10

WINDOWS SECRETS

EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW

By **KIM KOMANDO**, national radio host, USA Today columnist, Fox News contributor and best-selling author

INTRODUCTION

Windows 10 first hit the scene in the summer of 2015. Today, nearly a billion computers around the world are running Microsoft's latest operating system. It's estimated to dominate nearly 51% of the desktop OS market, surpassing even the popularity of Windows 7. (Because who remembers Windows 8, anyway?)

Critics have praised Windows 10 over the past few years, but everyday users are harder to please. Some love it, while others hate it.

Either way, Microsoft has described Windows 10 as its "final" version. That means instead of replacing the operating system every few years, Windows 10 pushes out a fairly consistent stream of free updates. With the return of the Start menu and advent of Microsoft Edge, Windows 10 is arguably the best version ever produced.

Thanks to all those updates, new features are continuously added to Windows 10 — but keeping track of it all can be a chore. You don't have to know everything this operating system can do, but it's definitely in your favor to know more than just the basics.

That includes features that aren't as well known, like these 10 Windows 10 secrets you should be familiar with to get the most out of your machine.

01

QUICKLY OPEN TASKBAR PROGRAMS

Windows 10 introduced a slew of new and convenient keyboard shortcuts. Take a look at the taskbar at the bottom of your screen where program icons are lined up, most likely including your web browser and Windows File Explorer. You can open those programs by hitting the Windows key ("⊞ Win") and the number that corresponds to the location of the icon in the bar.

Let's say, from left to right, you have the blue "e" for Microsoft's Edge browser (see "1" below), then the File Explorer folder icon (see "2"). Hold down "⊞ Win" and press "1" to open Microsoft Edge. This is a quick way to access your most popular apps without reaching for your mouse. With a little practice, this will come naturally — and make you feel like a pro.
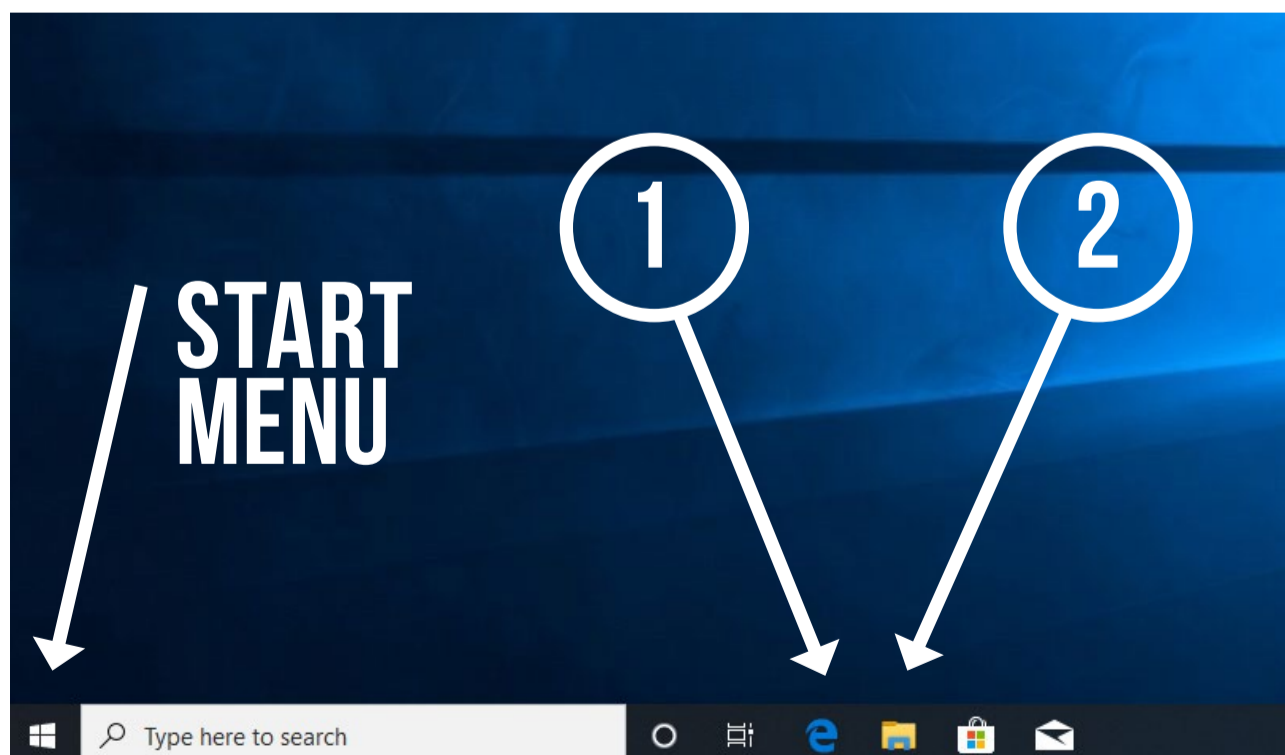
SWITCH BETWEEN APPS SEAMLESSLY

02

You may remember the Alt + Tab Task Switcher from previous versions of Windows. It's still in Windows 10, but instead of displaying small thumbnails for your open applications, the cards in Windows 10 are larger and more proportional to the applications they represent.

