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1

Get Windows 8

This chapter explains how Windows 8 has evolved from previous releases, identifies the new features and helps you recognize what's needed to upgrade your existing computer. It discusses the use of Microsoft accounts, to make your settings portable, and explains how to install Windows 8 apps on your system.

- 10** Windows 8
- 11** Which Release is Installed?
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- 24** Install Windows 8 Apps
- 26** Activation

Windows 8

Don't forget



There have been other releases of Microsoft Windows, intended for business and server computers, including Windows NT, Windows 2000, Windows Server 2003, Windows Server 2008 and Windows Server 2012.

Windows 8 is the latest release of Microsoft Windows, the operating system for personal computers. There has been a long list of Windows releases including:

- 1995 Windows 95
- 1998 Windows 98
- 2000 Windows Me (Millennium Edition)
- 2001 Windows XP (eXPerience)
- 2003 Windows XP MCE (Media Center Edition)
- 2007 Windows Vista
- 2009 Windows 7
- 2012 Windows 8 (and Windows RT)

When you buy a new computer, it is usually shipped with the latest available release of Windows. This takes advantage of the hardware features generally available at the time. Every year sees new and more powerful features being incorporated into the latest computers. In line with this, the requirements for Microsoft Windows have increased steadily. For example, the minimum and recommended amounts of system memory have increased from Windows 95 (4 MB to 8 MB), Windows 98 (16 MB to 24 MB), Windows XP (64 MB to 128 MB), Windows Vista (512 MB to 1024 MB), Windows 7 and Windows 8 (1 GB to 2 GB). There's a similar progression in terms of the processor power, the video graphics facilities and hard disk storage.

This means that your computer is likely to need upgrading or extending in order to use a later release of Windows, especially if you want to take advantage of new capabilities such as multi-touch. To take full advantage of new features, you may need a new computer, for example a "tablet" PC.

Each release enhances existing features and adds new facilities. Thus the new Windows 8 is able to support all the functions of Windows 7 and prior releases, often with enhancements, plus offer its own unique new features.

The value of all this is that you can use your computer to carry out tasks that would not have been possible with previous computers and operating system releases.

Hot tip



Windows RT is the version of Windows 8 that is designed for tablet PCs that use the ARM processor, as used in cell phones and other hand-held devices.

Hot tip



If you purchased a Windows 7 PC after May 30th 2012, you may be entitled to a reduced price upgrade to Windows 8 (see page 18).

Which Release is Installed?

To check which release of Windows is currently installed on your system, you can look in System properties.

- 1 Press WinKey and the Break key (simultaneously) to display the System properties
- 2 The operating system details will be displayed (along with user, memory and processor information)

The layout varies between releases of Windows, but similar details are shown.

Windows XP



Windows 7



Windows 8



Hot tip



WinKey is used to represent the Windows Logo key or other designated Windows key on your system.

Don't forget



These images show the System properties for computers with Windows XP, Windows Vista and Windows 8.

Hot tip



There are other ways to open the System properties, but the method shown is supported in all the various releases.

Hot tip

The Start screen replaces the Start menu of previous releases of Windows. The Desktop is used for traditional Windows applications.

Don't forget

There are some new Windows 8 apps and some traditional desktop applications provided with Windows 8 at installation, but you will need to visit the Windows Store for many functions that were previously included.

Features of Windows 8

Tile-based User Interface

Windows 8 features a tile-based user interface, similar to the interface for the Windows Phone and optimized for touch screens as well as mice and keyboards. The Start screen displays live application tiles which start Windows 8 apps. These run full-screen, or two can be displayed on higher resolution (1366×768 and larger) monitors by snapping one to the side of the screen. The Start screen also displays the user's name and picture.

Windows 8 also displays a new login/lock screen that shows the date and time and notifications, along with a customizable background.

Windows Store

Windows Store is a digital distribution application that is the only means of distributing Windows 8 apps to users. Microsoft will scan apps for security flaws and malware. Apps may be free or may carry a charge for download.

The Windows Store will also allow developers to publish traditional desktop applications, providing links to those applications on the developer websites.

File Explorer

Access to files, folders and drives is provided by the new version of Windows Explorer, now known as File Explorer, which now includes a Ribbon interface to provide in-context access to commands.

