WINDOWS 10, UPGRADING & USE

Windows 10 was launched on July 29th this year after going through a long period of technical review with input from the public. I personally have played with the development for over a year and the change between the initial offering and the final product is amazing. The good news is it is free for owners of Windows 7, 8 and 8.1 even if your version is pirated! However an important clarification here, your version of windows 10 is regarded as counterfeit and will probably not be allowed the upgrades etc. in the future. This hasn't been confirmed but it seems likely.

Windows 10 comes in 8 different versions but for most users "Home" will be used, the other versions being aimed at commercial users (Business using the "Pro" version) plus versions for mobile devices etc. Microsoft are producing these version with the idea that the same platform on all devices which provides pretty much the same experience irrespective of what device you are using. Also the minimum requirements are a 1 GHz processor, 1 GB RAM and 16 GB of hard disk space. This is pretty basic and can be found on any machine so there probably is no need to upgrade your system.

It is recommended you back up your computer files just in case something goes wrong, unlikely but anything is possible! You might just want to copy your most important files to an external hard drive or flash drive depending on the size or make a "system image" using the control panel and a blank DVD.

I have successfully upgraded to Windows 10 on over a dozen machines from Windows 7, 8 and 8.1 without any problems, the time needed depends on the machine. I would recommend you allow two or three hours for the process, not that you are busy all this time but the time is dependent on the capabilities of the computer so no firm figure can be quoted.

First if you have a machine that presently uses Windows 7, 8 or 8.1 and you regularly check for

Windows updates you probably have noticed a new notification square icon has appeared on your task bar (see at left in red), this is the upgrade assistant for Windows 10. Left click on this to open the assistant and you will see the settings icon and clicking on this and select "Check your PC". This will bring up the screen shown below, yours may be slightly different. Also this is for a standard desktop unit not a touchscreen laptop or tablet.

This shows the PC is suitable for upgrading and meets all requirements.

It may show a line of text on the right side saying "some apps aren't compatible" and this should be addressed.

After you start the download and installation your machine may stop and restart several times. There is no need for any actions from you, just let the process go forward and after completion your screen will finally open with the new Windows 10 screen which is shown below
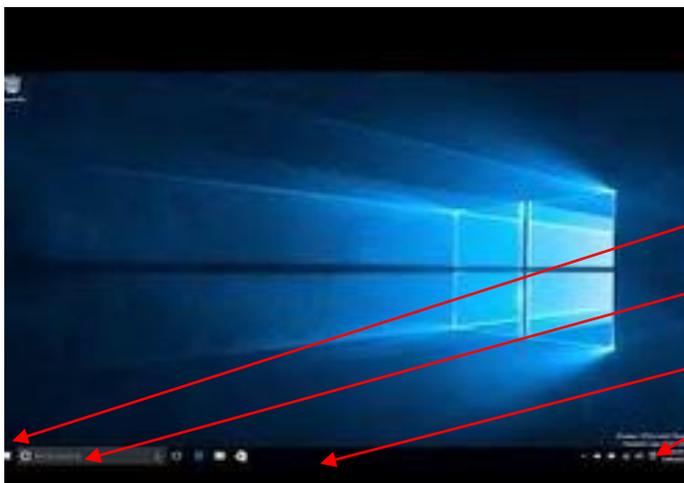
This is the default and can easily be changed.

Along the bottom of the screen, from left to right you have:

Start button

Search area (with Cortana)

Task bar

Action center/notifications

On this machine I have my own image which happens to be a slide show but you can have whatever you desire.

If you upgraded your machine any shortcuts you had on your desktop will still be there, on a new machine normally just the recycle bin will be shown but you can add other shortcuts, this will be mentioned later.

