



Windows 8 – Tips, Tricks and Information

Windows 8, codenamed **Midori** is a version of Microsoft Windows released October 26, 2012 and is one of the biggest changes Microsoft has made to their operating system since Windows 95. It features some new programming and technology to allow it to run quicker and provide a better look and feel to users. It will not only be available for desktop and laptop computers, but it will also be available to some tablet computers. Windows 8 includes a tablet interface, called **Metro**, which is compatible with touch-screen displays, like those on a tablet computer. Users can still use the standard windows desktop interface as well, if they prefer. Below is an example of the new Windows 8 **Start screen**, which replaces the **start button**.



Windows 8 is available in 32-bit and 64-bit versions and include Internet Explorer 10, as well as natively support USB 3.0. Users will have the option of using a Microsoft account to login to Windows 8 or even two other new authentication methods (picture password and PIN log in). The standard Task Manager has been redesigned, as has the Windows Defender security software, which will include anti-virus capabilities. Microsoft has also built Windows 8 to integrate with Xbox Live. To run Windows 8, a computer will need to have a 1GHz or higher processor, 1GB (32-bit) or 2GB (64-bit) of RAM, 16GB (32-bit) or 20GB (64-bit) of available hard drive storage and a DirectX 9 or higher graphics card.

Windows 8 system requirements

1GHz processor or faster 32-bit (x86) or 64-bit (x64)
1GB of RAM for 32-bit or 2GB of RAM for 64-bit
16GB of hard drive space for 32-bit or 20GB for 64-bit
DirectX 9 graphics device with WDDM 1.0 or higher.

- [Microsoft Windows 8 questions and answers.](#)
- [Top 10 Windows 8 tips and tricks.](#)

Picture password

Picture password is a feature introduced with Windows 8 that allows you to create three different gestures on any image of your choice and use those gestures as your password. The gesture can be any combination of circles, straight lines, and taps. For example if the picture you chose was of a face your picture password could be a tap on each eye and then a circle around the mouth.



How do I enable a Windows 8 picture password?

1. Open the Windows Charms.
2. Click **Settings** and then **More PC settings**
3. In the PC settings window click **Users** and then select **Create a picture password**

Tiling



1. A **tile**, **live tile**, and a **user tile** are all a new feature introduced with Windows 8 and shown on the [Windows](#)

8 Start screen. In the picture to the right, is an example of four different User tiles in the Windows Start screen. User tiles can be two different sizes, colors, and include a custom image. Live tiles are capable of displaying updated information such as weather information, stocks, or other types of notification information.

Tiles can be adjusted by right-clicking any tile and any tile can be moved by dragging and dropping the tile in a position you want the tile to appear.

2. Alternatively referred to as a **tile** or **tiled windows, tiling** is a method of arranging open windows, so none overlap, unless there are too many windows. Many programs will allow a user to specify a horizontal or a vertical tile. Tiling enables users to view each of their open programs or windows within a program at once instead of having to switch back and forth.

Tip: To tile open windows in Windows right-click on the Taskbar and click **Show windows side by side**.

Taking advantage of search

The Search in Windows 8 has been significantly improved when compared to all previous versions of Windows. To search for a file or run a program in Windows 8 from the Start screen just start typing what you're trying to find or want to run.

As you begin typing, the results will start appearing on the left-hand side. In addition to being able to search for files and run programs, the Search also supports limiting the search to apps such as Finance, People, Maps, Photos, Mail, Music, Videos, Weather, and much more. If what you are searching for is not a file or program, click on the app you wish to use as the search. For example, if you were searching for "New York" and selected the Weather App you would be shown the weather in New York, NY.

By default, Search organizes the available Apps by how frequently they are used and then in alphabetical order. If you want to keep your favorite app at the top of the Search list,

right-click the app and choose Pin. Pinning the app will lock it in place regardless of how often it is used. If there is an app you don't want (e.g. Finance) you can turn on and off any of the search apps through the PC settings, which is found under the Settings in the [Charms](#).

Bonus tip: The Search is also found through Charms and can also be opened by pressing **Windows key + F**.

Running two apps side by side

Any app can be pinned to the left or right-hand side of the screen. For example, open the People app and then press the **Windows Key + . (period)** to move that app to the right-hand side of the screen, pressing the same keys again will move it to the left-hand side, and pressing the same keys again will make it full screen. While an app is pinned, any other app or program can be opened and loaded into the available space on the screen. For example, in the below picture, we've opened a browser window and have the People app running to monitor our social networks.



