Windows 10 Review

Windows 10 Review | Tech Tips Article by PcCG

Return of the start menu



The single biggest hatred of Windows 8 (and even 8.1) was the removal of the traditional start menu. Now we all tend to be resistant to change, but if given time to adapt we usually cope and learn to like the changes. We see this when trying to move people from Internet Explorer or Firefox to Chrome. Not all change is good though. The removal of the start button in Windows 8 killed productivity and multitasking. It annoyed people and at the time, Microsoft refused to give people what they wanted. (Most PcComputerGuy customers however know you can download a free start menu replacement at http://www.classicshell.net/downloads/ [1])

Well we have great news! The start menu is back! It's not the same as it was in Windows 7, but that's ok. It's more of a hybrid between Windows 7 and Windows 8. It works well, looks nice and overall we feel is the single "most likeable" feature of Windows 10 over Windows 8.

Speed

Computer hardware is only part of the factor when it comes to overall speed. The efficiency of applications and the operating system also play a major role. Windows 10 is reported to be 30% faster than Windows 7. This means on the same computer, you'll see a speed increase of roughly 30% over Windows 7. Pretty substantial!

Attractive interface

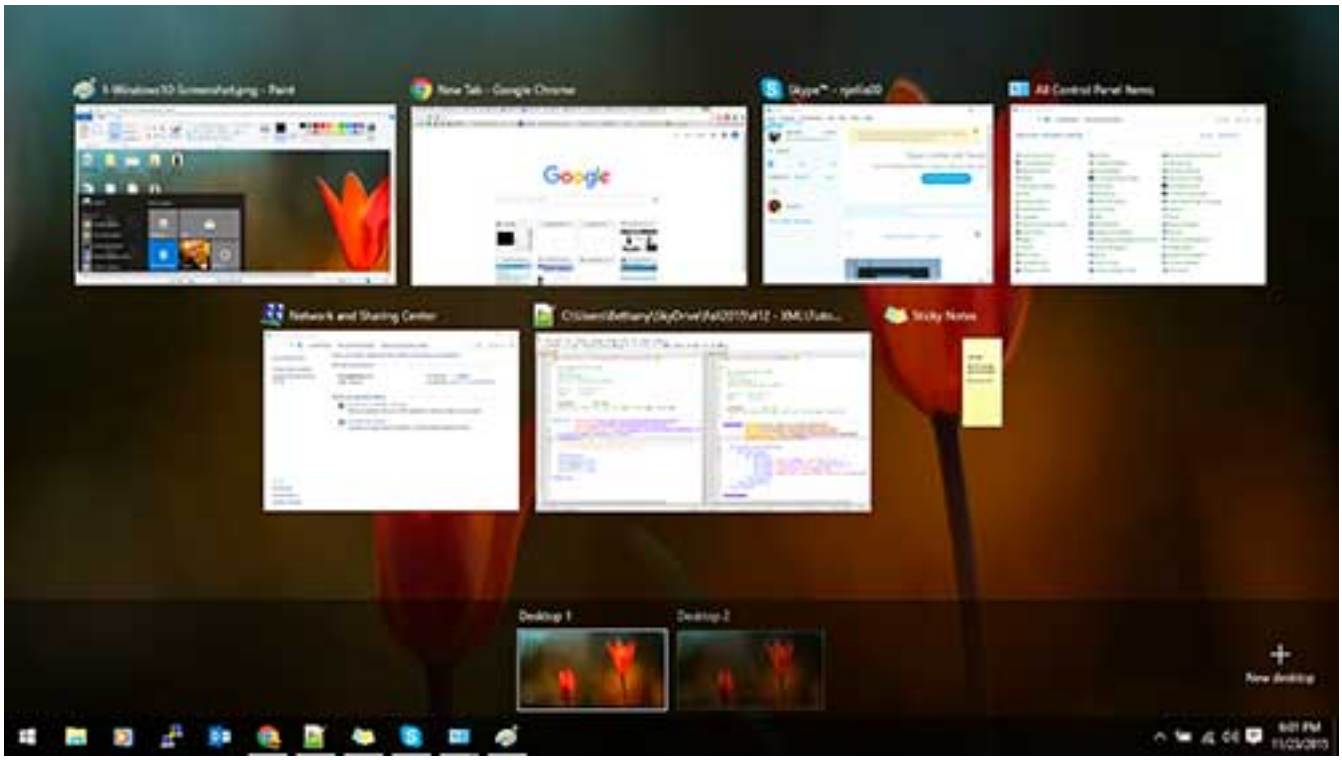
Windows 10 has been designed with a clean, modern look that attracts most people. Not much more

to say about it than “it looks nice”, without detracting from the usability of the operating system.

