

Moving from **Windows** 7 to 10

Which?

Welcome

Windows 7 is one of the most successful operating systems (OS) that Microsoft has produced but, from January 2020, a decade after its launch, Microsoft is ending consumer support, so anyone who has a Windows 7 computer will need to start making plans for what to do next. If you're affected, there's no need to panic. The easy solution is to switch to Windows 10, either by upgrading your existing PC or by purchasing a new one. And the good news is that Windows 10 will feel instantly familiar to seasoned Windows 7 users, while offering all the advantages of a modern operating system. Windows 10 is also easy to use, more secure and will remain fully supported by Microsoft for many years to come.

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Acknowledgements: This guide contains screenshots which remain the property of Microsoft (front cover, pages 5, 8, 10–15).



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What's happening to Windows 7?

Microsoft is calling time on Windows 7 soon, but what does this mean and how will it affect you? We answer your questions

Q What's happening to Windows 7?

A On 14 January 2020, Microsoft will end its support and updates for consumer editions of Windows 7.

Q Why is Microsoft ending Windows 7?

A Most software is subject to a fixed 'product lifecycle' that begins when the software is released and lasts throughout a set period (anything from three to 10 years), during which the software is supported by updates. Windows 7 has reached the end of its lifecycle, so Microsoft is retiring it. You can read more about Windows lifecycles at support.microsoft.com/en-gb/help/13853/windows-lifecycle-fact-sheet.

Q What does this mean for you?

A If you have a Windows 7 PC it won't suddenly stop working on 14 January 2020, but it will become far less safe to use, because Microsoft will no longer be supporting the software

or providing the security updates needed to patch any vulnerabilities and flaws that are identified. So if you continue to use your Windows 7 PC after this date, there's a much greater risk that hackers or malware could gain unauthorised access to your system, personal data and files.

Q What do I need to do?

A In order to stay safe you have two choices: upgrade your computer to Windows 10 (see pages 10–11 for more), or buy a new PC with Windows 10 (see pages 8–9).

Q Should I upgrade to Windows 8.1 or 10?

A Microsoft currently supports two versions of Windows: 8.1 and 10. However, there is arguably little point in upgrading to Windows 8.1, since its product lifecycle ends on 10 January 2023, whereas Microsoft promises to continue supporting Windows 10 on your PC as long as you keep the software up to date.

Q What are the main features of Windows 10?

A Windows 10 has dozens of new features. Here are a few highlights:

- Built-in security, including antivirus protection, with Windows Security
- Pre-installed apps (small programs) for photos, music, email and more
- A redesigned Start menu
- A simpler Settings app
- A new web browser – Microsoft Edge
- A built-in, voice-controlled digital assistant – Cortana
- Regular feature updates – Windows 10 receives new features from Microsoft every year.

Q What edition of Windows 10 do I need?

A As with previous versions of Microsoft's operating system, there are several editions of Windows 10 available. The most relevant for home users is likely to be Windows 10 Home. Windows 10 Pro has some additional features, but these are mostly geared towards business users.

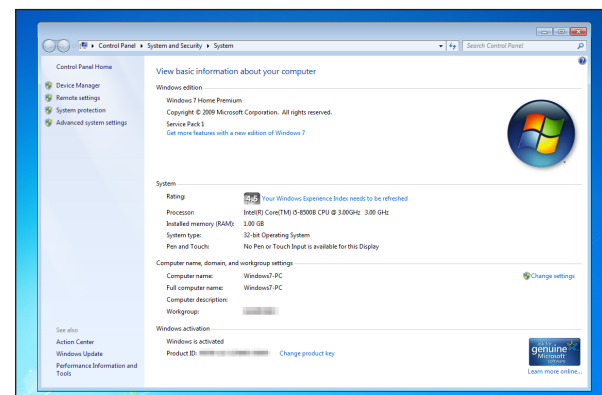


Some older PCs use a 32-bit system, whereas newer ones tend to use a 64-bit system. Windows 10 is available for both types of system, but you'll need to make sure you get the correct version for your computer's system type. You can find out whether your computer is 32-bit or 64-bit by clicking **Start**, right-clicking **Computer** and selecting **Properties** – look under **System type** (see screenshot, below).

