easy Computer Basics

Windows® 8 Edition

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Michael Miller

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Computer Basics

Windows® 8.1 Edition

Michael Miller

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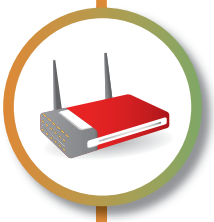

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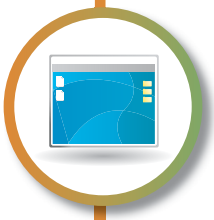

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EASY COMPUTER BASICS, WINDOWS® 8.1 EDITION

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DEDICATION

To Sherry—life together **is** *easier.*

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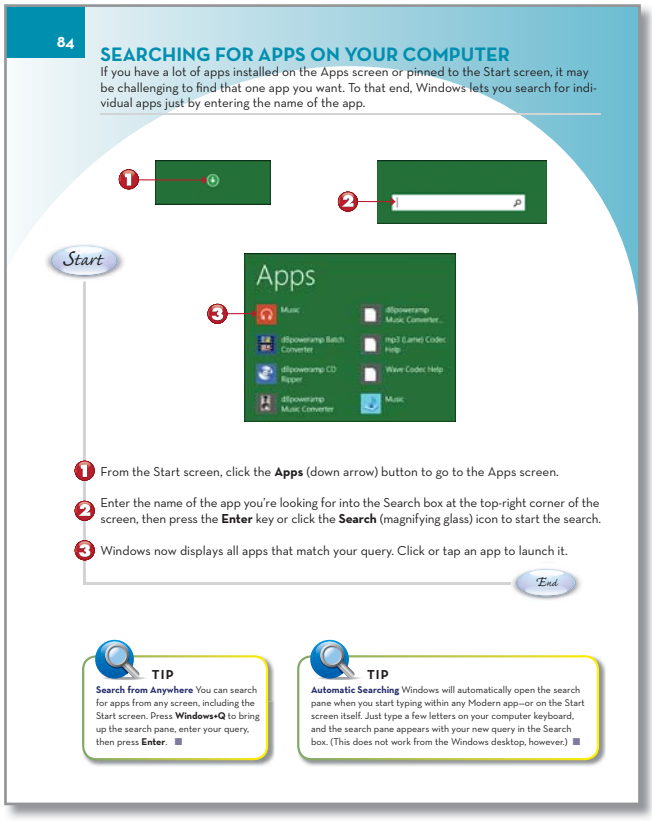
IT'S AS EASY AS 1-2-3

Each part of this book is made up of a series of short, instructional lessons, designed to help you understand basic information.

1. Each step is fully illustrated to show you how it looks on screen.
2. Each task includes a series of quick, easy steps designed to guide you through the procedure.
3. Items that you select or click in menus, dialog boxes, tabs, and windows are shown in bold.

Tips, notes, and cautions give you a heads-up for any extra information you may need while working through the task.



INTRODUCTION

Computers don't have to be scary or difficult. Computers can be *easy*—if you know what to do.

That's where this book comes in. *Easy Computer Basics, Windows 8.1 Edition* is an illustrated, step-by-step guide to setting up and using your new computer. You'll learn how computers work, how to connect all the pieces and parts, and how to start using them. All you have to do is look at the pictures and follow the instructions. Pretty easy.

After you learn the basics, I show you how to do lots of useful stuff with your new PC. You learn how to use Microsoft Windows to copy and delete files; use Windows' Mail app to send and receive email messages; use Microsoft Word to write letters and memos; use Internet Explorer to search for information on the Internet; and use Facebook, Pinterest, and Twitter to keep up with what your friends are doing. We even cover some fun stuff, including listening to music, viewing digital photographs, and watching movies and TV shows online.

If you're worried about how to keep your PC up and running, we cover some basic system maintenance, too. And, just to be safe, I also show you how to protect your computer when you're online. It's not hard to do.

To help you find the information you need, I've organized *Easy Computer Basics, Windows 8.1 Edition* into 16 chapters.

Chapter 1, "Understanding Personal Computers," discusses all the different types of personal computers out there and describes the pieces and parts of a typical computer system. Read this part to find out all about desktops, all-in-ones, notebooks, and tablets—and the things like hard drives, keyboards, mice, and printers that make them tick.

Chapter 2, "Setting Up Your PC," shows you how to connect all the pieces and parts of a typical PC and get your new computer system up and running.