This is a welcome change, since the cards reveal what's going on in your open applications. To quickly cycle through these open apps, just hold Alt, then press Tab repeatedly until the desired application is highlighted. Release the keys and your chosen program will open in the forefront, ready for use.

You also have the option to view open applications on your virtual desktops. Virtual desktops are ideal for single-monitor users, or for those who prefer to have separate desktops open for business or personal projects. To learn more about virtual desktops, **check out my article on Komando.com**.

BIG ICONS OR SMALL ICONS?

03

Changing the icon size in Windows 10 is one way you can make your Windows interface look better, or at least easier to work with. Who wants to squint to find the right files?

The "P" in PC stands for "personal," meaning your computer should be suited to your preferences. While increasing or decreasing icon sizes may sound easy, not everyone knows all the steps to do so correctly.

Start by right-clicking anywhere on your Windows desktop, other than an icon. From the drop-down menu that appears (see the screenshot below), hover over "View" at the very top, then choose your preferred icon size: Large, Medium (default) or Small. After you've clicked an option, your icons will resize automatically on your desktop. To revert your selection, simply go through the steps again.
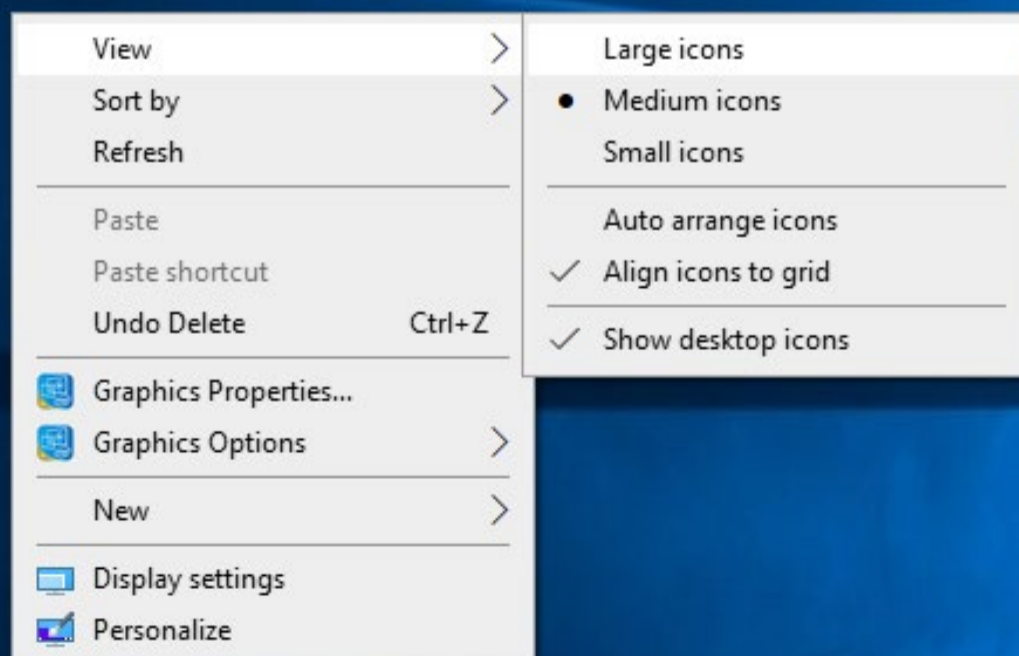
TAKE CONTROL OF UPDATES AND REBOOTS

04

Windows makes it easy to install updates; the process is straightforward, and you can set your updates to download and install automatically. The downsides? You usually have to reboot your computer, and you have no idea when a new update will begin downloading.

To prevent these interruptions, you can set time parameters. Just open "Settings," click on "Update & Security" and select "Change active hours."

You can also pause your updates for a certain amount of time. This might impact your security, so you don't want to wait too long. But if you want a short reprieve, go to your Settings menu and choose the "Update & Security" category again. From here, you can pause your updates for seven days, or you can open "Advanced Options" to specify how long you want to halt your updates (up to 35 days).