Restore and Reset

With Windows 8 you can refresh your PC, which keeps all your documents, accounts, personal settings and modern apps but returns Windows to its original state. You can completely restore your PC to the state it was in when you first got it. You can create a recovery drive on a USB key with the files needed to refresh or reset your PC even if Windows 8 can't boot. Restoring from the USB drive is a good option if you have a tablet PC without a disc drive or you just want to save space.

...cont'd

Shorter Boot Times

Windows 8 has short boot times, because it saves the kernel's memory to the hard disk on shutdown (similar to the existing hibernate option) and reloads it on start up.

Internet Explorer 10

The latest version of the Windows web browser, Internet Explorer 10, dedicates the entire screen to your websites, giving a full edge-to-edge display. Only when you need them do the browser tabs and navigation controls appear and they quietly get out of the way when you don't want them anymore. By taking advantage of Windows 8 and your computer's hardware acceleration features, Internet Explorer makes browsing faster and more fluid and the security capabilities ensure that your access is safe.

Microsoft Account Integration

Your Windows User account can be linked up to your Microsoft account. This means that you will not lose your settings and files, as you move from your home computer to your work laptop or to any other computer also using Windows 8 and sign in via your Microsoft account.

Multiple Monitors

If you have multiple monitors, Windows 8 can span the taskbar across the desktop on each of the monitors. Similarly, you can show different wallpapers on different monitors, or the same wallpaper stretched across multiple monitors.

Removed Features

Several features that were present in Windows 7 are no longer available in Windows 8. The Start menu and the Start button have been removed, although there is a Start screen hotspot in the lower left corner of the screen. The Aero Glass themes have been replaced by Windows 8 themes. The Microsoft Gadgets Gallery has also been removed. Windows Media Center will not be included and Windows Media Player will not provide DVD playback.

Beware



Some features are only available in particular editions of Windows 8, or have specific hardware prerequisites.

Hot tip



The Windows Media Center will be available for purchase as an add-on and this will include DVD playback capability.

Don't forget

The terms 32-bit and 64-bit relate to the way the processor handles memory. You'll also see the terms x86 and x64 used for 32-bit and 64-bit respectively.

Beware

The product functions and the graphics capabilities may vary depending on the system configuration.

What's Needed

The minimum configuration recommended by Microsoft to install and run Windows 8 is as follows:

- Processor 1 GHz 32-bit or 64-bit
- System memory 1 GB (32-bit) or 2 GB (64-bit)
- Graphics DirectX 9 graphics device with WDDM 1.0 driver
- Hard disk drive 16 GB (32-bit) or 20 GB (64-bit) free
- Optical drive DVD/CD (for installation purposes)

There may be additional requirements for some features, for example:

- SVGA display monitor with 1024x768 or higher resolution (1366x768 for snapping Windows 8 apps)
- Internet access for online services and features such as Windows Update
- TV tuner for Windows Media Center functions
- Five point Multi-touch hardware for touch functions
- A network and multiple PCs running Windows 8 for HomeGroup file and printer sharing
- An optical drive with rewriter function for DVD/CD authoring and backup function
- Trusted Platform Module (TPM) 1.2 hardware for BitLocker encryption
- USB flash drive for Windows to Go/BitLocker To Go
- An additional 1 GB memory, 15 GB extra hard disk space and a processor with Intel VT or AMD-V hardware features, for Hyper-V virtualization
- Audio output (headphones or speakers) for music and sound in Windows Media Player

Upgrade Assistant

To have your computer assessed to see if it is able to support Windows 8, run the Windows 8 Setup program from the Windows 8 installation DVD (or from the Microsoft Web Installer site at www.microsoft.com/windows).



This program will assess your computer and generate a report to tell you if any changes are needed to support Windows 8 on your computer. It also identifies any incompatible software or accessories that you may have.

For example, when run on an Asus Eee PC netbook computer currently running Windows XP, the Upgrade Assistant says that this has insufficient resolution.



This machine has a resolution of 1024 x 600, but the minimum requirement to access the Windows Store to install apps is 1024 x 768. Netbooks are therefore effectively incompatible, even when it is possible to install Windows 8.

Hot tip



If your computer runs Windows 7 or Vista, it may already be able to run Windows 8, perhaps with a hardware upgrade. Computers running earlier versions of Windows are unlikely to have the necessary capabilities.