Chapter 3, "Setting Up a Wireless Home Network," helps you connect all the computers in your house to a wireless network and share a broadband Internet connection.

Chapter 4, "Using Windows 8.1's New Interface," introduces the backbone of your entire system—the Microsoft Windows 8.1 operating system—including how it works and how to use it.

Chapter 5, "Personalizing Windows," shows you how to customize Windows 8.1's lock screen, how to change colors and backgrounds, how to add and delete tiles from the Start screen, and how to add new users to your system.

Chapter 6, "Working with New Windows Apps," walks you through everything you need to know to launch, use, and switch between useful Windows 8.1 apps—and how to find new apps in the Windows Store.

Chapter 7, "Using the Windows Desktop and Traditional Apps," shows you how to use your existing software programs on the Windows desktop—and how to customize the desktop background and colors.

Chapter 8, "Using Microsoft Word," shows you how to use both the desktop and online versions of Microsoft's popular word processor to create letters and other documents.

Chapter 9, "Working with Files and Folders," shows you how to use File Explorer and Microsoft's SkyDrive to manage all the computer files you create—by moving, copying, renaming, and deleting them.

Chapter 10, "Using the Internet," is all about how to get online and what to do when you're there—including how to use both the desktop and full-screen versions of Internet Explorer to surf the Web, search for information, and shop for items online.

Chapter 11, "Communicating with Email," is all about using email to communicate with friends, family, and co-workers. The focus is on Windows 8.1's Mail app, as well as the Yahoo! Mail app.

Chapter 12, "Sharing with Facebook and Other Social Networks," introduces you to the fascinating world of social networking—and shows you how to share with friends on Facebook, Pinterest, and Twitter.

Chapter 13, "Watching TV and Movies Online," shows you how to use your computer to watch television programming, movies, and other videos from Netflix, Hulu, and YouTube—and with the new Windows Xbox Video app.

Chapter 14, "Playing Digital Music," shows you how to use the Xbox Music app to download and listen to digital music, as well as use iTunes to manage music on your Apple iPod, iPhone, or iPad.

Chapter 15, "Viewing Digital Photos," helps you connect a digital camera to your PC, transfer your photos to your PC, touch up problem pictures, and view photos on your computer screen.

Chapter 16, "Protecting Your Computer," is all about defending against online menaces, keeping your PC running smoothly, backing up your important files, and recovering from serious crashes.

And that's not all. At the back of the book you'll find a glossary of common computer terms—so you can understand what all the techie types are talking about!

(By the way, if something looks a little different on your computer screen than it does in your book, don't dismay. Microsoft is constantly doing little updates and fixes to Windows, so it's possible the looks of some things might have changed a bit between my writing this book and you reading. Nothing to worry about.)

So, is using a computer really this easy? You bet—just follow the simple step-by-step instructions, and you'll be computing like a pro!

