

WINDOWS 10 HAS MORE THAN TWO DOZEN WAYS TO ANNOY YOU: HERE'S HOW TO ELIMINATE THEM

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Windows 10 starts as a very annoying operating system. The Start menu is full of games like Candy Crush, advertisements are all over the place, and useless icons like People litter the taskbar. Here's how to eliminate all those annoyances.

1. Get Rid of Candy Crush, FarmVille, and Other Junk Apps

Windows 10 “automatically downloads” apps like *Candy Crush Soda Saga*, Flipboard, Twitter, and *Minecraft: Windows 10 Edition* when you sign in for the first time. PC manufacturers can also add their own apps and live tiles that appear installed by default. None of these will go away automatically.

These apps are installed as part of the “Microsoft Consumer Experience”. Earlier, there was a group policy setting to disable this, but it was removed from consumer versions of Windows 10. Only Windows 10 Enterprise users—not even Windows 10 Professional users—can turn this off.

Fortunately, you can remove these apps and tiles. To do so, just open your Start menu, locate any apps you don't want to use, right-click it, one at a time, and select “Uninstall.” Apps like *Candy Crush Soda Saga* and *FarmVille 2: Country Escape* will appear on the start screen as tiles by default, but you will need to uninstall them under the start menu to make them go away!

Some apps are simply given a tile on the start screen, but aren't yet downloaded. To remove these tiles, just right-click the tile and select “Unpin from Start.” You won't see an “Uninstall” option because the tiles are just links that take you to the Windows Store where you can download the app.

2. Remove Bloatware

Unwanted or unused software, aka bloatware, are among the biggest factors that slow down any Windows-based system by using disk space and system resources unnecessarily.

Note: Legacy programs (created for Windows 7 and earlier) are easily removed by following the five steps below. Modern apps (created for Windows 8 and after) are more difficult and sometimes impossible to remove.

Removing any of the apps that you can boosts the system's performance, especially if you have downloaded many programs, but rarely use them.

To remove bloatware or unused apps:

1. Right click on start button.
2. Select **Apps and Features** (located at the top of the column).
3. Select **Programs and Features** from the far-right side of the next window.
4. Select the target program, then **Uninstall/Change** to remove programs, one at a time.
5. Follow the instructions in the **uninstall dialog boxes** to uninstall the software.

As mentioned in the paragraph above, it is difficult to uninstall modern apps (those created for Window 8 and 10). However, it's worth a try.

1. Right-click on the Start button.
2. Select **Apps and Features**, like before.
3. Under the Apps and Features column, you will find a list of modern apps, each one of which is installed on your computer.
4. Right-click on any of them, one at a time. If the “uninstall” button is highlighted, it can be uninstalled. If the “uninstall” button is greyed, it cannot be uninstalled.

3. Disable Apps that Run at Startup

Most commonly you may notice Windows running very slow or not responding at startup if there is a huge list of startup programs (apps that start along with the system). These startup **apps slow down the bootup process and degrade the device's performance**. Disabling such apps speeds up the performance of the system and improves the overall responsiveness.

To disable these startup programs:

1. Right click on the Taskbar and select Task Manager.
2. Move to the Startup tab to display the list of startup programs.
3. If you see a program that doesn't need to be there, right-click it and click **Disable**.
4. If you are unsure of what a program does, right-click it and click **search online**.

An alternative approach was introduced in the 1803 build (April 2018):

Windows 10's Settings (Windows + I) > Apps > Startup. now lets you disable the programs that automatically run when you sign in to your computer. In either case, the changes will be made at reboot.

4. Turn off Windows Tips and Suggestions

In an effort to be helpful, Windows 10 will sometimes give you tips on how to get the most out of your operating system. It scans your computer in order to do this, a process that can have a slight negative impact on performance. To turn off these tips, go to **Settings (Windows + I) > System > Notifications & actions** and toggle **Get tips, tricks, and suggestions as you use Windows** to OFF.

5. Disable Background Apps

As with Apps running at startup, apps that run in the background take system resources, heat up your PC and reduce its overall performance. That's why it's better to **disable them to speed up Windows 10 performance** and start them manually whenever necessary.

To disable background running apps

1. From **Settings (Windows +I)**, click on **privacy**.
2. Then click on **Background apps** in the left panel (look lower on the list).
3. Switch off toggles to turn off background apps you don't need or use.

6. Run Performance Monitor

Windows 10 has a useful real-time performance monitoring tool called **Performance Monitor**. It details system and hardware resources, performance issues and services, and also **suggests solutions for the listed problems**.

