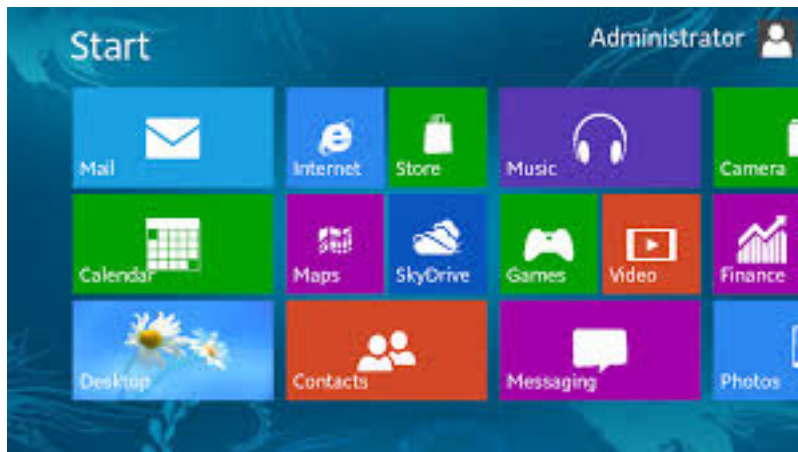


Making Windows 8 Usable with Classic Shell **(April 2013)**

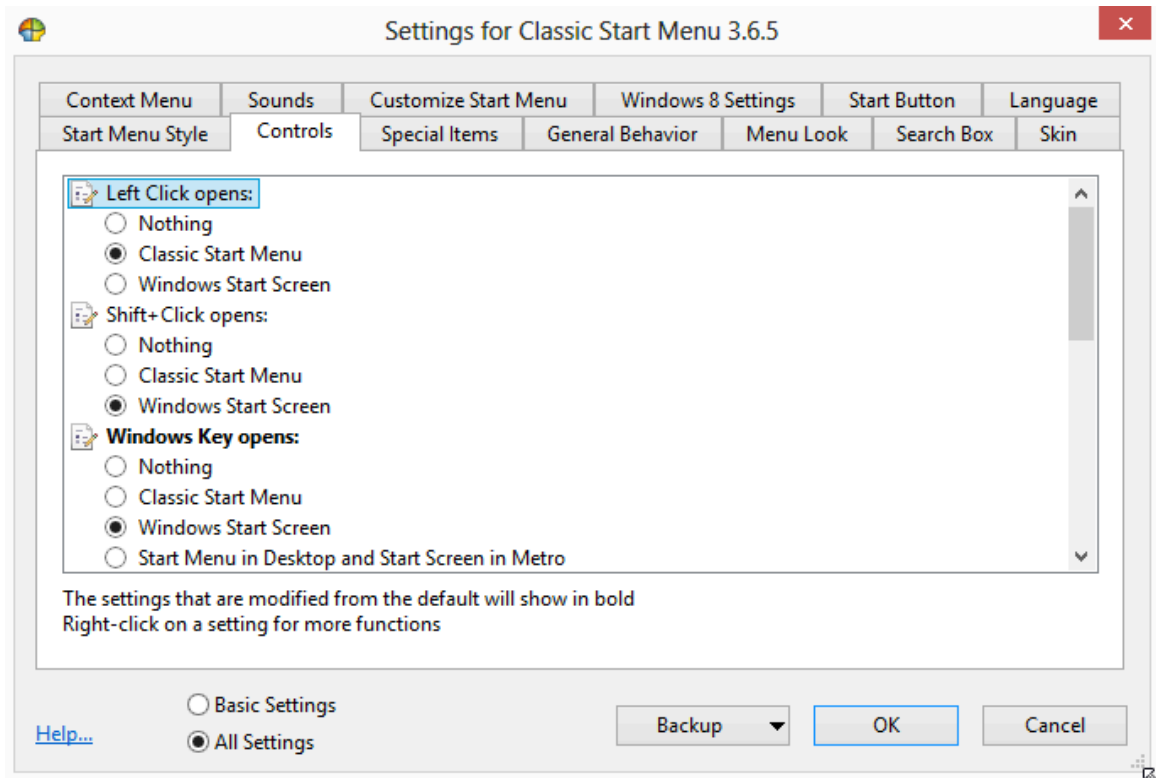


If you purchase a new Windows computer today, it will most likely come with Windows 8. In some cases (such as on Dell's website) you can still order computers with Windows 7, but as time passes it will become harder and harder to do so. Microsoft is putting all of its muscle behind Windows 8, so you may as well accept it and be prepared to deal with all the changes it introduces.

One of the biggest challenges in getting comfortable with Windows 8 is that the iconic Windows start button and associated menu that was ever present in the lower-left corner of previous Windows systems is gone, replaced with a completely different way to access the same functions. Thankfully, a number of vendors have created Windows 8 software that returns the start button and menu as well as a number of other mechanisms we have grown used to for interacting with Windows.

My favorite option is called Classic Shell (www.classicshell.net) and the good news is that it is completely free! Classic Shell lets you pick from three different start menu styles ("Classic", Windows XP, or Windows 7), as well as providing a number of classic user interface elements both for Windows Explorer as well as Internet Explorer 9. Classic Shell also allows you to boot directly into the Windows 8 desktop mode, bypassing the entire tiled interface of Windows 8.

Classic Shell provides you many settings to control the behavior you see. The majority of the defaults are just fine, but there is one setting you will definitely want to change, and that is to set the Windows key to toggle between the Windows 8 start screen and the desktop. This is the default behavior with Windows 8 and you will find it convenient to maintain that setting. You can see that option in the screen below.



Class Shell doesn't eliminate the reality that there will be a lot of new things you will need and want to learn about Windows 8, but it does take care of arguably the biggest challenge with Windows 8: the lack of the start button and menu.

As always, I hope you have found this information useful. If you do not wish to receive these emails in the future, let me know.

This newsletter, as well as all past newsletters, can be found on my web site (<http://steve.gimnich.com>).