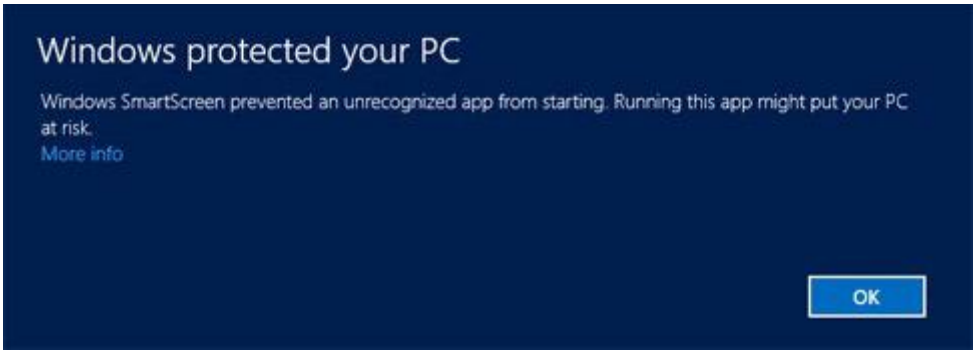
Windows Smart Screen

whenever your computer detects a security threat from a file or application, Windows Smart Screen will notify you with a full-screen warning. Whenever you see this warning screen, you should choose not to open the file or application unless you can verify that it will not damage your computer.



Windows Firewall

By default, Windows 8 will protect your internet connection with Windows Firewall.
A firewall prevents unauthorized access from external connections and helps protect your network from threats that could harm your computer.

Windows Firewall

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Focused on business and people:

Windows 8 is re imagined to support different working styles. It's more intuitive so you can find what you need faster and easier. The new look of Windows and the new app model make it easier for businesses to create their own line-of-business apps to help improve productivity. Windows 8 improves on Windows 7 fundamentals like speed, reliability, security, and other essentials that are important to IT administrators. And it works seamlessly with an existing Windows management infrastructure.

The better business tablet:

Windows 8 tablets bring together the convenience and mobility of a tablet with the productivity of a PC. With full support for touch, mouse, and keyboard, Windows 8 tablets run the majority of apps that run on Windows 7 PCs today. Windows 8 provides new opportunities for line-of-business apps, especially on tablets. Line-of-business Windows 8 apps can help enhance productivity, with full-screen apps that allow workers to more easily interact with the apps.

New possibilities for mobile productivity With Windows 8, it's easier for people in your business to get connected and stay connected. IT pros can help ensure that corporate data is safer and more secure. Great new features and enhancements mean that road warriors can take their Windows 8 computers with them, confident that the built-in Wi-Fi and mobile broadband solutions can help them stay connected whether they're on-site with a customer, waiting for a flight, or working from a branch office.

Built-in mobile broadband features in Windows 8 add support for 3G and 4G telecommunication, enabling business users on the go to connect to the Internet immediately. Windows 8 mobile broadband support can help businesses keep data

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usage costs low with built-in mobile broadband metering. As mobile users move between locations, Windows 8 automatically uses Wi-Fi hotspots, if they're available.

Windows to Go

is a cost-effective solution for alternative workplace scenarios. In Windows 8 Professional and Windows 8 Enterprise editions, IT administrators can provide employees with a corporate Windows image on a compatible USB storage device that includes line-of-business apps, settings, and corporate data. Off-site users can have a consistent Windows 8 experience on any Windows 7 or Windows 8 logo-certified corporate or personal PC. With Windows to go, employees get a rich, consistent, and personalized Windows 8 experience that's as secure as a fully managed PC. When they shut down, they can remove the USB device and no data is left on the host PC.