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Chapter 4

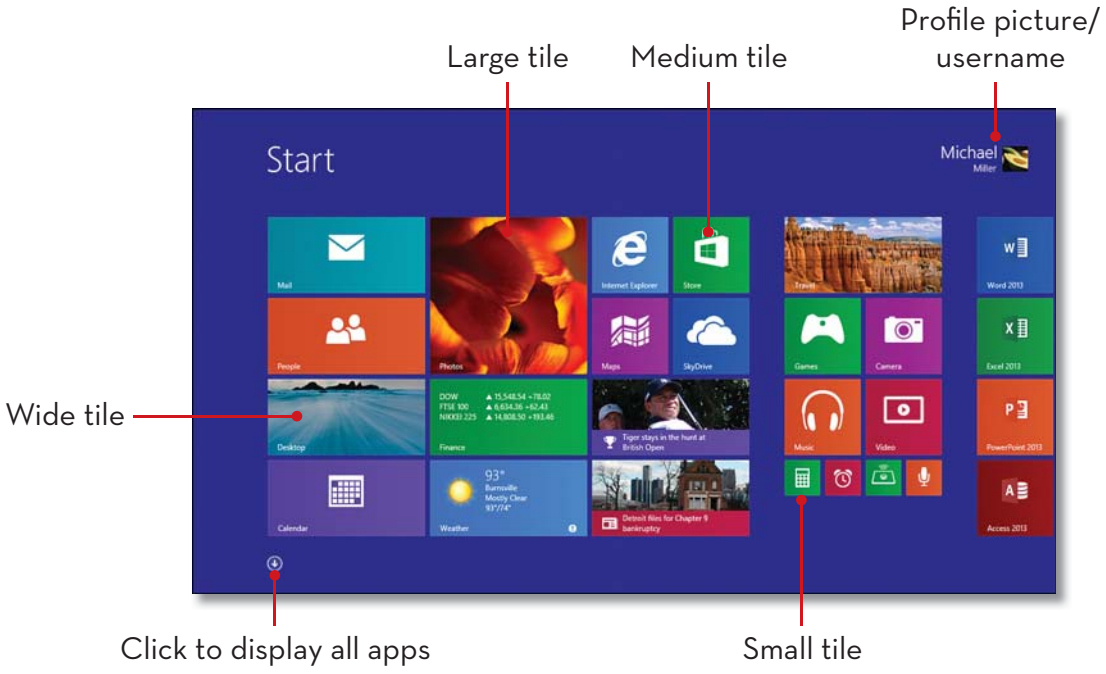
USING WINDOWS 8.1'S NEW INTERFACE

Microsoft Windows is a piece of software called an *operating system*. An operating system does what its name implies: It operates your computer system, working in the background every time you turn on your PC. The *desktop* that fills your screen is part of Windows, as is the taskbar at the bottom of the screen and the big menu that pops up when you click the Start button.

If you've used a version of Windows prior to Windows 8, or seen someone else using Windows in the past, you might think that this new version of Windows looks a lot different—and you'd be right. Windows 8 introduced a completely different *user interface* to the operating system, and Windows 8.1 builds on that. The Windows 8/8.1 user interface is called the *Modern* interface, and it differs from the traditional Windows desktop.

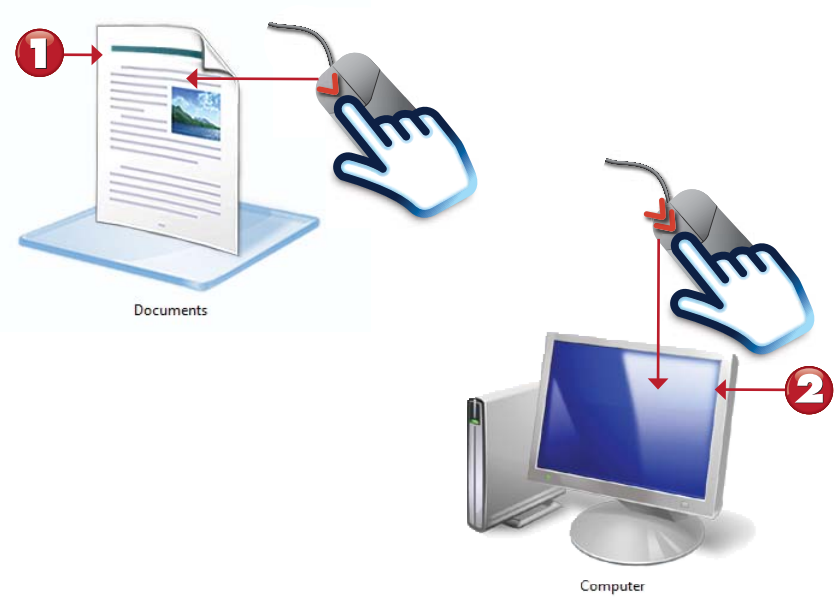
In Windows 8.1, everything starts on the Start screen (the home screen full of tiles for different apps) and goes from there. The traditional desktop is still there (as an app, and used to run older software programs), but you'll be spending most of your time with the new Modern interface and its tiled Start screen.

EXPLORING THE START SCREEN



USING WINDOWS WITH A MOUSE

To use Windows efficiently, you must master a few simple operations, all of which you perform with your mouse. Most mouse operations include *pointing* and *clicking*. Normal clicking uses the left mouse button; however, some operations require that you click the right mouse button instead.



Start

1. To single-click, position the cursor over the onscreen item and click the left mouse or touchpad button.
2. To double-click, position the cursor over the onscreen item and click the left mouse or touchpad button twice in rapid succession.

