Chapter 12

Customizing Windows 8 with the Control Panel

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In This Chapter

▶ Understanding the two Windows control panels

▶ Altering the appearance of Windows 8

▶ Changing video modes

▶ Installing or removing apps and programs

▶ Adjusting your mouse

▶ Automatically setting the computer's time and date

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*M*ost science fiction movies include a close-up of a smoking control panel, ready to burst into flames. If that happens in Windows, grab an extra fire extinguisher: Windows 8 contains *two* switch-packed control panels.

The Start screen's control panel, the PC Settings screen, which is full of oversized buttons, helps mostly with simple chores, such as changing your account photo or turning on the spell checker's autocorrect option. The desktop's mammoth set of switches, called simply *Control Panel,* carries the more powerful settings found in earlier Windows versions.

Although separate, the two panels often join forces. Sometimes a click on the desktop's Control Panel whisks you back to the Start screen's PC Settings screen for you to flip the final switch.

But no matter which bank of switches you face, they both let you customize the look, feel, behavior, and vibe of Windows 8. This chapter explains the switches and sliders you'll want to tweak, and it steers you away from the ones that are prone to causing fires.

One word of caution: Some of the Control Panel's settings can be changed only by the person holding the almighty Administrator account — usually the computer's owner. If Windows 8 refuses to open the Control Panel's hatch, call the PC's owner for help.

Finding the Right Switch

NEW IN WINDOWS 8

Windows 8 comes with hundreds of settings, sprinkled between two completely different control panels. You'll rarely stumble randomly across the setting you need. So, instead of clicking aimlessly at menus, let Windows do the hunting.

Follow these steps to find the setting you need:

Search

1. **From the Start screen, summon the Charms bar's Search pane.**

   You can summon the Charms bar's Search pane in any of three ways:

   TOUCHSCREEN

   • **Mouse:** Point the cursor at the screen's top- or bottom-right corner; when the Charms bar appears, click the Search icon.

   • **Keyboard:** Press ⊞+Q.

   • **Touchscreen:** Slide your finger from the screen's right edge inward and then tap the Search icon.

   Settings

2. **In the Search pane, click the word *Settings*.**

   That tells Windows to search through its *settings,* rather than your apps or files.

3. **In the search box, type a word describing your desired setting.**

   When you type the first letter, every setting containing that letter appears in a list. If you don't know the exact name of your setting, begin typing a keyword: **display**, **mouse**, **user**, **privacy**, or something similar.

   Don't see the right setting? Press the Backspace key to delete the letters you've typed and then try again with a different word.

4. **Click your desired setting on the list.**

   Windows takes you directly to that setting on the appropriate control panel.

   TIP

   When searching for a setting, always try the Search pane first. A few minutes spent at the Search pane yields better results than scouring the hundreds of settings stuffed in the two Windows 8 control panels.

The Start Screen's PC Settings Screen

The Start screen's mini control panel — the PC Settings screen — would make more sense if it simply offered mini tweaks, such as changing colors or other cosmetic fluff.

But oddly enough, Microsoft stuffed it with some of the most powerful commands in Windows 8. To open the Start screen's PC Settings screen, follow these steps:

1. **Summon the Charms bar's Settings pane.**

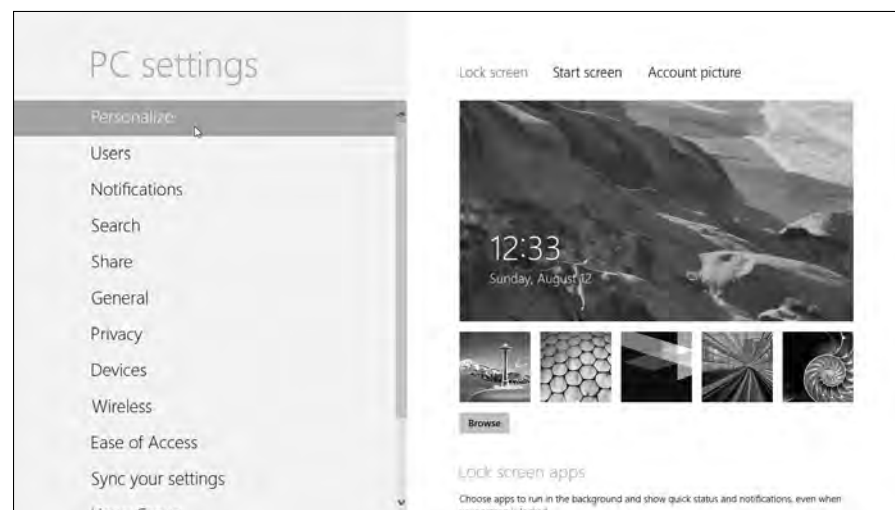   You can summon the Charms bar's Settings pane any of three ways:

   • **Mouse:** Point the cursor at the screen's top- or bottom-right corner; when the Charms bar appears, click the Settings icon.

   • **Keyboard:** Press ⊞+I.

   • **Touchscreen:** Slide your finger from the screen's right edge inward and then tap the Settings icon.

2. **Choose the words *Change PC Settings* with a mouse click or tap of a finger.**

The PC Settings screen appears, as shown in Figure 12-1.

Figure 12-1: The Start screen's easy-to-touch PC Settings screen offers many common settings.

Like the desktop's large Control Panel, the PC Settings screen breaks its settings down into categories, each described here:

✔ **Personalize:** This lets you choose a new picture for your Start screen and lock screen, described in Chapter 2. The Account Picture area lets you change the thumbnail photo assigned to your user account.

Don't overlook the Lock Screen Apps section, found at the bottom of the Lock Screen page of the PC Settings screen, shown in Figure 12-1. This section lets you choose which tiles should automatically update on your lock screen. Click the Calendar app, for example, and the lock screen displays your next appointment's time and date.

✔ **Users:** This category lets you change your password or authorize another person to use your computer. I cover both of those chores in Chapter 14.

✔ **Notifications:** Sometimes called *toast notifications,* these little strips of text appear on your screen's top-right corner, shown in Figure 12-2. If you find them informative, you needn't visit here. But if you find some of them to be distracting, head here to choose which programs, if any, are allowed to display onscreen notifications.

