

Windows Tips and Tricks Handy Windows Features

System Restore

The system restore function allows you to set your Windows back to an earlier known good point. This is very useful if something goes wrong with your system due to an upgrade or new software or hardware. In order to use it, however, it must be turned on. Open the *control panel* (not the settings) and go to system. Click on system protection. Select your hard drive (Windows C: System) and if protection is off click on configure and select turn on system protection. Then click create to create a system restore point. Windows will create restore points periodically when changes are made.

Clipboard


If activated the clipboard will now store multiple clips. To paste recent clips, hold down the Windows key and the V key at the same time. When the list appears release the keys and use your mouse to select the thing to paste. If you have multiple computers with the same Windows username and password the copy will be available on all devices.

Snip and Sketch

Snip and Sketch is the replacement for the old Snipping Tool. It has far more capabilities than its predecessor. Open the tool and click New. The tool will disappear, and your screen will go gray. The small toolbar will allow you to select a rectangular area to copy, a freeform area, a window or the whole screen. By default, it copies a rectangular area which you select by dragging the crosshair around the area you want. If you select the freeform clip you can use your mouse to select an uneven shaped area. The window select will copy the current active window and the full screen snip will copy the full screen but without the snip toolbar.

Once you have your copy you can do some simple editing with it. The tools include a pen, pencil, highlighter and eraser. There is also a cropping tool. When you have finished you can either paste it or save it as a picture in .png, .jpg or .gif formats. Be aware that if you use Snip and Sketch to select text and then paste it you will have a picture of the text so you won't be able to edit it.

Notification Center

The Notification Center is the icon in the lower right corner of your screen . When Windows needs to notify you of something you will see a circle with a number indicating how many notifications you have. After you have read the notification you can delete it with the X in the upper right corner of the notification box.

Additionally, the Notification Center displays a selection of quick actions. These include Airplane mode, All settings, Project and Screen Snip. You can edit what shows in Quick Actions by opening Settings, select System and then Notification and actions. Click on Edit your quick actions and then turn on or off the actions you want to display. You can also rearrange them into the order you want by dragging and dropping.

Screen snip (in the notification bar)

The Screen Snip in the notifications bar is a quick way to get a screen shot. This is handy when you have an error message you want to be able to send to your computer service person so they will know what the problem is. *Personal note: Someone calling me and saying "I got a message that says there was a problem. Can you fix it?" The answer is no if you don't have the exact error message.*


Minimize All

If you need to minimize everything on your screen and just see your main screen you can use the minimize all tool. It is the small box at the farthest right end of your toolbar. Hovering over it will temporarily show your main screen and clicking on it will minimize all open windows. Clicking it again will restore open windows.

Switch Between Open Windows

If you have several programs running and need to switch between them you can do so with the Alt key and Tab key pressed at the same time. This will bring up a representation of all open windows. By default, it will switch to the previous window but if you need another selection just tap the tab key while continuing to hold down the Alt key until the desired window is selected, then release the Alt key. (Hint: Using the shift key with the Alt key will cause the Tab key to work backwards if that is a closer way to the window you want.

Another way to do this is with the Task View. The Task View is the icon next to your

Start icon on the toolbar . When you click on this icon a view of all of your open Windows will appear. Find the window you want and click it to be switched to that window. It also has a history feature so you can get back to something you were doing in the last few days.

Change mouse pointer and font size

As we get older our vision seems to deteriorate and the default size of mouse pointers and text on the screen may be too small to see comfortably. For this reason, it is possible to adjust the sizes of the mouse pointer and the default windows font.

To change the mouse pointer open Settings, go to Devices and pick Mouse. On the right-hand side click on Adjust mouse and cursor size. Here you can change the pointer size, type of pointer and color.

To change the font size open Settings and go to System and then select Display. Under Scale and Layout select the percentage of font size you want. This will change the font size on your home screen and any standard Windows dialogs. Be aware if you set it too high you may have trouble seeing entire windows, they will be too large and extend off the screen.

Photos App

The Photos App is a big improvement over the tools in older versions of Windows which gave rise to third party programs. With the Photos App you can do editing, run a slide show, share with others create videos, and print.

The editing features are extensive. You can crop, adjust brightness and color, apply filters, add 3d effects, do freehand drawing, add animated text and create music videos. Double clicking a photo in your files should open it in the Photos App. Play with the options to see what you can do. When you are done you can save it as a copy so that your original still exists or just close without saving to abandon it.