



## Taming Windows 11's Start Menu & Quick Settings

THE START MENU ON WINDOWS ATTRACTS A LOT OF HATE FROM USERS, AND IT HAS BEEN CHANGED OFTEN. WINDOWS 11 USERS NOW HAVE A BIT MORE CONTROL OVER BOTH THE START MENU AND QUICK SETTINGS, SO LET'S TAKE A LOOK.

I'm sometimes surprised that some irritations people complain about are easily changed. I'll describe a couple of actions I've taken to make the computer function the way I want it to, but a quick Google or DuckDuckGo search will probably describe a fix for any "feature" that annoys you.

Windows isn't unique in failing to work exactly as users want it to. When you buy a car, move into a new house or apartment, or replace an old appliance, there's probably something that you want to change. So you do some research and make the change. A computer should be no different.

The computer arrives with settings designed for the *average* user, but the average user doesn't exist. The BBC program *QI* once described how an organization designed a piece of wearable equipment for an *average employee*. It fit nobody well, and so it is with the *average* Windows settings.

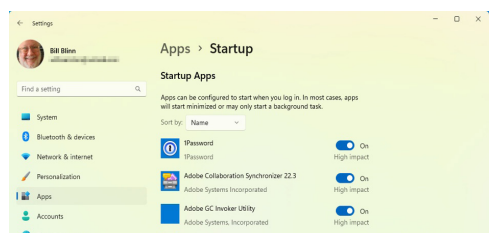
Windows comes with settings for the mythical average user and limited instructions for how to change things. Microsoft provides explicit instructions for making changes, but only if the person who wants to make changes asks the question the right way.

Let's consider three common areas of complaint and confusion: Apps that start with Windows, the Start Menu, and Quick Settings. I don't remember

when Quick Settings was introduced and couldn't find a definitive answer. It may have been present in Windows 8 or 8.1. It's definitely present in Windows 10 and works fairly well in Windows 11.

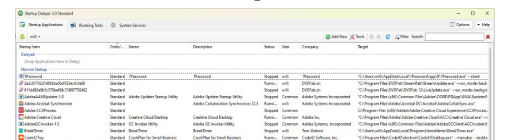
A new Windows computer has an operating system and interface designed for that "average user".

Depending on the computer manufacturer and the computer model, applications you don't want may load at startup and some programs you install may schedule themselves to start with Windows without requesting permission. A new option in Settings makes this an easy fix.



Start Settings, click the Apps tab, and then choose Startup at the bottom of the list. Every application that starts with Windows will be listed here. To keep an application from starting, find it in the list and then flip the toggle switch to off. Microsoft Teams starts with Windows, but I do not use Teams. Lenovo includes Glance by Mirametrix, an application that I might find useful if I didn't already have applications that do what it does. I turned it off, too.

Although this Windows feature is helpful, it can't specify *when* an application starts. Startup Delayer can and that is a most helpful feature. By default, Startup Delayer sets a blend about halfway between fast and smooth; the user can take complete control.



Being able to choose when an application starts is helpful for programs that start slowly, delay other applications, or aren't needed immediately. Startup Delayer is free from [R2 Studios](#).

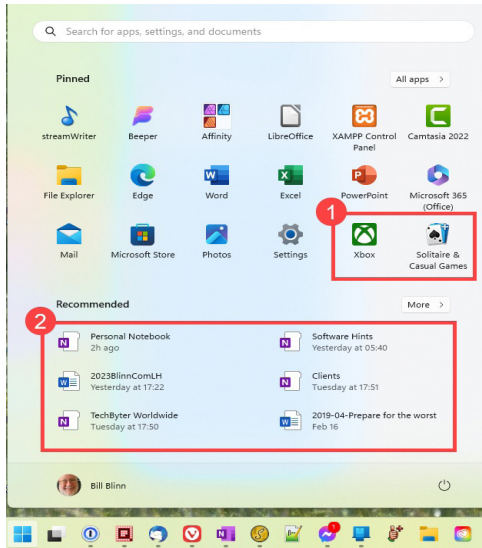
## Fix the Start Menu

THE START MENU HAS BEEN A MESS FOR A WHILE, BEGINNING WITH THE WINDOWS 8 DISASTER.