Q How much does Windows 10 cost?

A For a limited time after launch Microsoft offered Windows 10 as a free upgrade from Windows 7. Unfortunately, that offer has now ended, so you might find you have to pay for Windows 10. You can purchase it directly from Microsoft at microsoft.com/en-gb/store/b/windows. Windows 10 Home is £119.99 and Windows 10 Pro is £219.99. However, you can

run the upgrade first before having to buy – if it completes and you receive no prompts to enter a licence key, you shouldn't need to buy. Purchase directly from Microsoft, rather than a third-party seller, to avoid getting a licence that doesn't work.



SHOULD I WAIT FOR WINDOWS 11?

No. Windows 10 is the 'last version', so there will never be a Windows 11. With Windows 10, the idea is that the operating system is supplied as an ongoing service, rather than a one-off purchase with a finite lifecycle. This means that Windows 10 will keep going indefinitely and you will continue to receive updates, as long as you keep your PC up to date.

Windows 10 – what's new?

Windows 10 may look different to Windows 7 and offer lots of new features but, thankfully, Microsoft's latest operating system will feel reassuringly familiar

The Start menu and desktop

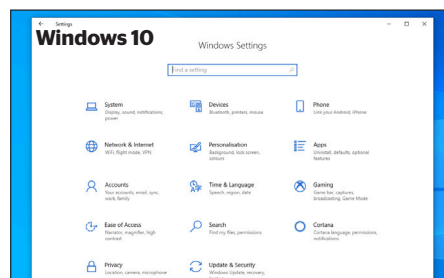
Microsoft experimented with dropping the Start menu in the Windows 8 operating system, but it proved unpopular. Windows 10 uses a more traditional desktop, with a Start button in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen and a Start menu that pops up when clicked to provide access to programs and files. On the left is an alphabetical list of installed programs, while on the right you can arrange shortcuts to apps and files, including 'live' tiles that display constantly updated information such as news headlines and weather. If you start typing the program you want, the Start menu will automatically find it.



The Settings app

One major change is how you access many of your PC's settings. In Windows 7 these were accessed via the Control Panel, but in Windows 10 most everyday system settings and tools have moved to the Settings app – just click **Start** then the **Settings** cog icon, or search for 'settings'.

In the Settings app you'll find sections for System, Devices, Network & Internet, Personalisation, Apps, Accounts, Ease of Access, Update & Security and more. Each section is divided into subsections that can be navigated using the left-hand pane – the settings are in the main part of the window on the right. To check for Windows updates, click **Update & Security**, then **Windows Update** on the left and scroll through the options on the right.



Apps and programs

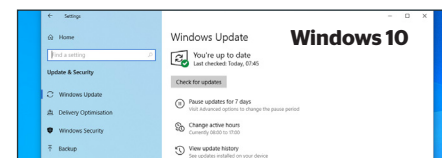
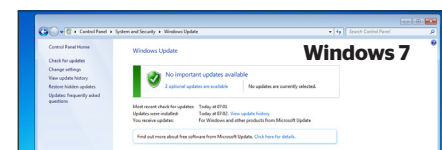
Windows 10 apps are like mini programs, similar to those on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. The OS comes with several apps built in – Music, Mail, Calculator – but you can download others via the Microsoft Store app, some of which are free. Apps are usually simple to use and safer than traditional programs, as they can't access important system files.

Windows 10 can run traditional PC programs and applications as well as new-style apps, though some older Windows 7 programs might suffer compatibility issues.

Updates

In Windows 7 you can choose which updates to install or switch some off altogether – though it's unsafe to do so. In Windows 10, updates are compulsory (see screenshots, below). For installation, see The Settings app, left.

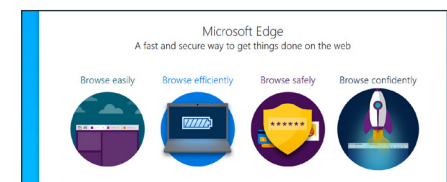
Microsoft issues security updates and fixes on an ongoing basis, some of which require you to restart your PC. In addition, Microsoft issues major updates to Windows 10 twice a year – usually in spring and autumn. These update the operating system to the latest version and bring lots of new features and improvements.