✔ **Search:** You can safely ignore this settings category, unless you want to prevent an app or its contents from being indexed. You usually want Windows to index *everything,* making everything easier to find.

Figure 12-2: Unless told to stop, the Messenger program places notifications about instant messages in your screen's upper-right corner.

NEW IN WINDOWS 8

✔ **Share:** Designed for social networkers who enjoy sharing what they see on their computer screens, this lets you choose apps that can share information. Windows 8 starts with your Mail and People apps for e-mailing items to friends. As you install other apps, they may appear as options here, as well.

✔ **General:** This catch-all category offers a way to turn off the spell checker and to make Windows ignore Daylight Savings Time. Don't ignore the General category completely, though, because three important troubleshooting tools live here: Refresh Your PC, Remove Everything, and Advanced Startup. I cover these three Get Out of Trouble Free cards in Chapter 18.

✔ **Privacy:** The Privacy category lets you prevent apps from knowing your geographic location and from sharing your name and account picture. If you're concerned about privacy, though, look for the Delete History buttons sprinkled in the General, Share, and Search categories.

NEW IN WINDOWS 8

✔ **Devices:** This simply lists all of your computer's *devices* — things you've plugged into your computer. That usually includes things like a mouse, monitor, printer, camera, speakers, and other gadgetry. (It doesn't let you adjust any of their settings, though.) To remove a device, click the gadget and then click the little icon in its top-right corner. To add a device, click the Add a Device button at the page's top.

✔ **Ease of Access:** This includes settings to make Windows more navigable by people with challenges in vision and hearing.

NEW IN WINDOWS 8

✔ **Sync Your Settings:** If you've signed in to Windows 8 with a Microsoft account, this category lets you pick and choose which settings should link to your account. Then, when you sign in to a different Windows 8 computer, that computer automatically changes to reflect your favorite colors, background, language preferences, app settings, and other personal details tied to your Microsoft account.

✔ **Homegroup:** Covered in Chapter 14, this lets you choose which libraries to share with other computers in your *Homegroup* — a simplified way to share files between connected computers.

✔ **Windows Update:** This settings category lets you know at a glance if Windows Update isn't working. Click the Check For Updates Now button to see whether Microsoft has released any fixes for your computer today.

The Big Guns: The Desktop's Control Panel

When the Start screen's PC Settings screen isn't enough, head for the big guns: The desktop's Control Panel lets you while away an entire workweek opening icons and flipping switches to fine-tune Windows 8. Part of the attraction comes from the Control Panel's magnitude: It houses nearly *50* icons, and some icons summon menus with dozens of settings and tasks.

Don't be surprised, though, when you flip one of the desktop Control Panel's switches and wind up in the Start screen's PC Settings screen to finish the job. The two control panels can't seem to leave each other alone.

TIP

To open the desktop's Control Panel, point your mouse cursor in the screen's bottom-left corner and right-click. (Or press ⊞+X.) When the text menu pops up in the bottom-left corner, choose Control Panel.

To save you from searching aimlessly for the right switch, the Control Panel lumps similar items together in its Category view, as shown in Figure 12-3.

Figure 12-3:
The desk-top's Control Panel groups dozens of settings into eight categories.

Below each category's name, shortcuts list that category's most popular offerings. The System and Security category icon in Figure 12-3, for example, offers shortcuts to review your computer's maintenance and security status, turn on the File History backup, and access troubleshooting tools.

Some controls don't fall neatly into categories, and others merely serve as shortcuts to settings found elsewhere. To see these and every other icon the Control Panel offers, choose either Large Icons or Small Icons from the View By drop-down list, shown in the top-right corner of Figure 12-3. The window quickly displays *all* umpteen-zillion Control Panel icons, as shown in Figure 12-4. (To return to the Category view in Figure 12-3, select Category from the View By drop-down list.)

Don't think something's astray if your Control Panel differs from the one in Figure 12-4. Different programs, accessories, and computer models often add their own icons to the Control Panel. Different versions of Windows 8, which I describe in Chapter 1, also have slightly different icons.

Figure 12-4:
Designed
for experi-
enced PC
owners with
good eye-
sight, the
Small Icons
view dis-
plays *every*
icon in the
Control
Panel.

TIP

Rest your mouse pointer over any confusing icon or category in the Control
Panel, and Windows 8 thoughtfully explains its meaning in life. (Add this perk
to the list of reasons why touchscreen owners will want a mouse when visiting
the Windows desktop.)

TIP

The desktop's Control Panel gathers all the main switches in Windows 8 into
one well-stocked panel, but it's certainly not the only way to change the set-
tings. You can almost always jump to these same settings by right-clicking
the item you want to change — be it your desktop, an icon, or a folder — and
choosing Properties from the pop-up menu.

The rest of this chapter lists the Control Panel's categories shown in Figure 12-3,
the reasons you'd ever want to visit them, and any shortcuts that jump straight
to the setting you need.

System and Security

Like an old car or a new friendship, Windows 8 needs occasional mainte-
nance. In fact, a little bit of maintenance can make Windows 8 run so much
more smoothly that I devote the best of Chapter 13 to that subject. There,
you discover how to speed up Windows, free up hard drive space, back up
your data, and create a safety net called a restore point.

This category's security section contains a full brigade of soldiers, and I've
written field manuals for them in Chapter 11. The new backup program in
Windows 8, File History, gets its due in Chapter 13.

User Accounts and Family Safety

I explain in Chapter 14 how to create separate accounts for other people to use your PC. That lets them use your PC but limits the amount of damage they can do to Windows and your files.

If you want to create a user account for a visitor, here's a refresher so you needn't flip ahead to Chapter 14: Fetch the Charms bar, click the Settings icon, and click Change PC Settings. Choose Users and then choose Add a User.

The Control Panel's User Accounts and Family Safety category also includes a link to the Security section's Family Safety area, where you can place limits on how and when your kids access your PC. I explain Family Safety controls in Chapter 11.

Network and Internet

Plug an Internet connection into your PC, and Windows 8 quickly starts slurping information from the web. Connect it with another PC, and Windows 8 wants to connect the two with a Homegroup or another type of network. (I explain Homegroups in Chapter 14.)