Clicking on the start button or just press the Windows button on your keyboard opens the new start menu. (See below).
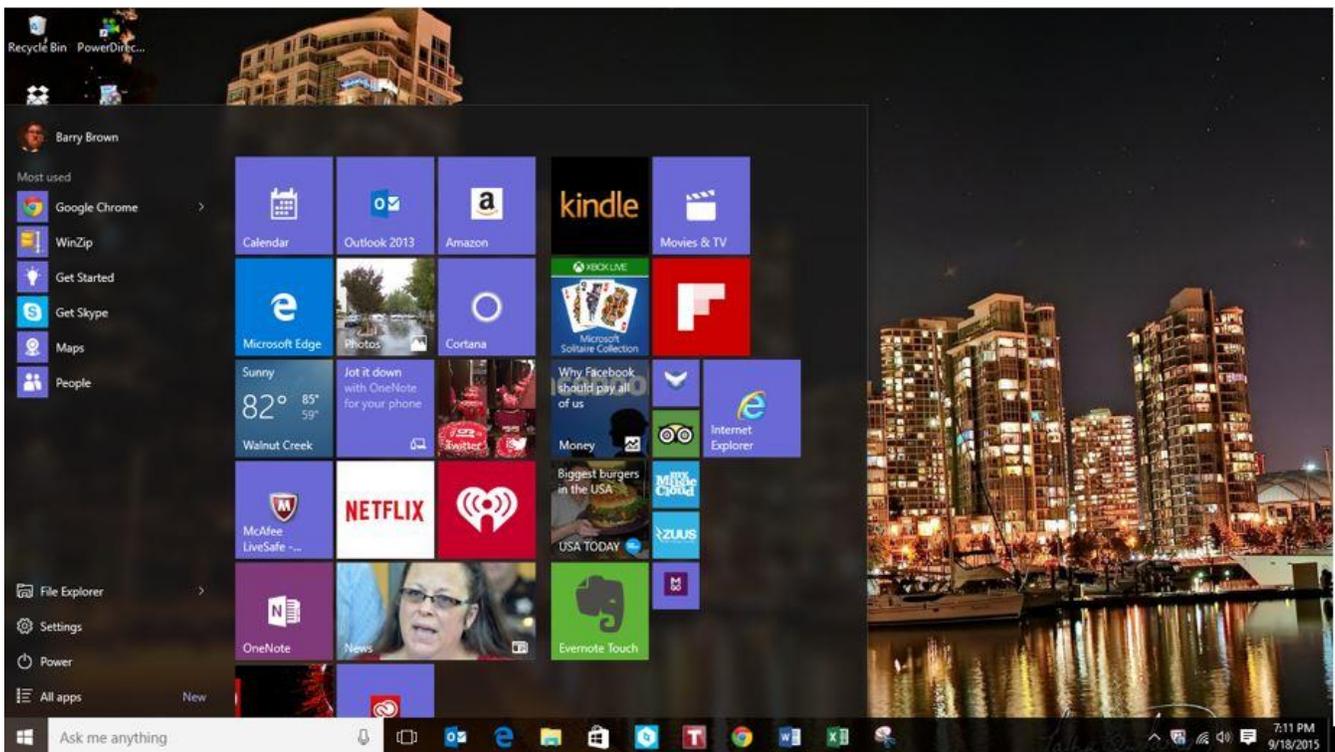
At the left-hand side we have a column showing the user logged on the computer followed by a list of most used applications/places visited recently. To activate any of these left click on the icon. (Image at left).
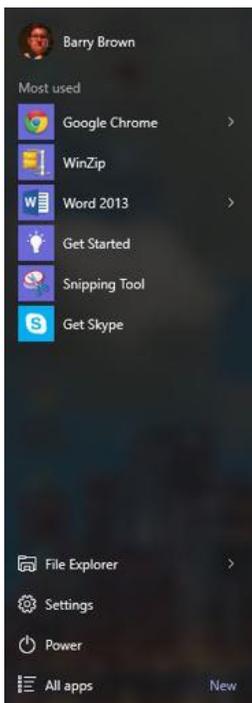
Below that in descending order are File Explorer, Settings, Power and All apps. I should mention here in a nod to the proliferation of tablets, smart phones etc. Windows now refers to all programs and software as apps the short hand for applications.