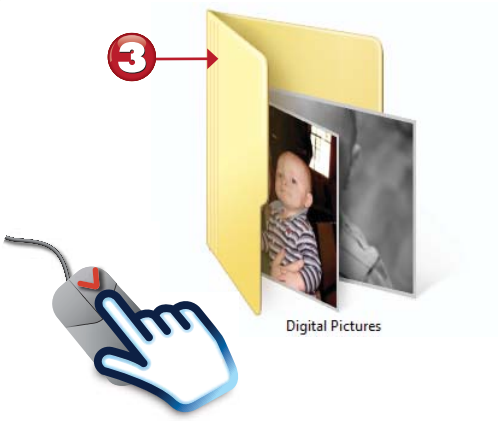
Continued

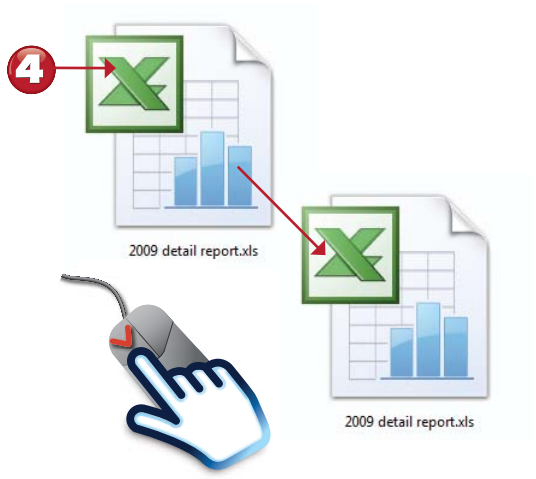
TIP

Click to Select Pointing and clicking is an effective way to select icons, menu items, directories, and files. ■

NOTE

Mouse Over Another common mouse operation is called the *mouse over*, or *hovering*, where you hold the cursor over an onscreen item without pressing either of the mouse buttons. For example, when you mouse over an icon or menu item, Windows displays a *ToolTip* that tells you a little about the selected item. ■





3. To right-click, position the cursor over the onscreen item, and then click the *right* mouse button.

4. To drag and drop an item from one location to another, position the cursor over the item, click and hold the left mouse button, drag the item to a new position, and then release the mouse button.

End

TIP

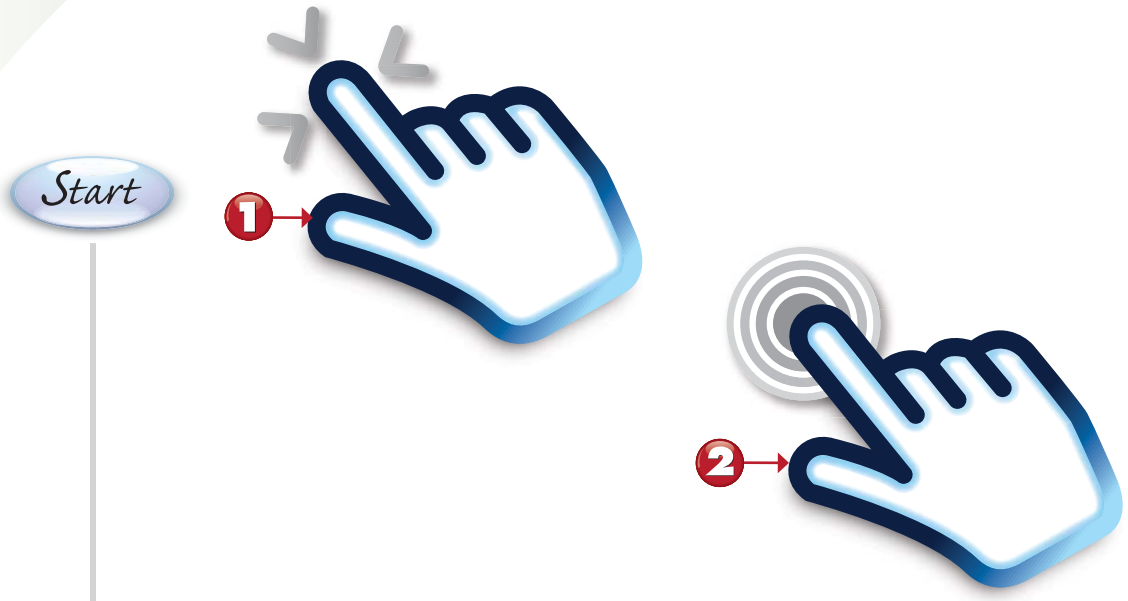
Pop-Up Menus Many items in Windows feature a context-sensitive pop-up menu. You access this menu or list by right-clicking the item. (When in doubt, right-click the item and see what pops up!) ■

TIP

Moving Files You can drag and drop to move files from one folder to another. You also can delete files by dragging and dropping them onto the Recycle Bin icon. ■

USING WINDOWS WITH A TOUCHSCREEN DISPLAY

If you're using Windows on a computer or tablet with a touchscreen display, you use your fingers instead of a mouse to do what you need to do. So, it's important to learn some essential touchscreen operations.