Direct Access allows remote users to more securely and seamlessly access resources inside of a corporate network without having to launch a separate virtual private network (VPN) connection to the corporate network. Branch Cache downloads files and apps from a corporate headquarters, storing this data in the branch office. Client PCs in the branch office can access the content locally, rather than repeatedly downloading it from headquarters. By using Branch Cache, you can reduce the time required for branch workers to access data on the network. In Windows 8, Branch Cache can store more data and serve more clients. Multiple hosted cache servers can be used in a single office, making deployment possible in offices of any size. The feature also includes cache encryption and removes the requirement for additional disk encryption technologies. This helps simplify deployment and helps to improve data security. Windows 8 uses Windows file server's state-of-the-art technology to divide files into small pieces and eliminate duplicates. This results in greater bandwidth savings and better network performance.

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Enhanced end-to-end security:

Windows 8 provides enterprise-class security capabilities that keep clients more secure against malware intrusion, better protected with easy-to-deploy data encryption, and more protected with strong access control to resources. Trusted Boot helps protect the end-to-end boot process and virtually eliminates the possibility for malware to hijack the Boot process or hide from antimalware software. On Windows devices equipped with UEFI 2.3.1.

The UEFI Secure Boot feature ensures that the OS loader is the first piece of software that starts. The Windows 8 Trusted Boot feature protects the integrity of the remainder of the boot process, including the kernel, system files, boot critical drivers, and even the antimalware software itself. The system's antimalware software is the first 3rd party application or driver to start. Moving antimalware into the Trusted Boot process prevents it from being tampered with. In the event that malware is able to successfully tamper with the boot process Windows can automatically detect and repair the system. Measured boot validates, signs, and stores boot information in the Trusted Platform Module (TPM) chip. This enables a remote service to validate a computer's integrity (called remote attestation).

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With Windows 8, you don't have to choose between a fun touch device and a hard-working PC because you can have it both ways. Prefer a mouse and keyboard? Great. Prefer touch? Enjoy the convenience. Windows 8 will run on amazing hardware, from tablets to laptops to all-in-ones with large, high-definition screens. Whether you like to stay put or work on the go, you can enjoy the power, convenience, and versatility of Windows.

Flexibility

Truly innovative hardware Windows 8 and Windows RT are available on a wide range of devices that showcase the latest innovations. It's an exciting time to buy a new PC because of the choices you have and the way hardware has evolved to truly keep pace with your life. Versatile convertibles give you the style and mobility of a tablet, but can be quickly turned into a laptop so you can use the keyboard when you need it. Tablets and convertibles are designed to work as hard as they play. Lightweight tablets are blazing fast with longer battery life to go where you go, do what you do, and never slow you down. Windows 8 is designed for faster, more secure startup. Many Windows 8 PCs will resume and connect to your networks before you even notice. To keep you connected while on the go, Windows has added support for mobile data networks, so you'll be able to find tablets and laptops with built-in support for your favorite mobile carrier. Windows provides support for a full range of environmental sensors that make it possible for Windows-based PCs and apps to react to what you're doing.

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You can buy a new Windows-based PC with these sensors built in, helping apps tell you where you are, react when you tilt or rotate the screen, do fun and interesting things when you Shake the screen, automatically change screen brightness based on changes to lighting, and even let you touch two devices together to share a photo or a webpage.

Longer life

Windows 8 is designed to deliver a great experience across many different devices, from ultra-fast desktops to low-power tablets. Because Windows 8 can run on low-power CPUs, you can work much longer on a single charge. That means you can stay connected so your PC is ready when you are. Battery life is longer and connections are stronger so you'll be able to find a device to suit you for work or play. Lower power requirements are also helped by the growing number of energy-efficient devices that are designed to work with Windows 8.

Share between devices Tap and Do works on mobile devices equipped with Near Field Communications (NFC) so you can tap two devices together and share information. Tap and Setup is another feature available with Windows 8 that lets you easily connect wireless devices, like keyboards, mice, headphones, and speakers by simply tapping

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them against your PC. No more PINs or complicated setup steps! More options for devices Windows senses compatible wireless printers, TVs, speakers, and Xboxes on your home network and makes them ready to use automatically. Setup can be as easy as connecting your device to your home network.

From mobile slates to powerful all-in-ones, Windows 8 will be available on a range of hardware

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Windows 8 is all about Metro. What are the unique advantages of Metro that are generating all the buzz?