To check and monitor system performance:

1. Click on the Start button, type *performance*, and hit the enter key.
2. Click on the *performance monitor* button at the top of the column.
3. Select **Reports** on the left, then **System**, then **System Diagnostics** option.
4. The tool will work on your request and gather all the information about your system and **produce a detailed performance report**.
5. Look at the **Warnings** section to find any **issues present on your PC**.

6. Check their descriptions; then use Windows 10's **Troubleshooter** or search the web for their solution.

7. Disable Effects & Animations

Another reason for windows running slowly can be visual effects and animations that **increase the burden on the system resources**. In the latest PCs, visual effects and animations may not cause a huge impact on power and speed. However, in older PCs, these do play a role so **turning them off is your best option to optimize the performance**.

To disable visual effects and animations:

1. Press Win + R, type **sysdm.cpl** and press the Enter key.
2. Move to the Advanced tab and under Performance, click Settings.
3. Under **Visual Effects**, choose the option **Adjust for best performance** (or you may also select **Custom** and uncheck all the checkboxes)

8. Disable transparency

Having the taskbar, start menu, and action center transparent can be good to your eyes, but the feature consumes some of the resources on your PC.

1. You can disable transparency by visiting **Settings > Personalization > Colors**.
2. Turn off the toggle button that says *Transparency effects*.

9. Disable All the Advertisements

Windows 10 is also packed with built-in advertisements. You'll see ads on your lock screen, suggested apps in your Start menu, taskbar pop-ups encouraging you to use Microsoft Edge, and notifications asking you to check out Office 365. Cortana occasionally has messages for you, the Solitaire game includes 30-second video ads, and even File Explorer recommends that you use OneDrive. That isn't even a complete list of all the ads that have been found.

Microsoft scattered the options for disabling these advertisements all over the operating system. Follow these suggestions to disable all of Windows 10's built-in advertising

Disable Lock Screen Ads

Windows 10 now displays ads on the lock screen via Windows Spotlight. Sometimes, Windows Spotlight will just show off interesting wallpapers, but it'll also sneak in advertisements for games like *Rise of the Tomb Raider* and *Quantum Break* available from the Windows Store.

To get rid of these lock screen ads, go to **Settings** (Windows key + I) > **Personalization** > **Lock Screen** and set the background to “Picture” or “Slideshow” instead of Windows Spotlight.

You’ll probably also want to disable the “Get fun facts, tips, and more from Windows and Cortana on your lock screen” option here, too.

Stop Suggested Apps from Appearing in the Start Menu

Windows 10 will occasionally show “suggested apps” in your Start menu. Suggested apps aren’t necessarily free, and Microsoft has used this feature to advertise \$60 PC games from the Windows Store (which, by the way, you shouldn’t buy). But mainly, they just take up valuable space in your Start menu.

To stop suggested apps from appearing in the Start menu, head to **Settings** (Windows key + I) > **Personalization** > **Start** and set the “show suggestions occasionally in Start” setting to “Off”.

Get Rid of Nagging Taskbar Pop-ups Ads

Windows 10 displays taskbar pop-up ads, which Microsoft calls “tips, tricks, and suggestions”. These tips have included recommendations to use Microsoft Edge for better battery life, and an encouragement to use Microsoft Edge so you can earn Microsoft Rewards points. These are just two of the many types of advertising in Windows 10. Here’s how to make it stop nagging you.

Windows 10’s taskbar pop-ups are implemented differently from those Get Office notifications. They’re not generated by the app they’re advertising for, like Edge. Instead, they’re generated by the Windows operating system itself. You can’t just disable those notifications like you would for the Get Office app.

You’ll find this setting in the **Settings** app (Windows key + I) > **System** > **Notification and Actions**. Scroll down to the Notifications section and disable the “*Get tips, tricks, and suggestions as you use Windows*” option.

That’s it. Windows won’t notify you with these “tips, tricks and suggestions” any longer.

Prevent Notification Ads from Appearing

Microsoft has added new “suggestions” that appear as notifications. These ads inform you about various Windows features and appear as normal desktop notifications. For example, you might see a notification telling you to set up Cortana. Like other notifications, they’re also stored in the Action Center so you can see them later.

To disable these “suggestions” that appear as notifications, go to **Settings** (Windows key + I) > **System** > **Notifications and Actions**. Set “*Show me the Windows welcome experience after updates and occasionally when I sign in to highlight what’s new and suggested*” to OFF.