The Edge browser

Windows 10 debuts Microsoft's new web browser, Edge (see screenshot, below). The most recent version includes extensions – tools that add functions to the browser such as ad blockers and password managers.

Development of Internet Explorer has ended, but Internet Explorer 11 is supported under Windows 10 and the older browser is still available – click **Start**, type **ie** and press **Enter** to launch it. You can also install other browsers, such as Chrome or Firefox.



Windows Security

Windows 7 includes Defender – a built-in firewall and security tool – but this only protects your PC against specific types of malware, so a separate antivirus program is needed for complete protection. In Windows 10, however, Windows Security works like a full antivirus program, watching for malware all the time, so it's possible to use Windows 10 without installing any third-party security protection. If you prefer, you can install an alternative antivirus tool – some third-party security products provide additional features, such as password management tools.

FIND OUT MORE

We test both free and paid-for security software to find out which offer the best protection. If you have access to our site, you can see the Best Buys at which.co.uk/antivirus.

Is my PC too old for Windows 10?

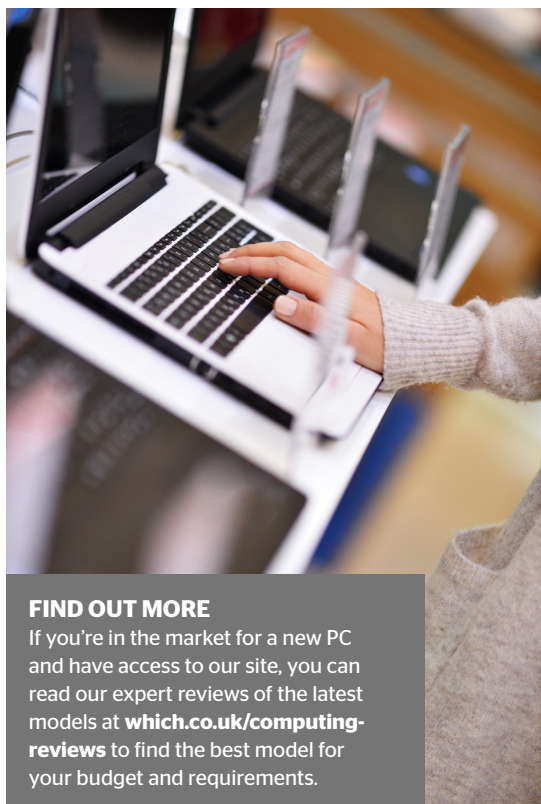
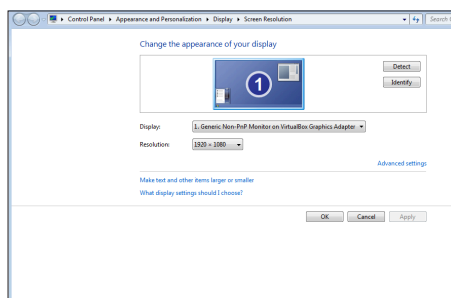
It's not worth upgrading to Windows 10 if your current PC isn't up to it. We help you work out if your PC will support Windows 10, or if you need to buy a new one

What does my computer need to upgrade to Windows 10?

To upgrade a Windows 7 PC to Windows 10, it should meet these requirements (although if it only meets the most basic requirements it may be slow to use when Windows 10 is installed):

- 1GHz or faster processor
- 1GB of Ram for 32-bit PCs, or 2GB of Ram for 64-bit PCs
- 16GB free hard-drive space for 32-bit PCs, or 32GB for 64-bit PCs
- A display with 800x600 pixels or greater resolution

Check your current PC's processor and Ram by clicking **Start**, right-clicking **Computer** and selecting **Properties**. To find out how much available hard-drive space you have, click **Start > Computer**, then check your C:\ drive. Right-click anywhere on your desktop and select **Screen resolution** to find out your current display's resolution (see below).



FIND OUT MORE

If you're in the market for a new PC and have access to our site, you can read our expert reviews of the latest models at which.co.uk/computing-reviews to find the best model for your budget and requirements.

Should I buy a new PC instead?

