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by Andy Rathbone

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About the Author

Andy Rathbone started geeking around with computers in 1985 when he bought a 26-pound portable CP/M Kaypro 2X. Like other nerds of the day, he soon began playing with null-modem adapters, dialing computer bulletin boards, and working part-time at Radio Shack.

He wrote articles for various techie publications before moving to computer books in 1992. He's written the *Windows For Dummies* series, *Upgrading and Fixing PCs For Dummies, TiVo For Dummies, PCs: The Missing Manual,* and many other computer books.

Today, he has more than 15 million copies of his books in print, and they've been translated into more than 30 languages. You can reach Andy at his website, `www.andyrathbone.com`.

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Introduction

Welcome to *Windows 8 For Dummies,* the world's best-selling book about Windows 8!

This book's popularity probably boils down to this simple fact: Some people want to be Windows whizzes. They love interacting with dialog boxes. Some randomly press keys in the hope of discovering hidden, undocumented features. A few memorize long strings of computer commands while washing their hair.

And you? Well, you're no dummy, that's for sure. But when it comes to Windows and computers, the fascination just isn't there. You want to get your work done, stop, and move on to something more important. You have no intention of changing, and there's nothing wrong with that.

That's where this book comes in handy. Instead of making you a whiz at Windows, it merely dishes out chunks of useful computing information when you need them. Instead of becoming a Windows 8 expert, you'll know just enough to get by quickly, cleanly, and with a minimum of pain so that you can move on to the more pleasant things in life.

And you'll be able to do that whether you're dealing with a touchscreen, laptop, or desktop computer.

About This Book

Don't try to read this book in one sitting; there's no need. Instead, treat this book like a dictionary or an encyclopedia. Turn to the page with the information you need and say, "Ah, so that's what they're talking about." Then put down the book and move on.

Don't bother trying to memorize all the Windows 8 jargon, such as Select the Menu Item from the Drop-Down List Box. Leave that stuff for the computer enthusiasts. In fact, if anything technical comes up in a chapter, a road sign warns you well in advance. Depending on your mood, you can either slow down to read it or speed on around it.

Instead of fancy computer jargon, this book covers subjects like these, all discussed in plain English:

- Keeping your computer safe and secure
- Making sense of the new Start screen
- Finding, starting, and closing programs and apps
- Locating the file you saved or downloaded yesterday
- Setting up a computer for the whole family to use
- Copying information to and from a CD or DVD
- Saving and sharing photos from your digital camera
- Printing your work
- Creating a network between computers to share an Internet connection or printer
- Fixing Windows 8 when it's misbehaving

There's nothing to memorize and nothing to learn. Just turn to the right page, read the brief explanation, and get back to work. Unlike other books, this one enables you to bypass the technical hoopla and still get your work done.

How to Use This Book

Windows 8 will most definitely leave you scratching your head at some point. It's the most confusing version of Windows ever released to the public, so take pride in the fact that you're strong enough to persevere.

When something in Windows 8 leaves you stumped, use this book as a reference. Find the troublesome topic in this book's table of contents or index. The table of contents lists chapter and section titles and page numbers. The index lists topics and page numbers. Page through the table of contents or index to the spot that deals with that particular bit of computer obscurity, read only what you have to, close the book, and apply what you've read.

If you're feeling adventurous and want to find out more, read a little further in the bulleted items below each section. You can find a few completely voluntary extra details, tips, or cross-references to check out. There's no pressure, though. You aren't forced to discover anything that you don't want to or that you simply don't have time for.

If you have to type something into the computer, you'll see easy-to-follow bold text like this:

Type **Media Player** into the Search box.

In the preceding example, you type the words *Media Player* and then press the keyboard's Enter key. Typing words into a computer can be confusing, so a description follows that explains what you should be seeing on the screen.

When I describe a key combination you should press, I describe it like this:

Press Ctrl+B.

That means to hold down your keyboard's Control key while pressing your keyboard's B key. (That's the shortcut key combination that applies bold formatting to selected text.)