Remove Advertisements from File Explorer

Microsoft has displayed ads pushing OneDrive and Office 365 with a banner at the top of the File Explorer window. These banners can be disabled in File Explorer’s options window.

To disable these options, open **File Explorer** (Windows key + E) > click the “**View**” tab at the top of a File Explorer window > click the “**Options**” button on the ribbon. At the top of the Folder Options window, click the “View” tab. Scroll down in the list of advanced settings and uncheck the “*Show sync provider notifications*” option. Then click OK.

Banish “My Office” Notifications

As mentioned earlier, Windows 10 includes a “Get Office” application that sits there, providing notifications suggesting you download Office 365 and enjoy a month-long free trial.

To stop those Get Office notifications, go to **Settings** (Windows key + I) > **System** > **Notifications & Actions**, scroll down, and set notifications for the “My Office” app to “Off”. You can also simply find the Get Office app in your Start menu, right-click it, and select “Uninstall”. However, it may come back when you update Windows 10 in the future.

10. Disable Live Tiles and Unpin Windows Apps

While you can remove the apps that are installed as part of the Microsoft Consumer Experience program, Windows 10 also includes quite a few apps you cannot uninstall that advertise to you. For example, the *Store* and *Xbox* tiles often make use of the “live tile” feature to advertise apps and games Microsoft wants you to download.

To disable live tiles that advertise to you, right-click a tile and select More > Turn live tile off. You can also just right-click a tile and select “Unpin from Start” to get rid of the tile entirely. You can even choose to unpin all the tiles and only use the All Apps list to launch apps, if you like.

11. Avoid the Built-in Solitaire Game

Stay away from the “Microsoft Solitaire Collection” game preinstalled on Windows 10. This app doesn’t just have advertising—it has video ads that are 30 seconds long. You can avoid the advertising by paying \$10 a year. Microsoft’s

Minesweeper game isn't installed by default, but it too has its own \$10 a year subscription fee. Those are steep prices for games that used to be free.

Play another free Solitaire game instead. Google now offers a solitaire game—just search for “solitaire” and you can play ad-free solitaire in Google’s search results.

There are also completely free Solitaire and Minesweeper games that anybody can access in a desktop browser. They are ad-free.

solitaireforfree.com

minesweeperforfree.com

12. Remove Ads from the Windows Ink Workspace

The Windows Ink Workspace includes its own “Suggested apps” section which advertises pen-enabled apps available in the Windows Store. You can disable these and just visit the Windows Store if you ever want to find more pen-enabled apps.

Go to **Settings** (Windows key + I) > **Devices** > **Pen & Windows Ink** and uncheck the “*Show recommended app suggestions*” option to get rid of these suggested apps ads.

You’ll only see the “Pen & Windows Ink” section in the Settings app if your PC supports pen input.

13. Hide App Suggestions in the Share Pane

Windows 10’s added a new Share pane to File Explorer (Windows key + E). Click the **Share** tab on the ribbon and click the “Share” button to open it and share a file to an installed app.

By default, this dialog doesn’t just list your installed apps—it also shows “suggested” apps Windows wants you to install from the Store. To hide these suggested apps, right-click in the Share dialog and uncheck “Show app suggestions”.

Expect to see Microsoft add more advertising to Windows 10 in future major updates. For example, Windows 10’s Fall 2016 turned more of the default tiles on the Start menu into “sponsored tiles”.

14. Declutter Your Taskbar

Windows 10’s taskbar starts pretty cluttered. By default, you’ll see a Cortana search box, Task View shortcut, People icon, and possibly Ink Workspace and touch keyboard buttons. Shortcuts to apps you may not use frequently, like the Microsoft Store and Windows’ Mail app, are also pinned to the taskbar.

To remove useless icons from your taskbar, just right-click them and use the options in the context menu. Select Cortana > Hidden to hide the Cortana shortcut. Uncheck the “Show Task View Button,” “Show People on the Taskbar,”

“Show Windows Ink Workspace Button,” and “Show Touch Keyboard Button” to hide everything else.

Even after hiding Cortana from the taskbar, you can still search with Cortana by opening your Start menu and typing. You can also still view the Task View interface by pressing Windows+Tab.

To unpin other shortcuts from your taskbar, like the Microsoft Store and Microsoft Edge, right-click them and select the “Unpin from Taskbar” command.

15. Uninstall OneDrive (If You Don’t Use It)

If you haven’t set up OneDrive, you’ll see a pop-up asking you to do so every time you sign in to your PC.

