

## **TAKE CONTROL OF THE MODERN APPS IN THE START MENU**

Windows 10 Anniversary Update has many worthy enhancements — such as scheduled updating and reboots — but some of the changes can be simply annoying.

For example, Microsoft has made Cortana a hard-to-remove fixture in Version 1607, even though most people don't want to have conversations with their computers.

Win10 also comes with numerous modern apps that many Windows users will never use. Unfortunately, some of those applications are also difficult to remove. But fortunately, there are ways to do so.

### **Removing unwanted modern Win10 applications**

In Windows 1511, applications you rarely or never used are relatively hidden in the separate All apps menu. They're effectively out of sight and out of mind.

But in Win10 1607, Microsoft made the full All apps list far more prominent — it shows up whenever you open the Start menu. Sadly, that's a "feature" you can't change, though you can make the list shorter and more focused to your needs.

The first and easiest step for removing unwanted apps from the Apps list is to simply uninstall them. You can, for example, remove the introduction item Get Started by simply right-clicking it and selecting Uninstall. (Note: In some cases, the uninstall option is hidden under "More.") Other candidates for quick removal from a typical desktop system include: 3D Builder, Food & Drink, Health & Fitness, Money, and Sway — essentially any app you'll never use.

Other native apps are more difficult to remove from the Apps list. For example, you may have no need for the Camera app. And you don't want Groove Music because you have iTunes and VLC Media Player installed. But Win10 offers no easy way to ditch Camera or Groove Music. To do so requires delving into Windows PowerShell.

### **Use Powershell to Hide or Remove Apps**

Microsoft has made it simple to remove the more cosmetic items attached to Windows 10, but you'll quickly find that not all apps are considered equal. Those apps Microsoft considers part of the core Windows 10 experience will require you to use the PowerShell to hide, or remove them. Others, such as Cortana simply

cannot be 100% removed from your system. You can disable Cortana, but your Start menu search function will cease to work well.

The PowerShell is an important part of the Windows command line. In this case, you can use the PowerShell to either hide or remove the apps installed with Windows 10. Open the PowerShell command line by typing **PowerShell** into your Start menu search bar. The best match should be Windows PowerShell. Right-click and select Run as Administrator.

Next, you need to decide which apps you want to remove, one at a time. The PowerShell can remove any package ranging from the Zune Music Player, to Bing Health and Fitness, to the Microsoft Windows Calculator. Not everyone will want to remove each feature, but a large proportion of them can be removed.

Entering the following code into the PowerShell will hide each application you enter.

```
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.ZuneMusic" | Remove-AppxPackage
```

```
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.Music.Preview" | Remove-AppxPackage
```

```
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.XboxGameCallableUI" | Remove-AppxPackage
```

```
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.XboxIdentityProvider" | Remove-AppxPackage
```

```
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.BingTravel" | Remove-AppxPackage
```

```
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.BingHealthAndFitness" | Remove-AppxPackage
```

```
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.BingFoodAndDrink" | Remove-AppxPackage
```

```
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.People" | Remove-AppxPackage
```

```
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.BingFinance" | Remove-AppxPackage
```

```
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.3DBuilder" | Remove-AppxPackage
```

```
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.WindowsCalculator" | Remove-AppxPackage
```

```
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.BingNews" | Remove-AppxPackage
```

```
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.XboxApp" | Remove-AppxPackage
```

Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.BingSports" | Remove-AppxPackage  
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.WindowsCamera" | Remove-AppxPackage  
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.Getstarted" | Remove-AppxPackage  
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.Office.OneNote" | Remove-AppxPackage  
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.WindowsMaps" | Remove-AppxPackage  
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.MicrosoftSolitaireCollection" | Remove-AppxPackage  
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.MicrosoftOfficeHub" | Remove-AppxPackage  
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.BingWeather" | Remove-AppxPackage  
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.BioEnrollment" | Remove-AppxPackage  
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.WindowsStore" | Remove-AppxPackage  
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.Windows.Photos" | Remove-AppxPackage  
Get-AppxPackage -name "Microsoft.WindowsPhone" | Remove-AppxPackage

Hiding has the obvious advantage of obscuring apps from your view that you will never use without actually deleting them from the system, meaning you can relocate them at any time.

If you change your mind, most of the modern apps that you have hidden or removed can be downloaded from the Microsoft Store.

## **Disable Cortana**

In early editions of Windows 10, it was easy to disable Cortana with just a couple clicks. Now, Microsoft is so committed to having its Win10 users use Cortana that it is impossible to disable Cortana in the Anniversary Edition (1607) without venturing into the Registry.

Standard warning: Registry Editor is a powerful tool and misusing it can render your system unstable or even inoperable. This is a pretty straight-forward hack and as long as you stick to the steps, you shouldn't have any problem.

Follow these steps to open the Registry Editor:

1. Press Windows+R on your keyboard.
2. Type *regedit* in the search box and press Enter.
3. Click *yes* at User Account Control.

Navigate to the following key in the left column:

Expand **HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE**

Go down the list to find and Expand **SOFTWARE**

Go down the list to find and Expand **Policies**

Go down the list to find and Expand **Microsoft**

Go down the list to find and Expand **Windows**

Go down the list to find and Expand **Windows Search**.

If you don't see a "Windows Search" folder below the Windows folder, right-click the Windows folder and select New > Key. Name it "Windows Search".

Right-click the "Windows Search" folder in the left pane and select New > DWORD (32-bit) Value.

Name the value **AllowCortana**. Double-click it and set the value to "0".

You can now close the registry editor. You'll have to restart your computer before the change takes effect.

To undo your change and restore Cortana in the future, you can just return here, locate the "AllowCortana" value, and delete it or set it to "1".

Note that with Cortana disabled, you should now be limited to local-only searches — which many Windows users prefer.

### **Decluttering the taskbar**

With Win10 (Anniversary Edition 1607), the taskbar properties have been moved into Settings (Personalization/Taskbar). There, you'll find the usual options such as using small taskbar buttons and automatically hiding the taskbar — though you have separate settings for hiding the taskbar in desktop and tablet modes.

Scroll down the Taskbar window to the Notification area section. Two links to check out are "Select which icons appear on the taskbar" and "Turn system icons on or off." The former lets show or hide apps that can appear in the notification

area. You can, for example, keep the Volume icon visible but hide Network or OneDrive. Note that third-party apps might also show up on the list.

"Turning system icons on or off" gives more system-centric options. You can, for instance, show/hide Clock, Power, and Location icons. You can even hide the Action Center. Oddly, there is some overlap between the two lists; Volume and Network show up in both. And some icons still show up in the "Show hidden icons" section.

### **Personalize the Start Menu**

When you're done tweaking the taskbar, take a few minutes to run through your Start options (Settings/Personalization) — including the "Choose which folders appear on Start" link.