

# THE TASKBAR IS YOUR VEHICLE FOR MASTERING WINDOWS

A Three-Hour Hands-on Class

Presented by Bill Wilkinson

## FIFTEEN INDIVIDUAL STEP-BY-STEP UNITS

### 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, follow these steps:

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

An alternative approach:

Go to Settings, then Personalization, then 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. Don't have the Search Box add to the Clutter**

To change the Search tool from the wide search box to the smaller circle, right-click on the Search box that is showing, move up to Cortana, then over to *Show Cortana icon*.

If neither the search box nor search icon is showing, right-click on the Taskbar area immediately to the right of the Start button, move up to Cortana, and select Show Cortana icon.

If Cortana is enabled (which is the default), both the search box and the small circle will state: *Ask me anything*. The small circle icon is replaced by a small magnifying glass icon when Cortana is disabled.

If Cortana is disabled, both the search box and the magnifying glass will state: *Search Windows*. Internet searches will be handled by your favorite browser and search engine.

### **4. 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 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.

Practice by executing this example.

#### ***PLACE A SHORTCUT FOR THE WEATHER APP ON THE TASKBAR***

- a) Click on the **START** button (or press the Windows key).
- b) Find the **Weather** application.

- c) Right-click on **Weather**.
- d) Click on **More**.
- e) Click on **Pin to Taskbar**.
- f) Press the **ESC (ESCAPE)** key in the upper left corner of your keyboard to close the menus. (As an alternative click on the part of the Desktop that shows in the background behind the open menus.)
- g) A shortcut for **Weather** now appears on your Taskbar.

#### ***PLACE A SHORTCUT FOR THE NEWS APP ON THE TASKBAR***

Follow the instructions for the Weather app listed above.

### **5. Access 20 Special Controls from the Taskbar**

Previously, when you right-clicked on an object on the Desktop, a vertical context menu would appear which gave you a choice of actions to take. In Windows 10, right-clicking the Start button produces an expanded and specialized set of 20 menu items. (To access the same set of specialized options, press Windows + X.)

### **6. Choose which File Folders Appear on 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 six of the options listed are turned off. You will want to keep *Show app list in Start menu* turned on. Now click on *choose which folders appear on start* and select from the 10 folders listed.

### **7. Add 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.

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 this program from taskbar**”.

## **8. 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.
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**”.

## **9. Pin Internet Explorer to the Taskbar**

1. Click on the Start Menu.
2. Click on the W folder.
3. Find and click on Windows Accessories.
4. Right-click on Windows Explorer.
5. Click on *More*, then on *Pin to Taskbar*.
6. You may wish to reposition the Internet Explorer icon so that it is in close proximity to the Edge browser. (Any Taskbar icon can be dragged and dropped to another position on the Taskbar.)

## **10. Customize the Links Bar to Show Your Favorite Websites**

You can customize the Links bar in Windows provided you add, remove, or rearrange shortcuts to your Favorites and Folders of Favorites from within **Internet Explorer**.

Customizing the Links bar gives you one-click access to your favorite folders and webpages. To manage the Links Bar:

1. Right-click on the Windows Taskbar. Click on Toolbars, and then click Links to select it (a checkmark will be displayed beside it).
2. You will now see "Links" added just to the left of the system tray (Action Center) on the taskbar.
3. To add a website shortcut to the Links bar:
  - a. Access the target website from within **Internet Explorer**.
  - b. Click on the Favorites tab on the Menu bar.
  - c. Click the Add to Favorites Bar.
4. To remove a shortcut from the Links bar: Right-click the shortcut in the Links bar, and then click Delete
5. To rearrange how your Favorites show on the Links bar: on the Links bar, drag a shortcut to a new location.

## **11. 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 *Pin this page to the taskbar*.
6. Your favorite website will now appear on the taskbar.

## **12. 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. In the *Search the Web* box, type the target website.

3. 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.
  4. Click on *Open with Internet Explorer*.
  5. After the Website arrives in Internet Explorer, click on the cog wheel in the upper right corner of the IE browser window.
  6. Click on *Add site to Apps*.
  7. The website will appear in the Apps menu (tap the Windows key to verify)
- 13. Show Important Application Icons (anti-virus and anti-malware 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.

**14. 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.

## 15. 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.

You can also opt to make Start, taskbar and action center transparent with the appropriate toggle switch. These options cater to form, rather than function, so feel free to mix and match as you please until you find a setup that works for you.