SHAKE YOUR WINDOWS

05

If you have stacks and stacks of windows open and you want to go down to just one, use the Aero Shake feature.

Aero Shake was introduced in Windows 7 and remains a popular feature in Windows 10. To use it, click on the top bar of your desired window, hold it down and shake the mouse to instantly minimize all other open windows. Do it again to restore those windows.

GET FEWER NOTIFICATIONS

06

Windows 10 added a handy notification area that's very similar to what you find on smartphones. To access it, simply click the notification icon on the bottom right of your taskbar, circled in white below:
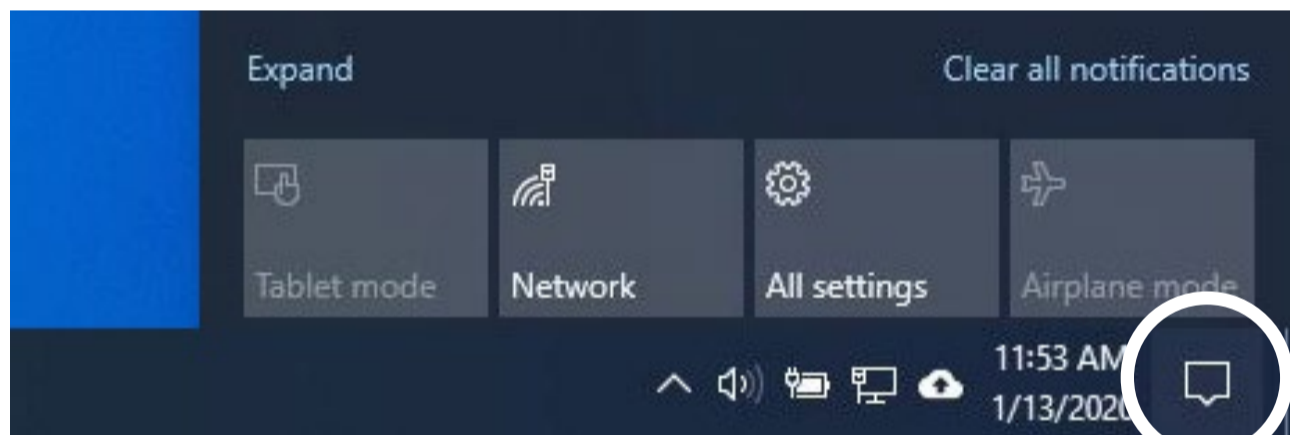
With all the apps and Windows features sending notifications, the pop-ups can get pretty annoying. Fortunately, you can customize your notifications and pop-up alerts to eliminate the distractions and clutter.

