

50 Best New PC & Web Shortcuts

Speed up everything you do on your PC. Jonathan Parkyn

reveals how to customise your programs

and cut down on clicks

WINDOWS SHORTCUTS

1 Create a customised Start menu folder of shortcuts

What's handier than a desktop shortcut? A shortcut to *all* your favourite shortcuts, that's what – especially if they're all available direct from your Start menu.

To do this, create a folder in `C:\Users\username\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\`

WHAT YOU CAN DO

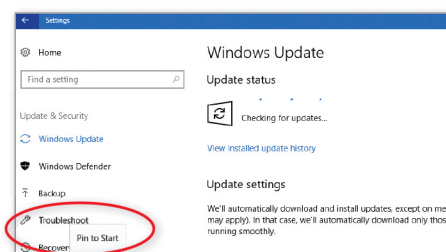
- Perform faster and more accurate searches in Windows
- Browse emails more quickly in Gmail by switching on its preview pane
- Colour-code folders to distinguish one from another at a glance
- Pin your favourite tools for quick access

`Windows\Start Menu\Programs` and call it 'My Shortcuts' or something similar.

Then drag and drop shortcuts to your favourite tools and files into the folder. The folder will now appear in the left-hand programs section of the Start menu – click it to reveal all your custom shortcuts. If your AppData folder is hidden, open File Explorer, click View, Options, then click the View tab and select the 'Show hidden files, folders and drives' option, then click OK.

2 Solve problems instantly in Windows 10 Creators Update

The Windows 10 Creators Update (CU) groups all of Windows 10's troubleshooting tools in one place in the Settings app. This is handy, but you can make it *even* quicker to access these tools when something goes wrong by pinning a



Pin your troubleshooting tools to the Start menu for quicker access

shortcut to the whole group to the Start menu. Click Start, Settings, 'Update & security', then right-click Troubleshoot and select 'Pin to Start' (see screenshot above).

3 Make searches more accurate

By default, Windows Search ignores the contents of compressed archives (such as

ZIP files) when you're carrying out a search. To save having to hunt through archived files yourself to find what you need, open File Explorer, click View, Options, then the Search tab. Tick 'Include compressed files' (and 'Always search file names and contents' while you're here – see screenshot right), then click OK.

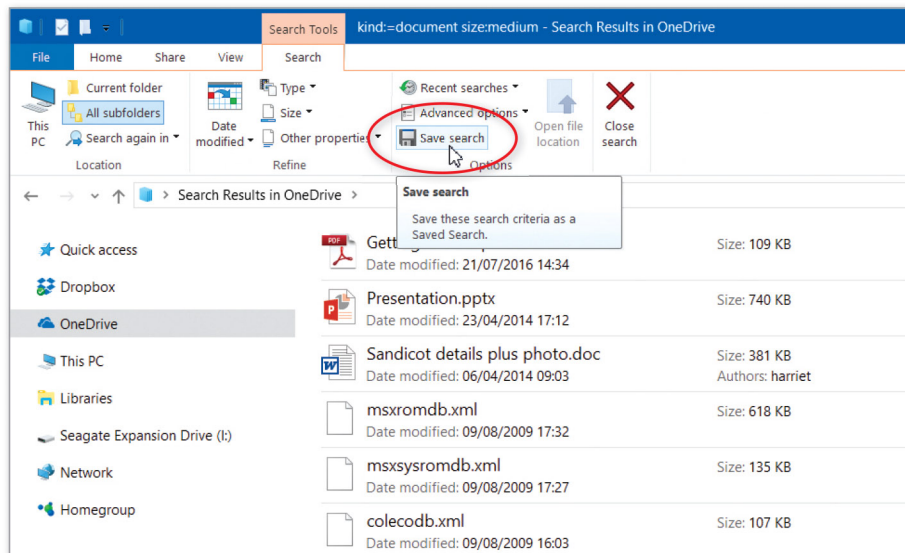
4 Find items quicker using Windows search tools

To save you wasting time sifting through dozens of search results, use File Explorer's Search Tools to find files faster. If you know roughly where the file is – in your Documents folder, for example – navigate to it, then click in the Search box at the top right and type a search term. The Search Tools will appear in the toolbar (if not, click the Search tab on the left). Click Kind, Size, 'Date modified' or 'Other properties' and choose criteria to narrow your search, then press Enter.