Metro is Microsoft's attempt to simplify Windows. The iPhone and iPad have exploded in popularity because their use is intuitive. Metro is Microsoft's translation of this simplicity to the desktop. While the visual cleanness (and lack of familiar landmarks like the Start button) will be what new Windows 8 users will notice first, the Metro environment actually brings several advantages under the hood as well.

Metro applications are Sandboxed

Each application is separate and isolated from the operating system itself. This is one of the reasons that iOS and UNIX applications have been inherently more secure than Windows applications. If an application on your iPhone dies, it typically does not require you to restart your entire phone; however, rebooting a badly behaving Windows box is so common that even our grandparents know to do it. By having each app isolated, the stability of the system should be improved.

Metro applications are downloaded and purchased from the Store.

This is very similar to the **App Store** on iOS and OS X devices. This will make applications more secure. However, developers will also be forced to publish and distribute their applications in this manner. Buying software and shareware through individual companies will soon be gone for both Apple and Microsoft. If you want to buy or sell software for their system, they are now going to get a cut.

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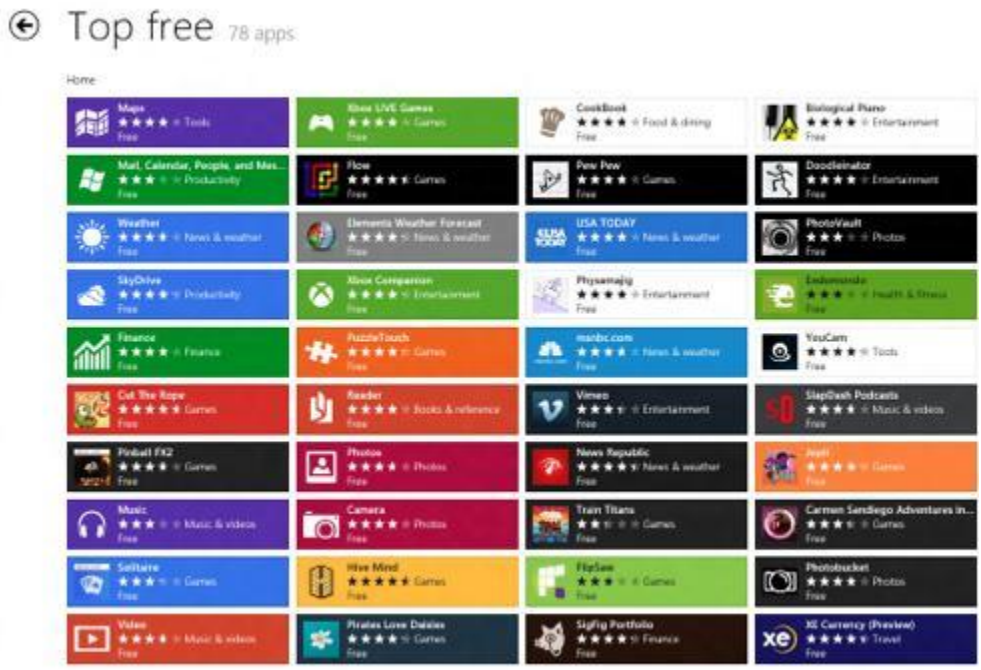

The Store where all Metro apps live

3. **Software updates are centralized.** On Windows systems today, finding updates for all the current applications can be difficult. Many applications run update checkers in the background which inevitably slow systems down. By having all the Windows applications in the Store, all the applications can be updated efficiently. Updated applications are also less likely to have a security hole which makes the overall process safer.

4. **Metro applications are cross-architecture**. The way a Metro application functions on the desktop will be the same as it functions on a tablet or on a Windows Phone. Using the new Windows runtime WinRT, programmers can create for all compatible architectures at once. No longer does a coder has to worry about the difference between the calls of the x86 versus ARM architectures. Also, WinRT allows the user interface to be designed using familiar HTML or JavaScript.

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Plus, the power savings typically found on mobile applications can now automatically translate to the desktop applications as well.