Beware



You can upgrade from Windows 7, Windows Vista and Windows XP, but you might not be able to keep all of your files, programs and settings.

Don't forget

The ARM processor is a RISC (reduced instruction set computer) processor with enhanced power-saving features, used for mobile phones, media players and tablet PCs. Currently, it is 32-bit only.

Don't forget

For the business user, the main choices are the Professional and the Enterprise editions.

Windows 8 Editions

There are three editions of Windows 8 for computers based on the x32/x64 Intel or AMD processors (until now the usual processors for Windows PCs), plus an edition called Windows RT for PCs based on the ARM processor.

Windows 8

Windows 8 is the base edition, intended for consumers and containing the main features of Windows 8, including touch screen and keyboard/mouse support, Windows 8 apps, Windows Store, Internet Explorer 10, enhanced Task Manager and improved multi-monitor support.

Windows 8 Pro

Windows 8 Pro is the edition designed for advanced users and business/technical professionals and includes all the features in Windows 8 plus features for encryption, virtualization, PC management and domain connectivity. Windows Media Center is not included in any edition of Windows 8 but is available as a chargeable media pack add-on to Windows 8 Pro.

Windows 8 Enterprise

Windows 8 Enterprise is the edition for customers with Software Assurance agreements and includes all the features of Windows 8 Pro plus features for IT organization, to enable PC management and deployment, advanced security, virtualization and new mobility scenarios. Unlike Windows 8 and Windows 8 Pro, it will not be supplied as a separate retail pack.

Windows RT

Windows RT will only be available pre-installed on PCs and tablets powered by ARM processors. It is designed to enable new thin and lightweight form factors with enhanced battery life.

Windows RT does not support conventional Windows desktop applications, though it does include touch-optimized desktop versions of the Microsoft Office applications – Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote.

Selecting your Edition

If you are unsure which of these editions of Windows 8 is best for you, it may be useful to focus on those features that are excluded or restricted in particular editions.

The main selective features are:

Feature	B	P/E	R
Multi-touch capability (hardware req)	Y	Y	Y
Desktop support (restricted in RT)	Y	Y	Y
Storage Spaces	Y	Y	-
Upgrade from Win 7 Starter/Home	Y	Y	-
Windows Media Player	Y	Y	-
x32/x64 processor support	Y	Y	-
BitLocker and BitLocker To Go	-	Y	-
Boot from VHD	-	Y	-
Client Hyper-V	-	Y	-
Domain Join	-	Y	-
Encrypting File System	-	Y	-
Group Policy	-	Y	-
Remote Desktop (host)	-	Y	-
Upgrade from Win 7 Pro/Ultimate	-	Y	-
Windows Media Center (add-in)	-	Y	-
ARM support	-	-	Y
Device encryption	-	-	Y
Microsoft Office (included)	-	-	Y

If one of these features is a must have, this will dictate the editions that you need to investigate in more detail. In practice, the choice will often be dictated by the hardware characteristics of your computer, since Windows RT is the only option for the ARM-based systems.

For home use on x32/x64 computers, the choice is between the base and the professional editions, while business users will have either professional or enterprise, depending on their company's preferences.

For travelling, a computer based on the power-saving ARM processor may be the preferred choice, except where there are conventional (legacy) applications that must be used.

Don't forget



The four editions of Windows 8 are:

B	Base
P	Pro
E	Enterprise
R	RT

Hot tip



If you choose the base edition and discover you do need additional features, you have the opportunity to upgrade your edition to the higher level.

Upgrades

If you are planning to install Windows 8 on an existing computer running a previous version of Windows, you may be able to upgrade and retain your existing Windows settings, personal data and applications.

The upgrade paths available include:

- Upgrade to Windows 8 (base edition) from Windows 7 Starter, Home Basic or Home Premium and retain Windows settings, personal data and applications
- Upgrade to Windows 8 Pro from Windows 7 Starter, Home Basic, Home Premium, Professional or Ultimate and retain Windows settings, personal data and applications
- Upgrade to Windows 8 Enterprise from Windows 7 Professional or Enterprise and retain Windows settings, personal data and applications (volume licensees only)
- Upgrade to Windows 8 from Windows Vista (with SP1) and retain personal data and Windows settings
- Upgrade to Windows 8 from Windows XP (with SP3) or Vista (without SP1) and retain personal data only

There is no upgrade path offered for Windows RT.

