THE TASKBAR: A TOOL FOR UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF WINDOWS 10

The Taskbar, the information-rich bar that typically appears at the bottom of most desktops, can become a launchpad to virtually every place you will want to go as you manipulate Windows 10. This document will provide seventeen stepby-step strategies for unlocking the operating system's secrets.

1. Customize the Taskbar's Location and Appearance

Just as in older versions of Windows, you can customize the taskbar in Windows 10 in the following ways:

- Lock the taskbar so that other users can't change it.
- Set the taskbar to auto-hide.
- Set the taskbar to use small buttons.
- Change the taskbar's location on the screen from the bottom to the top, or to the left or right of the screen.
- Set how taskbar buttons appear (either always combined with the labels hidden, or combined only when the taskbar is full, or never combined).
- Set whether to use the Peek feature to preview the desktop when you move your mouse to the Show Desktop button at the extreme right end of the taskbar.

To customize the taskbar format, follow these steps:

- 1. Right-click on the Taskbar.
- 2. Click on Taskbar Settings.
- 3. Set how you want the taskbar to behave by checkmarking the available settings.
- 4. Close the Taskbar dialogue screen.

An alternative approach: Go to Settings (Windows + I) > Personalization.> Taskbar.

2. Disable the Task View to Reduce Clutter

There is a **Task View** button that provides an overview of all your open windows and virtual desktop features. When it is enabled, the Task View button will always appear to the immediate right of the search bar/icon.

This feature is enabled by default. If you'd like to disable it, just right-click on a blank area of the taskbar and deselect the *Show Task View button*.

An old-fashion way to accomplish seeing all your open windows is to press the Alt key together with the Tab key.

3. Conversely, if you keep the Task View enabled you will be able to take advantage of the Timeline Feature

The **Timeline feature** keeps track of <u>every</u> file you open <u>and every web page you</u> <u>visit</u> while using your Edge browser. With this feature, you can also access previous tasks up to 30 days later.

The Timeline should be enabled by default. However, if it is not, Open Settings (Windows + I) > *Privacy* > *Activity History* on the left side of the window. Then, look at the middle column of the *Activity History* window. To be able to use the *Timeline* feature, you have to check the box that says "*Store my activity on this devise*." Also, you have to select at least one user account to use with the *Timeline*. The *Timeline* will then record and show the activities that you performed while connected to that user account.

4. Don't have the Search Box add to the clutter; replace it with a smaller magnifying glass. Also, decide if you want to enable Cortana

To change the Search tool from the wide search box to the small icon that looks like a *magnifying glass*, right-click on the Search box that is showing, move up to *Search* then over to *Show search icon*. By doing so, you will be provided with more longitudinal free space on your Taskbar.

If neither the search box nor search icon is showing, right-click on a blank area of the Taskbar and move up to *Search*, then over to *Show search icon*.

If **Cortana** is enabled, a small circle icon will appear next to the search box/icon near the far left side of the Taskbar. When you click on the Cortana icon, you will be invited to *Talk to Cortana*.

If you don't want to use Cortana (many people don't like it), turn it off by rightclicking on the Taskbar and deselecting *Show Cortana button*.

5. Activate the Jump List.

Jump lists allow you to see recent documents from apps that are pinned to your Taskbar. For example, if you have Microsoft Word pinned to your taskbar you can see recent open files simply by right clicking its icon on the Taskbar. To activate the Jump List:

- 1. Go to Settings (Windows + I).
- 2. Click on Personalization.
- 3. From the left column, click on Start.
- 4. Turn ON Show recently opened items in the Jump List....

6. Pin Important Apps to the Taskbar

Most of us like to make sure that anything we use frequently is easily accessible. That's why people place contact telephone numbers on speed dial.

Desktop or Taskbar shortcuts in Windows are like these real-life shortcuts because they are excellent timesavers. By placing shortcuts to your frequently used files, folders, and applications on your Desktop or Taskbar, you avoid having to hunt around for them in the vast recesses of your computer.

You can find the target item listed after clicking the **Start** button. All the applications stored on your computer will be listed here in alphabetical order. Once you find the target application (it may be hidden in a file folder), right-click on it, then click on **More**, then **Pin to Taskbar**. This action will place a shortcut icon on your Taskbar.

Later, this presentation will show you how to pin your favorite websites to the Taskbar.

7. Access 21 Special Controls from the Taskbar

Right-clicking the Start button produces an expanded and specialized set of 21 menu items. (To access the same set of specialized options, press Windows + X.)

Unfortunately, the Control Panel icon is no longer a part of this list. To access it, type "control panel" at the search bar/icon. (see section 9 below)

8. Choose which Special File Folders Appear on the Start Menu

The extreme left column of the Start menu (press Windows key) features the options that are available to you by default. Each can be turned on or off, depending upon which options you wish to use. To control the options, use **Windows key + I**, then **Personalization**, then **Start**. Generally, you will want to

make sure that several of the options listed are turned off. You will want to keep *Show app list in Start menu* and *Show recently opened items in Jump lists*... turned on, .