If you don’t want to use OneDrive, you can either stop OneDrive from launching at boot or uninstall it from the Start menu. A OneDrive shortcut still appears in File Explorer’s sidebar after you uninstall it, but you can remove that by editing your Registry (but it is not worth doing).

16. Customize Your Start Menu Tiles

Windows 10’s Start screen is filled with animated live tiles for apps you may not use. Every time you open your Start menu, you’ll see news, weather, new apps in the Microsoft Store, and more.

To make your Start menu less annoying, consider unpinning apps you never use and don’t care about. Just open your Start screen, right-click them, and select “Unpin from Start” to hide them. If you want a shortcut here but don’t want the live tile, select More > Turn Live Tile Off instead.

After you’re done, pin apps you do use to your Start screen. Just right-click them in the Menu list, and then select the “Pin to Start” command. Once they’re pinned, you can move them around by dragging and dropping. In addition, you can make these tiles larger or smaller by right-clicking them and selecting Resize.

You can even resize your start menu to make it larger or smaller—just position your mouse over one of the edges (or the top right corner) and click and drag the start menu to enlarge or shrink it.

17. Optimize Virtual Memory

Virtual memory is a **software-level optimization for improving the responsiveness** of any system. The operating system uses virtual memory whenever it’s short of actual memory (RAM). Although Windows 10 typically manages this setting, **configuring it manually** gives better results.

To manually optimize Virtual memory:

1. Press Win + R, type **sysdm.cpl** and hit the enter key.
2. On System Properties move to the **Advanced** tab.
3. Within the **Performance** box, click **Settings**.
4. On performance options move to Advanced tab and click on the Change button under Virtual Memory.
5. A new virtual memory window appears, uncheck **Automatically manage paging file size for all drives**.
6. **Select** the C: drive and then click the radio button for **Custom size**.
7. Then set the **Initial size (MB)** to the size of your RAM and **Maximum size (MB)** to double the size of your RAM (for ex., if the size of the RAM is 4GB, set the initial size to 4000 MB and maximum size to 8000 MB).
8. Click the **Set** button and then **OK**

18. Use High-Performance Mode

The 'High Performance' mode in Power options helps you make the best out of your PC. The CPU can utilize its full potential, while the high-performance mode prevents various components like hard drives, WiFi cards, etc. from going into power saving states.

To enable High-performance mode:

1. From the search box, type **power**, then click **Power & Sleep Settings**.
2. From the right column, click on **Additional Power Settings**
3. Set Power plan to **High Performance**

19. Disable Search Indexing

Search indexing **improves the search tool's responses** and speeds up searching in Windows 10. It weakens the performance, however, as it runs in the background and **utilizes a lot of system resources**. Owing to this reason, if you do searches occasionally, then it's best to disable it.

To disable search indexing:

Press Win + R, type **services.msc** and hit the enter key.

Scroll down the services list to look for **windows search** and double-click on it. Change the Startup type to manual or Disabled and then stop the service next to service status.

20. Disable Sync Feature

Windows 10 syncs many things like passwords, browser settings, system and language preferences etc. with your Microsoft account. Consequently, this feature **consumes system resources and bandwidth** of your web connection. So, consider disabling the sync feature, if you don't need it, as it helps improve the performance.

To disable the Sync feature:

1. Go to **Settings (Start + I) > Accounts > Sync your settings.**
2. Toggle off the **Sync settings**

21. Use the Free Up Space Now link

Windows 10 has a new, easy-to-use tool for freeing up disk space on your computer. It removes temporary files, system logs, previous Windows installations, and other files you probably don't need.

To find this new tool, go to **Settings (Windows + I) > System > Storage.** Click the *"Free Up Space Now"* link under Storage Sense. If you don't see that option here, the 1803 Update hasn't been installed on your PC yet.

Windows automatically scans your PC for unnecessary data that it can remove to free up space. Unlike the old Disk Cleanup tool, this screen only shows data you can actually remove, and it scans both user files like your Recycle Bin and system data like old Windows installations at the same time.

22. Check Disk Drive Error

With regular read/write operations, power failures and various other issues, **your computer's disks may get corrupted or damaged at certain places that you cannot easily identify.** This would result in a slowdown of the system and **can even cause hangups and freezes.** Here's where you can **run the CHKDSK utility.**

The CHKDSK command is run via the Command Prompt, but you will need to use administrative privileges to properly access it. To launch a Command Prompt, press **Windows Key + X**, and then click on **Command Prompt (Admin)**. You'll be presented with a UAC window requesting permission to launch the Command Prompt as Administrator. Click **Yes** to proceed and you'll see a new Command Prompt window. You can verify that you've successfully granted the Command Prompt administrative privileges by ensuring that "Administrator: Command Prompt" is present in the window's title bar.

