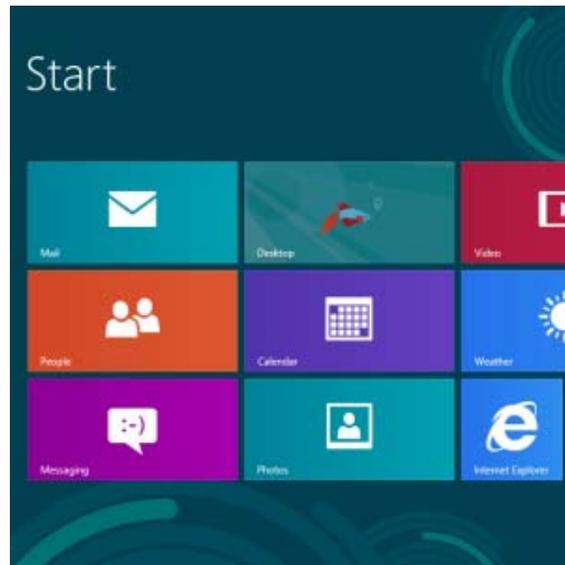


Five Surprising Facts about Windows 8

By Chris Hoffman

Windows 8 is full of surprising changes – whatever you think about Windows 8, Microsoft certainly isn't being timid this time around. The new "Windows 8-style UI" interface formerly known as Metro (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/windows-8-in-daily-use-what-is-it-really-like/>) and the de-emphasis on the traditional Windows desktop (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/6-ways-microsoft-is-killing-the-traditional-desktop-in-windows-8-opinion/>) aren't the only things to be surprised about in Windows 8.

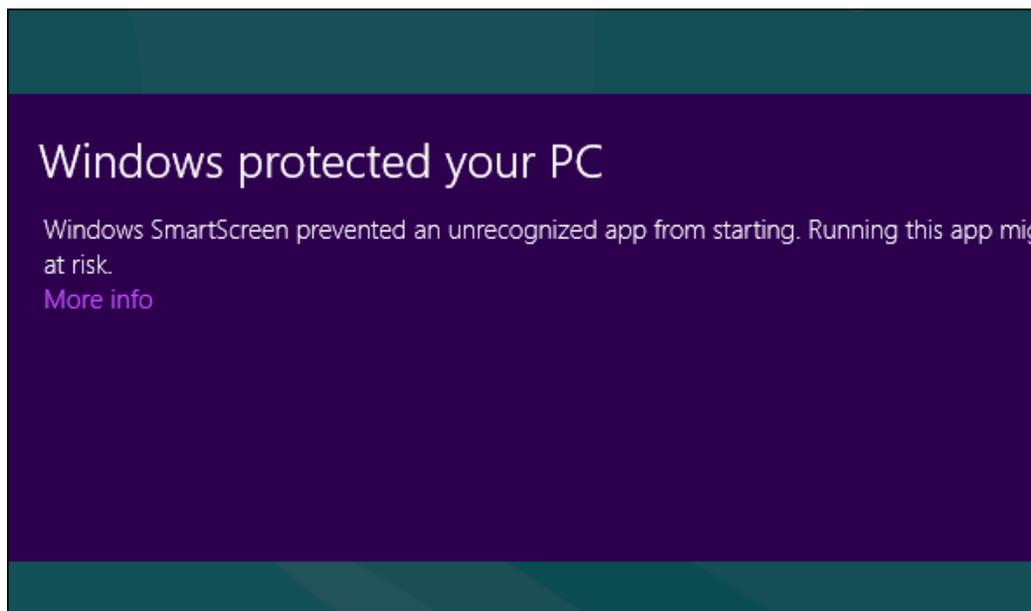
From integrated antivirus protection and less-disruptive updating to the removal of the Windows Aero 3D interface and the lack of DVD or Blu-Ray playback support in Windows 8, Windows 8 is sure to be full of surprises for the average Windows user. Here are some of the biggest ones you may not have already heard of.