Even if your current PC meets or exceeds these requirements, you might still be better off buying a new computer. Here are some key considerations:

- If your PC is old – perhaps more than eight years old – it might struggle to run Windows 10 smoothly, taking a long time to start up or perform tasks.
- The older your computer, the more likely you are to encounter compatibility problems with Windows 10.

■ Many newer computers are designed for Windows 10's features, such as a touch-sensitive screen to support Windows Ink handwriting and annotation abilities.

■ A new PC will be under warranty and will last for many years, whereas your old machine could develop a hardware fault that requires costly repairs.

■ Upgrading to Windows 10 costs £119.99, but some cheaper computers cost little more than that – you can get a decent budget model for £150–£200.

How to buy a new laptop

If you decide to go for a new computer, here are some features to look out for:

■ Processor

The clock speed of the processor, measured in gigahertz (GHz), governs the laptop's performance. But these days other factors, including how many cores the processor has, also play an important part. Many processors now come in dual- or quad-core form, doubling or quadrupling their power.

■ Memory (Ram)

Ram is your laptop's short-term memory, which stores information while you're using it. The amount of Ram it has determines how many different tasks it can accomplish at one time.

■ Hard drive

Your laptop's hard drive provides long-term memory for your files and software. Its size is measured in gigabytes (GB) or terabytes (TB). Check how much storage you're currently using to ensure your new laptop exceeds that.

■ Solid state drive (SSD)

Many laptops have a solid state drive or a hybrid SSD/hard disk drive. SSDs work like hard drives but there are no moving parts so they're more reliable. They're faster,

help speed up start-up times and extend battery life. The downside is they are more expensive per GB of storage.

■ Screen size

With a laptop's screen, bigger isn't always better – smaller screens often allow for longer battery life and more portability. Check the resolution, too – cheaper laptops might have lower-resolution screens, which can make your display feel cramped.

■ Hybrids

The line between laptops and tablets is becoming increasingly blurred. Many laptops have touchscreens and detachable keyboards, allowing you to use them like a tablet. A hybrid combines the portability of a tablet with the functionality of a laptop.

For more advice on buying the best laptop, visit which.co.uk/buy-laptop.

Should I buy a desktop PC instead?

A desktop PC is essentially a more traditional 'tower'-style computer, although they come in various shapes and sizes, including more discreet mini PCs and stylish all-in-one models. Desktop PCs tend to be more customisable and upgradable. They're often a little cheaper than laptops, too. You can also keep costs down by reusing your current computer's accessories, such as a keyboard, mouse or monitor.

RECYCLE YOUR OLD COMPUTER

If you're buying a new PC you'll need to consider what to do with your old one. You can recycle old computers, but you'll need to make sure you've removed all trace of your personal data first. Learn more at which.co.uk/recycle-computer.

How to upgrade from Windows 7 to Windows 10

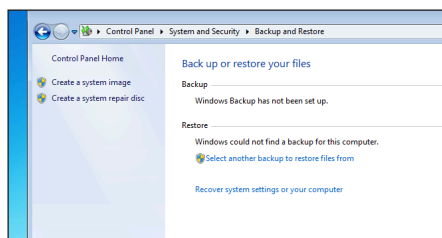
Installing a new version of Windows is a little time-consuming, but it needn't be stressful or complicated if you prepare properly and follow the instructions step by step

1 Get Windows 10

Before you buy Windows 10, make sure your current PC meets Microsoft's system requirements for the upgrade (see page 8 for more on this). You'll also need to ensure you get the correct edition of Windows 10 for your needs and for your PC (see page 5).

2 Back up

Before you start, back up your PC so you can restore everything should anything go wrong. We recommend using Windows 7's built-in tools to create a system image, which is a backup of your entire hard drive. For this you'll need an external USB hard drive large enough to take the contents of your hard drive – to check, click **Start > Computer**, then right-click the icon for **C: drive** and select **Properties**. Look under **Used space** – you'll need a USB drive with this amount or more. Plug this in, then click **Start > Control Panel > System and Security > Back up and restore > Create a system image**. Follow the steps, selecting your external drive from the **On a hard disk** dropdown menu when prompted.