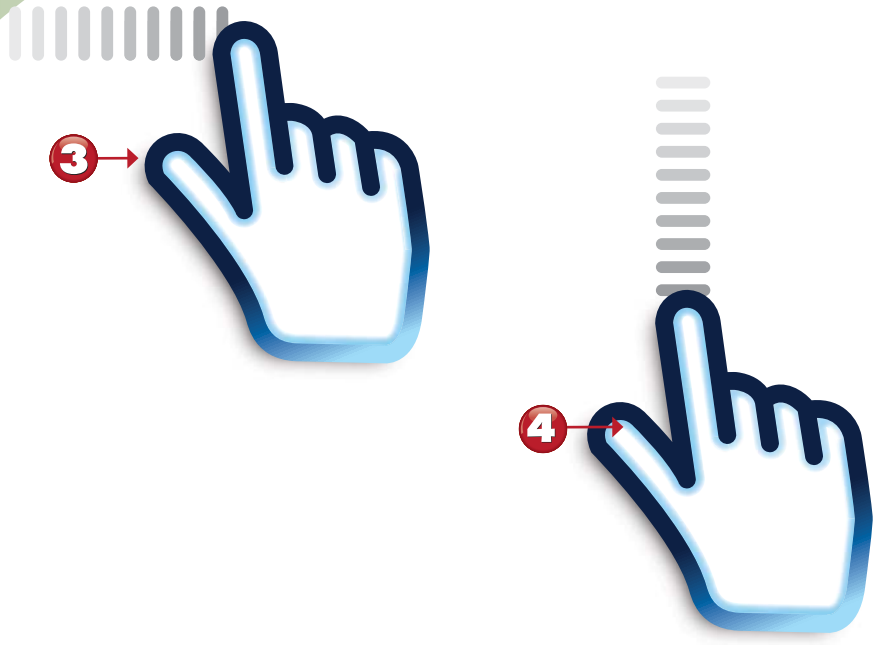


1. Tapping is the equivalent of clicking with your mouse. Tap an item with the tip of your finger and release.
2. To display additional information about any item, press and hold the item with the tip of your finger.

Continued

TIP

Right-Click = Press and Hold Pressing and holding is the touchscreen equivalent of right-clicking an item with your mouse. ■



3. To scroll down a page or perform many edge-centric operations, swipe the screen in the desired direction with your finger.
4. You can also scroll up, down, or sideways by touching and dragging the page with one or more fingers.

End

TIP

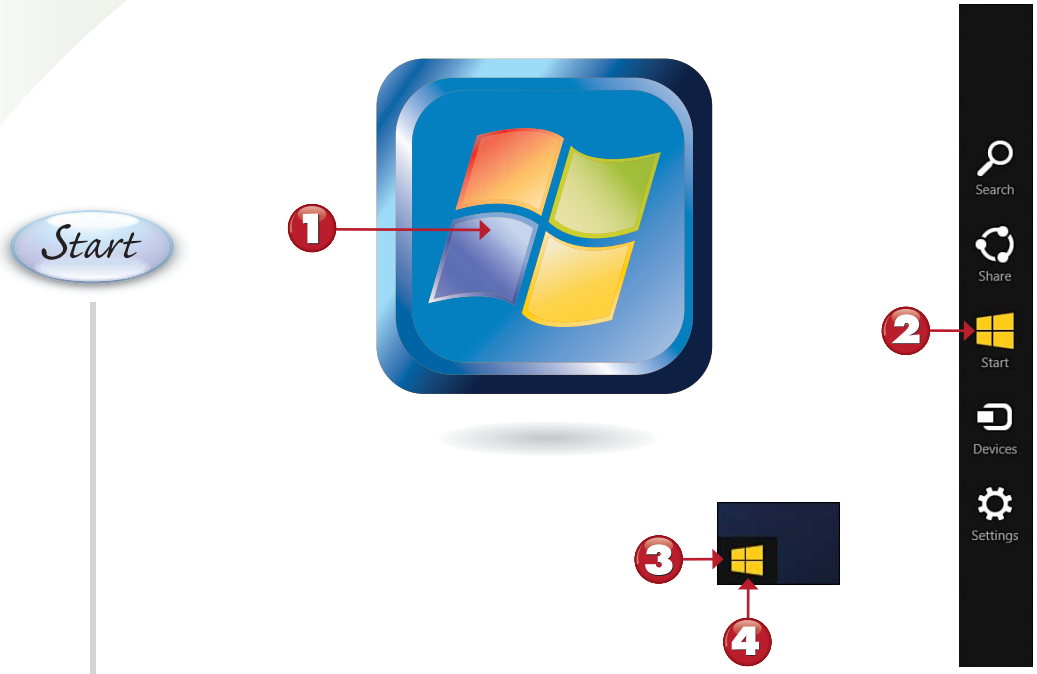
Zooming In To zoom in on a given screen (that is, to make a selection larger), use two fingers to touch two points on the item, and then move your fingers apart. ■