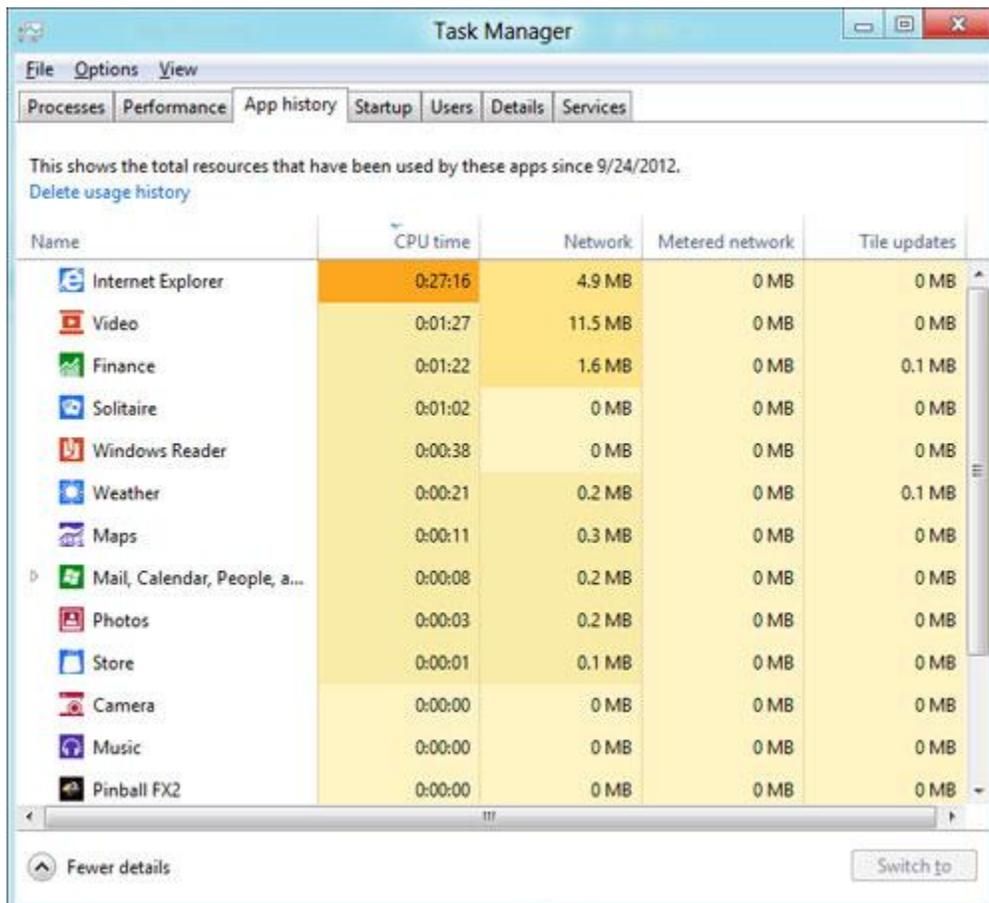
Any open app can also be pinned using your mouse by clicking at the top of the tile and dragging it to the left or right-hand side of the screen.

Bonus tip: The Desktop can also be pinned to the left or right-hand side of the screen.

Note: In order for snap to work properly your resolution must be at least 1,366 x 768.

Windows 8 Task Manager

The Windows 8 [Task Manager](#) has been significantly improved over previous versions of Windows. Some of the new changes include showing a total percent usage at the top of your Processes, which makes it easier to determine total memory and CPU usage, improved Performance graphs, a Startup tab to see startup processes and their impact to system performance, and the App history tab (as shown below) that gives you the total resources an app has used over a period of time. Press **Ctrl + Shift + Esc** to start exploring the new Task Manager.



The screenshot shows the Windows 8 Task Manager window with the 'App history' tab selected. The window title is 'Task Manager' and it has a menu bar with 'File', 'Options', and 'View'. Below the menu bar are tabs for 'Processes', 'Performance', 'App history', 'Startup', 'Users', 'Details', and 'Services'. The main content area displays a table of application resource usage since 9/24/2012. The table has columns for Name, CPU time, Network, Metered network, and Tile updates. The 'Internet Explorer' row is highlighted in orange, indicating it is the most resource-intensive application.

Name	CPU time	Network	Metered network	Tile updates
Internet Explorer	0:27:16	4.9 MB	0 MB	0 MB
Video	0:01:27	11.5 MB	0 MB	0 MB
Finance	0:01:22	1.6 MB	0 MB	0.1 MB
Solitaire	0:01:02	0 MB	0 MB	0 MB
Windows Reader	0:00:38	0 MB	0 MB	0 MB
Weather	0:00:21	0.2 MB	0 MB	0.1 MB
Maps	0:00:11	0.3 MB	0 MB	0 MB
Mail, Calendar, People, a...	0:00:08	0.2 MB	0 MB	0 MB
Photos	0:00:03	0.2 MB	0 MB	0 MB
Store	0:00:01	0.1 MB	0 MB	0 MB
Camera	0:00:00	0 MB	0 MB	0 MB
Music	0:00:00	0 MB	0 MB	0 MB
Pinball FX2	0:00:00	0 MB	0 MB	0 MB

At the bottom of the window, there is a 'Fewer details' button on the left and a 'Switch to' button on the right.