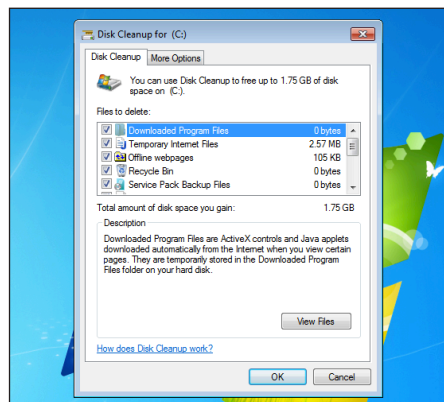


3 Tidy up

It's worth doing some housekeeping before you upgrade your PC. Make sure you get the latest updates, make room for Windows 10 and clear out any junk or unwanted files.

First, click **Start > Control Panel > System and Security > Windows Update > Check for updates** and install any available updates. Next, click **Start > Control Panel > Uninstall a program** and work through the list, clicking on any programs you no longer need, then click **Uninstall**.

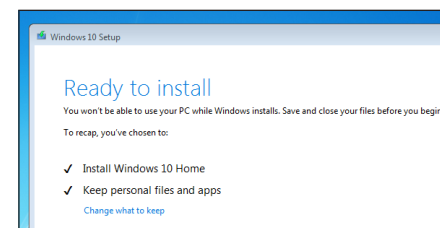
You can remove junk and temporary files by clicking **Start**, typing **Disk Cleanup** and pressing **Enter**. Click **Cleanup system files**, then tick the boxes next to the items in the Files to delete list and click **OK > Delete Files**.



4 Start the upgrade procedure

The precise method for launching Windows 10 installer will depend on the format in which you purchased it. If you bought it as a DVD or USB, insert the disk or drive into your PC and the installer should launch automatically. If you got a download from Microsoft's online store, double-click the downloaded file.

The installer will check for updates and run a compatibility check on your PC's hardware and software – if any issues are found, you will see a message flagging this (see pages 12–13 for compatibility and upgrade problems). Choose to **Keep personal files and apps**, then click **Install**.



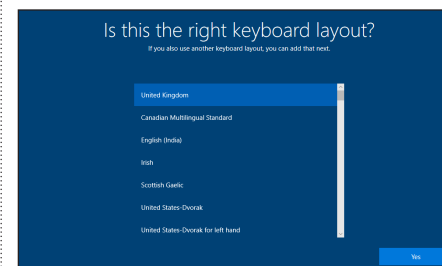
5 Wait while the upgrade is carried out

You'll see a progress screen, then your PC will restart and display the Windows 10 logo. It might seem like the upgrade has frozen, but it's working away in the background, so leave your computer alone. Your computer will restart more than once as the installer carries out the upgrade. The process usually takes between 30 minutes and an hour.

6 Select your initial settings

Eventually, you should see a screen asking you to complete setup by making a few choices. Select **United Kingdom** for your location and keyboard layout if prompted, for example (see screenshot, right).

Cortana, Windows 10's built-in voice-controlled digital assistant, will read these options aloud and, if you have a microphone attached to your PC, you can make your selections using your voice. Alternatively, you can disable voice control by clicking the microphone icon at the bottom of the screen.



7 Finish up

Work through any remaining steps, selecting your preferred setup options. To enable Cortana you must give permission for Microsoft to collect certain data and your PC usage, including your location, search history and calendar details. If you prefer not to share this data, click **Decline** when asked to opt out. You'll then have a short wait while Windows configures your PC, before you are greeted by the Windows 10 desktop.

ROLLBACK TO WINDOWS 7

After upgrading to Windows 10 you can revert to Windows 7 should you need to retrieve a file (after January 2020 you should then upgrade again). In Windows 10, click **Start > Settings > Recovery**, then click **Get started** under **Go back to Windows 7** and follow the steps. You can do this for up to 30 days after upgrading. You can also use the system image backup you made in step 1 to restore your PC.