SmartScreen Anti-Malware Filter

If you're an Internet Explorer (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/7-useful-tips-tricks-for-internet-explorer-9-users/>) user, you're already familiar with Windows SmartScreen – it filters the applications you download for your security. For example, if you download a popular application such as iTunes, Windows will allow the download to proceed. If you download a less-popular application that SmartScreen doesn't know about, you'll get an unknown application warning – the application could be malicious; SmartScreen just doesn't know. Finally, if you download a known virus or other piece of malware (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/difference-worm-trojan-virus-makeuseof-explains/>), SmartScreen will alert you that the application is definitely malicious and block the download.

With Windows 8, SmartScreen is now integrated into the Windows operating system itself – it doesn't matter if you use Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, or another browser; applications you download will be screened by SmartScreen when you try to run them. This feature is optional, although it's enabled by default.

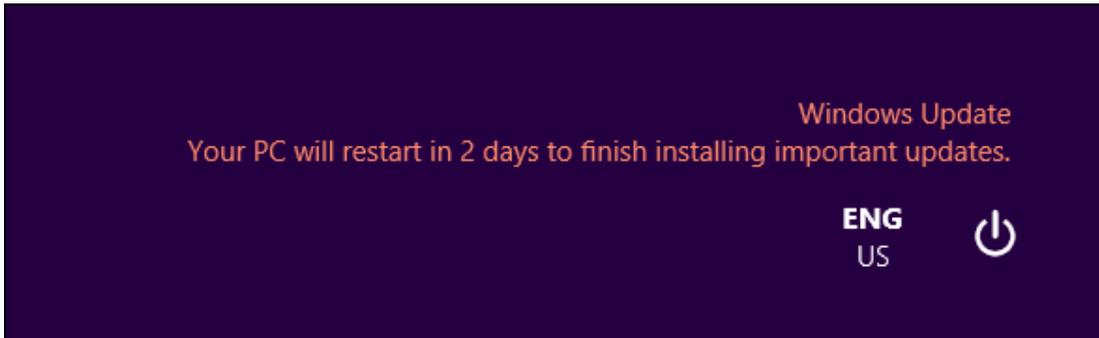


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A Less-Disruptive Windows Update

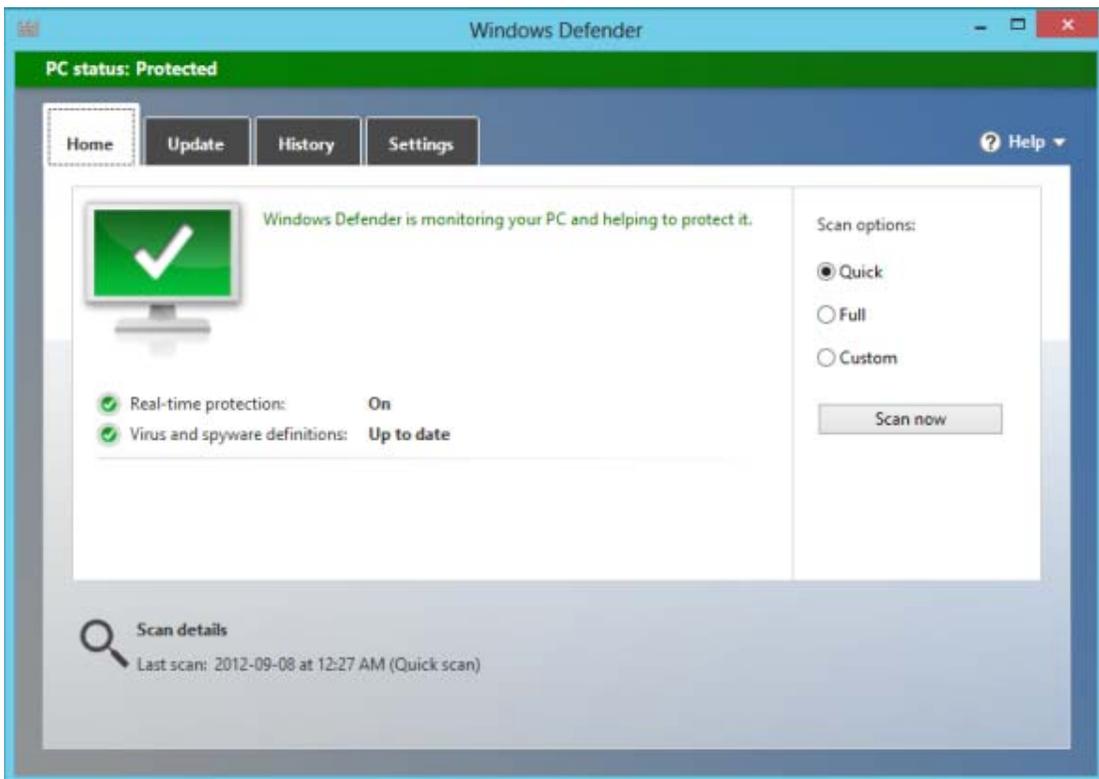
Windows Update is the bane of every Windows user trying to get work done. While it's important to install updates (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/apps-nag-update-listen-si/>), Windows Update can be a hassle – frequently asking you to restart your computer and forcing you to click a “Go Away” button every four hours until you finally do.