God Mode

One of the more interesting bits of functionality hidden in Windows 8 is "**God Mode**," a hidden menu that allows **power users** access to a massive selection of administrative, maintenance, and **troubleshooting** utilities and features. To reveal **God Mode**, first bring up **File Explorer** and then click on the View tab. Make sure that "Hidden items" and "File name extensions" are both checked. Then, on your desktop, create a new **folder**, and change that [folder's name](#) to "GodMode.{ED7BA470-8E54-465E-825C-99712043E01C}" (omitting the quotes). The folder's **icon** should change. Doubleclick on it, and Explorer will present you with a ton of little **system tools** to *tweak your machine*. [See less](#)

The Quick Access Menu

Another of our favorite little features is the **Quick Access Menu**, sometimes referred to as the **admin menu** or the **power user menu**, which you can get to through the Windows key + X, or by right clicking in the bottom left corner of the screen, whether in **Desktop** or **Start Screen mode**. The **Quick Access Menu** allows you to get to such system staples as the **Programs** and **Features** menu, the **Device Manager**, **Command Prompt**, **Task Manager**, and others. You can even customize it manually, or with helpful apps such as the **Win+X Menu Editor** featured in [this previous article](#).

Tile Management

The **Start Screen** and its **tiles** are one of the most confusing interface shocks for veteran **Windows users** but it doesn't take a lot of work to tame what seems to be an unruly mess of [tiles](#). At the most basic level, **tiles** can be dragged and dropped around the **Start Screen**. If you don't need a particular app tile, then simply **right click** to either unpin it from the **Start Screen** or uninstall it altogether.

Tile Groupings

To create a more manageable **Start Screen** space, you can drag tiles all the way to the right of the start screen to create a **tile group**. As you [drag and drop apps](#), you'll notice that they snap to each other in rough groupings. Once you've clustered related tiles together, you can then zoom out of tile view into a more **macro group view** by either pinching the **touchscreen**, or pressing **CTRL** and using your **scroll wheel**. In this zoomed out mode, you can right click on groups of app tiles and then give them an appropriate name, such as say, "News Readers" or "Games", etc. You can then drag and drop your **app groups** into a much more organized and presentable arrangement from here.

Live Tiles

Another feature that can at first be disconcerting is Windows' new **Live Tiles**. These are **widget**-like icons for **Metro apps** that display continually updated information on your Start Screen. A news **website's** app might regularly flash headlines on its **Live Tile**, while others might display the [weatherforecast](#), stock tickers, and more. If **Live Tiles** tick you off, then you can **disable** them on a per-tile basis by right clicking on your Start Screen tile, and then selecting "Turn live tile off" in the app options bar that pops up on the bottom of your **screen**. If instead you find the single tile too cramped to read easily, you can also **make the Tile larger** in this menu (and you'll probably want to do that for things like [news apps](#)).

The All Apps Screen

There's a bit of a dichotomy in how users get at their **applications** in **Windows 8**. Old-style **desktop apps** are best handled in the desktop view, while new **Metro**-style apps are viewed and launched in the **Start Screen**. Of course, it need not be that way, as a third view, "**All Apps**," does exist. Simply right-click on an empty space in the **Start Menu** to bring up the app options bar and select "All Apps." You'll be brought to a screen that displays all of your **Metro apps** alphabetically on the left, and **desktop apps** organized by **folders** on the right. The arrangement of **desktop apps** mirrors that of the hidden folder "C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs" and "C:\Users\username\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs" (where **username** is your **account**), and can be rearranged by adding **folders** and **shortcuts** here through **File Explorer**.

Not quite as handy as the **Start Menu**, but certainly useful for getting at all your apps.

Closing Metro Apps

Closing down **Windows apps** used to be pretty simple. Just look for the big red 'X,' click, and be done with it. **Windows 8**, on the other hand, tries to encourage users to keep apps running in the **background**, drawing some resources, but also being quickly accessible. While many **desktop apps** can be closed traditionally with the 'close' button and "ALT+F4," **Metro apps** can be a mixed bag. If you really feel the need to kill a **Metro App**, you can try:

-ALT+F4

-The App [Control bar](#)

-Mousing over the top of the screen, and then click-dragging to the bottom of the page.

-Bringing up the Open Apps sidebar (left of screen), and then right clicking on an open app to close it.

DIY Shutdown Button

While **Windows 8** can still be shut down quickly through Alt+F4 in **Desktop Mode**, users in the **Start Screen** and similar **Metro** interface apps have to dig through the **Settings Charm** (Win+I) to get to the **power button**. You can, however, create a **DIY Shutdown button** and place it on the desktop and **Start Screen**. To do so, go to desktop, right click, and **create a new shortcut**. Type in "shutdown /s /t 0" (omitting quotes and using /r instead of /t if you want to restart instead). Name it as you will, right click it again and search for a good **icon** before pinning it to the [start screen](#). Presto! **One-click shutdown and restart!**

Bring Back the Start Menu

One of the most frequently lamented changes is the loss of the traditional **Start Menu** in **Windows 8**. It's something that has angered many long-time users and spawned a cottage industry of **software tweaks** and **addons** that attempt to restore this iconic [Windows feature](#). Solutions range from the simple (customizing the **Quick Access Menu** and **All Apps** screen), to the complex, with tools such as **Classic Shell**, **Start8** and **RetroUI** attempting to [meld Windows 8 and older design sensibilities together](#).