Whenever I describe an email address or filename, I present it this way:

```
notepad.exe
```

And website addresses appear like this:

`www.andyrathbone.com`

This book doesn't wimp out by saying, "For further information, consult your manual." Windows 8 doesn't even *come* with a manual. This book also doesn't contain information about running specific Windows software packages, such as Microsoft Office. Windows 8 is complicated enough on its own! Luckily, other *For Dummies* books mercifully explain most popular software packages.

Don't feel abandoned, though. This book covers Windows in plenty of detail for you to get the job done. Plus, if you have questions or comments about *Windows 8 For Dummies,* feel free to drop me a line on my website at `www.andyrathbone.com`. I answer a reader's question on my website each week.

Finally, keep in mind that this book is a *reference.* It's not designed to teach you how to use Windows 8 like an expert, heaven forbid. Instead, this book dishes out enough bite-sized chunks of information so that you don't *have* to learn Windows.

Tablet Owners Aren't Left Out

Although Windows 8 comes preinstalled on all new Windows computers, Microsoft not-so-secretly aims this bold new version of Windows at owners of *touchscreens.* Tablets, as well as some laptops and desktop monitors, come with screens you can control by touching them with your fingers.

If you're a new touchscreen owner, don't worry. This book explains where you need to touch, slide, or tap your fingers in all the appropriate places.

If you find yourself scratching your head over explanations aimed at mouse owners, remember these three touchscreen rules:

- **When told to *click,* you should *tap.*** Quickly touching and releasing your finger on a button is the same as clicking it with a mouse.
- **When told to double-click, *tap twice.*** Two touches in rapid succession does the trick.
- **When told to *right-click* something, *hold down your finger on the item.* Then, when a little menu pops up, *lift your finger.*** The menu stays put onscreen. (That's exactly what would have happened if you'd right-clicked the item with a mouse.) While you're looking at the pop-up menu, tap any of its listed items to have Windows carry out your bidding.

If you find touchscreens to be cumbersome while you're sitting at a desk, you can always plug a mouse and keyboard into your touchscreen tablet. They'll work just fine. In fact, they usually work better when working on the Windows desktop rather than the Start screen.

And What about You?

Chances are good that you already own Windows 8 or are thinking about upgrading. You know what *you* want to do with your computer. The problem lies in making the *computer* do what you want it to do. You've gotten by one way or another, perhaps with the help of a computer guru — either a friend at the office, somebody down the street, or your fourth-grader.

But when your computer guru isn't around, this book can be a substitute during your times of need. (Keep a doughnut nearby in case you need a quick bribe.)

How This Book Is Organized

The information in this book has been well sifted. This book contains seven parts, and I divide each part into chapters relating to the part's theme. With an even finer knife, I divide each chapter into short sections to help you figure out a bit of Windows 8 weirdness. Sometimes, you may find what you're looking for in a small, boxed sidebar. Other times, you may need to cruise through an entire section or chapter. It's up to you and the particular task at hand.

Here are the categories (the envelope, please).

Part 1: Windows 8 Stuff Everybody Thinks You Already Know

This part dissects the backbone of Windows 8: its new Start screen, where you load apps and programs. It also explains how to find the traditional Windows desktop — the background found in every version of Windows for the past decade. It explains how to move windows around and click the right buttons at the right time. It explains the Windows 8 stuff that everybody thinks you already know.

Part II: Working with Programs, Apps, and Files

Windows 8 comes with bunches of free programs. Finding and starting the programs, however, often proves to be a chore. This part of the book shows you how to prod programs into action. If an important file or program has vanished from the radar, you discover how to make Windows 8 dredge your computer's crowded cupboards and bring it back. It also explains how to move your work from the computer screen onto paper through your printer.

Part III: Getting Things Done on the Internet

Turn here for a crash course in today's computing playground, the Internet. This part explains how to send e-mail and globetrot across websites. Best yet, an entire chapter explains how to do it all safely.