File Explorer replaces Windows Explorer as the utility for inspecting your folders and files on the computer and external drives. This can be opened using the Windows shortcut "Windows key+E".

Settings replaces the control panel for managing most configuration settings, "Windows key+I" is the shortcut.

All Apps opens to display the installed programs etc. alphabetically replacing all the items in the column.

Note: Alphabetical is literal and the apps are grouped by the creator, Photoshop is under **Adobe** Photoshop, Office is under **Microsoft** Office etc.

On the right side are the tiles (or columns 2 and 3) which can be moved, deleted, added to and resized. If you are using a touch screen monitor these areas will activate the apps they represent. Column 2 is labelled "life at a glance" and usually shows programs that have been pinned to the list by right clicking on them in the all apps list and selecting "pin to start menu". All of these can be moved around and resized. The column label can be erased or changed by clicking on the title and either renaming the column or erasing the name.
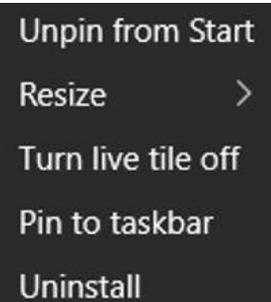
Column 3 is labelled "play and explore" and items can be added, removed and resized as desired.

In both columns tiles are manipulated by right clicking on them, the list of options varying by what the tile represents but typical options are shown in the image at right.

You can also condense the width of the tiles columns by dragging the right edge in or out. Dragging inwards will put column 3 below column 2.

App tiles can be renamed if you would like something more descriptive. Right click on the tile and select "open file location" and type in your own title or comment.

File Explorer is the quick and easy way of checking the contents of your computer. All your drives, partitions and folders are readily available and due to the tight integration of OneDrive into the operating system you can sync your common folders amongst devices connected to the same Microsoft account. This is not a complex setup but should be addressed at a future meeting.

Programs and Features
Mobility Center
Power Options
Event Viewer
System
Device Manager
Network Connections
Disk Management
Computer Management
Command Prompt
Command Prompt (Admin)

Task Manager
Control Panel
File Explorer
Search
Run

Shut down or sign out >
Desktop

Settings gives you access to control the system, devices, network, privacy etc. with many options for each of them. Many of them can remain in the default mode but you should spend some time going through all the options to get a little familiar with them.

For those of you who prefer the old Control Panel there is a quick way of getting to this by right clicking on the start button which brings up the list as shown here on the left.

You will note the Control Panel is available by clicking on the words along with many other areas you may want to explore.

For those of you who are very technically minded you will be pleased to see the "Command Prompt" feature now allows "cut and paste" within its window plus a couple of other improvements.

Added in Windows 10 is the "Action Center" which is the same no matter what version of the operating system you are using. It is situated at the extreme right of the taskbar next to the time and date. The notifications are things such as a system restart that needs to be scheduled for installing updates, antivirus or spyware protection being out of date etc. There are also toggles for settings like Wi-Fi, Bluetooth etc. By default there are 12 toggles which can be collapsed to 4 main items.

Also new is the search bar situated on the taskbar next to the start button. This search is linked to the Microsoft search engine "Bing", which is a very good search engine and is comparable to Google search in many ways. This search engine is also linked with "Cortana" the personal assistant first introduced with the Windows phones and has now been assimilated into Windows 10 for all computers. Cortana will respond to spoken commands but the results will vary for each individual. My experience has been quite good, but I did go through the Cortana diction school (☺) which is contained in the notebook section of the search box. To use the vocal commands you will need a decent microphone, the one built into a laptop is usually adequate but for a desktop computer a free standing microphone is recommended.