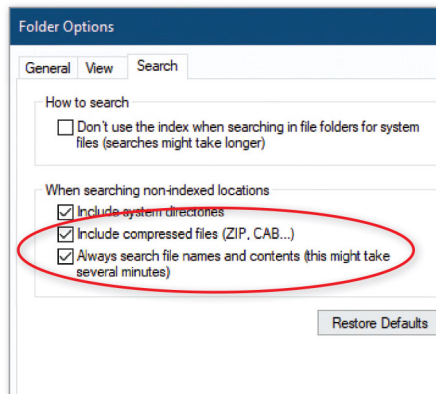
5 Save search criteria to use again

Find yourself looking for the same type of files over and over again? You can create a shortcut to your own custom searches to help you quickly find similar files in the future.

Follow the steps in the previous tip, then click 'Save search' in the Search Tools Options section (see screenshot below). Type a name for your custom search, then click Save. To make it even quicker in future, create a 'Quick access' shortcut to your saved searches. Navigate to the C:\Users\your username folder, then right-click Searches and select 'Pin to Quick access'.



Save your search criteria to re-use when looking for similar files in the future



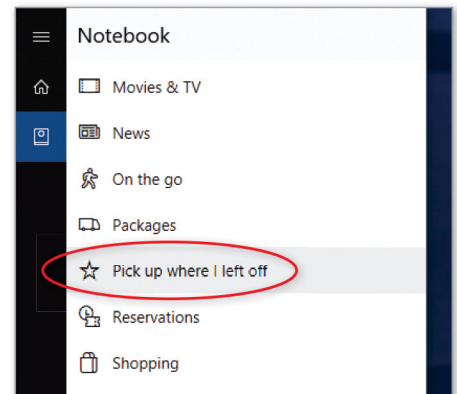
Tick these options so your searches have a better chance of finding the right file

6 Pick up where you left off on another Windows 10 PC

The CU introduced a useful time-saving feature called 'Pick up where I left off', which lets owners of multiple Windows 10 PCs quickly continue tasks – such as browsing a website in Edge – on another computer. The feature is currently hidden. To unlock it, click in the taskbar Search box, then click the settings (cog) icon and select 'English (United States)' as Cortana's language (UK English doesn't support the feature yet). Now click in the Search box again, click Notebook, then click the 'Pick up where I left off' option (see screenshot above right) and switch it on. You'll need to do this on all your PCs. To pick up a task on another PC, click the speech bubble in the Action Center.

7 Create your own custom 'Send to' shortcut

You can add any shortcut you want to Windows' right-click 'Send to' menu. If you're forever moving photos to your Pictures folder, for example, create a shortcut to that folder (right-click, then



Carry on working at the point you finished on another PC by switching this option on

click 'Create shortcut'). Next, open File Explorer type `shell:sendto` in the address bar and press Enter. Drag and drop your shortcut here.

From now on you can right-click any file and select Send to move it instantly to your Pictures folder – or whichever location you've added.

8 Scroll any open window without having to click it first

Windows 10 has a very handy feature that lets you scroll any open window, even if it's not 'active' – in other words, you don't have to click the window before you scroll it. This can save a lot of time if you're working simultaneously on a web page and a document, for example. To enable this, click Start, Settings, Devices, Mouse, then switch on 'Scroll inactive windows when I hover over them'.

9 Launch a new window of any open program

If you click the taskbar icon of a program that's already running, Windows will switch to that program. But if you hold down the Shift key and click a taskbar icon, Windows will open a brand new window of the program. It's a great, fast way to open a fresh browser window, Word document or File Explorer pane.