Multiple desktops

Pretty much all other operating systems for years have supported multiple desktops. Windows 10 is the first Microsoft OS that now incorporates this feature.

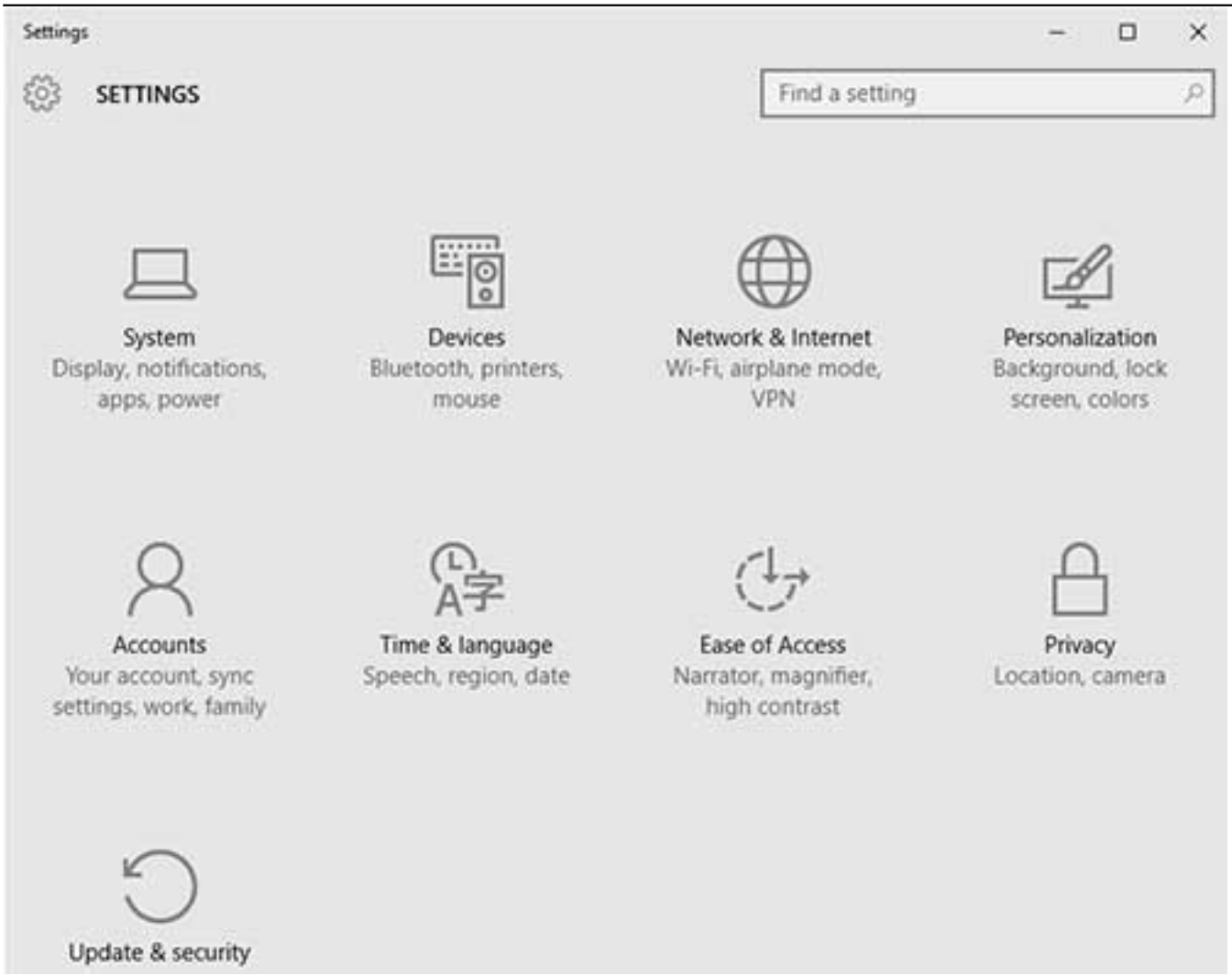
What are multiple desktops? Think about your smartphone where you can scroll left and right between different programs. You can have Desktop 1 for “personal” stuff and desktop 2 for “work” stuff if you want. If you have word open on desktop 1, and chrome open on desktop 2, when you switch to desktop 2, you will no longer see word, just Chrome. Is this for everyone? No, but some heavy multi-taskers love this feature. You can access this by hitting Windows key + tab