But should Windows 8 botch the job, the Control Panel's Network and Internet category has some troubleshooting tools.

I devote Chapter 15 completely to networking; the Internet gets its due in Chapter 9.

Changing the Windows 8 Appearance (Appearance and Personalization)

One of the most popular categories, Appearance and Personalization lets you change the look, feel, and behavior of Windows 8 in a wide variety of ways. Inside the category await these six icons:

✔ **Personalization:** Pay dirt for budding interior designers, this area lets you stamp your own look and feel across Windows. Hang a new picture or digital photo across your desktop, choose a fresh screen saver, and change the colors of the Windows 8 window frames. (To head quickly to this batch of settings, right-click a blank part of your desktop and choose Personalize.)

✔ **Display:** Whereas personalization lets you fiddle with colors, the Display area lets you fiddle with your computer's screen. For example, it lets you enlarge the text to soothe tired eyes, adjust the screen resolution, and adjust the connection of an additional computer screen.

✔ **Taskbar:** Head here to add program shortcuts to your taskbar, the strip living along your desktop's bottom edge. I cover this easy way to avoid a trip the Start screen in Chapter 3. (To jump quickly to this area, right-click the taskbar and choose Properties.)

✔ **Ease of Access:** Designed to help people with special needs, this short-cut contains settings to make Windows more navigable by the blind, the deaf, and people with other physical challenges. Because Ease of Access exists as its own category, I describe it in its own section later in this chapter.

✔ **Folder Options:** Visited mainly by experienced users, this area lets you tweak how folders look and behave. (To jump quickly to Folder Options, open any folder, click the View tab, and click the Options icon.)

✔ **Fonts:** Here's where you preview, delete, or examine fonts that spruce up your printed work.

In the next few sections, I explain the Appearance and Personalization tasks that you'll reach for most often.

Changing the desktop background

A *background,* also known as wallpaper, is simply the picture covering your desktop. To change it, follow these steps:

1. **Right-click your desktop and choose Personalize.**

2. **When the Personalization window appears, select Desktop Background from the windows' bottom left.**

   The window shown in Figure 12-5 appears.
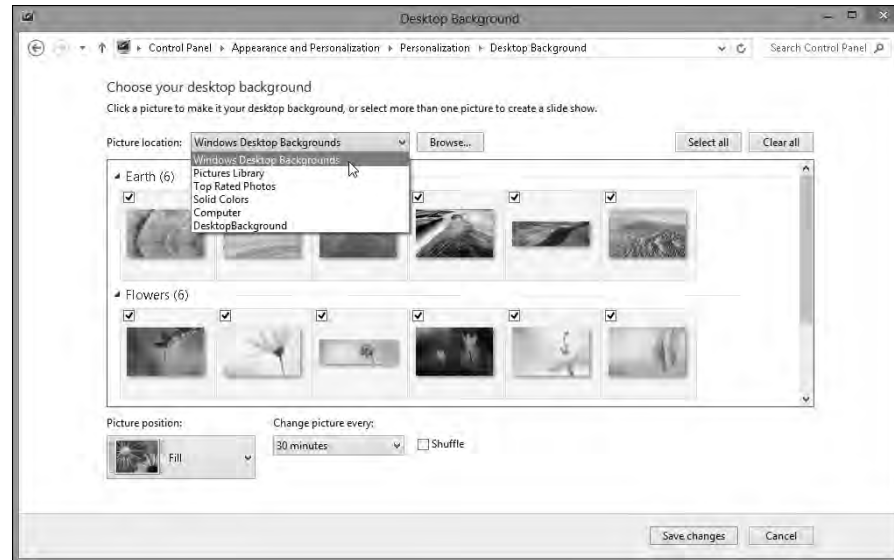
3. **Click a new picture for the background.**

   Be sure to click the drop-down list, shown in Figure 12-5, to see all the available photos and colors that Windows offers. To rummage through folders not listed, click the adjacent Browse button. Feel free to search your own Pictures library for potential backgrounds.

   Background files can be stored as BMP, GIF, JPG, JPEG, DIB, or PNG files. That means you can choose a background from nearly any photo or art found on the Internet or shot from a digital camera.

   When you click a new picture, Windows immediately places it across your desktop. If you're pleased, jump to Step 5.

Figure 12-5:
Click the drop-down list to find more pictures to splash across your desktop as the background.

4. **Decide whether to fill, fit, stretch, tile, or center the picture.**

   Not every picture fits perfectly across the desktop. Small pictures, for example, need to be either stretched to fit the space or spread across the screen in rows like tiles on a floor. When tiling and stretching still look odd or distorted, try the Fill or Fit option to keep the perspective. Or try centering the image and leaving blank space around its edges.

   You can automatically switch between images by choosing more than one photo. (Hold down Ctrl while clicking each one.) The picture then changes every 30 minutes unless you change the time in the Change Picture Every drop-down list.

5. **Click the Save Changes button to save your new background.**

   Windows saves your new background across your screen.

Did you happen to spot an eye-catching picture while web surfing with Internet Explorer? Right-click that website's picture and choose Set As Background. Sneaky Windows copies the picture and splashes it across your desktop as a new background.

Choosing a screen saver

In the dinosaur days of computing, computer monitors suffered from *burn-in:* permanent damage when an oft-used program burned its image onto the screen. To prevent burn-in, people installed a screen saver to jump in with a blank screen or moving lines. Today's computer screens no longer suffer from burn-in problems, but people still use screen savers because they look cool.

Windows comes with several built-in screen savers. To try one out, follow these steps:

1. **Right-click your desktop and choose Personalize to open the Personalization window. Then select the Screen Saver link from the window's bottom-right corner.**

   The Screen Saver Settings dialog box appears.

2. **Click the downward-pointing arrow in the Screen Saver box and select a screen saver.**

   After choosing a screen saver, click the Preview button for an audition. View as many candidates as you like before making a decision.

   Be sure to click the Settings button because some screen savers offer options, letting you specify the speed of a photo slide show, for example.

3. **If desired, add security by selecting the On Resume, Display Logon Screen check box.**

   This safeguard keeps people from sneaking into your computer while you're fetching coffee. It makes Windows ask for a password after waking up from screen saver mode. (I cover passwords in Chapter 14.)