10 Automatically clean up the Downloads folder

Clearing out unwanted files from your Downloads folder used to be a drag, but Windows will soon do it automatically. The upcoming Windows 10 Fall Creators Update (due in September) brings with it a great new feature that lets you tell Windows to delete any unused files in your Downloads folder automatically. Simply click Settings, System, Storage, 'Change how we free up space', then tick the 'Delete files in the Downloads folder that haven't changed in 30 days' option. ▶

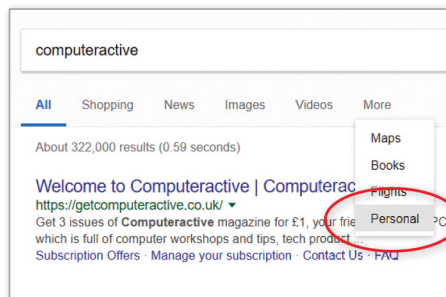
SPEED UP GOOGLE

11 Enable 'Quick access' in Google Drive

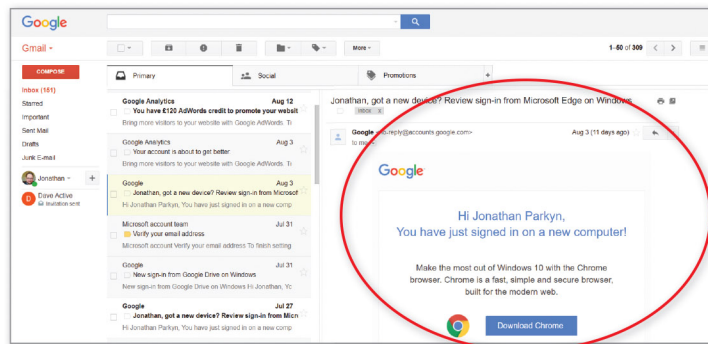
'Quick access' presents you with shortcuts to your most used or most recent files on your Drive homepage. Previously only available on Android/iOS, this time-saving feature is now also available in the web version of Drive, and gives you direct access to the files you need most. Click the cog icon, Settings, General, then tick 'Make relevant files readily available when you need them'. Click Done, then refresh the page.

12 Quickly search your own stuff

There's a quick new way to search all your personal Google content, including your Gmail conversations and Google Photos images. Google has introduced a new Personal search tool alongside its classic All, Images, Maps, Videos and News searches. To find it, make sure you're signed in with your Google account, then search for a term and click More, then Personal (see screenshot below).



Search your Gmail inbox from the Google search bar using the Personal option



Save time when navigating Gmail by viewing your emails in a preview pane

13 Instantly share your photos

If you store your photos in Google Photos, you may already use its sharing tools to provide friends and family with access to specific albums. But the new 'Share your library' tool lets you share your entire library (or selected sections of it) with one other person (such as your spouse or partner) on an ongoing basis, so you so you won't have to keep sharing separate albums with them going forward. Log in, click the hamburger menu, then 'Share your library' to get started.

14 Quickly open duplicate tabs in Chrome

There are times when you want to explore other sections of a website while keeping open the page you're currently looking at. You could open a new tab and then navigate to the same site or you could just right-click the tab you're on and select Duplicate. Doing so will open a fresh copy of the same web page in a new tab.

15 Process your emails in Gmail faster

Trawling through emails can be a real drag, but the Auto-Advance Gmail Labs tool can make it quicker by letting you control what happens when you delete, mute or archive an email conversation. To install it, click the cog icon, Settings, then Labs. Enable Auto-advance, then click Save Changes. Next, click General and you'll see a new Auto-advance option. You can set Gmail to 'Go to the next (newer) conversation', 'Go to the previous (older) conversation', or 'Go back to the threadlist' (your main inbox).

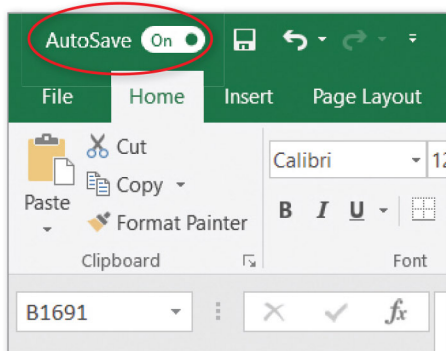
16 Enable Gmail's hidden preview pane

Tired of clicking 'Back to Inbox' when you want to return to your inbox after reading an email? Gmail's hidden preview pane (see screenshot above) can speed up the process by letting you read messages without leaving your inbox. Open the Labs as described in the previous tip, enable 'Preview pane', then click Save Changes.