5. **User logins are now Microsoft accounts.** By tying the Windows 8 user account to an account on Microsoft's servers, sharing data between devices and into the cloud is now painless. Just as an iPhone and an iPad sharing the same Apple ID can share information easily; all Windows devices sharing the same Microsoft account can do the same. We are getting closer and closer to a time when the user will not have to think about where the data is stored. A document saved from a home desktop can easily be accessed by a work computer, tablet, or phone. As the cloud becomes transparent, a user's data become uniformly available from anywhere.

Windows 8 makes the cloud transparent

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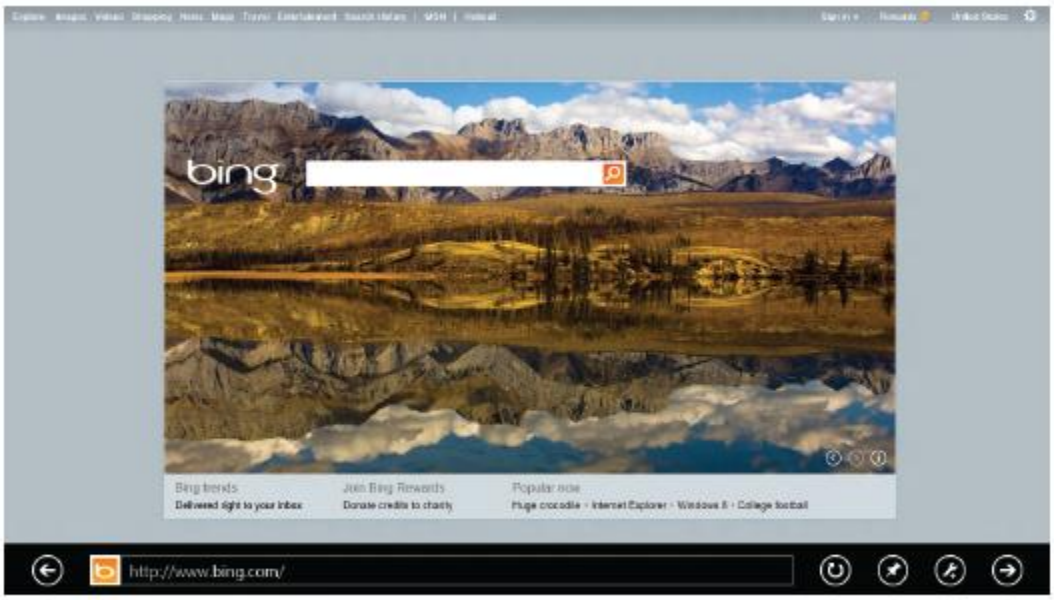

Internet Explorer 10 puts your websites front and center

Less browser

More webs Internet Explorer 10 put the focus on the web, not the browser. It dedicates your entire screen to your websites so the web is literally edge-to-edge. There only when you need them, browser tabs and navigation controls appear and then quietly get out of the way when you don't want them anymore.

Fast and fluid

With Internet Explorer 10, the web is fast. By taking advantage of Windows 8 and your device's hardware, browsing with Internet Explorer is as fast and fluid like the rest of Windows 8. Every navigation, every action you want to do on the web is a swipe or a tap away. And with the continued innovations in hardware acceleration, Internet Explorer allows web developers and designers to build increasingly rich and immersive web experiences that run as fast as local apps on your Windows 8 PC.