4. **When you're done setting up your screen saver, click OK.**
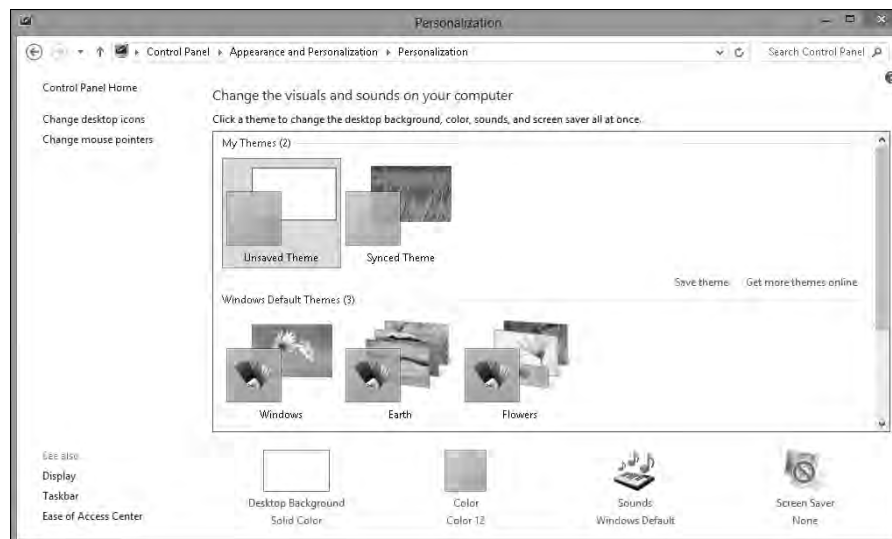
   Windows saves your changes.

If you *really* want to extend the life of your display (and save electricity), don't bother with screen savers. Instead, put your computer to Sleep before stepping away: Press ⊞+I with a keyboard, click the Power icon, and choose Sleep from the pop-up menu.

Changing the computer's theme

Themes are simply collections of settings to spruce up your computer's appearance: You can save your favorite screen saver and desktop background as a *theme,* for example. Then, by switching between themes, you can change your computer's clothes more quickly.

To try one of the built-in themes in Windows 8, right-click your desktop and choose Personalize. Windows 8 lists its token bundled themes shown in Figure 12-6, as well as an option to create your own. Click any theme, and Windows 8 tries it on immediately.

The window offers these themes, with options listed along the window's bottom.

- ✔ **My Themes:** Themes you've personally created appear here. If you have a Microsoft account, you'll see a Synced Theme, which is the theme you'll see on every PC you log into with that account.

- ✔ **Windows Default Themes:** This category includes the bundled themes in Windows 8, including its original one, called simply Windows.

- ✔ **Basic and High Contrast Themes:** This features high-contrast themes for the visually impaired.

Instead of choosing from the built-in themes, feel free to make your own by clicking the buttons (shown along the bottom of Figure 12-6) for changing the Desktop Background, Window Color, Sounds, and Screen Saver. After creating the perfect look for your computer, save your work by clicking Save Theme and typing a name.
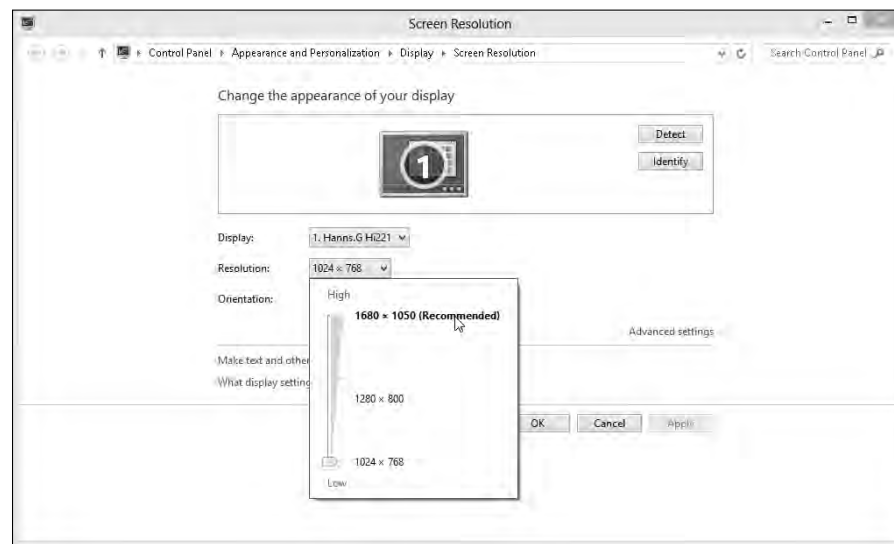
Changing the screen resolution

One of Windows' many change-it-once-and-forget-about-it options, *screen resolution* determines how much information Windows 8 can cram onto your computer screen. Changing the resolution either shrinks everything to pack more stuff onscreen, or it enlarges everything at the expense of desktop real estate.

To find your most comfortable resolution — or if a program or game mutters something about you having to change your *screen resolution* or *video mode* — follow these steps:

1. **Right-click a blank part of your desktop and choose Screen Resolution.**

   The Screen Resolution window appears, as shown in Figure 12-7.

Figure 12-7:
The higher the screen resolution, the more information Windows can squeeze onto your computer screen.

2. **To change the screen resolution, click the Resolution drop-down list and use your mouse to drag the little bar between High and Low.**

   Watch the little preview screen near the window's top change as you move the mouse. The more you slide the bar upward, the larger your computer screen grows. Unfortunately, the more information Windows 8 can pack onto your computer screen, the smaller that information appears.

   There's no right or wrong choice here, but choosing Windows' recommended setting makes for the clearest text and images.

   TECHNICAL STUFF Windows 8 only lets you snap an app to the side of your desktop at resolutions of 1366 x 768 or higher. (I cover snapping apps in Chapter 3.)

3. **View your display changes by clicking the Apply button. Then click the Keep Changes button to authorize the change.**

   TIP When Windows 8 makes drastic change to your display, it gives you 15 seconds to approve the change by clicking a Keep Changes button. If a technical glitch renders your screen unreadable, you won't be able to see or click the onscreen button. After a few seconds, Windows notices that you didn't approve, and it reverts to your original, viewable display settings.