To do this, open "Settings," click "System," then go to "Notifications & actions." From here, you can choose whether to see Windows tips, notifications from apps or programs, notifications on your lock screen and more.
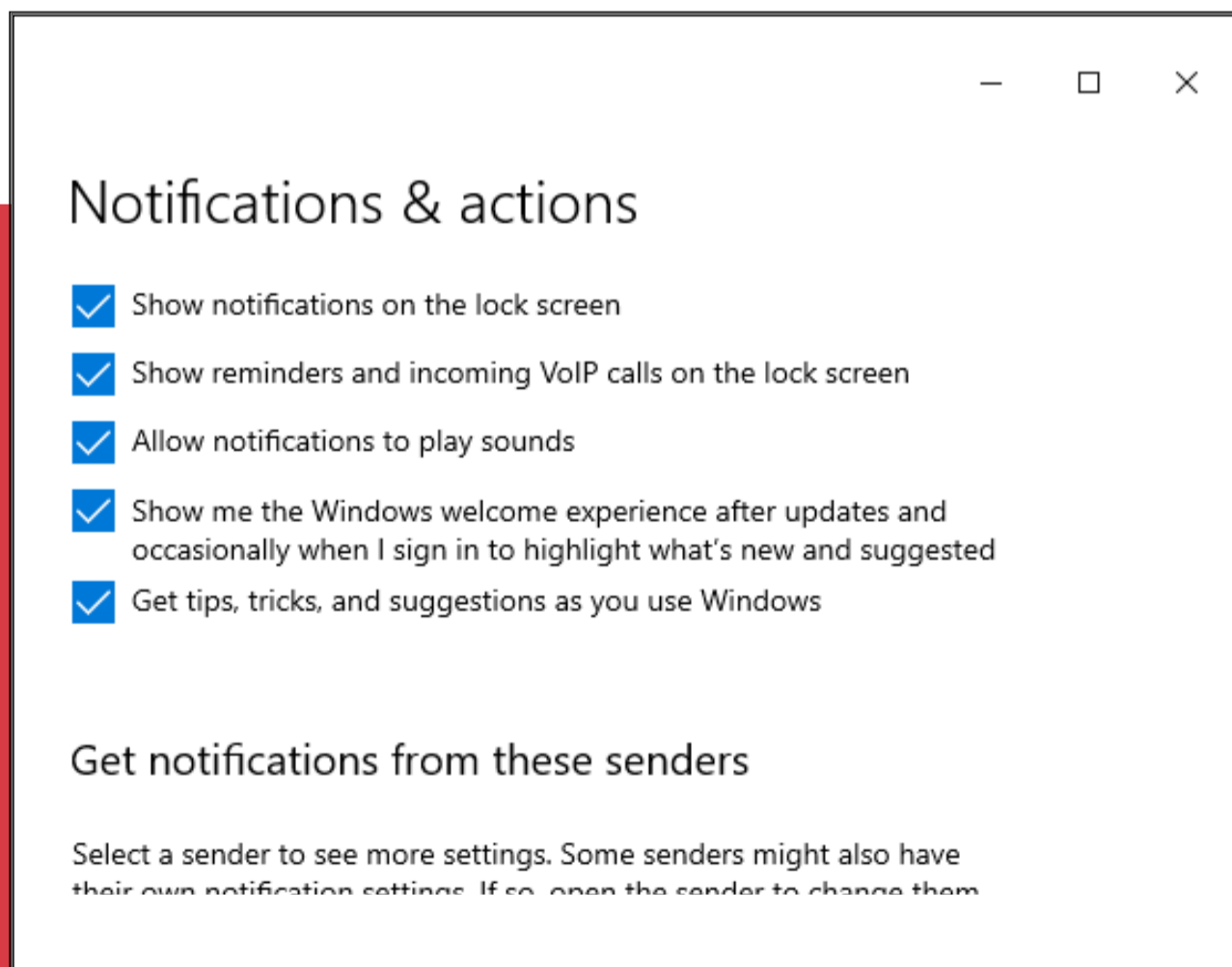
If you're tired of seeing notifications related to Windows, simply uncheck the box that says, "Get tips, tricks and suggestions as you use Windows." This will hide all Windows-related notifications.

To turn off all app notifications, toggle "Get notifications from apps and other senders" to "Off."

For individual app notifications, go back to the "Notifications & actions" area. Scroll down and click the name of the app you want to customize. Here, you can adjust toggles so you can receive banners, sounds or neither.

When you need to be productive and want to silence all notifications for a short period of time, open the notification box and click "Focus Assist." If you don't see it at the bottom of the box, hit "Expand."

Click "Focus Assist" once to only receive notifications from priority apps, twice to receive alarms only and tap once more to turn off "Focus Assist" altogether.

Notifications & actions

☑ Show notifications on the lock screen

☑ Show reminders and incoming VoIP calls on the lock screen

☑ Allow notifications to play sounds

☑ Show me the Windows welcome experience after updates and occasionally when I sign in to highlight what's new and suggested

☑ Get tips, tricks, and suggestions as you use Windows

Get notifications from these senders

Select a sender to see more settings. Some senders might also have their own notification settings. If so, open the sender to change them.

GOD MODE

07

Adjusting your settings and preferences in Windows 10 can be confusing. Although the new Settings folder is more streamlined and easier to navigate, people looking for more options will gravitate toward the traditional Windows Control Panel.

If you don't want to keep switching between Settings and the Control Panel, enable "God Mode." God Mode is a popular name for a folder with all of your Windows administrative tools, management settings and other options in one place for easy access.

To create your God Mode folder, sign in to an account with administrative privileges. Right-click on your desktop and select "New," then choose "Folder." Rename this newly created folder as follows:

GodMode.{ED7BA470-8E54-465E-825C-99712043E01C}

If you want to use a different name for this folder, replace "GodMode" with your new name. Just don't forget to include every single character on the folder name — period, brackets, capital letters and numbers.

After the folder is created, its icon will turn into the familiar Control Panel icon. Double-click this icon to access your newly compiled God Mode settings and controls.

BUILD YOUR OWN LIBRARIES

08

With Windows 7 came a folder type called "libraries," which it separated by default into "Documents," "Music," "Pictures" and "Videos." Opening these would show you the information their names indicated.

With Windows 10, you can link multiple folders to a single library folder. That lets you see information from folders around your hard drive, or multiple hard drives, in one spot. You can also create new library folders to better organize your files.

To view your library folders in Windows 10, open any folder and go to the "View" tab. Click "Navigation pane" and choose "Show libraries."