OFFICE SUITE SHORTCUTS

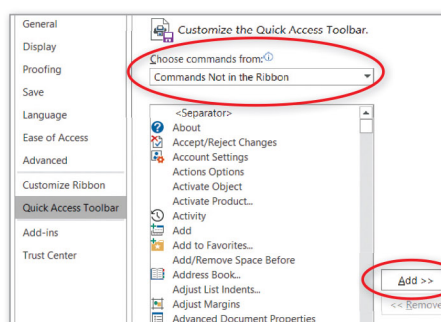
17 Enable Excel's new AutoSave function

If you use Office 365, there's a new feature in Excel (and PowerPoint) called



Use Excel's AutoSave feature in Office 365 to save every change you make instantly

AutoSave, which automatically saves your work as you make changes. Simply switch on the AutoSave slider at the top left (see screenshot left). Not only does this eradicate the need to constantly keep



Add the Word and Excel tools you use most to the Quick Access Toolbar

clicking Save, but it also effectively eliminates the risk of a program or system crash wiping out all the work you've done since you last saved. There are a couple of small caveats. Firstly, you need the very latest version of Office 365 (in Excel click File, Account, Update Options, Update Now), plus you need to be working on a spreadsheet that's stored in your OneDrive.

18 Create shortcuts to favourite tools and settings

You may already use Microsoft Office's Quick Access Toolbar (the selection of icons in the top-left corner of every Office program, including Word and Excel). By default, it only contains options for Save,

Undo and Redo, but you can add a shortcut for any frequently used function by right-clicking it on the Ribbon and selecting 'Add to Quick Access Toolbar'.

You can add functions that won't let you right-click by clicking the small down arrow next to your current Quick Access icons and selecting More Commands. In the window that opens, select 'Commands Not in the Ribbon' from the 'Choose commands from' dropdown menu, then click your chosen function and click Add, followed by OK (see screenshot below left).

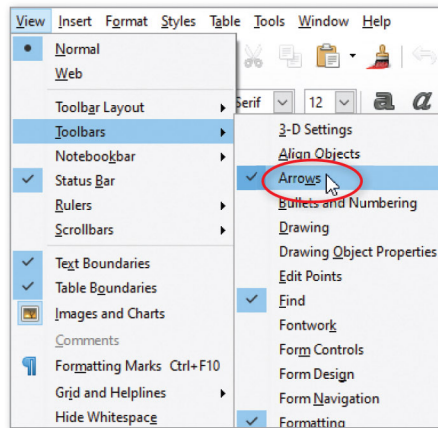
19 Put the Get Office tool to good use

Until recently, the Get Office app was effectively just an advert for Office 365. But since the Creators Update, for users who already subscribe to Office 365, it's actually become quite useful. Assuming you're signed into Windows 10 with the same account you use for Office 365, you can open the Get Office app to access handy shortcuts to all your recently opened documents, spreadsheets and more – all in one place.

What's more, you can use the app to quickly manage your Office 365 subscription, check your expiry date, install new tools and more without the need to go online and log into your account.

20 Jump to another page in LibreOffice Writer

The latest version of LibreOffice (5.3) has a new feature in Writer that lets you



Make short work of adding arrows to LibreOffice documents with the Arrows toolbar

quickly navigate between pages in longer documents. Click Edit, 'Go to Page' (or press Ctrl+G) to open the 'Go to Page' box. Type the page number you want to access, then click OK.

21 Scroll more quickly in Calc using your cursor keys

The latest version of LibreOffice Calc lets you scroll through lengthy spreadsheets quickly using the cursor (arrow) keys. Previously, the cursor keys navigated one cell at a time, but you can switch between this setting and scrolling longer sections by switching Scroll Lock on and off on your keyboard.

22 Highlight certain parts of Writer documents

Focusing your reader's attention to certain sections in your LibreOffice

MS OFFICE MUST-KNOW KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

F4 – Repeats the last action you carried out – whether that was making text bold, changing the font size, and so on – on the currently selected text.

Shift+F7 – If you're lost for words, this will open the Thesaurus.

CTRL+F6 – Lets you switch between any documents you have open.

Shift+F3 – Selected text will switch between lowercase, all caps, and title case (capitalising each word's first letter).

Ctrl+Space – Changes the selected text to your document's default size, font and colour.

Ctrl+] – Increases the font size of any selected text (use **Ctrl+[** to decrease it).

Ctrl+; – Enters the current date in an Excel cell (**Ctrl+Shift** enters the time).