4. **Click OK when you're done tweaking the display.**

   After you change your video resolution once, you'll probably never return here unless you buy a new, larger monitor. You'll also want to revisit here if you plug a second computer screen into your PC, which I describe in the sidebar.

Hardware and Sound

The Windows 8 Hardware and Sound category, shown in Figure 12-8, shows some familiar faces. The Display icon, for example, also appears in the Appearance and Personalization category, described in this chapter's previous section.

Doubling your workspace with a second computer screen

Have you been blessed with an extra computer screen, perhaps a leftover from a deceased PC? Connect it to your PC, place it beside your first computer screen, and you've doubled your Windows desktop: Windows 8 stretches your workspace across both computer screens. That lets you view the online encyclopedia in one computer screen while writing your term paper in the other.

To perform these video gymnastics, your PC needs a video card with two *ports,* and those ports must match your computer screen's *connectors.* This poses no problem to most newer computers, laptops, tablets, and monitors. Many tablets include an HDMI port for plugging in a second monitor.

After you plug the second computer screen into your computer, right-click a blank part of your desktop and choose Screen Resolution. The Screen Resolution window shows a second

onscreen computer screen next to your first. (Click the Detect button if the second computer screen doesn't appear onscreen.)

Drag and drop the onscreen computer screens to the right or left until they match the physical placement of the *real* computer screens on your desk. Then click OK. (That bit of clickery lets Windows expand your newly widened desktop in the correct direction.)

To configure your second display from the Start screen, fetch the Charms bar and click the Devices icon (or press ⊞+K), and click the Second Screen icon. From there, you can choose any of these icons: PC Screen Only (ignore the second monitor), Duplicate (show the same thing on *both* screens), Extend (stretch Windows to fit across both screens), or Second Screen Only (switch completely to the second screen).

Figure 12-8: The Hardware and Sound category lets you control the physical aspects of your PC: its display, sound, and attached gadgets.

This category controls the parts of your PC you can touch or plug in. You can adjust the settings of your display here, as well as your mouse, speakers, keyboard, printer, telephone, scanner, digital camera, game controllers, and, for you graphic artists out there, digital pen.

You won't spend much time here, though, especially coming in through the Control Panel's doors. Most settings appear elsewhere, where a click will bring you directly to the setting you need.

Whether you arrive at these pages through the Control Panel or a shortcut, the following sections explain the most popular reasons for visiting here.

Adjusting volume and sounds

The Sound area lets you adjust your PC's volume, a handy commodity when trying to sneak in a computer game on a Windows tablet during a boring business meeting.
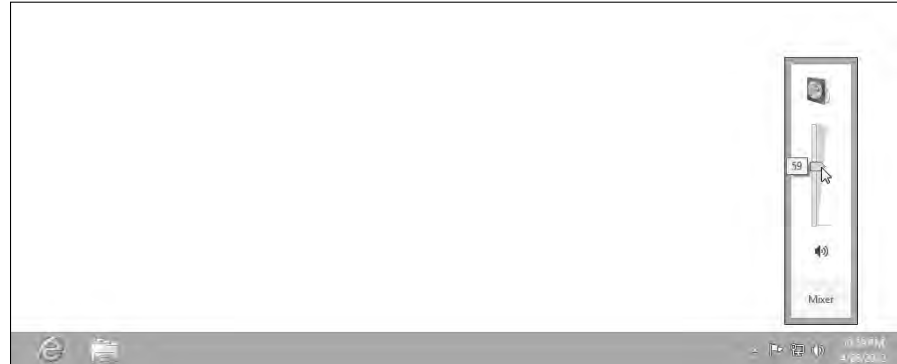
Most Windows 8 tablets come with toggle-switch volume controls mounted along their left or right edge. The top button turns up the volume; the lower button decreases the volume. Experiment with them a bit before playing Angry Birds in the board room.

To turn down your PC's volume from the desktop, shown in Figure 12-9, click the little speaker by your clock and slide down the volume. No speaker on your taskbar? Restore it by right-clicking the taskbar's clock, choosing Properties, and turning the Volume switch to On.

Figure 12-9:
Click the speaker icon and move the sliding control to adjust your PC's volume.

To mute your PC, click the little speaker icon at the bottom of the sliding control, shown in Figure 12-9. Clicking that icon again lets your computer blare music again.

Click the word *Mixer* at the bottom of the sliding volume bar to set different volumes for different desktop programs. You can quietly detonate explosives in your favorite game while still allowing your desktop's e-mail program to loudly announce any new messages. (***Note:*** The volume levels for Start screen apps won't appear here, unfortunately.)

To adjust the sound quickly from the Start menu on a touchscreen, summon the Charms bar by sliding a finger inward from the screen's right edge. When the Charms bar appears, tap the Settings icon and then tap the Sound icon. A sliding control appears, letting you slide it up or down to adjust the volume. (Slide the control to the bottom to mute the speakers.)

Installing or setting up speakers

Most PCs come with only two speakers. Others come with four, and PCs that double as home theaters or gaming rigs sometimes have up to eight. To accommodate the variety of setups, Windows 8 includes a speaker setup area, complete with a speaker test.

If you're installing new speakers, or you're not sure your old ones are working, follow these steps to introduce them properly to Windows 8:
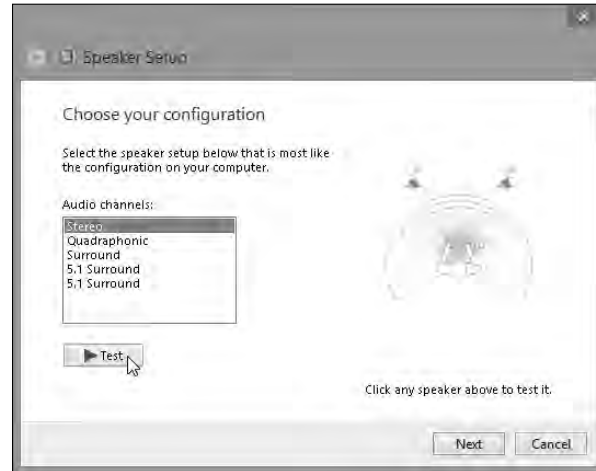
1. **From the desktop, right-click your taskbar's Speaker icon and choose Playback Devices.**

2. **Click your speaker or speaker's icon and then click the Configure button.**

   The Speaker Setup dialog box appears, as shown in Figure 12-10.