You won't be able to upgrade or retain Windows settings, personal data and applications if you make a move between 32-bit and 64-bit configurations.

If you install from DVD or USB, rather than running Setup from your existing Windows, you are also unable to retain Windows settings, personal data and applications.

For installations before January 31st 2013, Microsoft priced the upgrade to Windows 8 Pro at only \$39.99 (US price).

If you purchased a new Windows 7 PC between June 2nd 2012 and January 31st 2013, you could also register to buy an upgrade to Windows 8 Pro for only \$14.99 (US price).

Hot tip



Check at the Microsoft website for your location, or with your software retail store, to find your prices for Windows 8 upgrades, during and after the promotions and for the prices for the full release of Windows 8.

Don't forget



If you prefer to install from DVD, you can purchase an upgrade for \$69.99 (US price).

First Logon

When you upgrade your existing version of Windows to Windows 8, there are several actions that you may be asked to carry out.



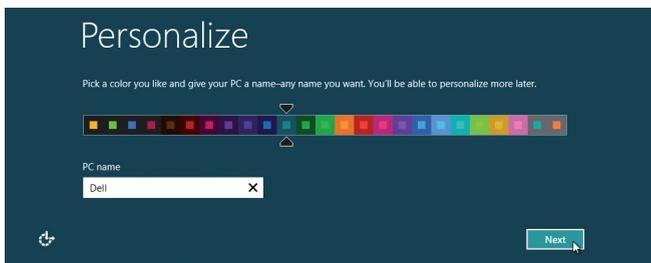
Hot tip



The first time you start up a new computer with an edition of Windows 8 preinstalled, you'll also be prompted for these actions.

Personalize

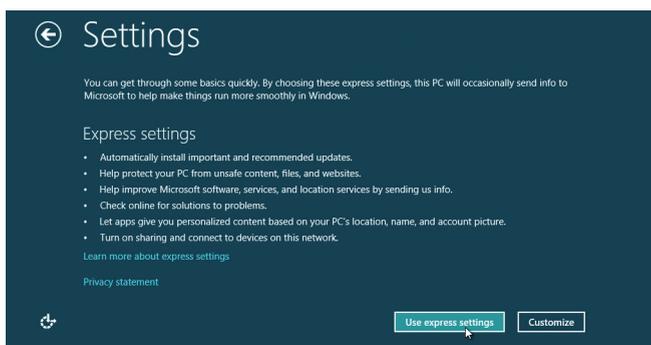
- 1 Choose one of the 25 color schemes offered (or accept the default Blue scheme)



- 2 Provide a descriptive name for the computer and click the Next button

Apply Settings

- 1 Customize settings for Windows updates and security, or choose to Use Express Settings



Don't forget



The Express Settings will enable Windows Update, Windows Firewall and Windows Defender, turn on network sharing and ensure that Windows 8 apps are personalized for your location.

Don't forget

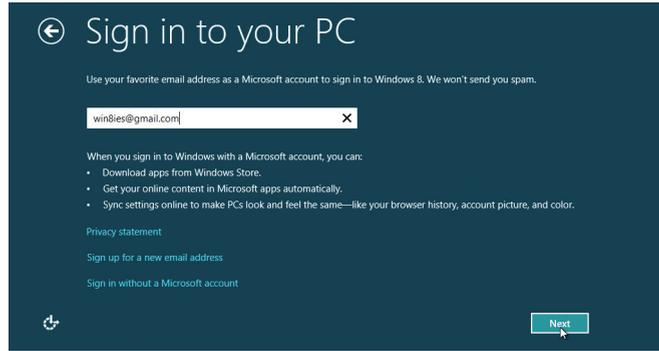
You can choose to use a Local account (see page 21) that is not associated with a Microsoft account but you will not be able to download Windows 8 apps and your settings won't travel with you when you switch computers.

Hot tip

If this email address is not recognized, you'll be prompted to provide personal details so that a Microsoft account can be created.

Microsoft Account

You'll be asked to provide an email address to use as a Microsoft account, to let you access the Windows Store (see page 24), get online content and sync settings online.