Writer documents just got a lot easier with the recent addition of a new Arrows toolbox. Previously only available in Draw and Impress, the Arrows toolbox can be enabled by clicking View, Toolbars, then Arrows (see screenshot above). Click an arrow style, then click and drag to add the arrow to your document.

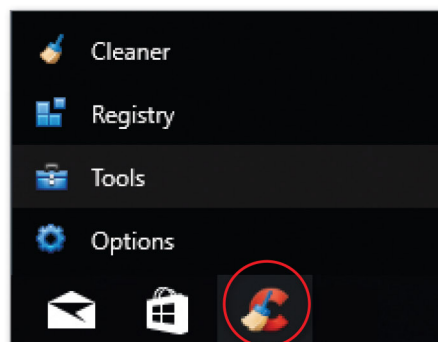
PC CLEANING

23 Locate specific junk files fast in System Ninja

The latest version of System Ninja Free (3.1.8, www.snipca.com/25324) has a hidden shortcut to a handy new feature that lets you search scan results for specific files. Click Scan For Junk as normal, then press Ctrl+F and type the name of a particular file or folder to see if it's about to be cleaned.

24 Make CCleaner display the tools you need

Save time by going straight to the tool you want in CCleaner (www.snipca.com/25298) – Cleaner, Registry, Tools or Options – by right-clicking its shortcut on your taskbar (see screenshot above right). To enable this, open CCleaner, click Options, Advanced, ensure Enable Windows Jump List Tasks is ticked. Now

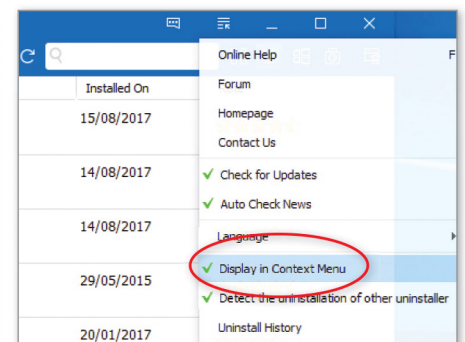


Open CCleaner at the tool you want by right-clicking its icon on the taskbar

right-click the CCleaner taskbar icon and select 'Pin to taskbar'.

25 Remove any program with a right-click

Click the Menu button in Wise Program Uninstaller (www.snipca.com/25299),



Enable this setting to uninstall programs with Wise Program Uninstaller via the context menu

then click the 'Display in Context Menu' option (see screenshot above). From now on you can right-click a program's **executable** (.exe) file or its desktop shortcut to see the option to 'Uninstall with Wise Program Uninstaller'.

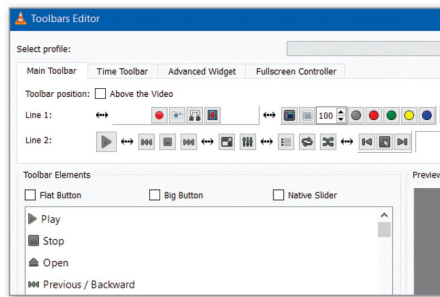
MEDIA PLAYERS

26 Create your own hotkeys in MusicBee

MusicBee (getmusicbee.com) doesn't just support keyboard shortcuts, it lets you choose your own. Click the Menu button, Edit Preferences, then Hotkeys. Click an action, type your new shortcut, click Assign, then Apply.

27 Start Kodi in the mode of your choice

By default Kodi (and the new Kodi Windows Store app – www.snipca.com/25300) shows its home screen when



you launch it. But if you mainly use Kodi for viewing photos, listening to music, and so on, you can set the app to launch directly into the mode you want. Click

Customise VLC's interface so the buttons and features you use the most are easy to access

Settings, Interface Settings, Other, 'Startup window', then make your choice.

28 Customise VLC's toolbars

Add shortcuts to your most-used VLC functions (www.snipca.com/25301) or rearrange toolbars so you can get to tools you need quickly by clicking Tools, Customise Interface to launch the Toolbars Editor (see screenshot) and organising the buttons/functions the way you want.

SECURITY

29 Export your Kaspersky settings to another PC

If you have Kaspersky Internet Security (KIS) installed on multiple PCs, or want to reinstall it on your current PC, you can save your settings to a USB stick to avoid having to set up each PC from scratch. Click Settings, General, Manage Settings (at the bottom right – see screenshot),



Save your Kaspersky settings to a USB stick so you can restore them quickly if necessary

'Export settings', then select your USB stick. To import the settings to another PC, insert the USB stick, then click Settings, General, Manage Settings, then 'Import settings'.

