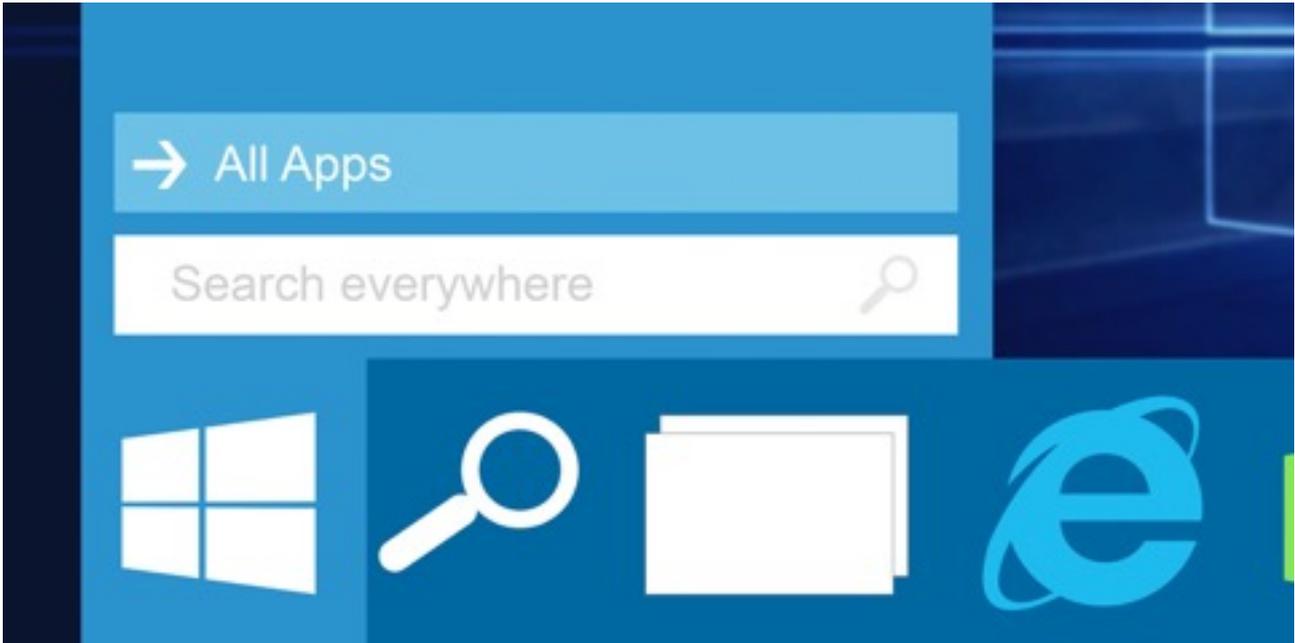


7 Tips for Customizing the Windows 10 Taskbar

By Joe Keeley

Read the original article here: <http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/7-tips-customizing-windows-10-taskbar/>



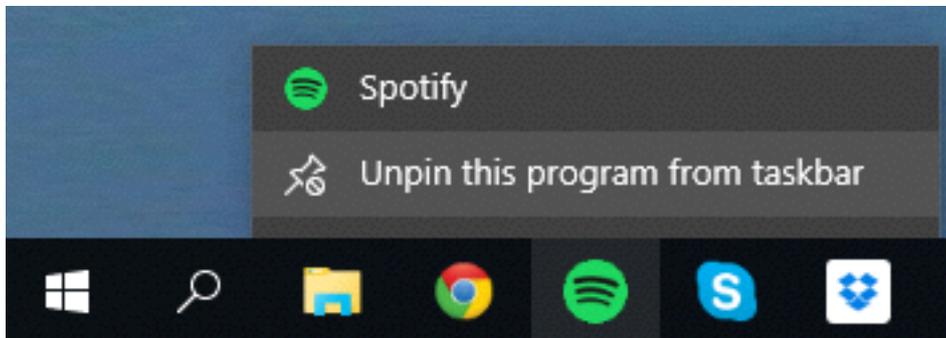
The taskbar is a staple feature of Microsoft's operating system and it's no different with Windows 10. It's been given a lick of paint and new features like Cortana have been added to it, but it's still the taskbar we all know and love.

While it's great out of the box, you can make tweaks to get it looking and handling exactly how you want it. Want to add some icons or ditch the default ones? Maybe you want a splash of color? We've outlined these tips and more.

If you've got your own taskbar customization tip to add to ours, please do drop a comment after the article to share it with us all.