Figure 12-10:
Click the
Test button
to hear your
speakers,
one at a
time.

3. **Click the Test button, adjust your speaker's settings, and click Next.**

   Windows 8 walks you through selecting your number of speakers and their placement and then plays each one in turn so that you can hear whether they're in the correct locations.

4. **Click the tabs for any other sound devices you want to adjust. When you're through adjusting, click the OK button.**

While you're here, check your microphone volume by clicking the Recording tab, as well as tabs for any other sound gadgetry you've been able to afford.

If your speakers and microphone don't show up as devices, Windows 8 doesn't know they're plugged into your computer. That usually means you need to install a new *driver,* an annoying journey I walk you through in Chapter 13.

Adding a Bluetooth gadget

Bluetooth technology lets you connect gadgets wirelessly to your computer, removing clutter from your desktop. On a tablet, it lets you add a mouse and keyboard without hogging one of your coveted USB ports.

Bluetooth can also connect your computer, laptop, or tablet with some cell-phones for wireless Internet access — if your wireless provider allows it, of course.

To add a Bluetooth item to a computer, laptop, or tablet, follow these steps:

1. **Make sure your Bluetooth device is turned on.**

   Sometimes you can simply flip a switch. Other devices make you hold down a button until its little light begins flashing.

2. From the Start screen, fetch the Charms bar, click the Settings icon, and click the Change PC Settings button.

You can summon the Charms bar's Settings pane in any of three ways:

- **Mouse:** Point the cursor at the screen's top- or bottom-right corner; when the Charms bar appears, click the Settings icon, and then click the Change PC Settings button.

- **Keyboard:** Press ⊞+I and press Enter.

- **Touchscreen:** Slide your finger from the screen's right edge inward, tap the Settings icon, and then tap Change PC Settings.

3. From the Devices category, click the Add a Device icon.

The PC Settings' Devices pane appears, listing all your connected devices. Your computer quickly begins searching for any nearby Bluetooth devices that want to connect.

If your device doesn't appear, head back to Step 1 and make sure your Bluetooth gadget is still turned on. (Many give up and turn off after 30 seconds of waiting to connect.)

4. When your computer lists your device's name in the Devices pane, choose the name with a tap or mouse click.

5. Type in your device's code if necessary and, if asked, click the Pair button.

Here's where things get sticky. For security reasons, you need to prove that you're sitting in front of your *own* computer and that you're not an adjacent stranger trying to break in. Unfortunately, devices employ slightly different tactics when making you prove your innocence.

Sometimes you need to type a secret string of numbers called a *passcode* into both the device and your computer. (The secret code is usually hidden somewhere in your device's manual.) But you need to type quickly before the other gadget stops waiting.

On some gadgets, particularly Bluetooth mice, you hold in a little push button on the mouse's belly at this step.

Cellphones sometimes make you click a Pair button if you see matching passcodes on both your computer and phone.

When in doubt, type **0000** on your keyboard. That's often recognized as a universal passcode for frustrated Bluetooth devices owners who are trying to connect their gadgets.

After a gadget successfully pairs with your computer, its name and icon appear in the Devices category of the PC Settings screen.

To add a Bluetooth device from the Windows 8 desktop, click the taskbar's Bluetooth icon (shown in the margin), choose Add a Bluetooth Device, and then jump to Step 3 in the preceding list. Don't see the taskbar's Bluetooth

icon? Then click the upward-pointing arrow that lives a few icons to the left of the taskbar's clock. The Bluetooth icon appears in the pop-up menu, ready for your click.

Adding an Xbox 360 game console

NEW IN WINDOWS 8

The Control Panel lets you add or tweak most computer accessories, but the Xbox 360 game console begs for an exception. If you own one of Microsoft's game machines, you instead grant your *Xbox* permission to connect with your computer.

To let Windows 8 and Xbox communicate, grab your Xbox 360 controller, sit in front of your TV, and follow these steps:

1. **Turn on your Xbox 360, signing in with the same account you've used to sign in to Windows 8.**

   If you've signed in to both your Xbox and computer with *different* Microsoft accounts, you're not left in the lurch. Sign out of that account and create *another* user account in Windows 8 using your Xbox 360 account name and password. (That's a Microsoft account, too.)

   Sign in to that account on Windows 8 whenever you want to use one of the Windows 8 Xbox apps.

2. **On your Xbox 360, go to System Settings, Console Settings, Xbox Companion.**

   There, you see two switches: Available and Unavailable.

3. **Switch from Unavailable to Available.**

4. **Open one of the Windows 8 Xbox apps and choose Connect.**

   After a few moments, the word *Connecting* appears on your television screen, and you're through. Your Xbox apps will find your Xbox in Windows 8.

Adding a printer

Quarrelling printer manufacturers couldn't agree on how printers should be installed. As a result, you install your printer in one of two ways:

✔ Some printer manufacturers say simply to plug in your printer by pushing its rectangular-shaped connector into a little rectangular-shaped USB port on your PC. Windows 8 automatically notices, recognizes, and embraces your new printer. Stock your printer with any needed ink cartridges, toner, or paper, and you're done.

✔ Other manufacturers take an uglier approach, saying you must install their bundled software *before* plugging in your printer. And if you don't install the software first, the printer may not work correctly.

Unfortunately, the only way to know how your printer should be installed is to check the printer's manual. (Sometimes this information appears on a colorful, one-page Quick Installation sheet packed in the printer's box.)

If your printer lacks installation software, install the cartridges, add paper to the tray, and follow these instructions to put it to work:

1. **With Windows 8 up and running, plug your printer into your PC and turn on the printer.**

   Windows 8 may send a message saying that your printer is installed successfully, but follow the next step to test it.

2. **Load the desktop's Control Panel.**

   Summon the desktop's Control Panel with the tools at your disposal:

   • **Mouse:** Right-click the screen's bottom-left corner and choose Control Panel from the pop-up menu.