30 Quickly check a program's reputation

In Kaspersky Internet Security, you can click any downloaded program or shortcut and select 'Check reputation in KSN' to see whether it's trusted or not. You need to enable the Kaspersky Security Network (KSN) when installing the program for this to work. If you didn't, you can enable it by clicking Settings, Additional, 'Additional protection', then 'management tools', then clicking Enable

31 Get instant advice on the safety of a program

KIS includes another right-click shortcut that can provide more detailed info about a program – such as possible risks – before you install it. Right-click the program's exe file, then select Kaspersky Application Advisor, which opens a page of details in your web browser.

32 Learn or customise LastPass shortcuts

You can create your own **hotkeys** in LastPass (lastpass.com), which let you speed up many tasks. By default, Alt+G, for example, lets you generate safe passwords, but you can change this. Click LastPass's **extension** icon in your browser, select Preferences, then click Hotkeys.

WEB BROWSERS

33 Get instant info about any website in Firefox

Ever wanted to know more about a site you're visiting? There are ways to check who owns a website, where it's based and more, but this often involves going to another site and searching for information. Flagfox (www.snipca.com/25295) is a recently updated **Add-on** for Firefox that displays a flag icon next to the web address that tells you which country it's based in. A right-click provides shortcuts to domain-ownership data, McAfee SiteAdvisor security information and more.

34 Search Firefox bookmarks using keywords

In Firefox, click 'Show your bookmarks', right-click a bookmark you use often,



Add keywords to your Firefox bookmarks so you can find them faster

then select Properties. Type a memorable keyword in the Keyword box (see screenshot), then click Save. Now you can type that keyword into the address bar and press Enter to go to that bookmark.

35 Quickly manage Edge tabs

The Creators Update brought a range of handy tab-management

shortcuts to Edge, including the ability to close all but the tab you're looking at (right-click the tab, then select 'Close other tabs'), open the same page in another tab (right-click it, then select Duplicate) and a quick way to save tabs for later (click the 'Set these tabs aside' button, at the top left).

36 Enable the hidden Home button in Edge

For reasons that we find hard to fathom, Microsoft disabled the handy Home button in Edge. But if you have a homepage that you regularly return to, you'll probably want to restore this abandoned shortcut. Click Menu, Settings, 'Advanced settings', then 'Show the home button'.

TWEAKS & HACKS

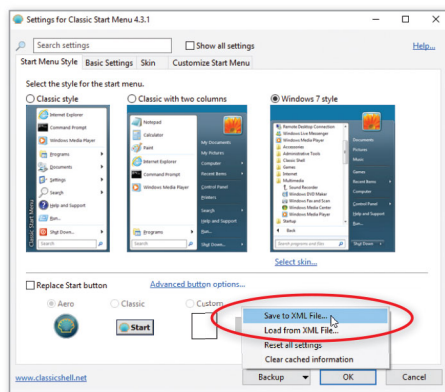
37 Access drives and files via your Start menu

With Classic Shell (classichell.net) installed, you can change your Start menu items so they work as dropdown menus rather than links.

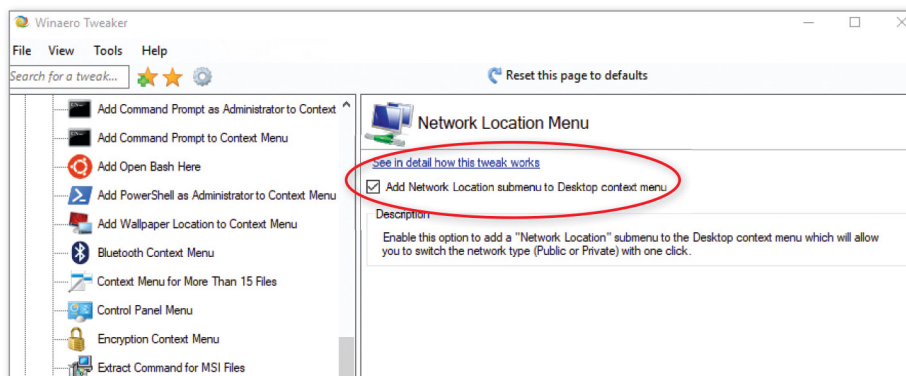
For example, the This PC item can be changed so that it displays a list of drives, rather than opening a separate File Explorer window. You can change your 'User files' folder in exactly the same way. Right-click Start, select Settings, then click 'Show all settings', then click the Customize Start Menu tab, make your changes (see screenshot right), then click OK.

