COMPUTER CORNER

Making Windows 10 Yours!

by Mike@Blackledge.com

  As genealogists, we require our computers to serve us with the best search, data collection, communication, and organization methods. We usually aren't into playing games or even DVDs. Well, not that much. In the previous Quarterly, AGS member Stuart Murray provided confidence-building steps to help us overcome our concerns with upgrading our PC operating system to Microsoft's latest, Windows 10. Stuart convinced me that the upgrade was not that traumatic a transition and, hopefully, he convinced you as well. I have now upgraded two of my computers. Even if your computer is too old to consider an upgrade (as is my laptop running Windows XP), when you purchase a new PC anytime in the next few years, it will certainly have Windows 10 already installed for you. This article is a followup to Stu's and has that "What now?" focus. This article explores techniques that you can implement on your Windows 10 system to make it work specifically for you.

  Microsoft Windows 10 OS (Operating System) was first released on 15 July 2015 and is now installed and running on some 200 million computers worldwide, mostly individuals as we have yet to see companies moving to adopt the system en masse. The individual acceptance for the system is incredible; a major upgrade was launched in November of last year, and Microsoft continues to work minor upgrades. Recognize that Microsoft 10 is here, and it is stable and reliable enough for general use. PC World tells us, "It's one of the best operating systems Microsoft has ever produced, and it's worth the download." Stu tells us, "From what I have read, Microsoft seems to think this is the last version of Windows they will develop. There will be upgrades and releases, but I think they are at a point if they can get people to switch over, it will be their last hurrah. They see Cloud based applications as the future."

  Once you have Windows 10 installed, what do you do next? The number one best seller today on AmazonSmile for Windows 10 guides is entitled *Windows 10 For Seniors For Dummies*. Besides being grammatically questionable, I find that title somehow doubly insulting. There is a separate, longer book entitled *Windows 10 for Dummies*. I understand the marketing concept—I just don't want to sign up for the constituency. We can do this without being called dummies at least, right? Building on Stuart's article, we will look at some of the features and opportunities that await you. But first, a couple of terms.

Apps: At its simplest, Apps are applications, or software programs for your computer. But "the rest of the story" may be important for us to understand. In Windows 10 Start Menu, you will see a section entitled "**All apps...**" In earlier versions of Windows, it would have said "All Programs"–what happened? What happened is that Windows wants to be the all-purpose operating system: for tablets, for phones, for

laptops and desktops. Apple already is there. The history of Apple and Microsoft's relationship has often been one of direct confrontation: Surface vs. iPad, Zune vs. iPod, and the classic PC vs. Mac. The two American giants have often competed for the same clientele, trying to satisfy the same needs. Microsoft's evolution over the past few years has brought it closer to Apple than ever before. Just like its old nemesis, the Windows company now sells its own phones and tablets, gives away OS updates for free, and runs a large network of retail stores.

But programs on the Mac were always called applications; thus for small programs to run on the iPad and the iPhone, Apple created Apps which you obtain from the App Store (which, not entirely accidentally, is also a nice mnemonic: App for Apple). Microsoft has gone along with that universality, and thus under Windows 10, programs are now Apps on the PC as well. One final clarifying comment by Vlad Savov: "The actual computer doesn't matter to Microsoft, whereas it is paramount to Apple." Bottom line: Apple gets most of its $$$ from hardware, Microsoft from software.

Windows Defender *(antivirus protection):* Security is basically peace of mind. People selling security systems, whether for your car, your house, or your computer, want you nervous enough to buy their product. If you have trouble sleeping at night, you are more likely to sign up for a security system and add enough features until you can sleep better. Many new computers come with security systems. In the box with my new laptop from Best Buy, the store threw in a "free $49 value" disc of Kaspersky Lab Security. I threw it out when I got home. I'm not going to compare all the McAfee, BitDefender, Kaspersky security systems – but you can do some research yourself, e.g., start with kaspersky.com and look at the chart which compares "PassFail" tests by 10 of the top software (including Windows Security Essentials, right in the middle) of virus 'exploits' of computer systems. I just want to depend on **Windows Defender**.
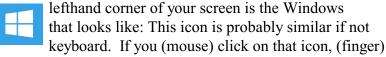
Windows Defender is a Microsoft software product that attempts to detect and remove malware. Initially designed as an anti-spyware program, it was first released as a free download for **Windows XP**, shipped with **Windows Vista** by default, and currently ships with antivirus capabilities as part of **Windows 10**. Windows Defender is now built into the latest versions of Windows and helps guard your PC against viruses and other malware. According to Microsoft, "Windows 10 is the most secure Windows we've ever built. From first boot up through the supported lifetime of your device, you're covered by enhanced security features that help protect against viruses, malware, and even phishing attacks."

