

## G U I D E

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TECHNOLOGY: WINDOWS 8

TITLE: WINDOWS 8 DESKTOP PRIORITISATION GUIDE

This guide shows how to undertake 2 critical modifications to your Windows 8 installation and also provide some additional added value options that the Author has found advantageous.

1. How to priorities the boot order between the two Windows 8 Desktops:
  - A. Conventional Desktop
  - B. Modern UI

In summary this means how you can boot directly to the Conventional Windows Desktop versus the New Windows Modern UI Tiled desktop.

2. How to and return certain critical efficiency assets most notably the Start menu. Remembering that we don't want to throw the baby out with the bathwater so the following maintains 100% the Windows Modern UI in all its tiling glory.
3. Some added value optional tweaks that you can take or leave.

Why is this needed? As I said in my earlier blog '[Microsoft leave the Control Freekery for the Fruitcakes](#)' the Windows 8 Modern UI is ill-suited to workstation environments.

The uncharacteristic step by Microsoft to throw users uncaringly into a whole new world of their Windows 8 Modern UI (User Interface) and at the same time cut them off from the comfort of a the Conventional Desktop is the most ill thought through and poorly thought through marketing faux pas since their Vista launch horror. Why throw away the trust and familiarity of the Conventional Desktop, when those characteristics actually represent the gateway to adoption of the Modern UI is beyond me. But then I guess that is why Steve Sinofsky was seen making such a fast exit. What would have been more engaging is the Modern UI and the Conventional Desktop introduced as distinct principle software environments for different device formats.

1. The Conventional Desktop should never have had its start menu removed, it alienated users immediately from any sense of a familiar introduction to Windows 8 where they would inevitably explore end up exploring and getting familiar with the Modern UI on their own terms.
2. The boot order should have been set as an elective as part of the install wizard, and in the same way allow users the flexibility and choice to safely adopt Windows 8 without the fear of being forced into the unknown and steep learning curve of change which we humans are inherently wary of.

So this guide aims to redresses this by giving you back that familiar and reliable fully empower conventional desktop environment from where in time you can build out your skills into the new world of the Modern UI.

This guide will step you through what I have now found as a robust process to re-establish a Windows 8 conventional desktop for power users and real multitaskers. I am hopeful that this will become somewhat redundant if Microsoft redress some of the Steven Sinofsky aberrations. Some of this will work with Windows 8 RT, but find that Windows 8 RT is largely on Tablet style devices that it suites very nicely so the priority is very much the Modern UI over the Conventional Desktop.

So let's get started.

### **A. Windows 8 Boot order & Start menu**

This assumes we are starting from a clean installation of Windows 8 Pro or Enterprise.

1. Reinstate the Start menu - Download Classic Shell (<http://classshell.sourceforge.net/features.html>) Full details and alternatives summarized in my blog '[Windows 8 – Boot to Basics](#)'
2. Download the attached file which I have had to give a .DOC extension so you can download it ([NRG Menu Settings.xml.DOC](#)) but it is in fact an XML file with XML script of the configuration I use in the Classic Shell that will help you get going. Right click on the link and save the file to your hard drive then remove the .DOC file extension to leave a native XML file you can then import it into Classic Shell from the Backup option in the settings menu. This will:
  - a. Configure your Start menu with a Windows 8 look and feel.
  - b. Automatically set your OS to boot to the Desktop. (You can always return to the Modern UI by hitting the Windows key on your keyboard).

So now you have a Conventional Desktop with a core asset returned to its usual location, reducing the laborious screen switching to the Tiled interface or heavy-handed use of search.

For some that will be enough and you will be capable of doing your own Conventional Desktop modifications from hereon.

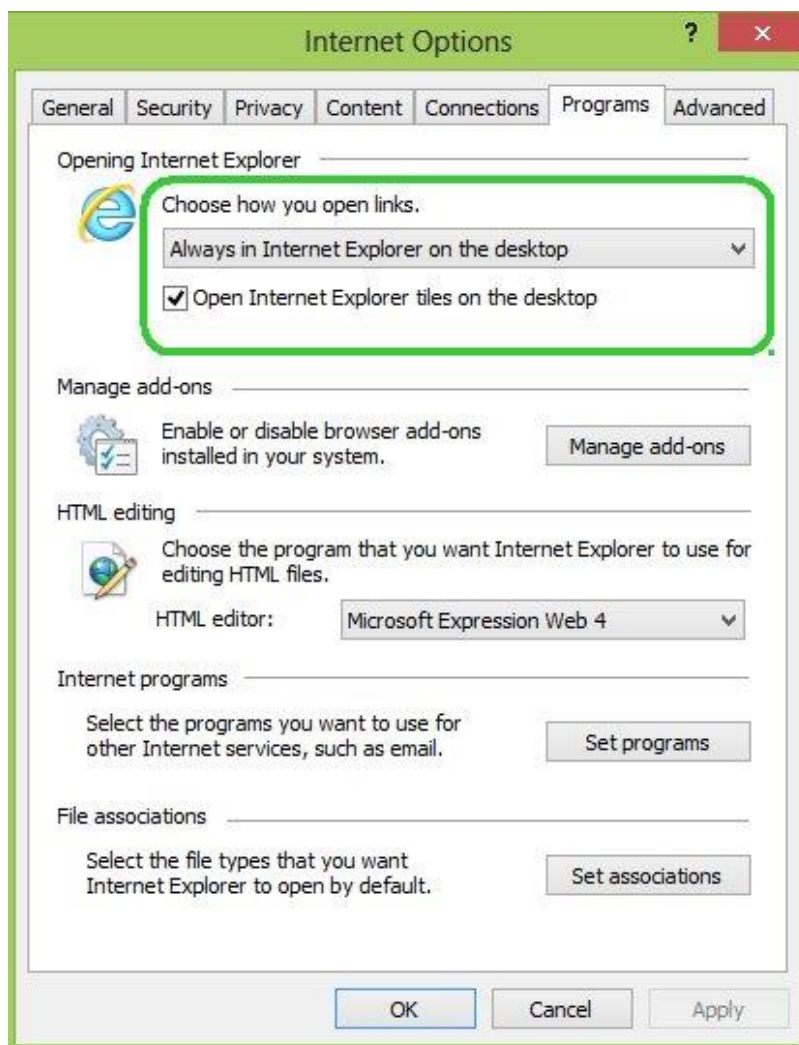
Those of you who would like some more tips I can recommend casting your eye over the following that will ensure your desktop experience does not regress into Frankenstein moments by popping into Modern UI applications not best suited for large non touch screen environments.