38 Transfer Classic Shell settings to another PC

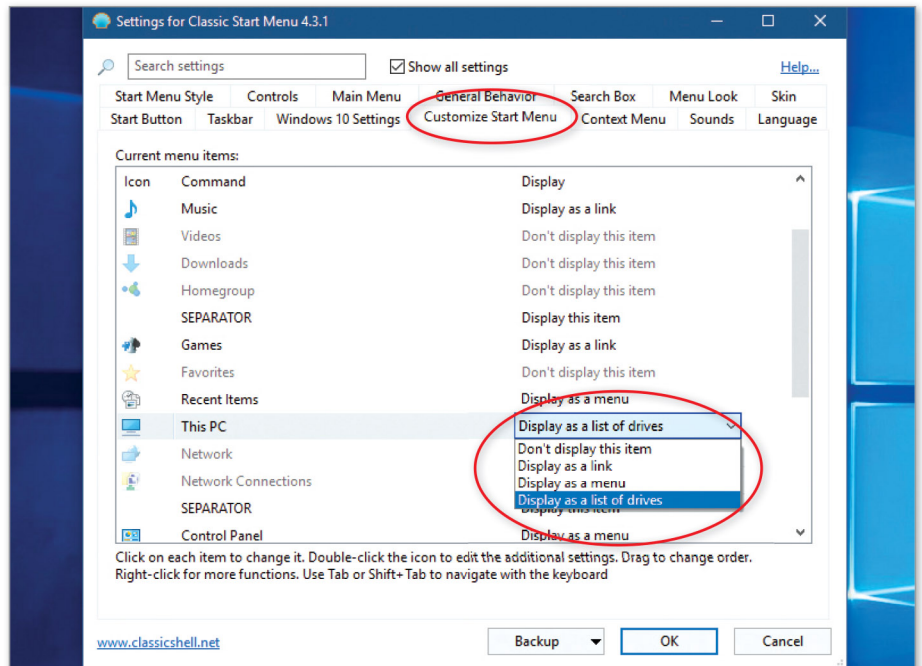
Once you've configured Classic Shell so that your PC works exactly how you want it to, you can export your settings to another computer so that you don't waste time having to set up the second one. Right-click Start, select Settings, then click Backup, 'Save to XML File', then save it to a connected USB stick. On your other PC, install Classic Shell, then click Backup, 'Load from XML File' and select the backup on your USB stick.



Back up and transfer your Classic Shell settings instantly using this shortcut



Access your network security options from your desktop with a right-click using Winaero Tweaker



Customise the Start menu so you can access your hard drives with just a couple of clicks

39 Change network location setting in a click

The latest version of Winaero Tweaker (www.snipca.com/25297) includes a very handy option for quickly changing your network location type from Private to Public – ideal if you often connect your laptop to a Wi-Fi hotspot outside of your home.

Scroll down to Context Menu, then click Network Location Menu and tick the 'Add Network Location submenu to Desktop context menu' (see screenshot below). To change between Public and Private networks, right-click your desktop then select Change Network Location.

40 Enable File Explorer's autocomplete function

Autocomplete saves you time by predicting what you're typing as you

type. It works in the address bar and the Run command box, as well as in Save and Open boxes within programs. Though useful, it's disabled by default. You can enable it in Winaero Tweaker (see previous tip). Open the program, scroll to File Explorer, click Enable Auto Completion, then tick 'Enable Auto Completion in File Explorer', sign out of your PC, then sign back in.

41 Add a right-click shortcut for the Snipping Tool

The Snipping Tool is awkward to launch in Windows, but Winaero Tweaker (www.snipca.com/25297) lets you add it to your right-click menu, so that you can quickly capture something on-screen. In Winaero, click Context Menu, then Snipping Tool Menu to enable it. In Windows 10 Creators Update, it provides a sub-menu link to 'Capture a portion of your screen', so you don't even have to launch the Snipping Tool.

