

Windows 8 Cheat Sheet

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Whats Hot

- Microsoft has issued an emergency security patch after it found components of the Flame malware were signed with one of its trusted digital certificates that “chained up” to the Microsoft Root Authority. Microsoft has also released a Windows Update patch that customers are advised to install immediately.
- LinkedIn Passwords Stolen - It emerged that hackers were working to “crack” a list of 6.5 million out of 150 million LinkedIn profiles. Web security experts galore quickly warned users to change their passwords for other services if they had reused the same one across the web as the hackers took control. And still LinkedIn’s public relations team remained silent.



Windows 8 - What you need to know!

Windows 8, let me guess, that’ll be the follow-up to Windows 7?

Yup, you got it in one.

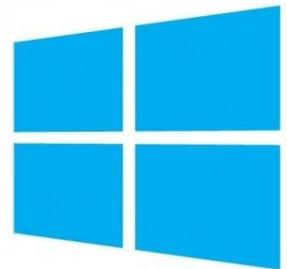
OK, so basically same stuff, different number, am I right?

Not quite: Windows 8 differs quite radically from what comes before. Windows president Steven Sinofsky claims that Windows 8 represents a “*generational change*” for Windows, *the likes of which has not seen since the release of Windows 95*.

How so?

Well for a start it’s designed to run

on more than just a PC. Windows 8 is made to run on both laptop and desktop computer and tablet hardware, scaling its interface to different screen sizes.



Windows 8 logo

But Windows 7 tablets didn’t exactly take over the world...

True, Microsoft knows this and is aware that as tablets fly off the shelves it needs to have a viable operating system in the slate space. The problem with Windows 7 on tablets is that it was first and foremost a desktop OS, with tiny fiddly icons designed for a mouse pointer and not chubby fingers. That’s why, with Windows 8, Microsoft has devised a tile-based interface called Metro that is designed around touch.

Metro - So what’s it got to offer?

The interface is based around interacting with tiles, basically large icons whose size makes them easy to touch. These tiles can be tapped or clicked to run local or web apps, or to go to websites. Tiles can be swapped in and out of blocks, for instance to build blocks of apps or

sites that are most commonly used, or related to specific topics like work. Tiles also link to online services like the Windows Store, where users can buy new Metro apps, and system settings like Control Panel.

Certain tiles can be set up to display dynamic information. For instance an RSS reader tile can display the latest story in the feed or a calendar tile

could show your next appointment. In this way real time information can streamed straight in to the Metro start screen.

Navigation of the Metro start screen is well-suited to touch, with users able to drag and pinch-and-zoom to manoeuvre through blocks of tiles and to rearrange tiles by dragging and dropping, or resizing them with their fingers. Edges of the screen also

Windows 8 - Cheat Sheet

play an important role, bringing up bars for quick interactions with the system or an app, and a touchscreen keyboard can also be summoned to enter text.

Navigating the apps themselves is again designed to work well with touch, with easy to hit icons and tiles, and single gesture swipes to perform tasks such as flicking through running apps or shutting down an app.

What if I just want to use it on a bog standard laptop?

Then you can use mouse and keyboard to navigate Metro. Some users of the developer's build of Windows 8 complained that Metro is not intuitive without a touchscreen, but Microsoft has sought to address this with a host of mouse and keyboard shortcuts. For example mousing to the corners of the screen allows for fast navigation, and apps, files or settings can be called by typing a name, or just the first letters of the name, into the Metro start screen. Also all of the hotkeys from Windows 7 work in the Windows 8 interface. Microsoft's goal with Windows 8 is, after all, for it to be as easy to use on a tablet as on a PC.

What happened to the old Windows desktop?

It's still there but as a Metro app,

as Windows 8 users log into the Metro start screen. The Desktop app is a full-screen Windows 7-style desktop, with the usual Recycle Bin, Internet Explorer, Windows Explorer, and taskbar. On a



The 'Metro' Interface

traditional Intel or AMD-based PC hardware the desktop will run legacy apps, such as those that run on a Windows 7 machine. However ARM-based hardware, such as most tablets, will not be able to run third party Windows desktop apps in Windows 8, only Microsoft desktop apps such as Notepad and Calculator.

Does the cloud get a look in?

Of course, online integration is woven throughout Windows 8. On the social side the Metro People app allows contacts from multiple sources and social networks - such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn - to be mashed together into a single stream, with live up-

dates from individuals or groups displaying on tiles.

There's also some serious syncing. Sign into Windows 8 using a Microsoft account and it will sync your settings between every Windows 8 machine you use. This will let you share your address book, account details for services like Facebook and Twitter, email and instant messages and the like between different devices. On top of this there's the ability for users to sync apps they've bought from the Windows Store or files stored on Microsoft's SkyDrive service between devices.

When is it out?

There's been no official announcement but reports indicate a release schedule similar to Windows 7, predicting that it will turn up on new hardware in October this year.

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