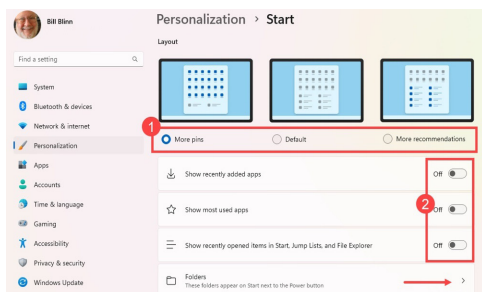
Tiles could be different sizes and sometimes they seemed to move around on their own. That was eliminated in Windows 10, and Windows 11 is better still, even though improvements could be made.

By default the Start Menu has three rows of applications that include items I might not want such as Xbox and Solitaire, three rows of "recommendations", and only the Power button at the bottom. I don't want recommendations, I'd like more rows of applications, and I'd prefer to have Settings,

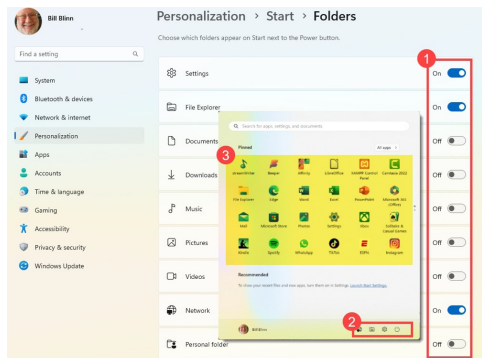
File Explorer, and Network options at the bottom.



To fix this problem, right-click a blank area of the Start Menu, click Start Settings, and select the More Pins option. This adds one more row of app icons to the menu.



I also turned off *Show recently added apps*, *Show most used apps*, and *Show recently opened items in Start, Jump Lists, and File Explorer*. This should allow at least one more row of app icons, but it doesn't.



Clicking the Folders selector adds the finishing touches to the Start Menu. Although I'd prefer to have Settings on the Task Bar, it's now limited to a single row of icons. On the Folders panel, I

turned on icons for Settings, the File Explorer, and Network. These appear adjacent to the Power button.

The next step involved modifying the icons in the Start Menu's upper section. Icons on the Start menu can be moved around and dragging one icon on top of another creates a folder. Then it's possible to drag other icons into the folder and arrange icons and folders as the user prefers. For example, a folder could contain the most frequently used Adobe applications.

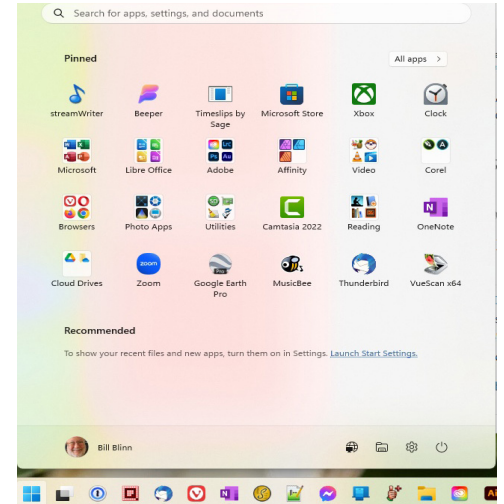


The Start Menu itself gains additional panels when one is full.

When I finished, the Start menu had just a single panel with individual icons for a few applications such as StreamWriter, Beeper, and Timeslips. The other icons were in folders such as those for Microsoft, Adobe, Affinity, video players, browsers, utilities, and more.

I still have the applications I use most frequently on the Task Bar. These include IPassword, Q-Dir, Thunderbird, Vivaldi, OneNote, UltraEdit Studio, Lightroom Classic and Photoshop, Word and Excel, and a few others.

The final section that may need some modification is Quick Settings, which lives on the right side of the Task Bar, immediately left of the clock. Clicking there opens Quick Settings and clicking the pencil icon opens Edit mode.



My primary computer has a battery, but it's always connected to AC power so I don't need the battery indicator and I can click the pin icon to remove it. Even though the computer is connected via an Ethernet cable, I like having the Wi-Fi icon in case I ever need to use it. The Quick Settings area also provides immediate access to the full Settings function.

So if there's something that annoys you about how Windows works, see what DuckDuckGo or Google can show to help you find the solution. Ω