A section explains Internet Explorer's built-in security tools. They stop evil phishing sites from tricking you and keep parasites from attaching themselves to your computer as you move from one website to another.

Part IV: Customizing and Upgrading Windows 8

When Windows 8 needs a jolt, fix it by flipping one of the switches hidden in its Control Panel, described here. Another chapter explains computer maintenance you can easily perform yourself, reducing your repair bills. You discover how to share your computer with several people in your family or in a shared apartment — without letting anybody peek into anybody else's information.

And when you're ready to add a second computer, head to the networking chapter for quick instructions on linking computers to share an Internet connection, files, and a printer, as well.

Part V: Music, Photos, and Movies

Turn here for information on playing music CDs, digital music, and movies. Buy some cheap CDs and create your own greatest hits CDs from your favorite tunes. (Or just copy a CD so that your favorite one doesn't get scratched in the car.)

Digital camera owners should visit the chapter on transferring pictures from your camera to your computer, organizing the pictures, and e-mailing them to friends.

Part VI: Help!

Although glass doesn't shatter when Windows crashes, it still hurts. In this part, you find some soothing salves for the most painful irritations. Plus, you find ways to unleash the Windows 8 program's team of troubleshooters.

Stuck with the problem of moving your files from an old computer to a new one? You can find help here, as well. (If you're ready to upgrade your Windows XP, or Windows Vista, or Windows 7 computer to Windows 8, check out `www.dummies.com/go/windows8` for instructions.)

Part VII: The Part of Tens

Everybody loves lists (except during tax time). This part contains lists of Windows-related trivia, such as ten aggravating things about Windows 8 (and how to fix them). As a bonus for the tablet and laptop crowd, I've collected the most useful portability tips for Windows 8 and placed them into one chapter. You can find step-by-step instructions for the most frequently used tasks while traveling, whether you're moving across the world or across the street.

Icons Used in This Book

It just takes a glance at Windows 8 to notice its *icons,* which are little push-button pictures for starting various programs. The icons in this book fit right in. They're even a little easier to figure out.

Watch out! This signpost warns you that pointless technical information is coming around the bend. Swerve away from this icon to stay safe from awful technical drivel.

This icon alerts you about juicy information that makes computing easier: a method for keeping the cat from sleeping on top of your tablet, for example.

Don't forget to remember these important points. (Or at least dog-ear the pages so that you can look them up again a few days later.)

The computer won't explode while you're performing the delicate operations associated with this icon. Still, wearing gloves and proceeding with caution is a good idea.

Are you moving to Windows 8 from an older Windows version? This icon alerts you to areas where Windows 8 works significantly differently from its predecessors.

Controlled by fingertips rather than mice and keyboards, touchscreens are standard fare on tablets, as well as some laptops and desktop computer monitors. This icon appears next to information aimed directly at the touchy feely crowd.

Where to Go from Here

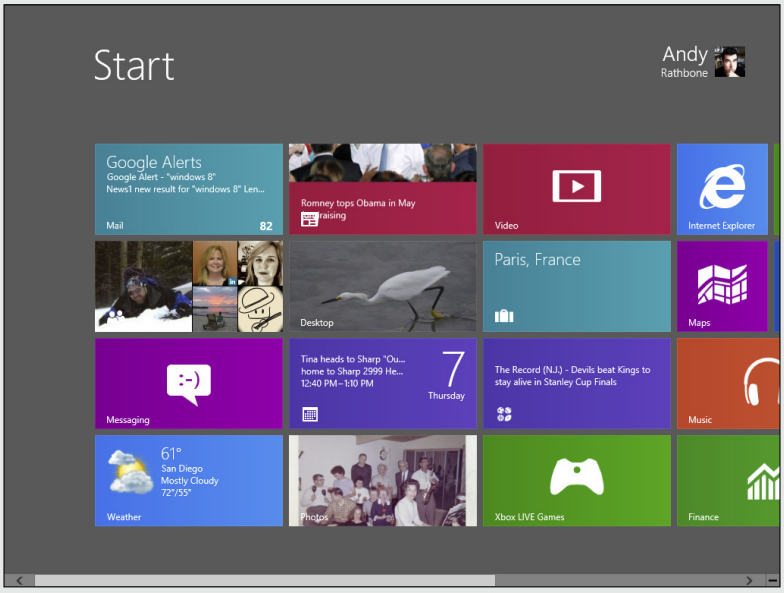
Now, you're ready for action. Give the pages a quick flip and scan a section or two that you know you'll need later. Please remember, this is *your* book — your weapon against the computer nerds who've inflicted this whole complicated computer concept on you. Please circle any paragraphs you find useful, highlight key concepts, add your own sticky notes, and doodle in the margins next to the complicated stuff.