Pin Programs

You can pin programs directly to your taskbar to make for quicker access to the things you constantly use. Search for the program through the new Start menu, **right-click** it and then select **Pin to taskbar**. You can **left-click** the icon to launch the program, or **click and drag** to change its position on the taskbar.



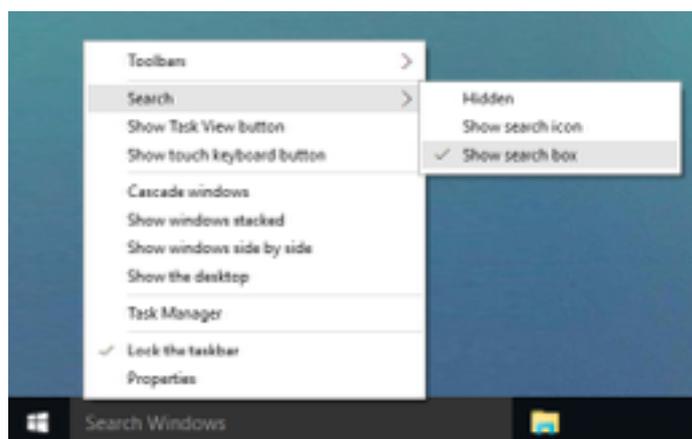
To access the context-sensitive menu for that program, like frequent pages on your browser or pinned files on your system, simply **right-click**. You can also select **Unpin this program from taskbar** if you want to remove the icon.

Taskbar Properties

Right-click an empty space on the taskbar and select **Properties**. This will bring up a window that will let you customize the taskbar in miscellaneous ways. It's nothing new if you've used Windows in the last decade or so, allowing you to lock the taskbar, auto-hide it, use small icons, set its screen location, and adjust the behavior of merging windows.

Search Directly

A sizeable search box will sit in your taskbar by default. You can use this to search the web, your apps, files and settings, and access Cortana, the new personal assistant (if enabled). The box is pretty wide though, so you might want to reduce it to an icon or get rid of it completely.