- 1 Enter your preferred email address and click Next



- 2 Windows checks for the Microsoft account for that email address and prompts you for the password

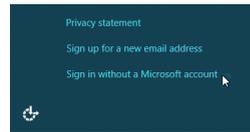


- 3 Windows starts up with that account and its settings



Local Account

If you'd prefer a local account, click the option to Sign in without a Microsoft account. Windows reminds you of the implications of this choice.



Beware



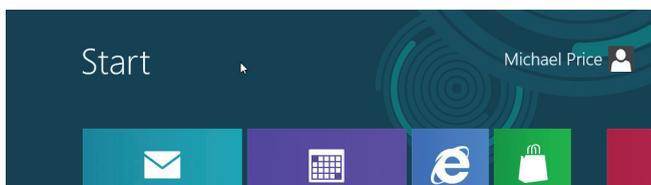
You won't be able to access the Windows Store with a local account. However, you will be able to set up a Microsoft account later for that purpose.

1 Select Local Account to confirm your wishes



2 Enter user name and password, confirm the password, provide a password hint and click Next

3 Windows starts with a local account



Hot tip



Note the subtle change in the way the user name is displayed on the Start screen, for a local account versus a Microsoft account.

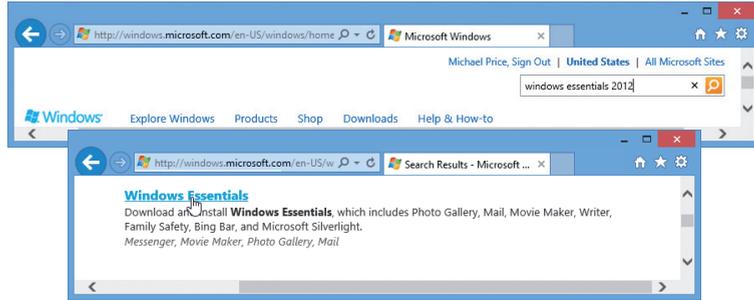
Don't forget

Windows 8 doesn't include as many applications as previous releases. However, Microsoft provides additional apps for both Desktop and Windows 8 for you to download and install.

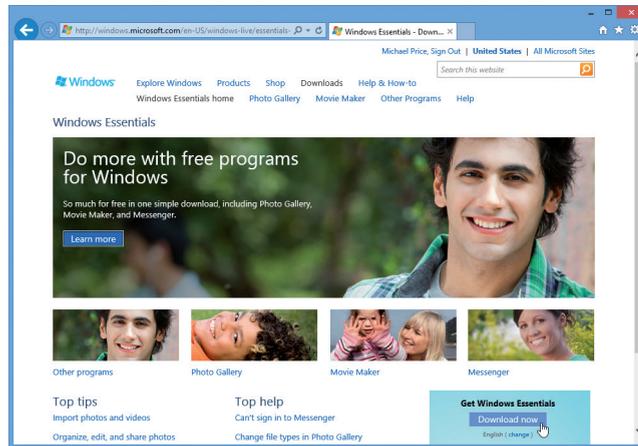
Install Applications

For the Desktop environment, you can start with Windows Essentials 2012. To install these programs:

- 1 Go to the Desktop, select Internet Explorer from the Taskbar and go to windows.microsoft.com



- 2 Type Windows Essentials 2012 in the Search box and press Enter to locate links to that product



- 3 Select the Microsoft Essential link, click Download Now and choose to Run the setup program



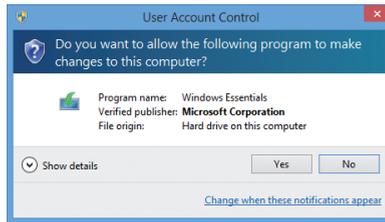
This installs the Windows Essential programs from the Web.

Hot tip

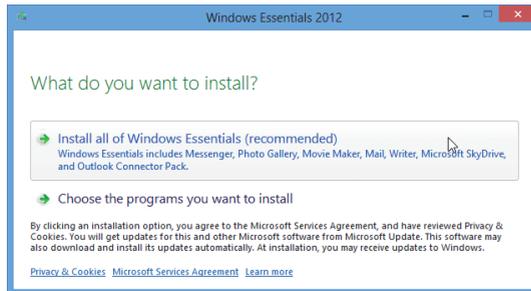
The link shown is for installation from the Web, but there is an alternative link that will allow you to download and install the programs offline.