With Windows 8, Microsoft has made Windows Update behave more sanely. Windows Update will only try to restart your computer once per month, after Microsoft's “patch Tuesday,” when security updates are released. Windows will also give you three days to restart your computer, with a warning on the login screen instead of one that hassles you while you're working on your computer.



Built-In Antivirus

Windows 8 finally includes an integrated antivirus. The antivirus is named Windows Defender, although anyone who has used the free Microsoft Security Essentials (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/reliable-default-windows-security-apps/>) will recognise the interface immediately. Windows 8 includes Microsoft Security Essentials by default; it's just been renamed to Windows Defender.



Windows Defender will get out of the way if you install a third-party antivirus, so you'll still be able to install other antivirus programs. Other antivirus programs (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/ten-best-antivirus-programs/>), such as Norton and McAfee, will market themselves as having “more features,” but Windows Defender has all the features the average user needs in an antivirus.

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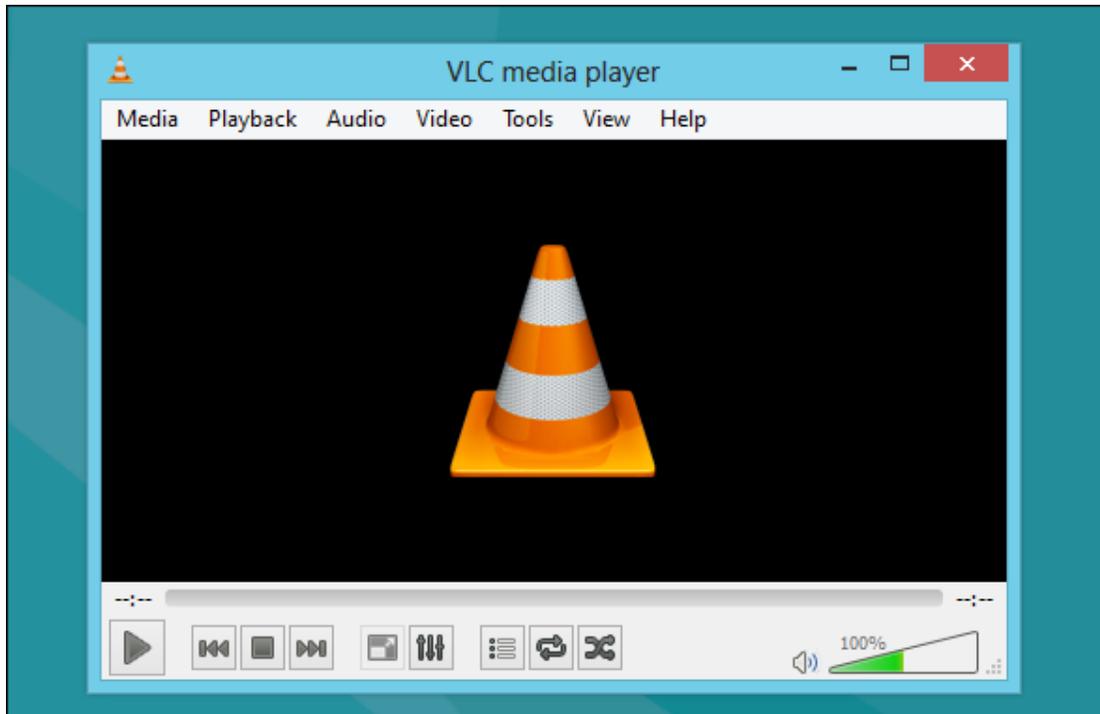
Microsoft has taken a while to get here – while they currently offer Microsoft Security Essentials for free, MSE was originally based on Windows Live OneCare, which Microsoft sold to Windows users. It's good to see Microsoft beefing up Windows' security.