42 Restore 'Open command windows here' shortcut

Recent versions of Windows 10 have removed this from the Shift-right-click menu, but Winaero Tweaker lets you put it back – and you can even add it to the standard right-click menu, making it even quicker to reach. Scroll to Context Menu, and enable 'Add Command Prompt to Context Menu'. You can also add the admin prompt here if you want.

PHOTO TOOLS

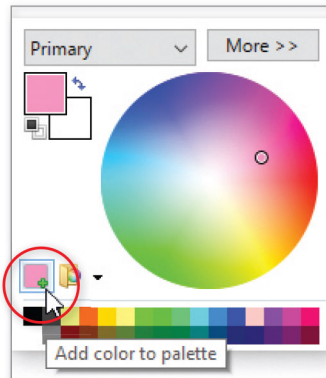
43 Choose your own default tool in Paint.net

By default, Paint.net (getpaint.net) will launch with Paintbrush as the active tool, but if you frequently use a different tool – the Pencil or the Rectangle Select tool, for example – you can save time by setting this as the default tool instead. Click Settings, Tools and choose your preferred option from the ‘Default tool’ menu. You can choose other toolbar defaults here as well.

44 Save your own colours to Paint.net’s palette

If you have a colour that you frequently

use, you can add it to Paint.net’s colour palette for easy access. Use the colour wheel to choose the colour you want to



Add your most used colours to Paint.net’s palette

save, click the ‘+’ button (see screenshot), then click a colour in the palette that you want to replace. You’ll see that the colour you selected is added to the palette.

45 Quickly re-enable Windows Photo Viewer

By default, Windows Photo Viewer is disabled in recent versions of W10. It’s possible to re-enable it via Windows’ settings, but to do so is a faff. Ultimate Windows Tweaker 4.3 (www.snipca.com/25307), provides a quick shortcut for re-enabling it. Open Tweaker, click Additional (on the left), then click Enable Windows Photo Viewer.

FILES & FOLDERS

46 Launch PeaZip in a location of your choice

When you open PeaZip (peazip.org), it automatically displays the contents of whichever folder you last accessed with the program. But you can save time by making it open to a folder of your choosing – one that you frequently use for compressing files, for example. In PeaZip, click Options, Settings, Advanced, ‘Start from’, then choose Custom, select your folder, then click OK.

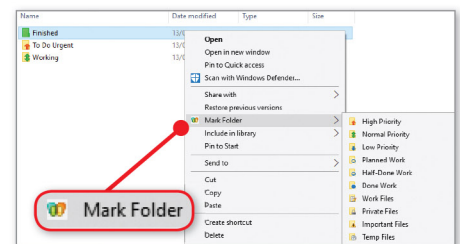
47 Colour-code folders to show their status

If you’re embarking on a large job such as archiving your photo folder, for example, you can mark folders and sub-folders to

distinguish those you’ve finished with and those still on the to-do list. With Folder Marker Free (www.snipca.com/25302) installed, right-click any folder, select Mark Folder (see screenshot), then click Colors to choose a colour, or click a priority level, such as Planned Work.

48 Open last File Explorer window from taskbar

In Windows 10, if you have more than one File Explorer window open and you click its taskbar icon, you’ll see thumbnail previews of all instances. You then have to click again to open the one you want. But with Ultimate Windows Tweaker 4.3 (www.snipca.com/25307) you can specify that clicking File



Use Folder Marker Free to colour-code folders according to their status

Explorer’s taskbar icon instantly switches to the last active window, making it quicker to return to the File Explorer window you were just using. Click Customization, File Explorer, tick Make Taskbar Button Switch To Last Active Window, then click Apply Tweaks.

TROUBLESHOOTING

49 Scan for system file errors

If your PC is behaving erratically, you can launch Command Prompt or PowerShell, then type `sfc /scannow` to scan for (and replace) corrupted system files. Ultimate Windows Tweaker 4.3 (see previous tip)

offers a quicker way to do this – click the link to this function on its launch screen.

50 Run PC health checks

Many of Windows’ more powerful troubleshooting tools are only available via complex system

commands. But a new tool called Sys_Minion (www.snipca.com/25308) provides shortcuts to a number of these tools via a simple user interface. You can clean up your hard drive, clear out surplus and out-of-date drivers, run a health check and more. 

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