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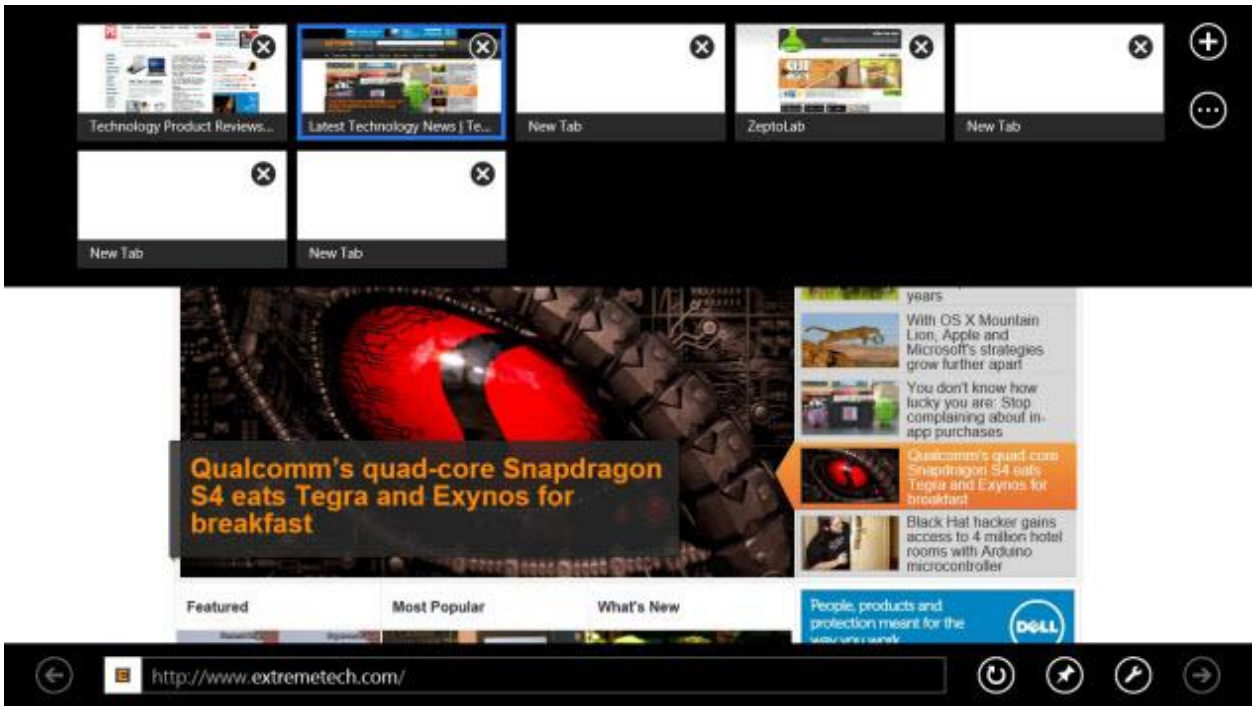

A more trusted web Internet Explorer 10 Release Preview continues to provide a trusted browsing experience, helping to keep you safe from the real-world security and privacy concerns that come with the modern web. Building on the security platform of Windows and harnessing Smart Screen Filter, Internet Explorer is recognized as a leader in protecting against socially-engineered malware and phishing, and it will help keep you more secure when browsing the web. Internet Explorer gives you choice and better control over your online privacy with innovative Tracking Protection privacy controls. Based on standards Internet Explorer has one underlying platform that supports HTML5 and enables the same markup to work across many other modern browsers. And with extensive support for additional standards spanning HTML5, CSS3, and EcmaScript5, Internet Explorer 10 Release Preview provides developers with a standards-based platform they can use to write increasingly rich and beautiful sites that are free of plug-ins.

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I wanted to share these experiences with you. If you have the Windows 8 Release Preview installed, most of what is in my post are things you can do yourself today with the Windows 8. And if you haven't installed the Windows 8, perhaps this might change your mind!, then hopefully my experience serves as a sort of "sneak peek" for you on what is to come with Windows 8 later.

To begin, I thought it was only natural to begin with the "heart" of the new user experience in Windows 8 – the Start screen…

The Start screen is the dashboard to everything important to me

I love the Start screen in Windows 8. The Start screen serves as the dashboard to everything that is important to me on my device. On the Start screen, I have all my favorite apps pinned. Many of these apps have tiles that change and update in real-time (live tiles) and all these tiles together "light up" the Start screen with all kinds of content and information. For example with the Weather app, I am able to constantly see the latest weather for my area. Or with the People app, I can see when people leave comments on my Facebook Timeline or replies to me on Twitter.