No Integrated DVD or Blu-Ray Playback

Windows 8 won't include DVD or Blu-Ray playback support. Many new computers – ultrabooks (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/ultrabook-succeed-technology-explained/>) especially – don't ship with DVD drives. Microsoft pays a fee to license DVD playback on each computer that ships with it – there's no point in Microsoft purchasing DVD support for computers that can never watch DVDs. Microsoft is also betting big on tablets with Windows 8, and tablets don't have disc drives.

Don't worry, though – you can still watch DVDs and Blu-Ray discs on Windows 8. Windows 8 computers you buy with disc drives will include licensed DVD and Blu-Ray playback applications that will be able to play the discs. You can also download the popular and free VLC player (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/7-top-secret-features-free-vlc-media-player-si/>) to play DVDs and Blu-Rays without paying another cent.

You can also buy or upgrade to Windows 8 Professional (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/which-windows-8-version-is-for-you/>), which allows you to install the Windows Media Centre add-in, which comes with DVD playback.

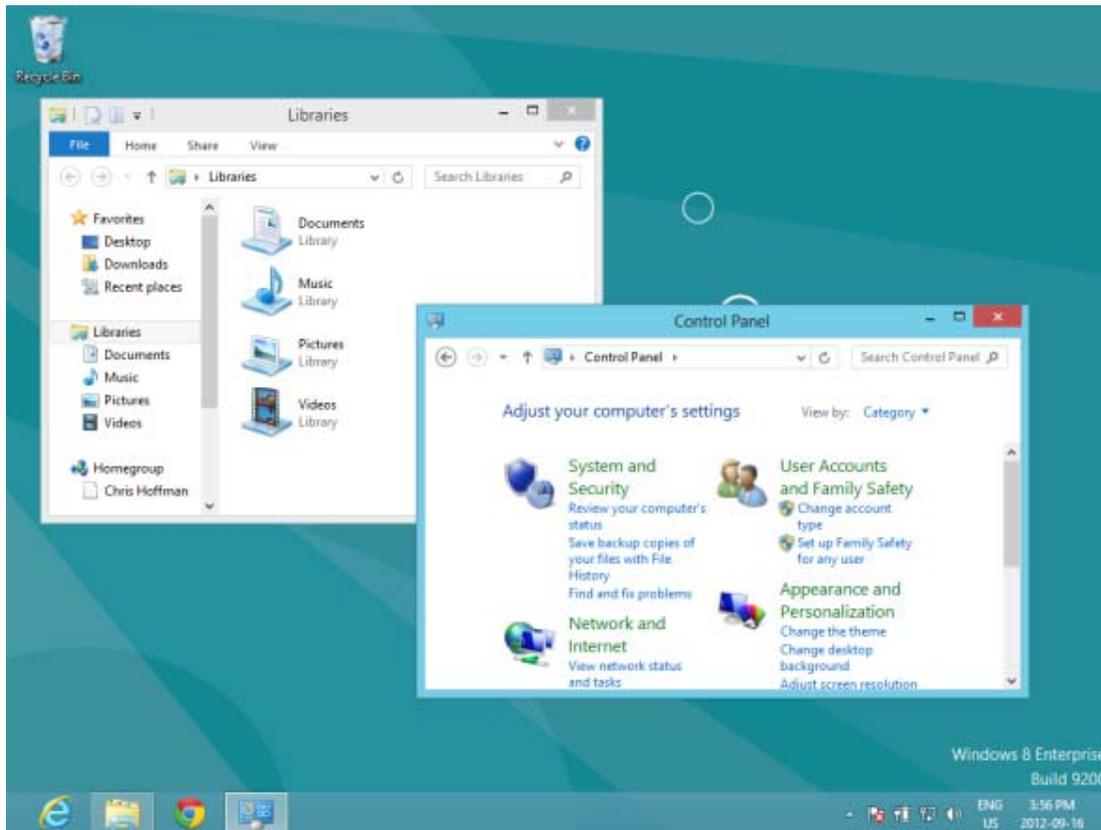


Windows Aero & Flip 3D Are Gone

