



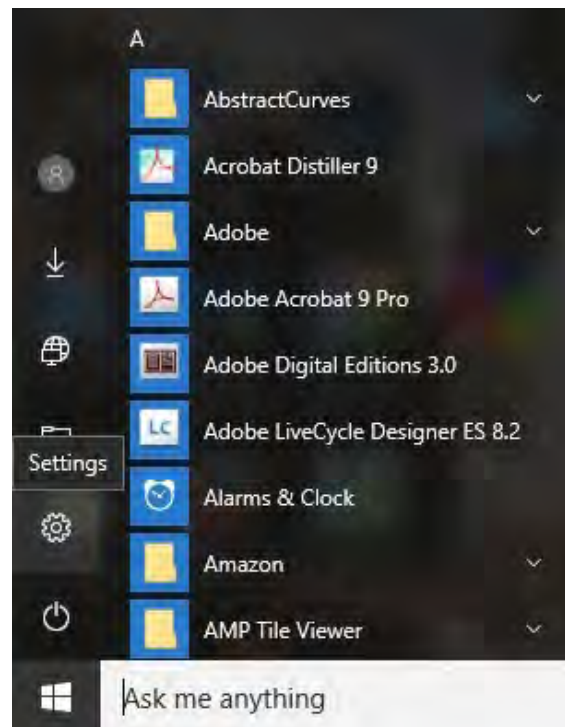
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Taming Windows 10, Part 2

Last month, I told how to turn off some of the Windows 10 annoyances and chimes. The August 10th newsletter covered turning ON the Active Hours feature for limiting what time updates are installed, turning OFF Windows' arbitrary changes to your default printer choice, and adding back your documents and pictures shortcuts.

The Windows 10 Anniversary Update is arriving now, but very slowly; I've only seen a handful of them that arrived automatically. So far, it has only caused one major issue: If you are using a Kindle Fire tablet, don't leave it plugged into a Windows 10 computer; after the Anniversary Update installs, the computer won't start. The workaround is to unplug the Kindle and turn the computer off and back on. Microsoft has announced a patch, which isn't available yet.

In the instructions below, if you have the Anniversary update, the 'Settings' app is reached by going to Start, and clicking the gear icon. If not, click on the word 'Settings'.



Check Browser Defaults

The default web browser for Windows 10 is *Edge*, and it's not ready for use on many websites, including some Microsoft sites. Switching the browser default to Internet Explorer 11 is an easy fix, or, even better, switching to either Google Chrome or Firefox, both of which protect users from evil sites better than Microsoft browsers, which are, in fairness, target number 1 for evil websites.

To change the default browser, goto Settings, System, Default Apps, and in the Web Browser category, click on Edge, and select from the installed browsers in the list that appears.

Shrink that Massive Start Menu

The new Start menu is ignored by most users. It's usable if it isn't enormous, but by default, it's showing far too many apps and advertisements to be useful, and they're in no order, and include advertising for apps with "in-game purchases", like *CandyCrush*. You can drag the icon blocks to any position or order you like, and they'll dock. But first, delete the blocks you won't use, by right-clicking on each, and choosing "Unpin from Start". If you remove enough blocks, the scrollbar will disappear. You can also turn off internet content on items like News, Finance, or Twitter: Right-click any of these blocks, and choose "More >" and then "Turn live tile off". For any tiles you keep, you can change the size, choose "Resize >" and select an option.

There are also settings to keep Windows from adding more tiles and ads to the Start menu. Go to Settings, Personalization, Start. Turn off "Occasionally show suggestions in Start". You might also want to turn off "Show recently added apps".

Reduce the Taskbar Notifications and Chimes

These are the messages, with sound effects, that slide in from the right-bottom of your screen to tell you things or sell you the newest version of Office. Most users can turn them all off; important messages like warnings about missing antivirus software will still appear. To reach these options, right-click on any blank area of the task bar (bottom of your screen), choose Properties, and next to 'Notification area:', click Customize. Change all five Notifications to Off. If you use the built-in app for managing a Calendar, you can leave 'Show app notifications' turned on, but so far, no one I've seen is using it.