To edit an existing library, open any folder, and in the left column under "Libraries," right-click on a folder and select "Properties." You'll see everything included in this category.
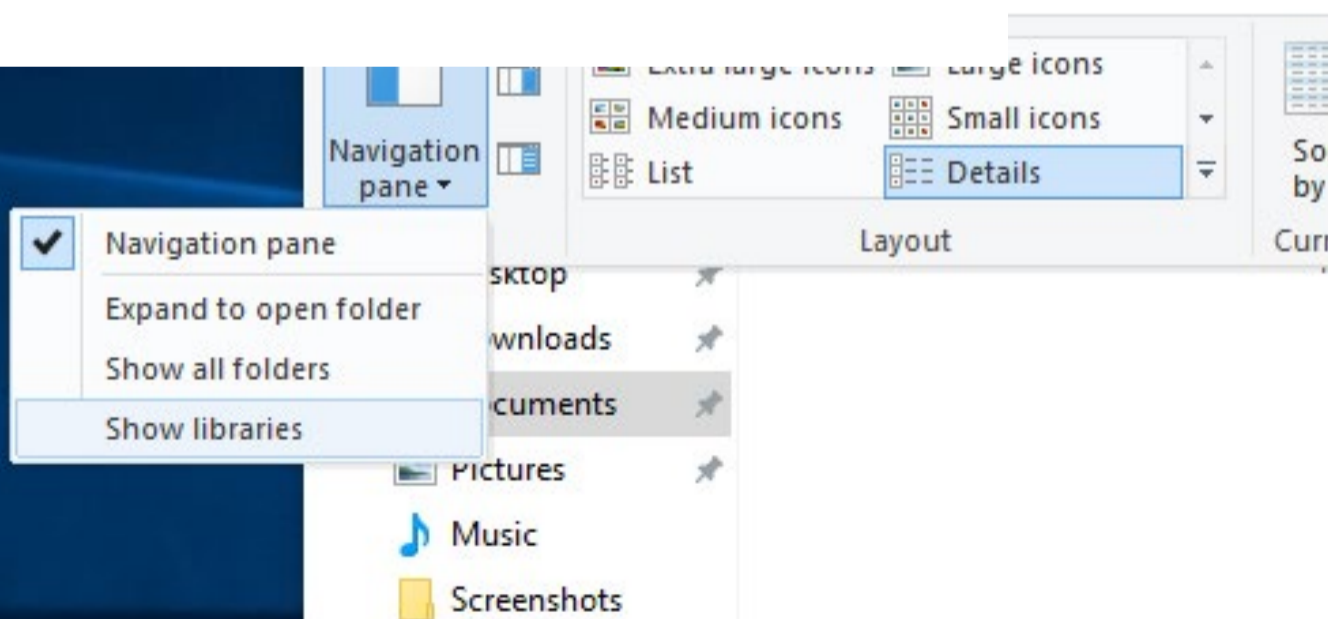
To add folders to the "Libraries" section, right-click the folder you want to add and choose "Include in libraries." This also lets you select which folder is your "save location." When you save a file to the library folder, your "save location" is the actual folder to which the file is saved.

When you're browsing around your computer, you can also right-click on a folder and select "Include in library," then select the library to which you want to add the folder.

To create a new library folder, open "Libraries," then right-click a blank section within the window, choose "New" and select "Library."

MOBILE TO PC IN AN INSTANT

09

Windows makes it easy to link your Android-based smartphone or tablet to your PC. With Microsoft Launcher (formerly Arrow Launcher), you can personalize your Android device and sync seamlessly between your gadgets — and that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Microsoft Launcher is perfect for people who juggle multiple devices. With Microsoft Edge mobile and its "Continue on PC" feature, users can share open web pages on Microsoft Edge across all of their signed-in gadgets.

To get started, open Settings, click "Phone" and then "Add a phone." Sign in with your Microsoft account, type in your phone number and click send. Microsoft will send your phone a text with a link to the app store to download and install it.

Once you have the Microsoft Edge mobile app, open it and go to a webpage. Sign in with the same Microsoft account you're using for your computer, and the app will prompt you to "Continue now" or "Continue later." If you choose "Continue now," the website will open on the linked PC. If you choose "Continue later," the site you're on will appear under your Action Center and you can access it when you have more time.

You can also sync your favorites, browsing history, reading list and eBooks as long as you're logged into the same Microsoft account.