A useful addition is the "virtual desktop" which allows you to quickly switch between all open apps. If for instance you are working on a Word document and need to put in some information from another document you can open both but only the last opened will be visible on the screen. By pressing the Windows key+ tab both documents will be open on the desktop. On a tablet or laptop this is not always realistic but on a large screen such as you probably have with your desktop machine this can be
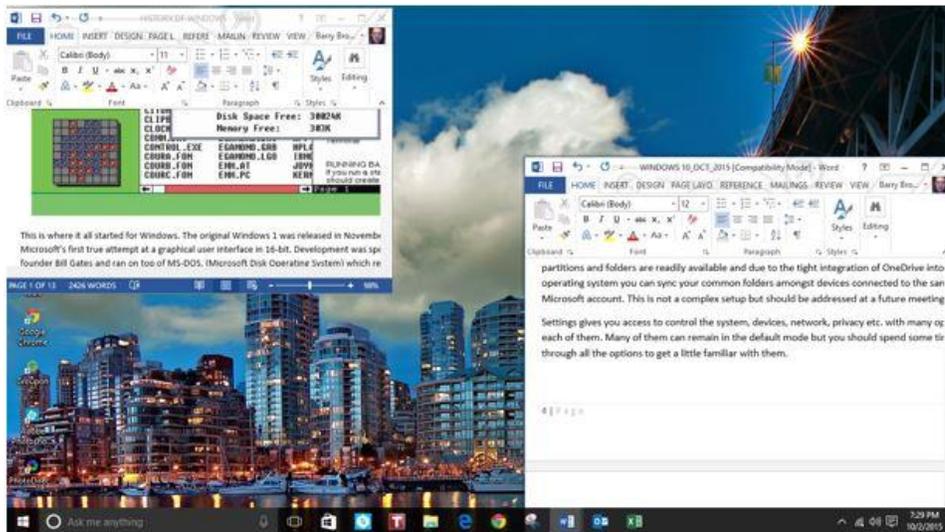
useful. To see what apps are open just click on the "task view" icon on the taskbar. Note this icon is fixed and cannot be moved around the taskbar.

You may remember "Aero Snap" in Windows 7 which allowed you to "snap" a screen to the edge so
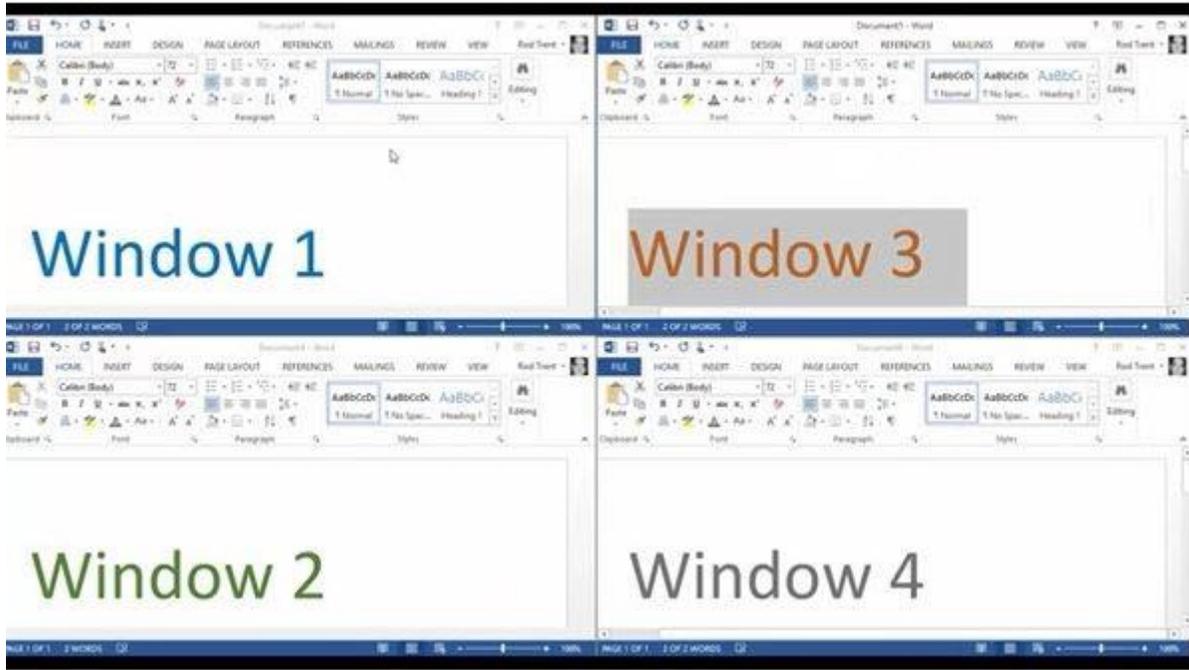
that more than two could be viewed in the same area. This has been greatly improved in Windows 10 and you can snap four screens to the edges if desired. (see below).