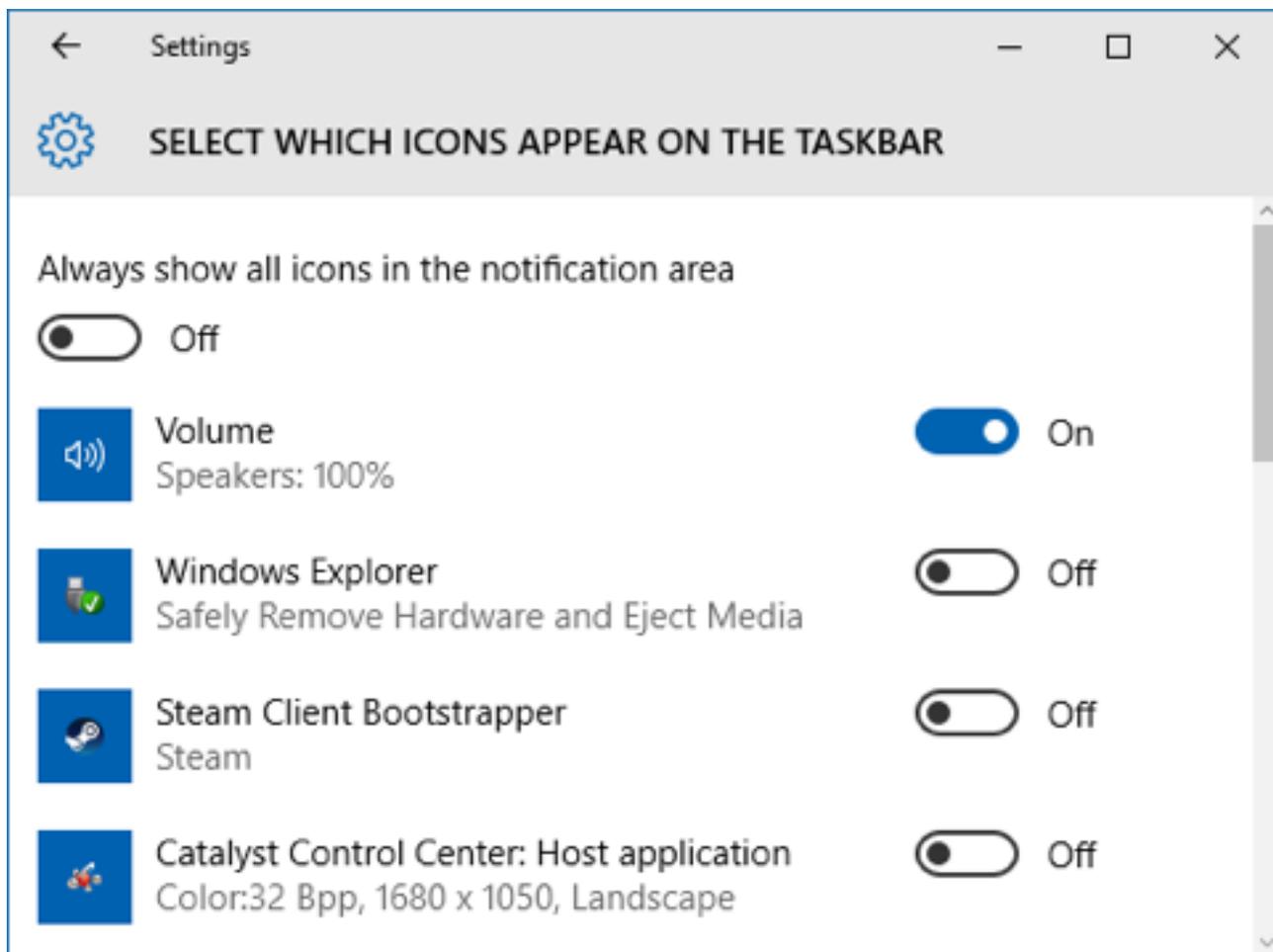


Right-click the taskbar, hover on **Search** and then you can select from three options: **Hidden**, which will remove the search function from the taskbar; **Show search icon**, which will place a clickable magnifying glass icon; **Show search box**, which is the default.

Bear in mind that if you've got your taskbar set to use small icons, you won't have the option to use the search box unless you opt for the larger look.

Edit the Notification Area

The icons that appear on the far right of the taskbar sit within the [notification area](#). You can adjust which icons appear here, along with their behavior. To do so, **right-click** an empty space on the taskbar, select **Properties** and then **Customize....**



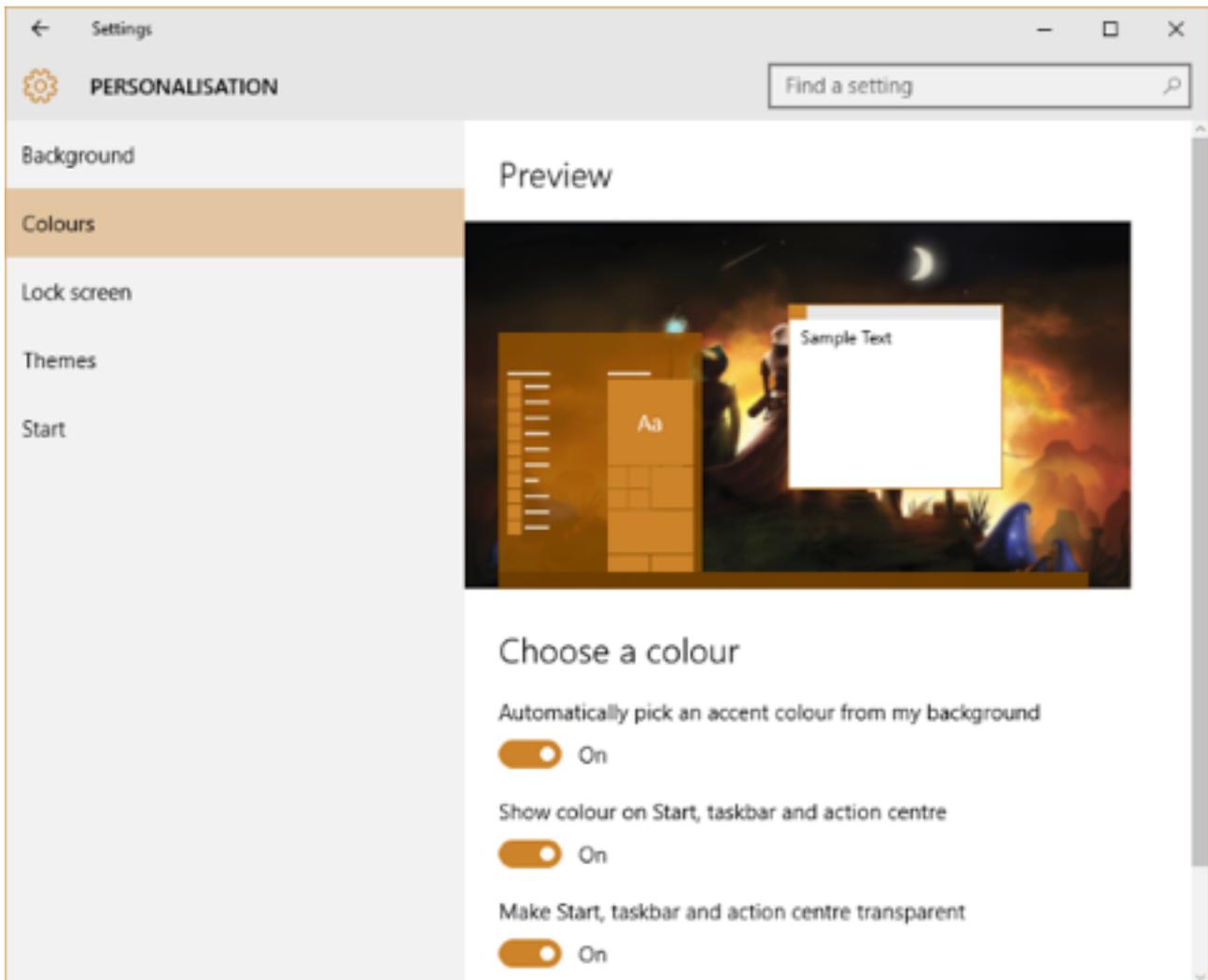
This will open a window that will give you access to a host of options. Of particular note are the two links at the top. First, click **Select which icons appear on the taskbar**. Here you can turn specific program icons on or off. Turning them off will relegate them to the icon area that opens when you click the upwards arrow on the notification area.