...cont'd

- 4 When prompted, you must authorize Windows Essentials to make changes to your system



You may be prompted to allow additional Windows features such as Microsoft Net Framework, that may be needed to operate Windows Essentials.

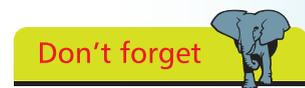


- 5 Choose to install all of Windows Essentials

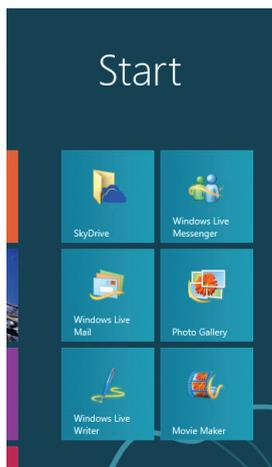
- 6 The components of Windows Essentials are installed



- 7 Click Show Details to see the progress, program by program



Windows Essentials was previously identified as Windows Live Essentials. The terminology has changed, though the preview versions of the programs may still carry their old titles.



- 8 The applications in Windows Essentials are Desktop programs, but they will still be added as a group of tiles on the Start screen

Don't forget

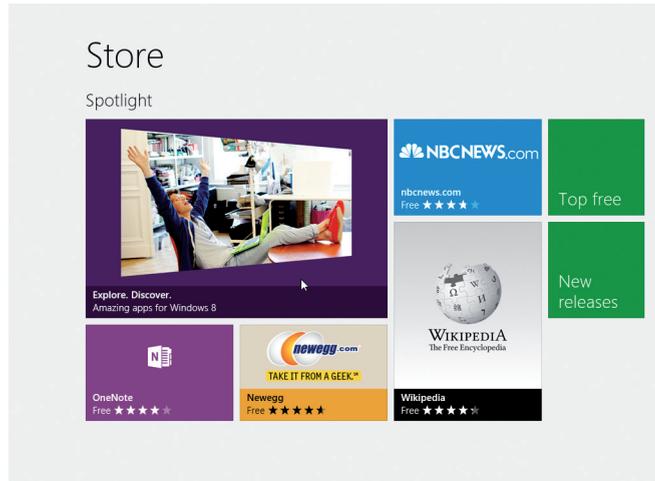
Applications designed for the Windows 8 environment can be downloaded and installed from the Windows Store, a procedure familiar to users of smartphones and tablet devices.

Install Windows 8 Apps

There are many Windows 8 apps in the Windows Store, but Microsoft spotlights sets of apps that can make good starting points. To install these:



- 1 From the Start screen, click Store, which opens as a full screen app

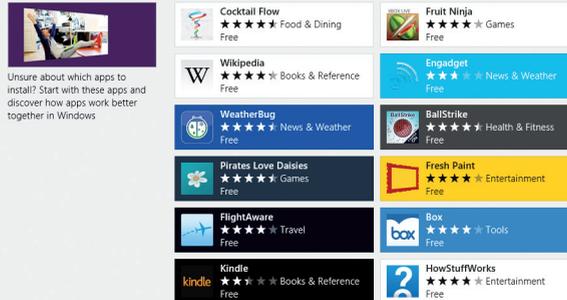


- 2 Select the Spotlight apps that have been selected to help you explore and discover apps for Windows 8

Hot tip

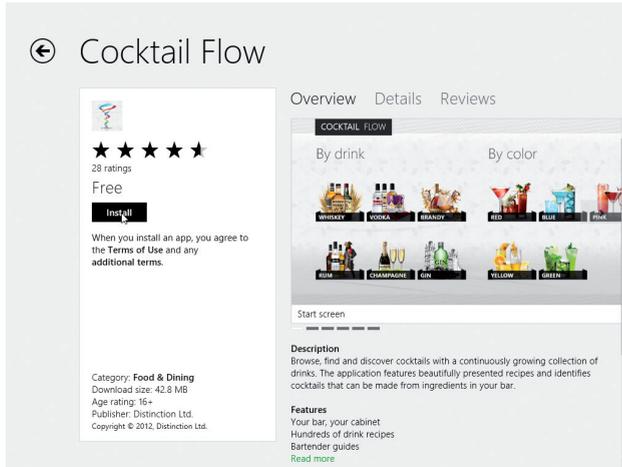
The Spotlight apps will be changed from time to time, but these illustrate some of the apps that are considered as useful for starting off with Windows 8.