As a bonus for busy parents, it also has location tracking and an app usage monitor — perfect for keeping an eye on your kids.
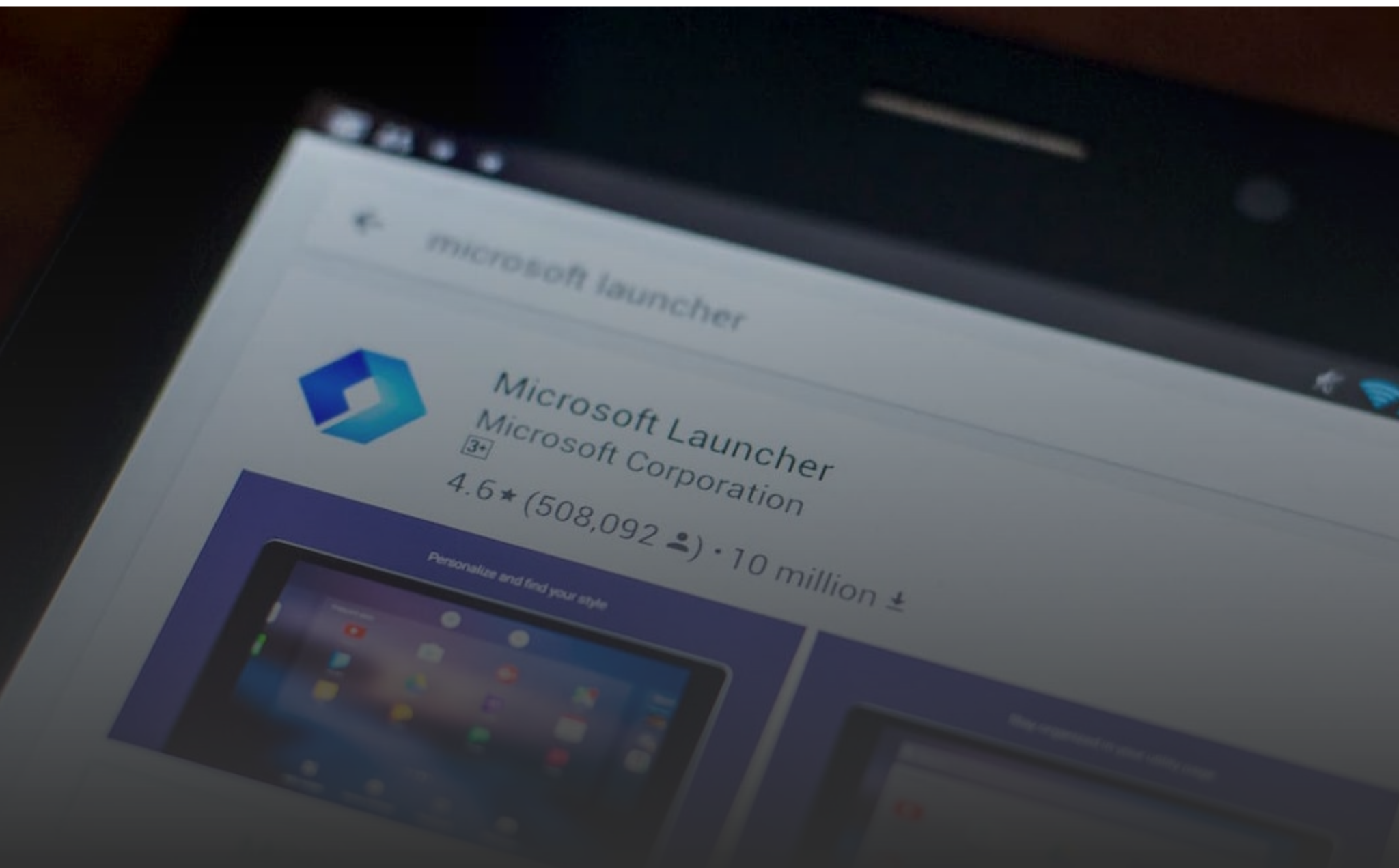
KNOW YOUR SHORTCUTS

10

Let's be honest: For many, the mouse is probably the most-used piece of computer hardware, simply because it makes things faster and easier; however, others prefer to use the keyboard as often as possible.

Using the keyboard can be much faster than using a mouse, because a few taps can yield the same results. If you prefer your keyboard, you're going to love the new shortcuts introduced in Windows 10.

Check out the shortcuts on the next page, and you may find a few that help make you even faster.

