



The Windows 10 Productivity Handbook

Discover Expert Tips, Tricks, and
Hidden Features in Windows 10

Mike Halsey

Apress®

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About the Author



Mike Halsey was first awarded as a Microsoft Most Valuable Professional (MVP) in 2011. He is the author of more than a dozen Windows books, including *Windows 10 Troubleshooting* (Apress, 2016), *Beginning Windows 10* (Apress, 2015), and *The Windows 10 Accessibility Handbook* (Apress, 2015). He is also the Series Editor and an author for Apress' Windows and Windows Server Troubleshooting books.

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CHAPTER 1



Getting Up to Speed with Windows 10

Do you dream? Do you watch people around you going about their daily tasks, and wonder how they're able to achieve things you can't, be more effective than you can be, or have more time for enjoyment? You're not alone: at some point, everybody will have watched another person achieve what they would consider to be almost impossible.

This happens on a macro level when we see explorers heading into the vast unknowns of the Arctic or the Himalayas. It happens when we watch extreme sports or when someone's latest app has just made them their first million at age 21. It also happens on the micro level when you visit a friend and see just how beautiful and colorful their garden is, or just how they're able to prepare and cook such an amazingly tasty meal from exotic ingredients you've never heard of.

This feeling isn't just restricted to our private lives either. In the workplace, we have all watched a colleague do something, manually or with their PC, that seems to elevate their own work above the people around them, or that saves them huge amounts of time, enabling them to do more, or to a higher standard than you yourself know how.

We all want to be more productive and effective at what we do. Our employers want it, our clients want it, and we want it for ourselves. It makes our work engaging and more understandable, while making us more employable and giving us greater self-esteem.

While I'm afraid I can't help you with either cooking or gardening (much as I wish I could), *I can* help you with your use of Windows 10 at home, at college, and in the workplace.

This book is your cheat sheet, your masterclass, and your easy-to-follow guide on how to achieve those things on your PC that you've seen others do, but that you don't have a clue how to do yourself.

■ **Note** Microsoft regularly updates and refines Windows 10, just as apps are regularly updated. This means that some features or functionality might look different from that described here, or may change slightly after a period of time. It also means that new features or functionality might be added. Fundamentally, however, Microsoft will not change the overall function or discoverability of the operating system or your apps.

Getting Familiar with Windows 10

Windows 10 seems like the logical place to begin this journey. It's the workspace in which everything happens, the container for your apps and files, and the thing you'll spend the vast amount of your time interacting with.

Let's begin by looking at the *lock screen* because it's the first thing you see when you start your PC. In the center of the lock screen is your user photo or avatar, below which is a box asking you for your PIN or password if you have one set up on the PC (see Figure 1-1).

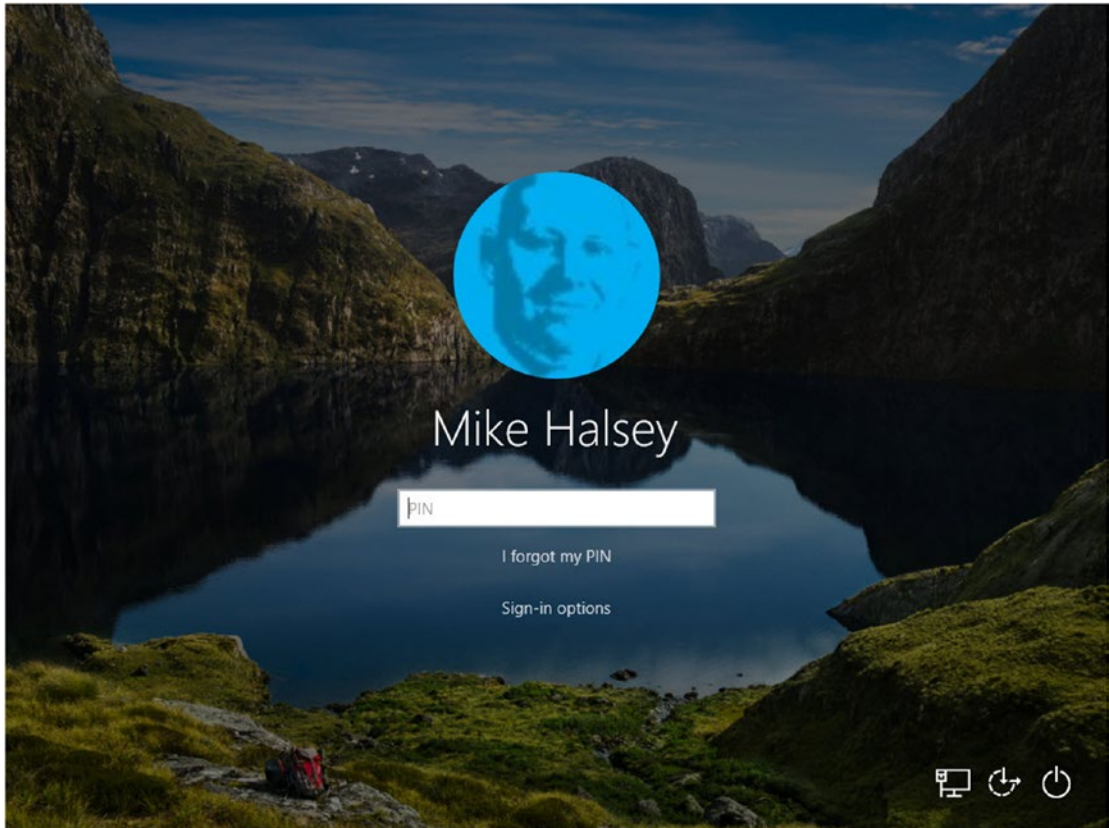


Figure 1-1. The lock screen contains useful options

You can switch between different sign-in methods (PIN, password, and Windows Hello) by clicking the sign-in options. This can be useful because sometimes you might find Windows 10 switches to asking you for a password, when you'd rather sign in with a PIN.