TIP

Zooming Out To zoom out of a given screen (that is, to make a selection smaller and see more of the surrounding page), use two fingers—or your thumb and first finger—to touch two points on the item, and then pinch your fingers in toward each other. ■

DISPLAYING THE START SCREEN

You can easily return to the Start screen from any other screen in Windows, even the desktop, using either the keyboard or the mouse. For many users, clicking the Start button (which appears at the lower-left corner of every screen) is the quickest way to display the Start screen.



1. Press the **Windows** button on your keyboard.

OR

2. Display the charms bar and click or tap the **Start** icon.

OR

3. If you don't see a Start button onscreen, mouse over the lower-left corner of any screen to display it. (If you're using the Windows desktop, the Start button is always constant in the left corner of the taskbar.)
4. Tap or click the **Start** button.

End

TIP

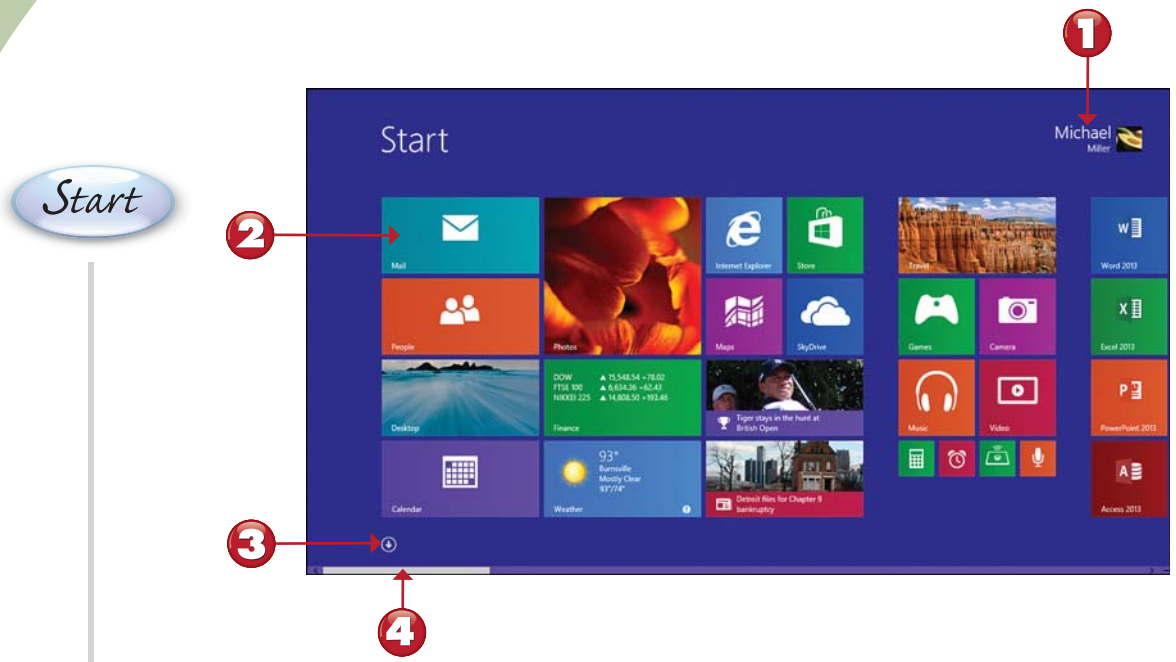
New to Windows 8.1 The Start button was not present in Windows 8. The ability to return to the Start screen by clicking the Start button is new to Windows 8.1. ■