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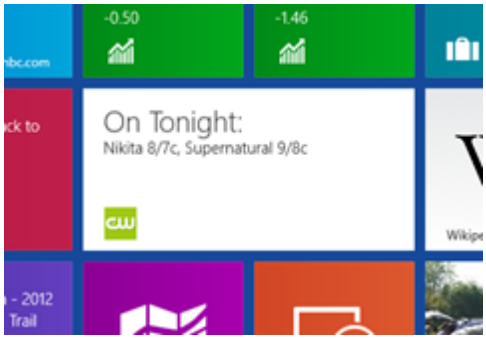

Another great example is the **CW app.** If you have the CW app pinned to your Start screen, it will show you the evening's schedule of shows.

It's not just apps you can pin to your Start screen.

I have many of my favorite websites I visit regularly throughout the day in Internet Explorer 10, such as **Techmeme** and **TrekMovie.com**, pinned to my Start screen as well. I have **Project Prometheus** pinned too.

You can also pin content from within apps too! I have stocks that I am tracking pinned from my Watch list in the Finance app (**one of the Bing-powered apps in Windows 8 today**) whose tiles update throughout the day with the latest stock information. I also have my favorite sports teams such as the Portland Trail Blazers and Seattle Mariners pinned from the Sports app whose tiles update with the latest news and scores (the NBA season is over so the Blazers tile just gives me the latest news for the team).

What the Start screen has done is it has enabled me to see everything I want to see in *one view* really quickly.

I don't have to flip through multiple apps or open windows or a variety of different menus. The Start screen exposes just the right amount of content I want to see. And I love this. And this works out great regardless of form factor. I wrote this blog post in Microsoft Word on my desktop PC here in my office at work (**multiple monitors FTW!**) and with the press of the Start button on my keyboard, the Start screen comes up super-fast and I can quickly see if my mom has posted embarrassing photos of me as a kid before proceeding to press the Start button on my keyboard again to go back

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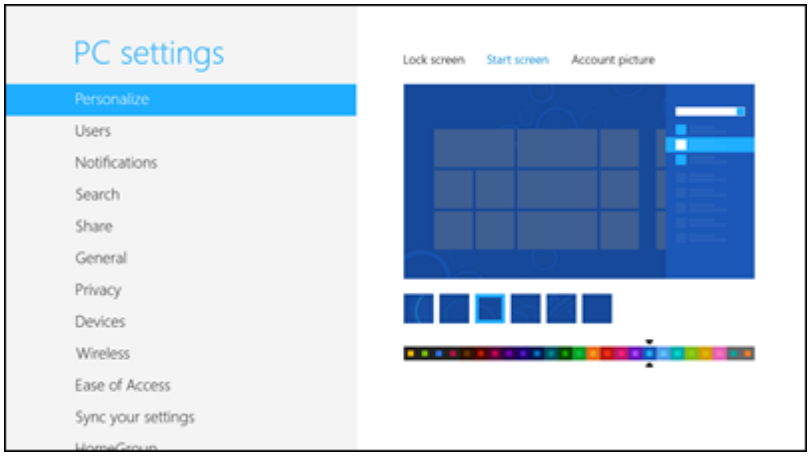
to writing in Microsoft Word. I do this on my laptop too. It really is fast and fluid. Start screen = everything I want in one spot on all my devices.

Windows 8 is personalized just the way I want it

I just wrote about all the things you can pin on your Start screen. But how about making the Start screen look just the way you want it? You can. In Windows 8, you can choose from a variety of different colors for your Start screen and designs for its background. I like blue so blue is the color of my Start screen with the circles design on the background.



In choosing colors for your Start screen, you'll notice each color has a middle square color and then a border color that surrounds it. The middle square represents the color of text and selected items in menus while the border color will be the color of your Start screen.

Aside from colors and designs – you can arrange your apps and other items pinned to your Start screen in any way you want including into their own groups. Then with **Semantic Zoom**, you can zoom out on your Start screen for an all-encompassing view of everything on your Start screen and name those groups. Then you can move and arrange those groups into whatever order you want!