Amazing apps for Windows 8 12 apps



...cont'd

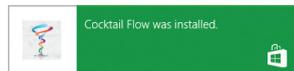
- 3 Select an app, e.g. Cocktail Flow, to see the description



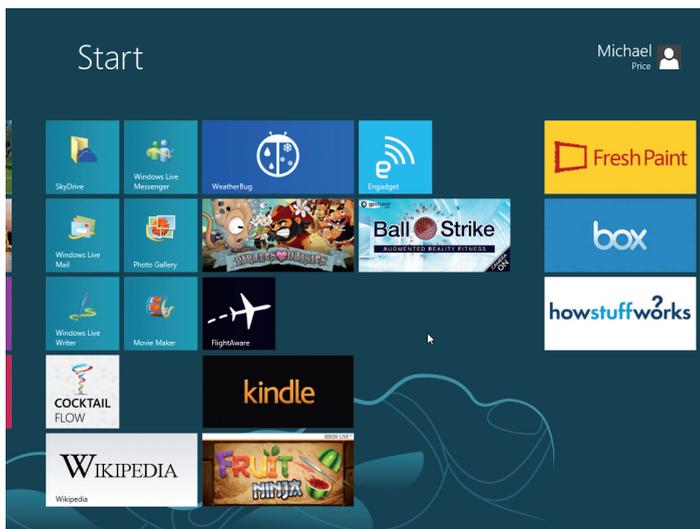
Hot tip 

When you Install an app, the Store reappears and you see progress messages at the top right of the screen. You can select another app, even if previous installs are still pending.

- 4 Click the Install button for that app, then select more from Spotlight or other areas



- 5 Go to the Start screen to see the additions



Don't forget 

Tiles for the apps that you install are added to the right-hand side of the Start screen, flowing on from the last group on the screen. You can regroup and reposition the tiles (see page 67).

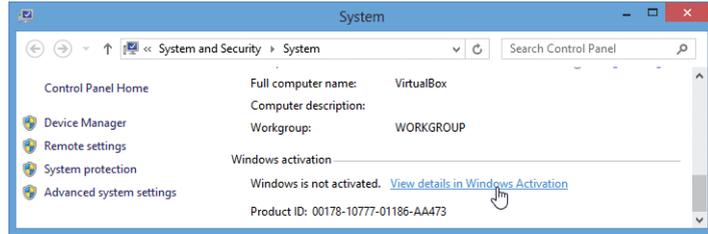
Hot tip

Activation is the process by which Microsoft associates your specific copy of Windows 8 with your computer.

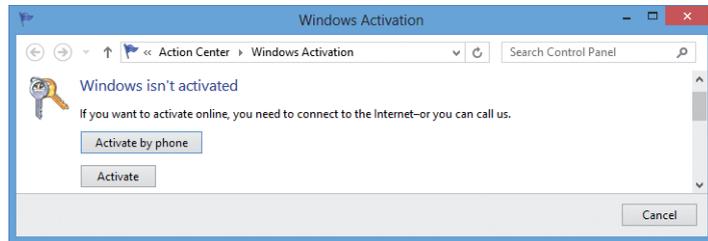
Activation

Your copy of Windows 8 must be activated before you can apply an upgrade and in any event within 30 days of first using the system. To check the current status:

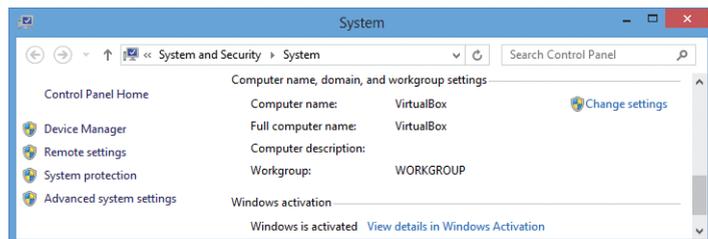
- 1 Open the System properties (see page 11) and scroll to the bottom to view the Activation status



- 2 If Windows is not yet activated, click View details in Windows activation



- 3 Connect to the Internet and click Activate, or you can activate by phone
- 4 System Properties will show the status as Activated

**Don't forget**

If your system is connected to the Internet when you install Windows, or the first time that you run Windows, Activation will be completed automatically.