Fix Windows 10 upgrade problems

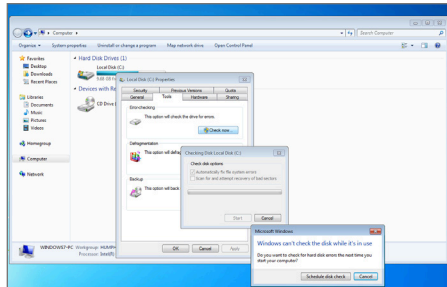
With any luck your upgrade will have gone smoothly but, if you're having problems, don't worry – there are easy ways to solve most common issues

I get an error message when I try to upgrade to Windows 10

If the upgrade fails, freezing and displaying error messages, don't panic: there are a few things you can try. First, make sure you have enough free space on your hard drive – you should have at least 16GB spare. If not, move some files to external drives and uninstall programs (see page 10).

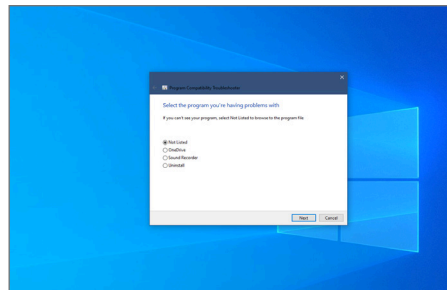
Check your hard drive for errors, too. Open **Computer**, then right-click your **C: drive** and select **Properties**. Click the **Tools** tab, then click **Check now > Start > Schedule disk check** and restart your PC. Any errors should be fixed automatically.

When your computer restarts, unplug any extra hardware – printers, external drives and USB sticks, for example – then run Windows Update several times until you're sure there are no more updates to install. Finally, restart your PC and try upgrading to Windows 10 again.



My programs no longer work in Windows 10

If you're using older programs under Windows 10, compatibility issues could prevent them running correctly – or even at all. If so, click **Start**, type **compat** and press **Enter**. Click **Next** to see if Windows 10 can detect the problem automatically. If the program in question is listed on the next screen, click to select it, then click **Next**. Otherwise, click **Not Listed > Next > Browse** and look for the **exe** file of the program – you should find it in the **C:\Program Files** folder. Click **Next**, then select **Try recommended settings**. If this doesn't help, run the tool again and select **Troubleshoot program** for more options.



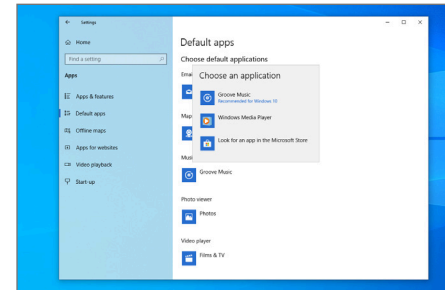
DID YOU KNOW?

If your PC is experiencing a problem, try Windows 10's troubleshooting tools to fix problems automatically. Click **Start**, type **trouble**, then click the **Troubleshooting settings** link.

My files open with the wrong programs

When you double-click a file – an MP3 music file or JPG photo, for example – Windows opens the file in its associated program. The trouble is, Windows 10 often changes the associated programs to common file types, so when you double-click the file it opens in an alien program – often one of Microsoft's own built-in apps, such as Groove Music – instead of the one you're expecting.

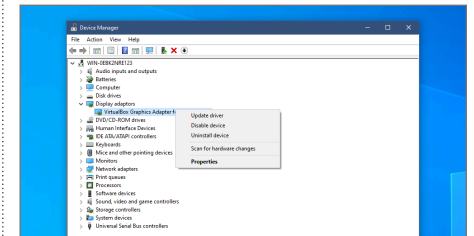
Click **Start > Settings > Apps > Default apps**. Click the icon under the category you want to change – Music, for example – and a list of alternative programs and apps you have installed will be displayed. Click the program you want to switch to; for instance, we're switching from Groove Music to Windows Media Player.



My hardware doesn't work properly after the upgrade

As with software, it's possible that hardware (like your screen or printer) designed to work with Windows 7 might cause problems after upgrading to Windows 10. You could, for example, find that your screen is skewing or displaying in an oddly stretched manner, or that you have no sound. External devices might not work properly, either – you could have problems printing. Updating drivers should resolve these issues; right-click **Start** and select **Device Manager** from the pop-up

list. Click the category of device you're having problems with – for example, click **Display adaptors** if the issue is your screen. Now right-click the device listed and select **Update driver**, then click **Search automatically for updated driver software**. If Windows can't find a more up-to-date driver for your hardware, visit the manufacturer's website to find one yourself – most hardware manufacturers provide these via the Downloads or Support section of their website.