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I have everything arranged in a variety of groups beginning with “Favorite Apps”. These are apps I use most often with live tiles of information I want to see first when I go to my Start screen. Then I have my Entertainment apps grouped together, Games, etc.

My Start screen looks different on each of my devices because the screen sizes are different. And Windows 8 is designed to work great on large range of screen sizes and resolutions. I customize my Start screen based on the device.

[Screenshots above from left to right: Start screen on my All-in-One PC, Start screen on my tablet, and Start screen on my laptop]

For example, I have tiles for some apps displayed as large tiles on some devices, while the tile for the same app is displayed as small tiles on others. On my tablet – because the screen size is a bit smaller than my laptop or my All-in-One PC, I am particular about what app tiles are large size because they take up more space on my screen. But on my All-in-One or desktop PC here at work – I have plenty of screen space for apps to

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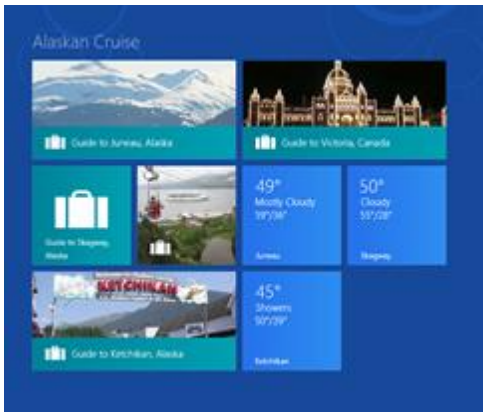
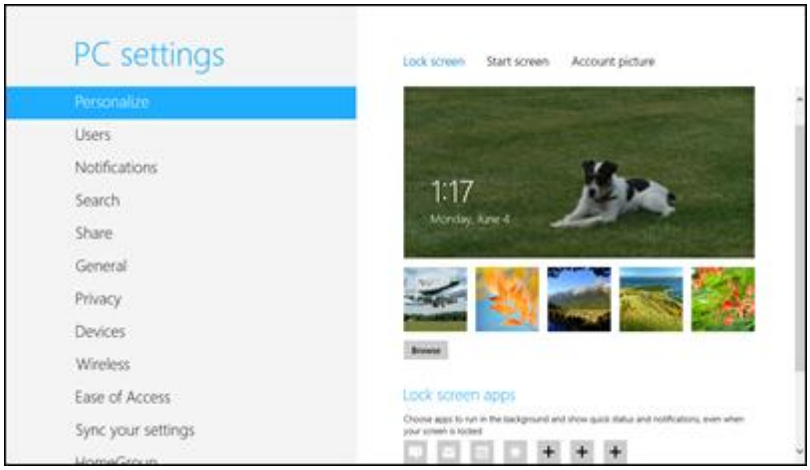
be displayed as large tiles. Again, it is important for me to see certain things up-front when I first hit my Start screen and I optimize my Start screen on all my devices for this.



I recently went on an Alaskan cruise and for the trip – I only brought my tablet. Before heading on the trip, I created a special group on my Start screen with guides for each of the ports we would be stopping at from the Travel app and weather for each of those ports from the Weather app. I had all the information I needed for these ports during my trip in this group on my Start screen.

You can also customize the **Lock screen** in Windows 8 too.



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I currently have a photo I took of my parents' new dog Dexter as my Lock screen background. The Lock screen in Windows 8 will show you the date and time but you can also customize which apps can show a quick status on your Lock screen and what app can give more detailed status. On my work laptop, I have the Calendar app showing a more detailed status (e.g. what's next on my calendar) but at home on my All-in-One it shows the weather.

I have all the apps I want

The Mail, Calendar, SkyDrive, Photos, People, and Messaging apps all come with Windows 8. And these apps are connected to services that I use daily like Hotmail, Facebook, and Twitter simply just by adding them to my Microsoft account. I use the People app regularly to see what is happening with my friends and family on Facebook. And of course I use the Mail app quite a bit for emails and the Calendar app helps me keep track of what I have coming up on my schedule.

