EFFECTIVE SEARCH STRATEGIES

In Windows 10's earlier build (1511, aka "November build") Microsoft made it possible to have the Start button set to either *Search the web and windows* or just *search windows*. Cortana was there if you wanted it, but it was easy for the user to turn the application off with a checkmark from the Taskbar. With Cortana turned off, the Search button/bar was used to search exclusively within Windows. Internet searches were best accomplished by the use of your favorite browser.

Now with build 1607 (aka "Anniversary update), Microsoft doesn't want you to disable Cortana. You used to be able to turn Cortana off in Windows 10, but Microsoft removed that easy toggle switch from the Anniversary Update. You can still disable Cortana, but it has to be done by modifying the register and that can be tricky unless you use the special method described later in this document. This transforms the Cortana box into a "Search Windows" tool for local application and file searches. You can search the Internet with your favorite search engine.

THE SEARCH SYMBOL: A BOX, A SMALL CIRCLE, OR A MAGNIFYING GLASS

To change the Search tool from one option to the other, right-click on the Search tool that is showing, move up to Search (or Cortana), then over to *Show search (or Cortana) icon* or *Show search box*.

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 Search (or Cortana), and select either the search box or the search icon.

If Cortana is enabled (which is the default), both the search box and the small circle will state either: *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.

CORTANA IS A RESOURCE HOG. YOU MAY WISH TO DISABLE IT

Cortana always launches the Microsoft Edge browser and uses only Bing when you search. That's the good news. The bad news is that Cortana is a resource hog that may slow you down. If that sounds like something you wouldn't want to use, here's how to turn it off.

TURN OFF CORTANA BY SAFELY MODIFYING THE REGISTRY

As mentioned earlier, many Windows 10 laptop and desktop computer users have found it to be a nuisance that consumes an inordinate among of memory, thus slowing down other aspects of the operating system.

The only way to turn off Cortana is to modify the computer's registry. This practice brings with it an important warning: *Changes made to the Windows registry happen immediately, and no backup is automatically made. Do* **not** *edit the Windows registry unless you are confident about doing so.*

By following these steps, you will be able to <u>safely</u> turn off Cortana. It will remain disabled until you turn it on.

1. Click on this link: turn-off-cortana.reg
2. At the bottom of the screen, click *Save as* and send to Desktop.
3. Go to the Desktop (Windows + D).
4. Double-click on "turn off Cortana" icon.
5. At the Open File – Security Warning window, click Run.
6. At the User Account Control window, click Yes.
7. At the Registry Editor, click Yes.
8. At the Registry Editor, click OK.
9. Remove the Turn-off Cortana icon from the desktop.
10. Reboot the computer.
11. Cortana is now turned off.

If you want to turn on Cortana, follow the eleven steps above, except in step 1 use turn-on-cortana.reg.

In either case, this change applies to all user accounts on the PC you're configuring. Sign out and sign back in and you'll notice that the text in the search box has changed from "Ask me anything" to "Search Windows." Clicking in the search box displays only a simple prompt. In addition, Cortana's Notebook is unavailable, only a few settings are available when you click the gear icon, and there's no option to search the Web from the search box.

FIND AN APPLICATION, A SETTING, OR A DATA FILE
From the Search box that's tucked into the lower left corner of the Taskbar, you can start typing the name of an application, setting, or file in order to access it. For example, type the word "Windows," and you'll see tiles among the search results for Windows Defender, Windows Media Player, Windows Firewall, and similar

applications with the name "windows" contained within. The search results will appear in the column immediately above the search box.

Note that across the top of the column, you will have several filters (apps, settings, documents, folders, photos, videos, and music) that will assist you in refining your search.

FIND FILES IN FILE EXPLORER

The File Explorer (Windows + E) search bar which is located in the upper-right corner of the File Explorer window, always starts with "Search," followed by your current location in File Explorer. This search bar functions differently from the search bar found on the taskbar. First, you can use File Explorer's search bar only to search for files and folders on your computer. Also, the search is performed only in your current location. For example, if you're in Quick Access and you type the name of a file, Windows 10 searches for it only in the locations found in Quick Access. Similarly, if you go to the Pictures folder and you type the name of a file, Windows 10 searches for it only in the Pictures folder.

FIND SPECIAL SETTINGS AND CONTROL PANEL ISSUES BURIED IN SETTINGS

When you access the Settings window (Windows key + I), don't miss the special search engine that is built into Settings. It can be a treasure trove of hidden features. For example, if you have a Hewlett-Packard laptop computer and would like to turn off the pesky touch pad, type in *touchpad* in the search box and see what you get.