   • **Keyboard:** From the desktop, press ⊞+I, scroll up to the words *Control Panel* and then press Enter.

   • **Touchscreen:** From the desktop, slide your finger from the screen's right edge inward, tap the Settings icon, and tap the words *Control Panel*.

3. **From the Hardware and Sound category, click the View Devices and Printers link.**

   The Control Panel displays its categories of devices, including your printer, if you're lucky. If you spot your USB printer listed by its model or brand name, right-click its icon, choose Printer Properties, and click the Print Test Page button. If it prints correctly, you're finished. Congratulations.

   Test page *didn't* work? Check that all the packaging is removed from inside your printer and that it has ink cartridges. If it still doesn't print, your printer is probably defective. Contact the store where you bought it and ask who to contact for assistance.

   Windows 8 lists a printer named Microsoft XPS Document Writer. It's not really a printer, so it can be safely ignored.

That's it. If you're like most people, your printer will work like a charm. If it doesn't, I've stuffed some tips and fix-it tricks in the printing section in Chapter 8.

TIP

If you have two or more printers attached to your computer, right-click the icon of your most oft-used printer and choose Set As Default Printer from the pop-up menu. Windows 8 then prints to *that* printer automatically, unless you tell it otherwise.

✔ To remove a printer you no longer use, right-click its name in Step 3 and then choose Delete from the pop-up menu. That printer's name no longer appears as an option when you try to print from a program. If Windows 8 asks to uninstall the printer's drivers and software, click Yes — unless you think you may install that printer again sometime.

✔ You can change printer options from within many programs. Choose File in a program's menu bar (you may need to press Alt to see the menu bar) and then choose Print Setup or choose Print. The window that appears lets you change things such as paper sizes, fonts, and types of graphics.

TIP

✔ To share a printer quickly over a network, create a Homegroup, which I describe in Chapter 14. Your printer immediately shows up as an installation option for all the computers on your network.

✔ If your printer's software confuses you, try clicking the Help buttons in its dialog boxes. Many buttons are customized for your particular printer model, and they offer advice not found in Windows 8.

Clock, Language, and Region

Microsoft designed this area mostly for travelers to different time zones and locations. Desktop computer owners will see this information only once — when first setting up your computer. Windows 8 subsequently remembers the time and date, even when your PC is turned off.

Portable computers owners will want to drop by here when visiting different time zones; bilingual computer owners will also appreciate settings allowing characters from different languages.

To visit here, right-click the screen's bottom-left corner; choose Control Panel from the pop-up menu; and click the Clock, Language, and Region category. Three sections appear:

✔ **Date and Time:** This area is fairly self-explanatory. (Clicking your taskbar's clock and choosing Change Date and Time Settings lets you visit here, as well.)

✔ **Language:** If you're bilingual or multilingual, visit this area when you're working on documents that require characters from different languages.
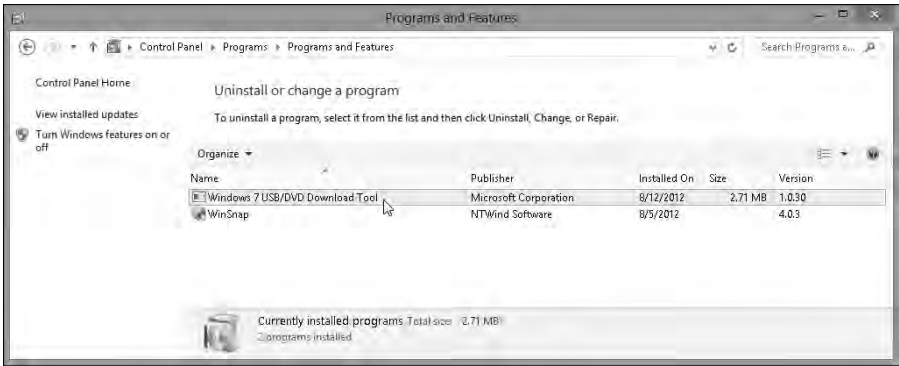
✔ **Region:** Traveling in Italy? Click this category's icon and, on the Formats tab, select Italian from the Formats drop-down list. Windows switches to that country's currency symbols and date format. While you're at the Region window, click the Location tab; and from the Home location drop-down list, select Italy — or whatever country you're currently visiting.

Adding or Removing Programs

Whether you've picked up a new program or you want to purge an old one, the Control Panel's Programs category handles the job fairly well. One of its categories, Programs and Features, lists your currently installed programs, shown in Figure 12-11. Click the one you want to discard or tweak.

Figure 12-11:
The Uninstall or Change a Program window lets you remove any of your currently installed programs.

This section describes how to remove or change existing programs and how to install new ones.

Removing apps and programs

Removing an app from your computer doesn't take much effort. Right-click the app's tile from the Start screen; when the App bar rises from the Start screen's bottom edge, click the Uninstall icon, shown in the margin.

To remove an unwanted desktop program or change its settings, head for the desktop's Control Panel by following these steps:

1. **Right-click in the screen's bottom-left corner and choose the Control Panel from the pop-up menu.**

2. **When the Control Panel appears, choose Uninstall a Program from the Programs category.**

   The Uninstall or Change a Program window appears, as shown in Figure 12-11, listing your currently installed programs, their publisher, size, installation date, and version number.

   To free up disk space, click the Installed On or Size column header to find old or large programs. Then uninstall those forgotten programs you never or rarely use.

3. **Click the unloved program and then click its Uninstall, Change, or Repair button.**

   The menu bar above the programs' names always displays an Uninstall button, but when you click certain programs, you may also see buttons for Change and Repair. Here's the rundown:

   - **Uninstall:** This completely removes the program from your PC. (Some programs list this button as Uninstall/Change.)

   - **Change:** This lets you change some of the program's features or remove parts of it.

   - **Repair:** A handy choice for damaged programs, this tells the program to inspect itself and replace damaged files with new ones. You may need to have the program's original CD or DVD handy, though, because you'll need to insert it into your computer.

4. **When Windows asks whether you're *sure,* click Yes.**

   Depending on which button you've clicked, Windows 8 either boots the program off your PC or summons the program's own installation program to make the changes or repair itself.

   After you delete a program, it's gone for good unless you kept its installation CD. Unlike other deleted items, deleted programs don't linger inside your Recycle Bin.