Those of you who have read my blog posts regularly know I love taking photos. The Photos app provides an immersive experience into all my photos. I can set any of my photos at the background image for the app for example and see photos not just from the device I am on, but also from my connected services such as Facebook and Flickr. On any device running the SkyDrive client, the Photos app will also fetch photos from those devices as too.

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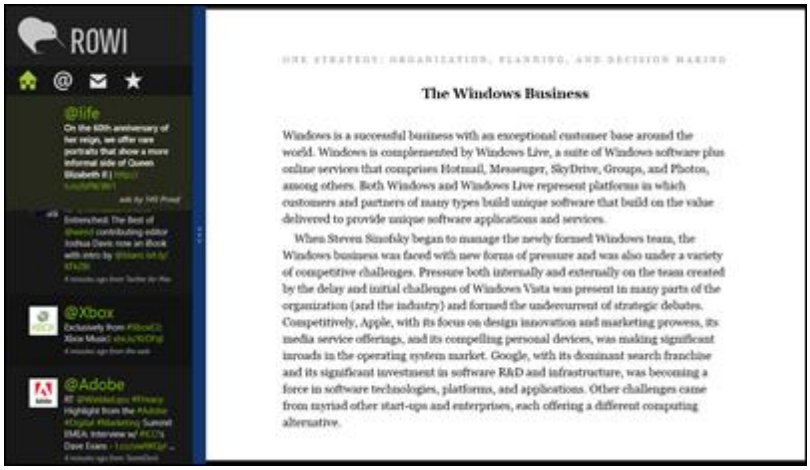
So what about entertainment such as music, video and games?

In the Windows 8 Release Preview today, you can check out the Music, Video, and Games apps which are just previews of the apps to come when Windows 8 is generally available. As I write this, I am listening to the Foo Fighters through the Music app and just yesterday I watched the season finale of Fringe in the Videos app.

There are also other apps I use pretty regularly from the Windows Store today. I am a pretty regular Twitter user so I use the Twitter app **Rowi** quite a bit (which recently got updated to 0.6!). I love the games cut the Rope and **Fruit Ninja**. And I have my collection of books I like to read on my tablet through the Kindle app.

Tweeting and reading a book at the same time?



Yes

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All my stuff syncs and roams with me amongst my devices

Windows 8 connects me to my people and my files but it also connects all my devices together. I absolutely love how my device settings will roam with me from one device to another through my Microsoft account.

Settings such as the color and design for my Start screen for example will roam to all of my Windows 8 devices. My Start screen looks the same on all my devices but as I mentioned above, customized a bit differently depending on what device I'm on.

My desktop personalization also roams with me. So whatever background I have on my desktop will in Windows 8 will be the same on all my devices.

And app settings!

Whatever stocks I have on my Watch list in the Finance app or whatever locations I have saved in the Weather app – they all roam so I have the same settings for these apps on all my Windows 8 devices. I'm never left having to add the same thing into these apps.

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Doing the things I want

Windows 8 allows me to do all the things I want to do without compromise on any device. Whether it is writing a blog post in Microsoft Word to reading my email in the Mail app or showing off photos I've taken on a recent vacation from the Photos app.

I have never had to move to another device to do something as basic as, say, opening an email attachment. I can do everything I used to do with my PC with Windows 7 plus a ton more.

Give Windows 8 Release Preview a Try

I hope you enjoyed reading about my experiences with Windows 8. I encourage you to Install and explore Windows 8 for yourself!

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Conclusion

Windows 8 give strong competition to mobile computing, especially the tablet market OS such as Apple OS and Android. So far it has been quite successful and has got the rival developers moving with new ideas. Windows 8 provides great experience on large screens and is a wonder for palm sized smart phones. The fluidity and ease of access is always there and the apps are well coordinated too. The desktop computers are quite powerful and have fetched wonderful speeds and have witnessed quite a number of futuristic apps already. The Start screen is more innovative and the start menu is definitely totally different than that in previous versions which might not be cheered by all Windows enthusiasts. We can hope that other hidden features of zooming and multimedia control get popularized.

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