

# Tips for Navigating the new Windows 8 User Interface

by Roger Bergstein  
Stuart Computer Service  
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The user interface changes to Windows 8 from Windows 7 are perhaps the most significant since the Windows 3.1 to Windows 95 interface changes. Due to the elimination of the Start button, the Windows 8 interface may be confusing, perhaps even daunting, to users who are extremely familiar with Windows versions from Windows 2000 forward.

Here are two tips to keep in mind as you move around the Windows 8 interface: the **Windows Key** and the **Charms Bar**.

**The Windows Key**: Located between the Ctrl and Alt keys on the keyboard, this key was rarely used in prior versions of Windows because it performed the same action as clicking on the Start button. However, in Windows 8 the Windows key is critical to navigating the interface. Think of the Windows key similar to the Home key on an Ipad or Android tablet: it will always return you to the live tile Start screen. (Note that if you depress the Windows key while on the live tile Start screen it will return you to your previous spot).

**The Charms Bar**: By moving the cursor to the top right of the screen you will expose the Charms bar along the right side of the screen. The Charms Bar has 5 icons: Search, Share, Start, Devices, and Settings.

Click on the Charms Bar Search icon to bring up all your applications. If you don't see the app you are looking for immediately, just start typing in the search box. For example, typing "no" without the quotes displays Notepad and Sticky Notes.

Click on the Charms Bar Settings icon. This will expose the settings screen which will enable you to change your computer settings. Note that the settings screen is context sensitive. For example, Charms Bar>Settings from the desktop brings up Control Panel and Desktop Personalization as choices; Charms Bar>Settings from the Weather App allows you to configure your desired location(s) for this app.

***To quickly find your program or app bypassing the Charms Bar***: If you are not on the Start screen, hit the Windows key to get there. Then just start typing what you are looking for. For example, type "co" without the quotes. The search screen will pop up with results such as Computer, Control Panel, etc.

If you would like even more Windows 7 compatibility, you can download **Start8** from [www.startdock.com](http://www.startdock.com). This neat little utility adds a Windows 7 style Start menu to your desktop. Start8 is has many configuration options, including bypassing the live tile Start screen by booting directly to the desktop. This utility comes with a 30 day free trial, then just \$4.99 to buy.