Turn off Ads in the Lock Screen

The lock screen is that first photo that Windows shows on startup, with the login prompt. It shows ads occasionally, usually for Microsoft Games, and suggests a visit to the Microsoft store, or asks odd questions. That's an odd location for any of that; they probably got the idea from the Amazon "Kindle with Special Offers", which does something similar.

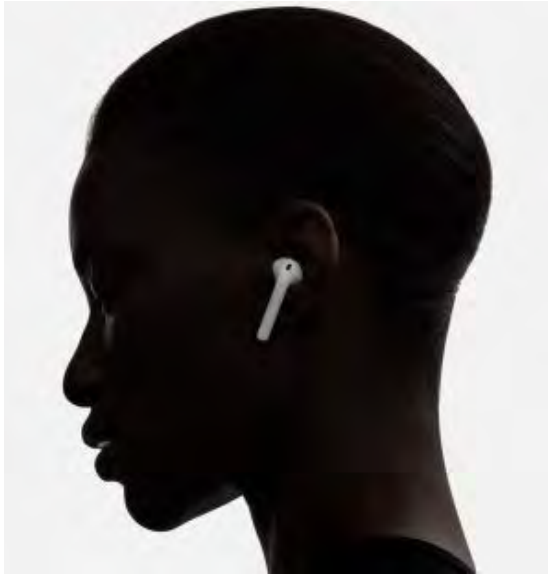
To turn off these annoyances, go to Settings, Personalization, Lock Screen, and change the top item, to either Picture or Slideshow. "Windows spotlight" is the setting that shows ads. On the same screen, set "Get fun facts, tips, tricks, and more on your lock screen" to Off. Important: This setting is reset by installing the Windows Anniversary update, so re-apply as needed.

Apple Announces the iPhone7

The big news on the September 7th announcement from Apple was that the new iPhone won't have an audio jack. People are upset. I disagree; it's overdue. Here's why: Headphone jacks are an analog technology, invented for use by telephone switchboards in the closing years of the 19th Century, and about as reliable as any other electronic technology of that era. I've installed audio jacks in mixing boxes, a long time ago, and they are very simple, and feature a cleverly-designed spring that both creates an

electrical contact and holds in the plug. Nice, for its time.

But they're also not waterproof unless you encase the whole thing in a plastic trenchcoat and galoshes, they don't like dust, and then there's the static. It's time for them to go.



Apple will include wired earphones, now called *EarPods with Lightning Connector*, that connect to the charging port on the new iPhone. That makes them digital, fixes the static issue, and allows Apple to create a water-resistant phone. Or there will be new wireless AirPods, for anyone who wants the "Stereo Ear Antennas" look, all for just an extra \$159. Most of the new Apple products will become available in October.

Do You Have a Website? Expect Fake Complaints.

The newest malware circulating in large volume this past month has been an email asking why there is a credit card charge from (your website address here), in the amount of \$263.48, and here's a screenshot... But the 'screenshot' is an attached 'DOC' file, containing macros (program code!), and it will infect your computer if you open it in Word. I've received exactly the same message, except for the address of the site, for two different sites, from 5 different email senders, either fake or malware-infected 'spam-bots'. Just delete them without opening.

There's more on how to recognize evil email here, on my blog at Startupware.com:

<https://www.startupware.com/identification/social-engineering-doc-file/>

Automatic Patching

Browsers and free software from the internet needs to be kept up-to-date; these popular programs include Adobe Reader and Flash, Java, Firefox, Chrome, dozens more. We have a program to automate that, and if you're running many machines, call for details. But if you're running just one computer, you can do it yourself with a program that scans for needed updates and installs what you need.

Right now, the easiest way to scan a Windows computer for needed updates, and install them in one step, is the free program *Patch My PC*. Download it, run it, and it will show you, in green, what programs you have that are on the list it knows about, and are up-to-date, and in red if there are patches needed. There's one button to click to install all the updates, and they're mostly done using silent installs, as they would be on a corporate network, so there is nearly no "click next" to deal with. Run it around once per month.

Patch My PC is here:

<https://patchmypc.net/download>