Always use the Control Panel's Uninstall or Change a Program window to uninstall unwanted programs. Simply deleting their files or folders won't do the trick. In fact, doing so often confuses your computer into sending bothersome error messages.

Installing new programs

Today, most programs install themselves automatically as soon as you slide their discs into your PC's drive or double-click their downloaded installation file.

If you're not sure whether a program has installed, go to the Start screen and look for its tile, usually toward the far right edge. If it's listed there, the program has installed.

But if a program doesn't automatically leap into your computer, here are some tips that can help:

- ✔ You need an Administrator account to install programs. (Most computer owners automatically have an Administrator account.) That keeps the kids, with their Limited or Guest accounts, from installing programs and messing up the computer. I explain user accounts in Chapter 14.

- ✔ Downloaded a program? Windows 8 usually saves them in your Downloads folder, accessible by clicking your username on the Start screen. Double-click the downloaded program's name to install it.

- ✔ Many eager, newly installed programs want to add a desktop shortcut, a Start screen tile, *and* a Quick Launch toolbar shortcut. Say "yes" to all. That way you can start the program from the desktop, avoiding a trip to the Start screen. (Changed your mind? Right-click any unwanted short-cuts and choose either Delete or Unpin to remove them.)

- ✔ It's always a good idea to create a restore point before installing a new program. (I describe creating restore points in Chapter 13.) If your newly installed program goes haywire, use System Restore to return your computer to the peaceful state of mind it enjoyed before you installed the troublemaker.

Modifying Windows 8 for the Physically Challenged

Nearly everybody finds Windows 8 to be particularly challenging, but some people face special physical challenges, as well. To assist them, the Control Panel's Ease of Access area offers a variety of welcome changes.

If your eyesight isn't what it used to be, you may appreciate the ways to increase the text size on your computer screen.

Follow these steps to modify the settings in Windows 8:

1. **Load the desktop's Control Panel.**

   You can fetch the Control Panel any of several ways:

   - **Mouse:** Right-click the screen's bottom-left corner and choose Control Panel from the pop-up menu.

   - **Keyboard:** From the desktop, press ⊞+I, scroll up to the words *Control Panel*, and then press Enter.

   - **Touchscreen:** From the desktop, slide your finger from the screen's right edge inward, tap the Settings icon, and tap the words *Control Panel*.

2. **When the Control Panel appears, select the Ease of Access category, and choose the Ease of Access Center icon.**

   The Ease of Access Center appears, as shown in Figure 12-12. The ethereal voice of Windows 8 kicks in, explaining how to change its programs.

3. **Choose the Get Recommendations to Make Your Computer Easier to Use link.**

   Look for the link called Get Recommendations to Make Your Computer Easier to Use (shown with the mouse pointing to it in Figure 12-12). That makes Windows 8 give you a quick interview so that it can gauge what adjustments you may need. When it's through, Windows 8 automatically makes its changes, and you're done.
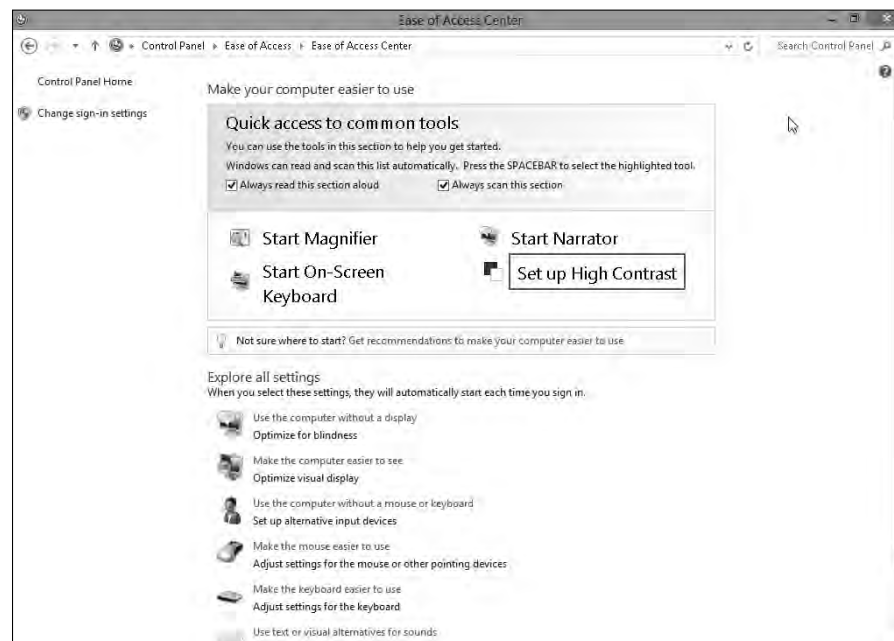
   If you're not happy with the changes, move to Step 4.

4. **Make your changes manually.**

   The Ease of Access Center offers these toggle switches to make the keyboard, sound, display, and mouse easier to control:

   • **Start Magnifier:** Designed for the visually impaired, this option magnifies the mouse pointer's exact location.

   • **Start Narrator:** The awful built-in narrator in Windows 8 reads onscreen text for people who can't view it clearly.

Figure 12-12:
The Ease
of Access
Center contains a wide
variety of
ways to help
users with
physical
limitations.

- **Start On-Screen Keyboard:** This setting places a clickable keyboard along the screen's bottom, letting you type by pointing and clicking.

- **Set up High Contrast:** This setting eliminates most screen colors but helps vision-impaired people view the screen and cursor more clearly.

Choose any of these options to turn on the feature immediately. Close the feature's window if the feature makes matters worse.

If you're still not happy, proceed to Step 5.

5. **Choose a specific setting in the Explore All Settings area.**

Here's where Windows 8 gets down to the nitty gritty, letting you optimize Windows 8 specifically for the following things:

- Blindness or impaired vision

- Using an alternative input device rather than a mouse or keyboard

- Adjusting the keyboard and mouse sensitivity to compensate for limited movements

- Turning on visual alerts instead of sound notifications

- Making it easier to focus on reading and typing tasks

Some centers that assist physically challenged people may offer software or assistance for helping you make these changes.