How can this be? Let's talk about Windows Defender. Windows Defender can be turned on or off on your system. I suggest you turn it on, and uninstall McAfee or whatever commercial security software came installed "for free" (for a few months) on your system. Windows Defender uses realtime protection to scan everything you download or run on your PC. You can turn on or off realtime protection temporarily by selecting the Start icon button, and then selecting Settings > Update & security > Windows Defender. When Windows Defender is on, you're notified when spyware or other potentially unwanted software tries to install or run on your computer. If you use the default settings, Windows Defender also checks for new definitions (files that are used to determine if software is spyware) and automatically removes any detected item that has a recommended removal action.
In summary, Microsoft tells us: "Windows 10 is safer and more secure thanks to Windows Defender and Windows Firewall. When you start up Windows 10 for the first time, Windows Defender is on and working to protect your PC by scanning for malicious software. It will turn itself off if you install another antivirus app." That is the point to rememberif your computer comes with a Defender

competitor installed such as Symantec Corporation (best known for its Norton consumer security software which is marketed to PC users worldwide), McAfee Inc., or Trend Micro Inc, then Windows Defender has been turned off. My suggestion: uninstall the commercial product and turn on Windows Defender.

Start Menu: All the way down in the icon—a small four pane window icon identical to the Windows icon on your lefthand corner of your screen is the Windows that looks like: This icon is probably similar if not keyboard. If you (mouse) click on that icon, (finger) tap that icon on your touchscreen, or touch the Windows key on your keyboard, you will open the Start menu. That is the new Start button for Widows 10. Some of us actually paid $4.95 to add a Start menu to Windows 8 but a real Start menu is making its triumphant return after it was last seen in
Windows 7.

The Start menu is even better than before. Microsoft says it specifically made tweaks based on input from Windows Insider testers. You can keep it nice and small or resize it to take over your whole screen if you want. You can also customize it to your content with four different live tile sizes (small, medium, wide and large), drag and drop applications around and more.
For me, it is where I can quickly see the weather, check out a few headlines and open up my most used apps, and it's easily the best version of the smart menu ever. Let's see why.

Customizing the Start Menu: OK, here is the good stuff. Hit the Windows icon and look at all the tiles along the right side of the resulting Start menu window. What are these? Click on any one to

 find out–all they do is launch a particular program (OK, app) for you. And most of these apps you don't need. Pick one out and right click on it and you'll see that you can uninstall that program, or at least unpin the tile from the Start menu. I would go through and delete all those Xbox tiles, other games that you don't need in your Start menu. If there is something you like, such as Photos, you can right click it and change the size, perhaps to Large. If there is

something you want higher up in the selection of tiles, just click on that tile and drag it up to about where you want it and then 'let it go.' Nice!

What about some of our genealogy programs? Click on the **All apps …** and scroll down the alphabetical list of all the programs installed on your computer. If you come across a genealogy program you use, say Legacy or Fold3 or RootsMagic4, then click on it and drag it over to the tile section. Then you can right click on that tile and resize it – make it larger or smaller, as you wish. You can also click on the default title of all those tiles, at the top of the collection, and edit it to what you want: **Mike's favorite programs**–or even delete that title altogether.

Some of those are **Live Tiles**–like the News tile shows a headline, and a photo or two that go

with that headline. A weather tile shows the current temperature in Albuquerque or Kirtland AFB. Or a Money tile flips between the current Dow Jones and Nasdaq averages. Another tile might show a web site you have used recently, such as iHeartRadio. The more you play with these tiles and apps, the more you can make the menu 'yours.' And clicking the Windows icon makes them all appear in that Start menu, or click again and the menu disappears.

Snap: One of the nice features of certain genealogy software programs such as RootsMagic is that it allows you to fill your computer monitor with two database displays, one left and one right, to compare database entries or work on one database while reading the other. Windows has this feature in spades, a feature that originally launched in Windows 7. It's better in 10, allowing you to snap applications to the corners of the display, or even to divide each screen into quarters. On a dualmonitor setup, one could fit eight applications onscreen at once if one actually wanted to. OK, that's a little much. Four is plenty.

Summary: Windows 10 is a significant upgrade over previous operating systems for the PC. Clicking the Windows icon on keyboard or screen opens a world of options for you. You can do quite a bit to customize your PC to what you need and what you use. Now, excuse me, I'm going down to the Library. There are only 20 holds on their *Windows 10 for Dummies* copy.

I discovered . . .
the ***HowOld.net*** web site allows you to upload one of your scanned genealogy pictures (or any picture with faces) and within a few seconds view an educated estimate of the sex and age of everyone in the photo. The site uses Microsoft's Artificial Intelligence Application Program Interface. The results are far from perfect – my experience is results appear more accurate with older photos, perhaps because there existed less makeup and facelifts back then. When you have little else to go on, using the site helps determine possible relationships and relative (no pun) ages of ancestral photos—and incorporates the important three F factors: Fun, Free, and Fast!

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