Now go back and select **Turn system icons on or off**. This time, turning the icons off will remove them completely. Of course, the functions themselves do still exist on the system and are accessible through other routes, they just won't be on the taskbar.

Make it Colorful

The default taskbar is black, but you can easily change the color if you're after something a bit more exciting. To do so, press **Win Key + I** to launch the Settings app. From here, click **Personalization** and then select **Colors** from the left-hand navigation.

First, make sure that the slider for **Show color on Start, taskbar and action center** is set to **On**. Now you've got a choice. If you want the taskbar color to be determined from your wallpaper, slide **Automatically pick an accent color from my background** to **On**.



If you leave that option off then you'll be shown a list of colored squares, which you can click to manually set the color. Not a fan of the choices available? No problem. First, select the last colored square and we can now go into the registry to get greater control.

Caution: You're [editing the registry](#) at your own risk! While the following steps bear no risk, we are not responsible for any damage caused by registry edits.

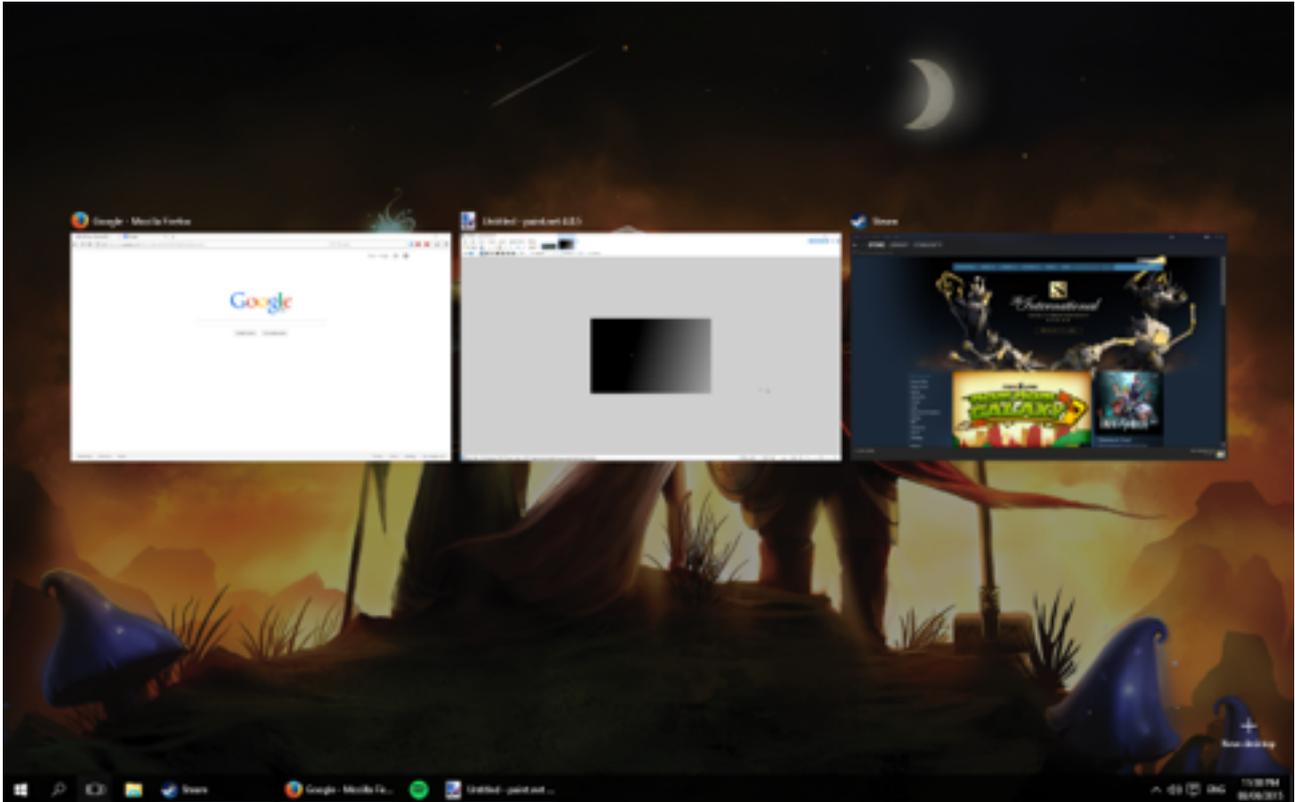
To begin, press **Win + R** to open Run, then type **regedit** and press **OK**. Then navigate to the following path:

```
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Themes  
\Personalize
```