KEYBOARD SHORTCUT	RESULT
⊞	Open and close the Start menu
⊞ + A	Open the action center for quick actions and app notifications
⊞ + B	Set focus in the notification area
⊞ + C	Open Cortana in listening mode
⊞ + D	Display and hide the desktop
⊞ + E	Open the "File Explorer" folder
⊞ + F	Open "Feedback Hub" and take a screenshot
⊞ + G	Open the game bar (only works if a game is already open)
⊞ + L	Lock the computer or switch users
⊞ + M	Minimize all windows
⊞ + P	Select a presentation display mode
⊞ + R	Open the "Run" dialog box
⊞ + T	Cycle through taskbar programs
⊞ + U	Open the "Ease of Access Center"
⊞ + V	Open the clipboard
⊞ + X	Open the "Quick Link" menu

| KEYBOARD SHORTCUT	RESULT
⊞ + [1-9]	Start a program pinned to the taskbar in the numbered position
⊞ + Alt + [1-9]	Open the jump list for the program pinned to the taskbar in the numbered position
⊞ + Ctrl + [1-9]	Switch to the last active window of the program pinned to the taskbar in the numbered position
⊞ + Shift + [1-9]	Start a new instance of the program pinned to the taskbar in the numbered position
⊞ + Tab	Open "Task" view
⊞ + ↑	Maximize the window
⊞ + ↓	Minimize the window or remove the current window or app from the screen
⊞ + →	Maximize the window or app to the right side of the screen
⊞ + ←	Maximize the window or app to the left side of the screen
⊞ + Home	Minimize everything but the active window; restores all windows if pressed again
⊞ + Shift + ↑	Stretch the window from the top and bottom of the screen
⊞ + Shift + ←/→	Move an open window or app from one monitor to another
⊞ + Pause	Display the "System Properties" dialog box
⊞ + Shift + M	Restore minimized windows to the desktop
⊞ + Ctrl + F	Search for computers on the same network

BONUS: 4 FREE WINDOWS DOWNLOADS YOU'LL LOVE

If you've been using your Windows PC for some time, you already know just how many third-party programs like photo editors, games and productivity tools are available. Many of these can enhance your computer, improve its functionality and even make life more fun.

What you might not know is that many of the most useful programs don't cost a cent to use or download.

To help you get started with supercharging your PC, here are some of our favorite utilities and apps to make using Windows more productive and fun.
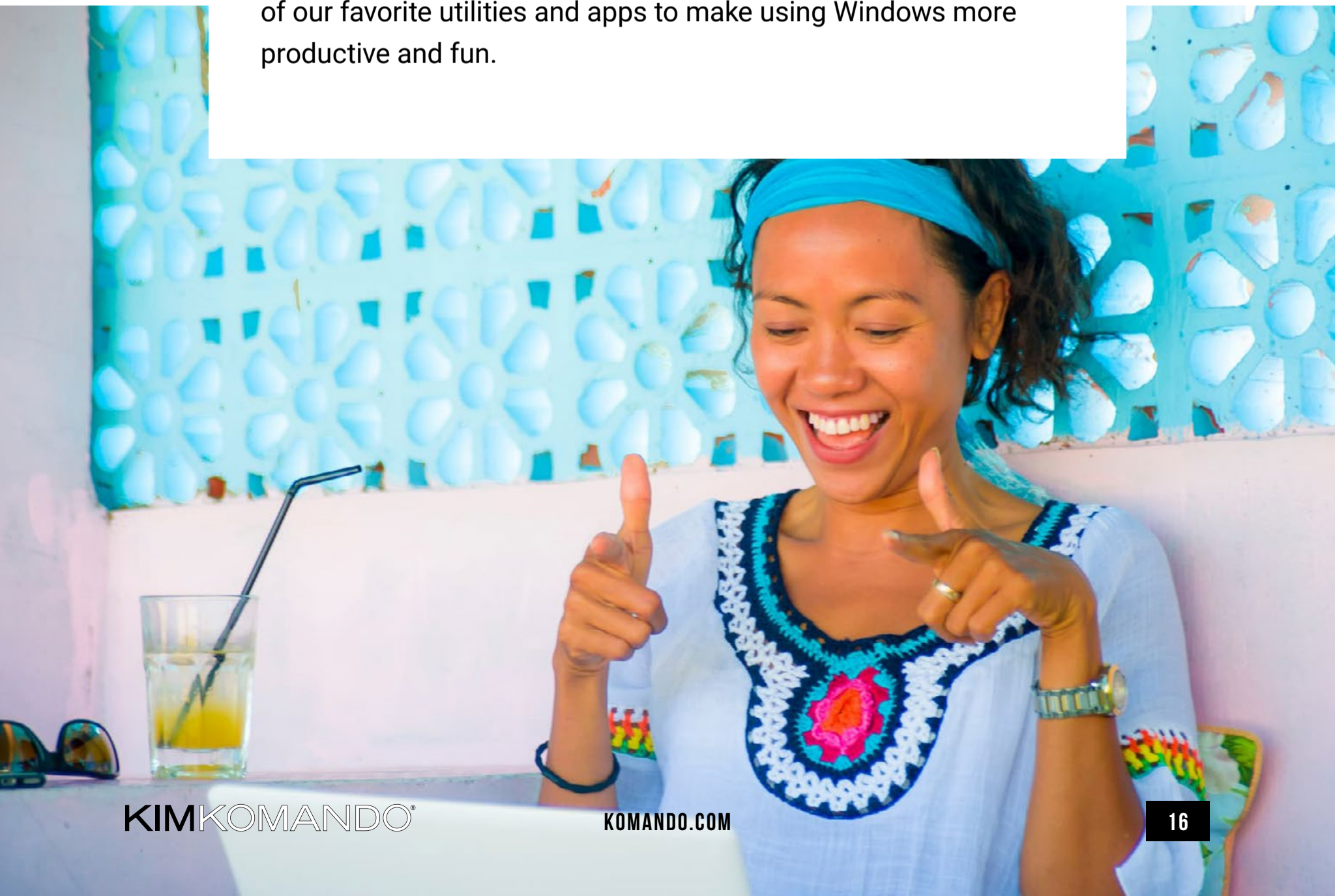
1. COLD TURKEY