GET MORE HELP

Which? Tech Support members can get expert technical support and buying advice for computers, printers, tablets, smartphones, TVs, broadband and more. Subscription costs £5 per month (£6 for non-members). Visit try.which.co.uk/tech-support or call 029 2267 0000.

Get started with Windows 10

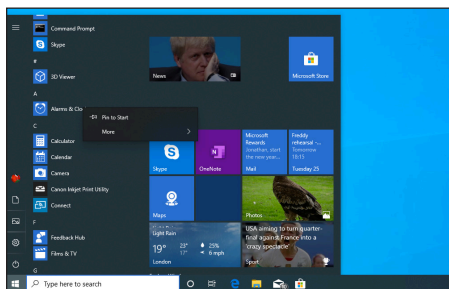
Whether you've upgraded to Windows 10 or bought a new PC, it's time to find out how Microsoft's latest operating system works. Here we explore how to sign in, browse programs and files and find your way around

Setting up an account

Unlike Windows 7, users can sign in to Windows 10 with a Microsoft account, which will allow you to access a number of Microsoft services, including Outlook.com webmail, Xbox and OneDrive online storage. If you don't have a Microsoft account, you can sign up for one at account.microsoft.com. If you prefer to sign in with an offline account, click **Start > Settings > Accounts**, then click **Sign in with a local account** instead and follow the steps.

Using the Start menu

To customise the Start menu, scroll through the apps and programs on the left until you find one for which you want a shortcut. Right-click and select **Pin to Start** – a tile for the program will appear in the right-hand pane. You can rearrange the tiles by clicking and dragging them. Right-clicking a tile gives more options – such as resizing it or switching the Live Tile function (where it displays live information) on or off.

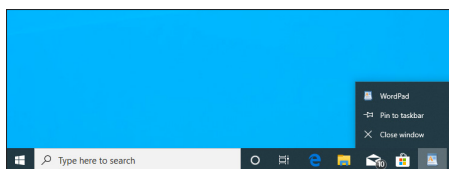


Using the taskbar

The taskbar runs along the bottom of the screen. On the left is the **Start button** and **Search bar**. The circular icon next to the Search bar is the **Cortana button**. Click this to ask Cortana a question or change the digital assistant's settings. The icon to the right is the **Task View button**. Click this to view all the program windows currently open and your Timeline – which lists your recent activity.

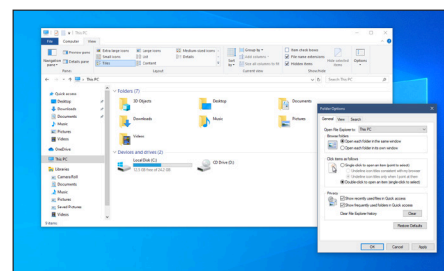
By default, there will be shortcuts for Edge, File Explorer and the Microsoft Store on the taskbar. You can add further useful shortcuts by opening a program – WordPad, for example – then right-clicking its taskbar icon and selecting **Pin to taskbar**.

On the right of the taskbar is the Notification area, which shows the date, time, volume controls (the speaker icon) and icons for other programs that run in the background, such as anti-virus software – click the **up arrow** to see more. Click the **speech bubble icon** on the far right to reveal recent notifications and shortcuts to useful settings.



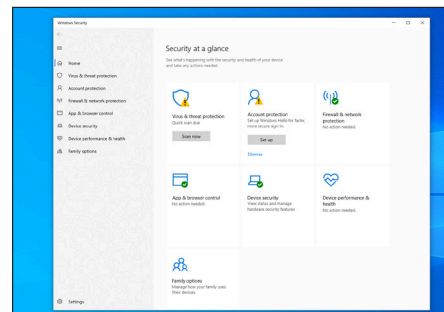
Using File Explorer

Open File Explorer from its taskbar icon to browse all the files on your hard drive. By default, it shows the Quick access view, with frequently used folders at the top and recent files at the bottom. For a more traditional view of your PC's drives and user folders, click **This PC** on the left. If you'd prefer this view permanently, click **View > Options** and select **This PC** from the **Open File Explorer** to menu, then click **OK**.