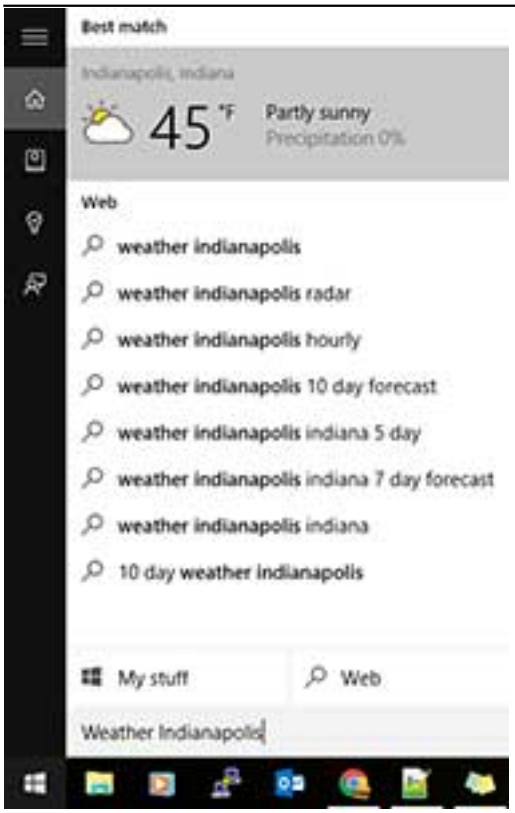
Better for multi-tasking

We now have the start button back, and the multiple desktops – Windows 10 allows multi-tasking (using or doing multiple things at one time) much easier in comparison to Windows 8. The “full screen” apps are mostly gone which made it difficult to switch to a different program because the task-bar would disappear.

Rearrangement of Settings/Control Panel



I’m not a fan of the new control panel. I find it over-simplified and “apple-esk”. However for the average user it probably makes management and changes easier to find and implement. Fortunately the old style control panel can still be accessed. In place of the control panel, the new Windows 10 interface is called “settings”.



Cortana – Search / Virtual Assistant

Cortana is Microsoft's "virtual assistant" that can set calendar appointments for you, search programs and files, or the web for information you might like. Most of the time, you'll see the search right alongside the start menu in Windows 10. If not, when you click start you can simply start typing on the keyboard and you'll see Cortana / Search bring up results. Learn to use this! Similar things have existed since Vista and I'm still shocked at how seldom this is used. If I want the calculator, I just click start and type "calc" and before I'm done typing the calculator app pops up in the results. You can use natural phrases as well such as "change password" to change your Windows password or "change desktop background" should you want to do that.

Tablet Mode

Windows 8 forced everyone into using a "tablet mode" interface which was annoying to the max. I feel this is because Microsoft is so far behind Google and Apple in the mobile arena (tablets/smart phones). Projected growth for these devices is to far outpace desktop sales. Microsoft seeing this wanted to cram their mobile interface down everyone's throat – so that next time you went to buy a smart phone or tablet, you would see, recognize and buy their product over the alternatives. This clearly backfired as users hated Windows 8. However in Windows 10, you have the option to use the computer in "Tablet mode" or not – something Windows 8 would not provide.



Upgrading

Most impressive to me is the ease of upgrading to Windows 10… most of the time. In all previous versions of Windows, when you got the “upgrade”, you simply got a discount. You would still lose all your programs and have to reinstall everything after you upgraded. Now with Windows 10, *most* of your programs and settings transition seamlessly. You won’t need to go digging for your Office CD or reload your other programs. There are some exceptions to this, but by and large, things “just work”.