The more you mark up your book, the easier it will be for you to find all the good stuff again.

To access additional Windows 8 content, go to `www.dummies.com/go/windows8`. Occasionally, we have updates to our technology books. If this book does have technical updates, they will be posted at `www.dummies.com/go/windows8fdupdates`.

Part I

Windows 8 Stuff Everybody Thinks You Already Know



In this part . . .

Most people are dragged into Windows 8 without a choice. Their new computers probably came with Windows 8 already installed. Or maybe the office switched to Windows 8, and everyone has to learn it except for the boss, who still doesn't have a computer. Or maybe Microsoft's marketing hype pushed you into it.

Whatever your situation, this part explains the bizarre new Start screen in Windows 8. It shows how to find the traditional Windows desktop and then gives a refresher on Windows basics and buzzwords such as dragging and dropping, cutting and pasting, and even tapping a touchscreen.

This part explains how Windows 8 has changed things for the better, and it warns you when Windows 8 has messed things up completely.

Chapter 1

What Is Windows 8?

In This Chapter

- Getting to know Windows 8
- Discovering the new features in Windows 8
- Deciding whether to switch to Windows 8
- Figuring out whether your PC is powerful enough to run Windows 8
- Knowing which version of Windows 8 you need

Chances are good that you've heard about *Windows:* the boxes and windows that greet you whenever you turn on your computer. In fact, millions of people worldwide are puzzling over Windows as you read this book. Almost every new computer and laptop sold today comes with Windows preinstalled, ready to toss colorful boxes onto the screen.

This chapter helps you understand why Windows lives inside your computer, and I introduce Microsoft's latest Windows version, called *Windows 8.* I explain how Windows 8 differs from previous Windows versions, whether you should upgrade to Windows 8, and how well your faithful old PC and programs will weather the upgrade.

What Is Windows 8, and Why Are You Using It?

Created and sold by a company called Microsoft, Windows isn't like your usual software that lets you calculate income taxes or send angry e-mails to mail-order companies. No, Windows is an *operating system,* meaning it controls the way you work with your computer. It's been around for nearly 30 years, and the latest incarnation is called *Windows 8,* shown in Figure 1-1.

Figure 1-1: The newest version of Windows, Windows 8, comes pre-installed on most new PCs today.

The name *Windows* comes from all the little windows it places on your computer screen. Each window shows information, such as a picture, a program, or a baffling technical reprimand. You can place several windows onscreen simultaneously and jump from window to window, visiting different programs. Or, you can enlarge one window to fill the entire screen.

When you turn on your computer, Windows jumps onto the screen and begins supervising any running programs. When everything goes well, you don't really notice Windows; you simply see your programs or your work. When things don't go well, though, Windows often leaves you scratching your head over a perplexing error message.

In addition to controlling your computer and bossing around your programs, Windows 8 comes with a bunch of free programs and *apps* — mini-programs. These programs and apps let you do different things, such as write and print letters, browse the Internet, play music, and send your friends dimly lit photos of your latest meal.

And why are you using Windows 8? Well, you probably didn't have much choice. Nearly every computer sold since October 2012 comes with Windows 8 pre-installed. A few people escaped Windows by buying Apple computers (those nicer-looking computers that cost a lot more). But chances are good that you, your neighbors, your boss, and millions of other people around the world are using Windows.