Now click on *choose which folders appear on start* and select from the 10 folders listed. All the folders listed have value for most users and give you fast access to those folders via the File Explorer.

9. Add the Control Panel to the Taskbar

Do you find yourself accessing the Control Panel periodically to reset some of your computer's 50 settings? If so, why not place it on your Taskbar for easy access?

- 1. From the Search bar, type *Control Panel*.
- 2. Right-click on the Control Panel icon that appears at the top of the column.
- 3. Select Pin to Taskbar.
- 4. The Control Panel icon will appear on the Taskbar as a light blue rectangle.
- 5. Now you can access the control panel whenever you want without all the mouse manipulation.
- 6. If you ever want to get rid of it, just **right-click** and select "**Unpin from taskbar**".

10. Pin File Explorer to the Taskbar

File Explorer is one of the most important locations within Windows 10. It is there that you will locate all your drives, folders, and files. It is there that you will determine where your folders and files are stored.

- 1. From the Search bar, type *file explorer*.
- 2. Right-click on the file explorer icon that appears at the top of the column.
- 3. Select Pin to Taskbar.
- 4. The file explorer icon will appear on the Taskbar as a manila folder.
- 5. Now you can access the file explorer whenever you want without having to remember the Windows + E shortcut!
- 6. If you ever want to get rid of it, just **right-click** and select "**Unpin from taskbar**".

11. Pin Edge to the Taskbar

By default, Microsoft Edge is on the Taskbar; however, if it's missing, follow these steps:

- 1. Click on the Start Menu.
- 2. Click on the **M** folder.
- 3. Find and right-click on Microsoft Edge.

4. Click on More, then on Pin to Taskbar.

12. Add a Favorite Website to the Taskbar

Follow these steps to place a favorite website on the Taskbar:

- 1. Open your Edge browser.
- 2. Click on the plus + sign at the top of the site.
- 3. In the *Search the Web* box, type the target website.
- 4. Once you have accessed the website from within the Edge browser, click on the menu tab (3 horizontal dots) in the upper right corner of the browser window.
- 5. Click on *More Tools*, then *Pin to taskbar*.
- 6. Your favorite website will now appear on the taskbar.

13. Add a Favorite Website to Your App List

Follow these steps to place a favorite website on the Apps list:

- 1. Open your Edge browser.
- 2. Click on the plus + sign at the top of the site.
- 3. In the Search the Web box, type the target website.
- 4. Once you have accessed the website from within the Edge browser, click on the menu tab (3 horizontal dots) in the upper right corner of the browser window.
- 5. Click on Apps.
- 6. Click on *install this site as an app*.
- 7. The website will appear in the Apps menu (tap the Windows key to verify)

14. Show Important Application Icons (anti-virus and antimalware programs) on the Taskbar

You can easily tweak which application icons appear in the Taskbar's systray.

- 1. Right-click any open area on the Taskbar and then click "Taskbar Settings."
- 2. On the taskbar settings page, scroll down toward the bottom and click the "Select which icons appear on the taskbar" link.
- 3. You'll see a list of application icons. Toggle each one on or off to suit your needs. As you toggle them, the representative icons will either appear or disappear from the system tray.

15. Show Important System Icons (clock, volume, network, etc.) on the Taskbar

You can easily tweak which system icons appear in the Taskbar's systray.

1. Right-click any open area on the Taskbar and then click "Taskbar Settings."

- 2. On the taskbar settings page, scroll down toward the bottom and click the "Turn system icons on or off" link.
- 3. You'll see a list of system icons. Toggle each one on or off to suit your needs. As you toggle them, the representative icons will either appear or disappear from the system tray.

16. Determine which Quick Actions you want to have access to via the Action Center (Windows + A).

The Action Center (located in the far right corner of the Taskbar) gives access to frequently used settings called Quick Actions (of which there are 15). You can easily collapse the settings tiles down to one row of four tiles using the Collapse caret. To change which four Quick Actions appear when you do this, you can go to Settings (Windows + I) >. System > Notifications & actions > Edit your quick actions > left drag and drop the tiles into new locations.

17. Show the Touch Keyboard Button on the Systray (only for computers with touch screens)

- 1. To place the Touch Keyboard Button on the Taskbar's Systray:
- 2. Right-click on a blank area of the Taskbar.
- 3. Click on Show Touch Keyboard Button.

18. Add a Splash of Color to the Taskbar

Live Tiles bring the Start Menu to life, but it might not feel personalized to your tastes until you've given it a fresh coat of paint. By default, the Start Menu is set to ignore the color you chose when you set up your Windows 10 user account, so the first priority is to amend that option.

To do so, navigate to **Settings** > **Personalization** > **Colors**. First, turn off the *Automatically pick an accent color from my background*. Now, scroll down to the toggle switch marked *Show color on Start, taskbar and action center* and make sure that it's set to On. You'll then be able to select from a variety of different swatches.