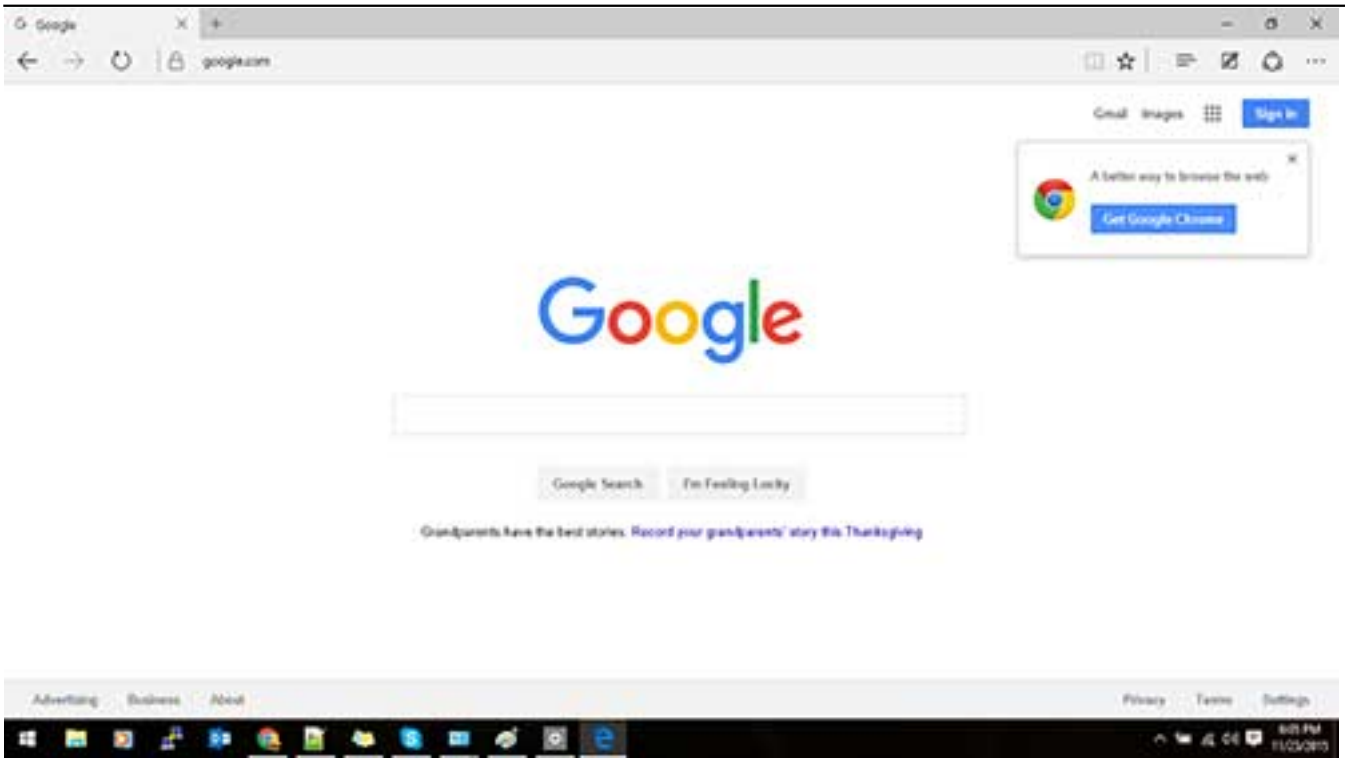
IMPORTANT: When you upgrade you are making A LOT of changes to your files. NOT ALL UPGRADES GO SMOOTHLY. While it is impressively smooth most of the time, there are users that end up with a big mess on their hands. Sometimes it’s easy to restore to your previous version of Windows with everything intact. Other times things get so bad that the only solution is to wipe everything and start fresh. So if you choose to upgrade, know that there is a chance (We’d guess 5-10%) that things don’t go smoothly.

In general, we recommend not upgrading if everything is working fine with your current setup simply because of that risk that things don’t go well.

Get rid of that Pesky Windows 10 Update notification in Windows 7 and 8 *[2] if you don't want to upgrade.*

Edge Browser – Internet Explorer – Chrome

When you first boot into chrome, the blue “E” at the bottom is no longer internet explorer. It’s now “Edge.” This is Microsoft’s new cleaner faster browser. I’m not a fan and prefer to stick with Chrome. If you want internet explorer you can click start and type “internet explorer” and you’ll find the traditional browser. To pin it to your task bar, right click it and say “pin to task bar”.



Conclusion

In the months of using Windows 10, I've found some things that don't work right. For example when upgrading, none of my "VPN" connections worked anymore – and needed to be re-created. Sometimes I fight with power and Wi-Fi settings in the lower right next to the clock. It's not a huge fight but a bit buggy. However most of these issues won't affect the average user. We give Windows 10 a solid 8/10 score.

My laptop runs Windows 10 happily, but I'm not upgrading my Windows 7 desktop. It works well and I just don't want to bother risking the stability I have on it now. Windows 7 is going to be supported by Microsoft for security updates until Jan 14, 2020. So don't fret about upgrading for updates. Microsoft however has already ceased free support of Windows 7 and adding new features to Windows 7.

Update: Tired of the annoying icon telling you to upgrade to Windows 10? Here is how to remove it: Remove Windows 10 Upgrade Icon [2]



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