NOTE

Start Menu The Windows 8.1 Start button does not function like the Start button in older versions of Windows. Prior to Windows 8, clicking the Start button brought up a Start menu of all the apps installed on your system. The new Windows 8.1 Start button takes you to the Start screen, instead; there is no Start menu in Windows 8 or 8.1. ■

NAVIGATING THE START SCREEN

Everything in Windows 8 revolves around the Start screen. The Start screen is where you start out and where you launch new apps and software programs.



1. Click or tap your name to sign out of Windows, lock the screen, or change your account picture.
2. Click or tap any tile to launch the associated program.
3. Click or tap the **Apps** button (down arrow) to display the Apps screen, which lists all the apps installed on your system.
4. To see additional tiles, mouse over or tap the bottom of the screen to display the horizontal scrollbar, and then click and drag the scrollbar to scroll left or right.

End

TIP

New to Windows 8.1 The Apps button (down arrow) on the Start screen is new to Windows 8.1. ■

TIP

Scrolling with the Keyboard or Touchscreen To scroll through the Start screen with your keyboard, press the **PageDown** key to scroll right or **PageUp** key to scroll left. You can also scroll one tile at a time by pressing the **left arrow** or **right arrow** keys. To scroll on a touch-screen display, swipe the screen with your finger right to left to scroll right, or left to right to scroll left. ■

USING THE CHARMS BAR

Windows 8 has more functions up its sleeve, although they're not obvious during normal use. These are a series of system functions, called *charms*, which are accessed from a charms bar that appears on the right side of the screen.

Start

Information panel

1. To display the charms bar, press **Windows+C** on your keyboard.
2. Click the **Search** icon to search your computer for apps and documents.
3. Click the **Share** icon to share the content of the current app with other apps.

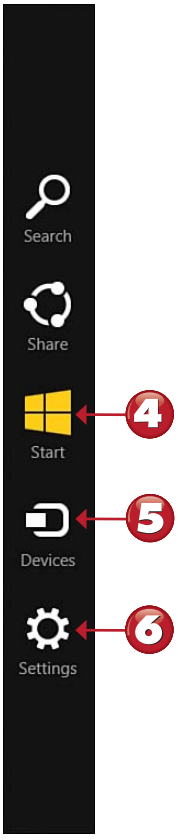
Continued

TIP

Charms Bar with the Mouse To display the charms bar with your mouse, move the mouse cursor to either the top-right or bottom-right corner of the screen. ■

TIP

Charms Bar on a Touchscreen To display the charms bar on a touchscreen display, swipe your finger from right edge of the screen to the left. ■



4. Click the **Start** icon to return to the Start screen from any other location in Windows.

5. Click the **Devices** icon to configure the settings of any external devices connected to your PC.

6. Click the **Settings** icon to access and configure various Windows settings.

End

TIP

Charms Bar from Any Screen You can access the charms bar from any Windows screen, even if you have an app displayed full screen. Each app has its own customized charms bar, with options specific to that app. ■

NOTE

Notification Panel Whenever the charms bar is displayed, Windows also displays a notification panel at the bottom left of the screen. This panel duplicates the information shown on the Windows Lock screen: current date and time, Internet connection status, and power status. ■