From the Command Prompt, type the command "**chkdsk**" followed by a space, then the letter of the drive you wish to examine or repair. In most cases, it's internal drive "C."

Simply running the CHKDSK command in Windows 10 will only display the disk's status, and won't fix any errors present on the volume. To tell CHKDSK to fix the drive, you will need to give it parameters. After your drive letter, type the following parameters separated by a space for each one:

chkdsk C: /f /r /x

23. Run system file checker

Corrupted or missing system files sometimes cause different startup problems and slow down the system performance. **Run The System file checker** (SFC utility) to make sure corrupted or damaged system files are not causing the problem.

Open Command prompt as administrator (see "how to" steps in #24 above), then type **sfc /scannow** and hit the enter key. This will scan for missing or damaged system files. If any are found the **sfc utility** will restore them from a special folder located on %WinDir%\System32\dllcache. After the scanning process is complete, restart Windows. If SFC failed to repair the corrupted system files then **RUN The DISM command**, which will repair the system image and allow SFC to do its job.

24. Skip the Lock Screen

The lock screen shows a nice-looking background image, and you can have Windows apps display information like the weather and any new emails you have on it. All of this can be configured from **Settings > Personalization > Lock Screen**.

However, for many people, the lock screen is useless and just something to click on before you sign in. If you never want to see the lock screen, you can disable the lock screen and have Windows go straight to the sign-in screen when it boots or resumes from sleep.

To disable the lock screen:

1. From the Taskbar's search box type **power**.
2. Choose *Power and Sleep settings* at the top of the column.
3. Click *additional power settings* located in the far right column.
4. Then click on *Choose what the power buttons do*.
5. Next select *Change settings that are currently unavailable*.
6. You can now move down to near the bottom of the screen to find the **Shutdown Settings** section. Removing a tick mark in the box next to the **Lock** option will disable this feature.

25. Automatically Sign in to a LOCAL ACCOUNT without needing a Password (You must have a password for your MICROSOFT ACCOUNT)

Initially, Windows 10 throws up both a **Lock screen** and a **login screen** in front of you before you can access the operating system, but if you don't need to shield your **Local account** from prying eyes, you can bypass both the Lock screen and the login screen entirely.

Follow these steps to **bypass the login screen** and delete the password from a **local account**. You only need to do this function once:

1. Type **netplwiz** at the Taskbar's search box.
2. From the search results that will appear at the top of the column, click on the button for netplwiz.
3. In the User Accounts Control Panel, deselect the checkbox that says "Users must enter a user name and password to use this computer."
4. Click OK.
5. Type your current password once and then again to confirm it.
6. Click OK again to close the User Accounts tool.
7. When you restart Windows, you'll now bypass the Lock screen and login screen and move straight to the Desktop.

26. Silence Notifications

On any device, notifications can be useful—but they can also be very distracting. Windows 10 offers a one-click switch that disables all notifications, and you can also disable notifications for individual applications to prevent them from annoying you.

This will affect every single application that uses standard Windows desktop notifications, including traditional Windows desktop applications. However, some applications use their own custom notification pop-ups, so you can't disable their notifications from here. For those, you'll have to dig into the app's settings.

How to Disable All Notifications

Navigate to **Settings** (Windows key +I)> **System** > **Notifications & Actions**. To disable notifications for every app on your system, turn the *Get notifications from apps and other senders* toggle off.

This option will disable the notifications for both Windows 10 Store apps and classic desktop apps.

How to Disable Individual App Notifications

To disable notifications for individual apps, move to **Settings** (Windows key + I)>**System**> **Notifications & Actions**, and then scroll down to the “*Get notifications from these senders*” list. This list shows Windows system features, Store apps, and traditional desktop apps that can send notifications.

Set an app to “Off” and Windows will prevent that app from showing notifications.

The above options only work for apps that use the traditional Windows notification method. Apps with custom notification bubbles continue to show their own notifications unless you close them or disable the notifications within those specific apps. Most apps that show notifications offer an option to disable them. Just open that particular app and look in its settings window for an option that disables notifications.

27. Make Windows Send Less Telemetry Data to Microsoft

Windows automatically sends some telemetry data to Microsoft, but you can limit what's sent. To do so, go to **Settings** > **Privacy** > **Diagnostics & Feedback** and select the “Basic” level instead of the “Full” level. Your PC will still work normally, but it will send less data to Microsoft.