Facebook can be a tough habit to break — especially when work is on the line. Rather than try (and fail) to give up the platform when important work needs to be done, you can place your faith in an app that locks you out with zero exceptions.

Cold Turkey is designed to block distracting web content and is perfect for writers, self-employed workers and anyone interested in taking a break from social media. Just set the length of time you want to block a platform, enter the web address and start the clock.

Nothing — not even resetting your computer — will stop the block from working. It's quite a handy tool for those of us with short attention spans.

Cold Turkey is free to download. There's also a **Pro version** with added features like passwords, breaks and daily time limits.

2. MICROSOFT GARAGE: MOUSE WITHOUT BORDERS

If you use multiple computers for work, you already know the pain that comes with managing products over several systems. Now you can control up to four computers from a single mouse and keyboard setup with Microsoft Garage's **Mouse without Borders**.

Right off the bat, you'll not only have access to every workstation from a single location, but you'll even be able to drag and drop files across computers. Additionally, each of your computers will have a shared clipboard, meaning you can copy and paste seamlessly from one machine to the next. It's a multitasker's dream come true!

Mouse without Borders is compatible with all versions of Windows, from Windows Vista to Windows 10.

3. MICROSOFT PHOTOS

As a Windows user, you may feel a tinge of jealousy when you see some of the default photo apps Macs come with, but don't worry — Microsoft didn't leave you hanging.

With **Microsoft Photos**, you can easily import your photos and videos from your device of choice and edit them with an assortment of handy tools and effects. Plus, Microsoft Photos lets you share your photos and slideshows with friends and family using the built-in share button.

4. SKYPE

If you haven't used **Skype** yet, or in a long time, it's one of the most simple and widely employed conference call apps on the web. With Microsoft now leading its development, the program is even more secure and frequently updated.

With Skype, you can make free calls to friends and family — and easily send media like photos and videos. You can even create a group call where multiple users can see one another. It's a great, free way to stay in touch.

Keep in mind, Microsoft has admitted to analyzing recordings from certain calls using the program's translation features, so if you have something sensitive to say, you might want to say it in English.

ABOUT KIM KOMANDO

Kim Komando's interest in the digital landscape dates back more than 22 years. Kim attended Arizona State University, which offers one of the leading Computer Information Systems (CIS) degrees in the nation. She left her first major in architecture when research convinced her that the opportunities in CIS were better.

During her college years, Kim Komando started her first business teaching people how to use personal computers. In her classes, she realized how confusing these machines were, especially to adults. She knew that if she could make things easy and fun, people would listen.

After college, Kim accepted a position with IBM selling computers. She later marketed computerized phone systems for AT&T, then mainframe computers at Unisys. But her dream was to go on the radio and teach many more people to improve their lives through computers.

Kim's reality far exceeded the dream. Today, her network radio shows are broadcast on more than 400 stations in the United States and around the world on the American Forces Network. Kim hosts a daily Consumer Tech Update vignette on 300 top radio stations with over two million listeners, and she is a USA Today-syndicated columnist and a regular contributor to Fox News. She is also an author and philanthropist. The Kim Komando Show airs globally on the renowned Bloomberg Television Network from a custom-designed set at her WestStar MultiMedia Entertainment production facility in Phoenix. Her email news network also delivers more than 10 million informative and up-to-the-minute digital newsletters to subscribers each week.