If there is more than one user account configured on the PC, you will see a list of available users listed in the bottom-left corner of the lock screen. You can click a user icon to sign in to the PC as that user instead of the one currently shown in the center of the screen.

In the bottom-right corner of the screen are icons for your network connection (should you need to connect to Wi-Fi), *Ease of Access* (if you need to make Windows 10 easier to use when you sign in), and *Power* (so you can shut down and restart the PC directly from the lock screen).

The Windows 10 Desktop

When you sign in to Windows, you are presented with the Windows 10 desktop—what it offers and how to become accustomed to it. If you look at your own desktop, what do you see? You'll very likely see the *Start menu* and the *taskbar* that runs across the bottom of the screen (see Figure 1-2).

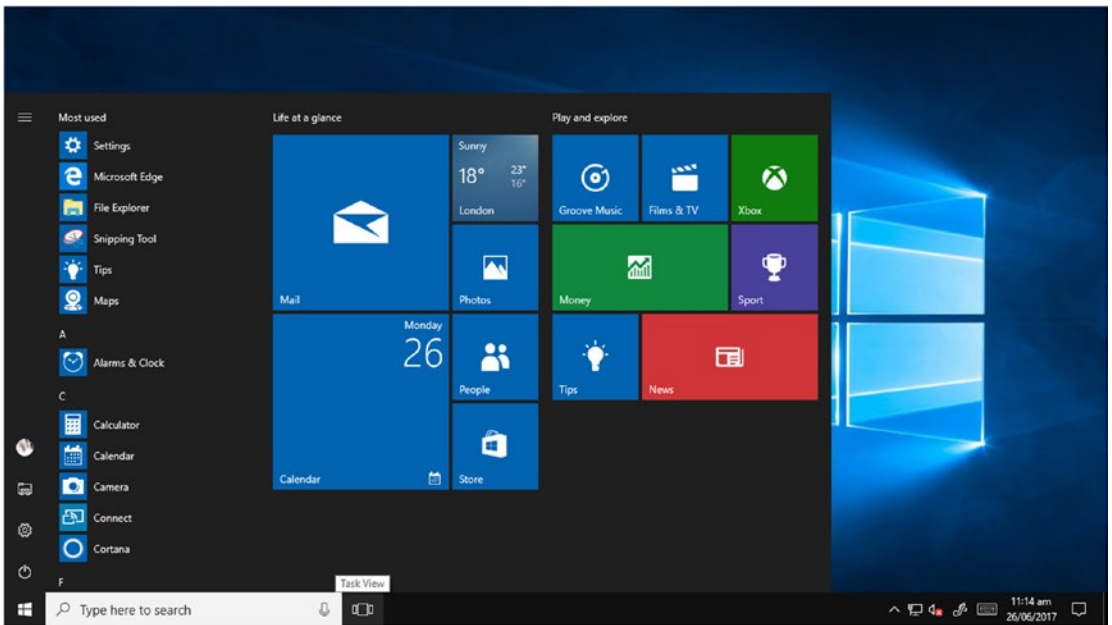


Figure 1-2. The Windows 10 desktop and Start menu

Do you see the other features that can save you time and make you more productive? Because as there are actually more than you might think. Pressing either the Windows icon in the bottom-right corner of the screen or the Windows key on your keyboard opens the Start menu. In the bottom-left corner of the Start menu are icons to sign out of your user account, open Settings (which I'll cover later in this chapter), and restart and shut down the PC.

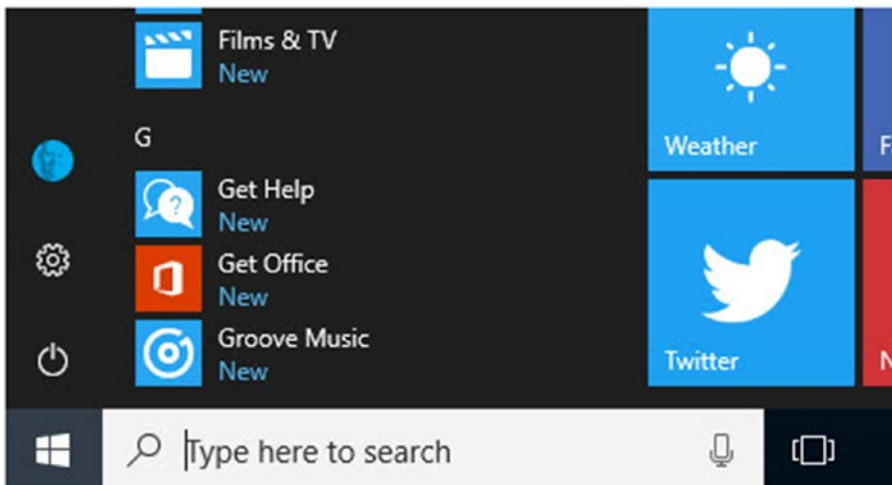


Figure 1-3. You can sign out, restart, and shut down the PC from the Start menu, see Figure 1-4