Again this has some limitations with smaller screens but is very useful on large ones. Below is shown two Word documents opened simultaneously on my laptop one to the upper left, the other to the lower right.

It has been mentioned to me by some of our members that the task bar icons are too small and can be a problem to decipher. Unfortunately there is no way to enlarge these but you can put larger icons for any program onto the desktop as a shortcut by simply dragging the icon from the "all apps" feature onto the desktop and releasing same. If you would like something larger you can also go to the "all apps" list and left click on the program and select "pin to start". The program will now appear as a tile which can be adjusted to a size which you like.

One thing which has stirred up a lot of controversy is the "update" procedure. In previous versions of Windows updates were regularly released and you were notified they were available. It was your decision as to when or even if you installed them.

Visit the Windows Update interface and you'll just find a single button — "Check for updates." Click this button and Windows will check for available updates. If it finds any, it will automatically download and install them. Windows will also check for updates in the background and automatically download and install them.

Unlike on previous versions of Windows, there's no way to select individual updates you want to download. All updates — from security updates and Windows Defender definition updates to optional updates and driver updates — will be installed automatically. You do have some control over when they will be installed by going to settings>updates & security>Windows Update>Advanced Options. This will allow you to schedule say a restart at a convenient time rather than an arbitrary selection by Windows.

Many techies have complained about this "heavy handed" approach but I believe for the average user these updates should not cause a problem and as this is a new product it can be expected, at least for the first few months that there will be many updates and fixes but this should slow down as bugs and fixes are resolved.

If there is a problem with your PC, you can uninstall problematic updates afterwards. To view your update history, open the Windows Update interface, select "Advanced options," and select "View your update history." You'll see a list of updates, and you can select "Uninstall updates" to view a list of updates you can uninstall.

Microsoft will probably continue rolling out major updates to Windows 10 in the form of "builds" that contain all previous updates. This means that you'll be unavailable to avoid updates forever, just as you'd have to accept an update when it appeared in a service pack on previous versions of Windows — assuming you wanted to upgrade to that service pack.

Why did Microsoft go from Windows 8.1 to 10, skipping 9? There has been lots of speculation and some rather bizarre reasons (9 is an unlucky number in Japan) but the most reasonable I have heard is that some legacy desktop apps have written in their code "if version starts with {Windows 9*then 95/98/*else { or} " .

Given how Windows 10 is meant to be a single platform for just about every form factor, plus the massive weight and importance that Microsoft is lending to this release, I wouldn't be surprised if it sticks around for a long time — and Microsoft has made noises indicating it wants to move to an ongoing, evolving OS without specific version numbers.

Now after installing the new operating system and wrestling with it for a couple of weeks you decide this isn't for you and you are yearning to return to your previous version of Windows. What can you do? If you really want to revert to Windows 7 or 8 in the first month after your upgrade go to:

 Settings>update & security>recovery and follow the instructions to return to your previous version of Windows. Remember this is a one-time recovery, you cannot change your mind and go back to Windows 10!

This has been a quick look at this new operating system and there are many more features not covered. When you have it installed and find you have questions or need assistance there are a lot of places you can go.

Here are a few to get you started:

Microsoft Windows 10: http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-10/getstarted-whatsnew

Windows 10 forums: http://www.windows10forums.com/

Windows Ten forums: http://www.tenforums.com/

CNet Windows 10 forum: http://www.cnet.com/forums/windows-10/

All of these have some good information and feedback from other users, you should be able to answer many of your questions and with some post your problems for discussion and hopefully answers.