### **B. Optional Tweaks**

One of the issues with Windows 8 is you will find many file types are automatically set to launch with Modern UI applications. The following steps will allow you to ensure you will priorities your desktop applications.

1. Install desktop applications so that you can re-assign file types to use the Conventional Desktop programs over the Modern UI apps. Some applications you may find useful will include:
  - a. Adobe Acrobat Reader – PDF file reader [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)
  - b. VLC – Films and video <http://www.videolan.org/vlc/>
  - c. SkyDrive Desktop App - <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/skydrive/download>
  - d. Skype - You will need to get the Windows Conventional Desktop version. The Skype site has a habit of trying to force you to the Windows App Store where you can only get the Modern UI version which is what you DO NOT WANT! See my blog on Skype for some guidelines as to Windows 8 issues '[Windows 8, Microsoft Account & Skype – A Tsunami of support in the making!](#)'
2. From your re-instated Start menu go to 'Control Panel\Programs\Default Programs\Set Default Programs' and click through your newly installed programs to prioritise them. Some key ones I would suggest include:
  - a. Those listed above
  - b. Windows Media Player – Playing & managing music
  - c. Paint – Image viewer and basic editor.
  - d. Windows Photo Viewer – To view and print images instead of the Modern UI Photo Viewer.

3. The other big one is Internet Explorer - make sure the dropdown election is set in the 'Internet Options > Programs' to always use IE on the Conventional Desktop. I also tick the 'Open IE tiles on the Conventional Desktop as well so even if I am in the Modern UI I will prioritise a desktop instance of IE.



4. An alternative way is to use File Explorer and right click on the individual files want to assign to a specific program and click 'Properties'. On the general tab will be an option to 'Open With:' and a 'Change' button. This is a little more long winded than the earlier step but gives more control.
5. A clean way to reduce conflict with Modern UI apps and also save a bit of disk space is to uninstall the Modern UI variants such as:
  - a. Video Player
  - b. Photo Viewer
  - c. Mail (this will also remove Calendar, Messaging and peoples hub) but assuming you are running Microsoft Office as a power users these are fripperies you will not need and only serve to duplicate content on your hard drive and increase network activity if you do.
  - d. SkyDrive (Modern UI version only)
  - e. Skype SkyDrive (Modern UI version only)

6. **WARNING** - Do not install the same apps both in the Modern UI and on your Conventional Desktop, this can cause conflicts such as with Skype also you will find you end up duplicating data and network activity. Windows 8 is chatty enough on the network without adding to it!
7. **Time Limited** 'Free' Media Pack for Windows 8 Pro users - <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-8/feature-packs>
8. Some optional free or Shareware utilities I also find useful that you can take or leave include:
  - a. Image Resizer 3 – Free and very useful right click option addition to the file menu to resize and manage images in situ <http://imageresizer.codeplex.com/releases/view/82827>
  - b. WinRAR - Compression and extraction utility <http://www.rarlab.com/download.htm>
  - c. Imgburn – Free Utility for burning and copying CD's and DVD's <http://www.imgburn.com/>
  - d. TreeSize – Useful to Identify large files and folders [http://www.jam-software.com/treesize\\_free/](http://www.jam-software.com/treesize_free/)
  - e. KeePass – Free Secure eWallet for keeping all your passwords and sensitive information in one place that is supported across multiple platforms <http://keepass.info/>
  - f. QuickScreenCapture – Advanced Screen capture tools <http://www.etrusoft.com/>

**Desktop Gadgets** – This is something I have been asked by just about every user I have helped convert to Windows 8, they miss the convenience of having some of those core gadgets 'just there'. Key favourites include the Calendar, currency conversion, weather. Post it's and power monitor. You are in luck head over to 8Gadgetpack at <http://8gadgetpack.bplaced.net/> . It's not quite a full Windows 7 gadget style experience more Vista with the sidebar limit, but you can remove the sidebar and have just the gadgets on the Conventional Desktop.

What you should now have is a fully tuned up conventional desktop environment (with a few utilities if you elected for them) that will allow you to leverage the full potential of Windows 8 whilst maintaining the luxury of the Modern UI tile environment 100% intact. The key difference being you have prioritised the Conventional Desktop experience over a touch screen experience with no compromise.