Double click the **SpecialColor** entry. Here you can specify a RGBA color – use an [online color picker](#) or a [desktop alternative](#) if you need assistance. When done, click **OK** and log out and back in to see your changes. You can always revert your choice by going back to the Settings screen.

Task View

By default, an icon will be placed on your taskbar which, when clicked, will send you to the Task View. This is a side-by-side of all the windows you have open, along with the ability to switch desktops and create new ones. It's a handy feature, but you might not need it on your taskbar.



That's because pressing **Win Key + Tab** achieves the same effect. Maybe you find it easier or quicker to click the icon, but if you want your taskbar minimal then you won't be losing functionality by removing it. Remember, **Alt + Tab** is an alternative way to switch windows, but you'll need to use the former for desktop changes.

Restore the Old User Interface

Windows 10 has made some visual changes to previously existing taskbar notification elements, like the Action Center and volume adjuster. We can use [the registry](#) to change the look of these back to Windows 7/8.1.

Firstly, to open the registry, press **Win + R** to open Run, then type **regedit** and press **OK**. A word of warning: don't mess around in areas of the registry not mentioned and don't use these tips if you aren't confident in following them.

With thanks to [AskVG](#) for these tweaks.

Volume Control

The volume control in Windows 10 is now horizontal and doesn't offer quick access to your mixer. If you want the old vertical slider back, navigate to the following registry path:

```
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\
```

Go to **Edit > New > Key** and name it **MTCUVC**. Then go to **Edit > New > DWORD (32-bit) Value** and name it **EnableMtcUvc**. **Double-click** the DWORD you just created, set the **Value Data** to **0** and click **OK**.

Either delete the DWORD or set the value to 1 if you want to restore the newer style volume control.

Date & Time

Clicking the time and date on your taskbar will give you a purely digital clock and a large monthly calendar view. If you want the analogue clock and smaller presentation back, navigate to the following registry path:

```
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion  
\ImmersiveShell
```

Go to **Edit > New > DWORD (32-bit) Value** and name it **UseWin32TrayClockExperience**. Then **double-click** the DWORD and set the **Value Data** to **1**, then click **OK**.

Either delete the DWORD or set the value to 0 if you want to restore the newer style date and time.

Notification Center

If you're not a fan of the Notification Center sliding in from the right of your screen, you can change it back to a simpler approach that was used in an earlier version of Windows 10. To do so, navigate to the following registry path:

```
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion  
\ImmersiveShell
```

Double-click the **UseActionCenterExperience** DWORD and set its value to **1** to restore the older style notification center. Restart to see the changes. You can change the value back to **0** if you want to bring back the newer style.

Take it to Task

Many people may never tweak their taskbar, but since it's on your screen all the time (unless you've set it to auto-hide), customization is worth your time. And if everything you need is a click away, it'll help with productivity too.

Don't be afraid to experiment with the taskbar to see what works best for you. Any change you make can easily be reverted, so dive in: pin programs, adjust your icons, and get to know the search.

Have you used any of these tips to customize your taskbar? Do you have any of your own to add? Please share them here.

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