Using Windows Security

In a recent Windows 10 update, Microsoft consolidated all its built-in security tools into a new app called Windows Security, which can be accessed by clicking the shield icon in the notification area (on the right of the taskbar) or selecting **Windows Security** from the Start menu app list. The app opens on a Security at a glance screen (below), showing your PC's status and any issues



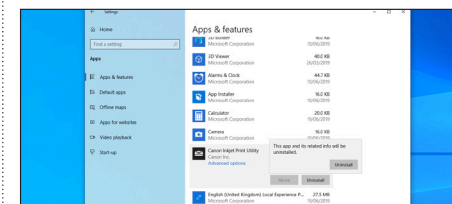
needing your attention. Individual security tools appear on the left – click one to see its settings and options. For example, if you want to scan your PC for malware, click **Virus & threat protection**, then click **Scan now**.

Using the Microsoft Store

The Microsoft Store is a built-in app that allows you to buy and download apps, games, movies, TV shows and more. You can access it via the taskbar icon if you are signed in with a Microsoft account. Click the **Search icon** to find something by keyword or browse by category by clicking the headings at the top.

Uninstall apps and programs

Click **Start > Settings > Apps**. Click any apps or programs you no longer want and click **Uninstall > Uninstall** to remove them. You can also uninstall software by right-clicking on its icon in the Start menu list and selecting **Uninstall > Uninstall**.



FIND OUT MORE

For more expert tips, tricks and tutorials on how to use Windows 10, as well as simple solutions to other technology problems, visit our Tech Support site at [computing.which.co.uk](https://www.computing.which.co.uk).

Jargon buster

■ **32-bit/64-bit** Older computers run on 32-bit systems, while newer PCs run on 64-bit systems

■ **Antivirus** Software that scans for viruses and other malware, and removes them from your computer

■ **App** (Short for application). A small program installed on mobile devices and newer versions of Windows.

■ **Back up** Making copies of your files to keep them safe in the event that the originals are lost, destroyed or stolen

■ **Digital assistant** A voice-controlled computer system, such as Cortana on Windows 10, Alexa on Amazon Echo devices or Siri on Apple products

■ **Driver** A small piece of software that allows hardware to interact with your computer

■ **Extensions** Small tools that can add extra functions to a web browser, such as an ad blocker

■ **Firewall** A security system that blocks incoming and outgoing connections that may harm your computer

■ **GB (gigabyte)** A measurement of storage space: 1,000 megabytes (MB)

■ **GHz (gigahertz)**

A measurement of processing speed

■ **Graphical user interface (GUI)** The way you control programs using buttons on-screen along with a mouse and keyboard

■ **Hacker** Criminals who use vulnerabilities to gain access to devices and data

■ **Hard drive** A computer's permanent storage. Files and programs are all kept on the internal hard drive, external hard drives can be used for backup

■ **Hardware** The physical parts of a computer and related devices, such as a hard drive, monitor, printer and mouse

■ **High definition** A high-quality video, clearer than older, 'Standard definition' (SD) video

■ **Hybrid device** A device that can work in two different ways, such as a laptop that can be used as a tablet

■ **JPG** A type of image file (pronounced 'J-Peg')

■ **Malware** An umbrella term for viruses, Trojans, ransomware and other malicious programs

■ **MP3** A type of audio file

■ **Operating system** The core software that provides a user interface by which people can interact with their device,

such as Windows on a PC or Android and iOS on mobile devices

■ **Password manager**

A tool that can securely manage and generate passwords and logins

■ **Ram** Your computer's temporary 'working' storage area

■ **Resolution** The amount of detail in an image or displayed on a screen, measured in pixels

■ **Software** A general term for programs and applications that run on computers

■ **SSD** A newer type of storage device, like a hard drive but faster and with no moving parts

■ **System image** A type of backup that takes a snapshot of your entire hard drive, rather than just specific files

■ **TB (terabyte)** A measurement of storage space: 1,000 gigabytes (GB)

■ **USB** A commonly used interface for connecting external devices

■ **Virus** A malicious program that spreads from computer to computer

■ **Web browser**

The software you use to browse websites, such as Edge in Windows 10. Other examples are Chrome, Firefox or Internet Explorer