Aero Glass (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/tweak-customize-color-windows-7s-aero-glass-5-tools/>), first introduced with Windows Vista, was once the future. Microsoft advertised Windows Vista as a shinier, more futuristic and advanced version of Windows, and the glass and transparency effects were a big part of the "premium visual experience" that Microsoft was selling.

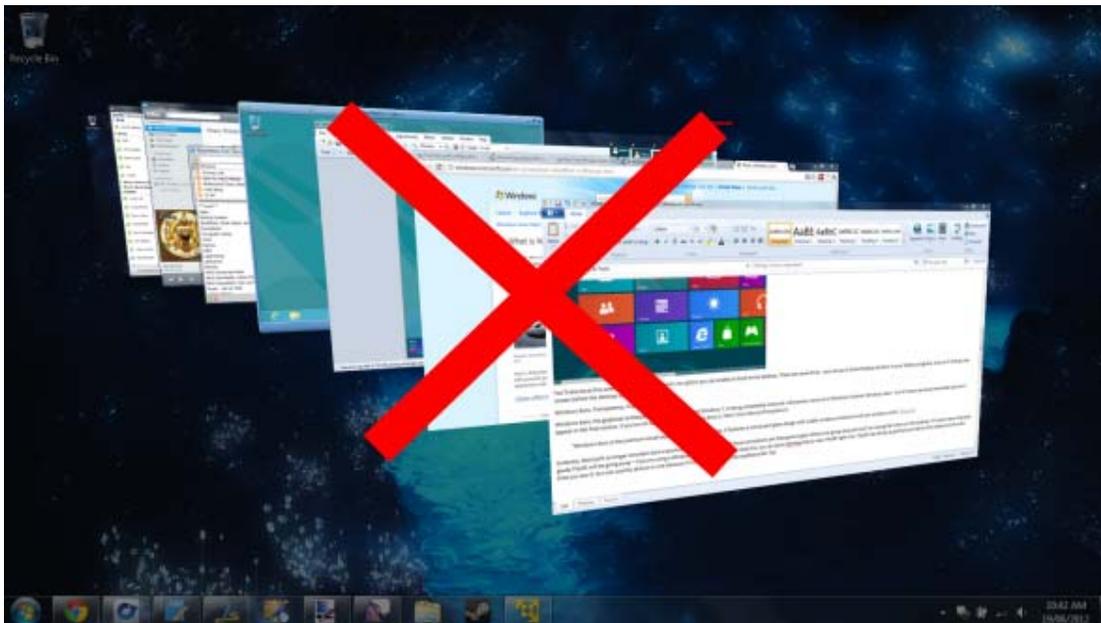
As we mentioned in our list of things that Microsoft removed from Windows 8 (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/missing-windows-8/>), Aero Glass is gone. The new desktop theme is a flat, single-color look that fits with the flat look used in the Windows 8 interface formerly known as Metro. (However, you can customise the colour used, just as you can customise the colour used in the interface formerly known as Metro.)

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Microsoft argues that the new interface is simpler and cleaner. It's also likely that Aero was removed to improve battery life on ultrabooks or tablets.

Also gone is Flip 3D (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/enable-troubleshoot-aero-effects-windows-7/>), the window switcher you can access by pressing the Windows key and Tab at the same time on Windows 7 and Windows Vista. Flip 3D was never particularly comfortable to use – it was always a glorified tech demo that existed to show off 3D effects and impress Windows customers.



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