GETTING HELP IN WINDOWS

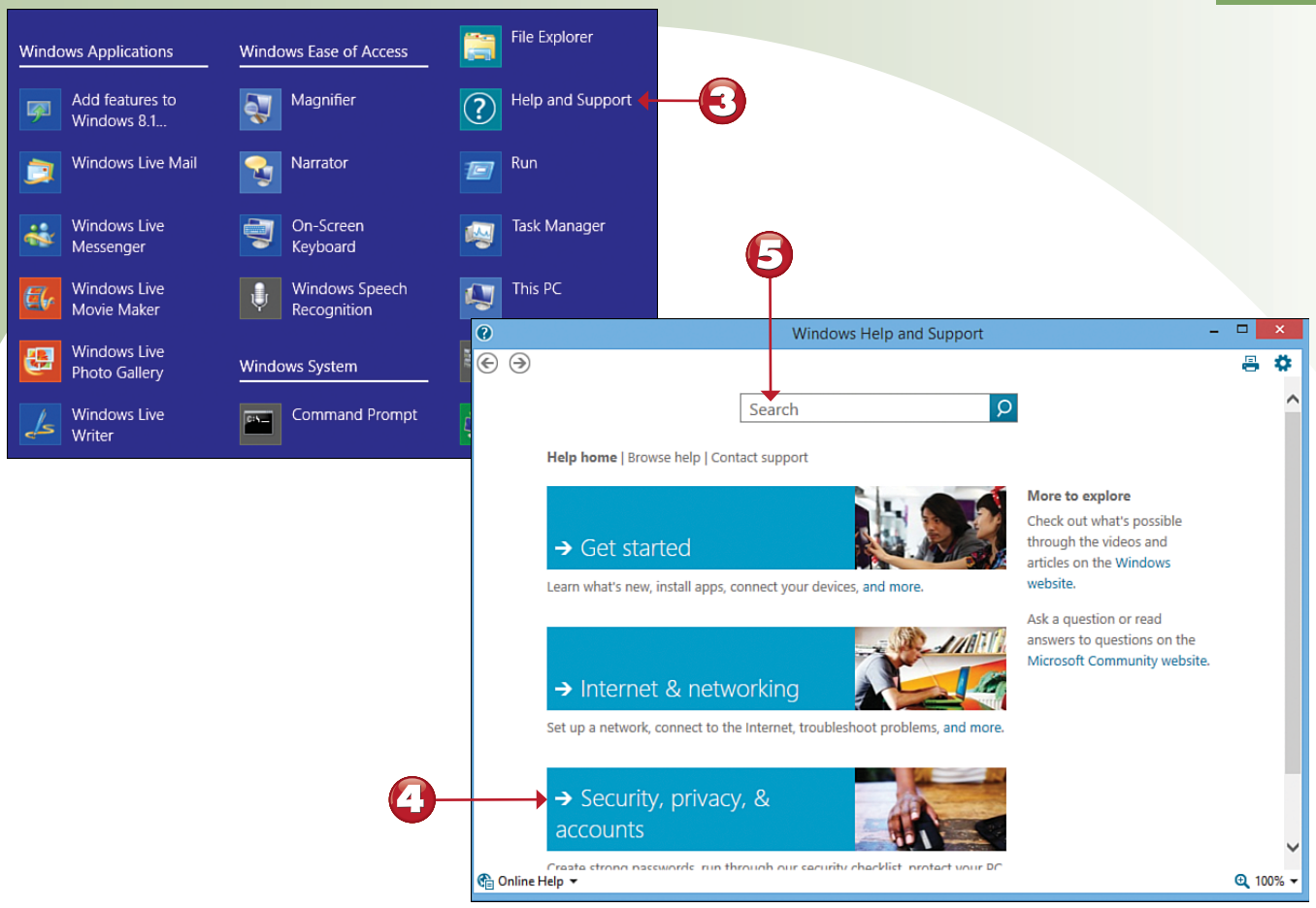
When you can't figure out how to perform a particular task, ask for help. In Windows 8, you can ask for help through the Windows Help and Support Center.

1. Press the **Windows** key or click the Start button to display the Start screen.
2. Click the **Apps** (down arrow) button to display the Apps screen.

Continued

TIP

More on the Web You can find out more about Windows on Microsoft's website, www.microsoft.com. Use the Search box on the main page to search for specific information. ■



3. Scroll to the Windows System section and tap or click **Help and Support**. This opens a Help and Support window on the Windows desktop.

4. Click one of the suggested help topics on the main screen.
   OR

5. Enter a description of your issue into the Search box, and then press **Enter**.

End

TIP

Browse for Help You can also browse the topics in the Windows Help system. Click **Browse Help** at the top of the Help window, and then click the appropriate topic below. ■

CAUTION

Less Than Helpful The Windows Help system doesn't have all the answers. If you can't find what you need in the Help system, you can go online to the Microsoft Support website (support.microsoft.com), or access the technical support offered by your computer's manufacturer. Also useful are the other books and articles offered by this book's publisher, available online at www.quepublishing.com. ■

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