

OVERVIEW OF NEW USER INTERFACE IN WINDOWS 8

Start Screen

When we log into Windows 8, we will see the Start Screen. The Start Screen is very different from the Start menu which was available in earlier versions of Windows. Windows 8 was designed in so called metro style, which is primarily intended for devices with touchscreens such as tablets and smart phones. This means that the user interface and the navigation style is pretty much the same on the PCs with touchscreens, tablets and mobile phones. However, in this article we will explore the new Start Screen by using our mouse and see how that works. On PCs users will most often use their mouse and keyboard. When the Start Screen appears we will see a bunch of tiles.

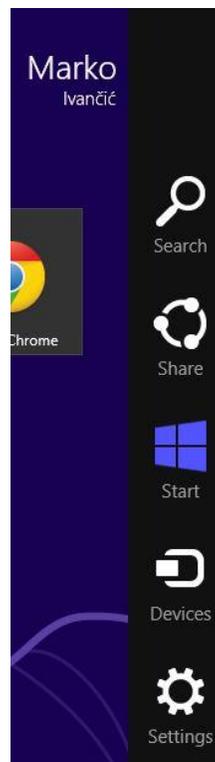


Start Screen

The tiles mostly represent metro style applications that come with Windows 8. To run those apps we only have to click once on the tile to activate them. You will notice that metro apps don't have a title bar with minimize, maximize and close buttons. So, how do we exit current application? To do that we have to use the **Windows key** on our keyboard. Be sure to try this out if you haven't already!

Hot Corners

Windows 8 comes with another new feature called Hot Corners. The thing is, our screen has four active corners in it. For example, let's move our mouse to the upper right-hand corner and see what happens.



Charms

As you can see on the picture, the so called charms will appear on the right hand side. We have Search, Share, Start, Devices and Settings charms. For example, if we you don't like using the Windows key on your keyboard to return to Start Screen, you can use the Start charm to do the same thing. If you try to use the bottom right hand corner, you will notice that the same charms will be available.

Now, let's see the upper left hand corner.



Upper Left Corner

This time we will see the previously opened application. In our case we have the Desktop opened, and by clicking it we will switch to it. When you move your mouse to the upper left hand corner, try clicking the icon multiple times. This will change the switch between running applications so we can choose which one we want to show on the screen. For me personally, this is pretty bad way of switching between applications, but luckily, the ALT+TAB feature still works. Another option is to slide your mouse down when you get to the upper left hand corner. This will show you all the applications that are running in a simple list view.



List of Opened Applications

Now, if we move our mouse to the lower left hand corner, we will see the Start icon.



Lower Left Corner

This is also another way to get to the Start Screen.

UPDATE: Microsoft released an update and with it came back the Start button.

Well, almost, since it doesn't quite work like the Start button in Windows 7.

Anyway, here is how the Start button looks in Windows 8.1.



New Start Button

It works the same as before the update - when we click it, we go to the Start screen.

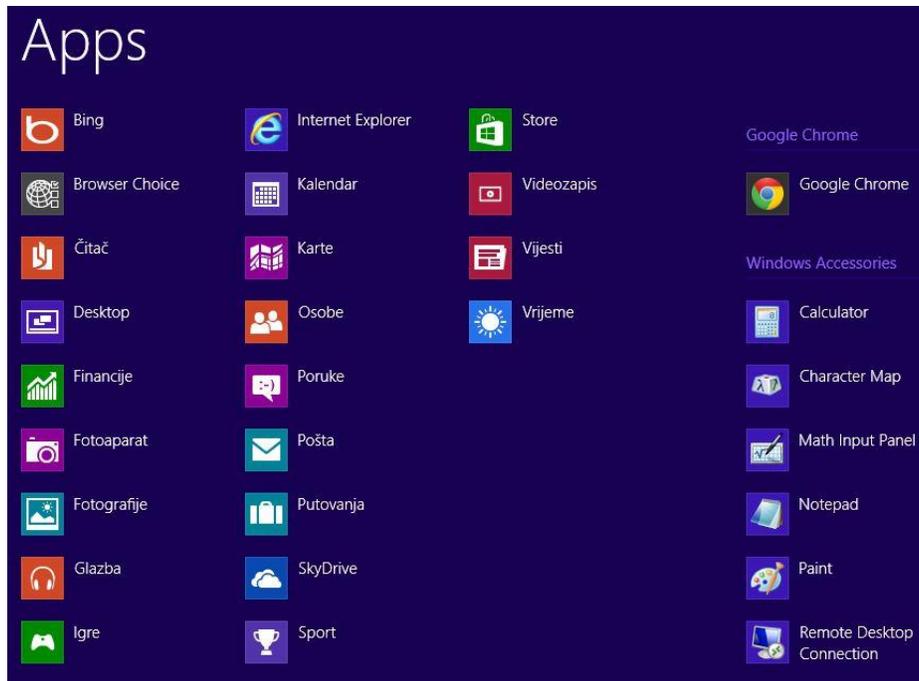
Right-Click

Right-clicking works in Windows 8, and depending on where we are, we will get different options. For example, if we click on the Start Screen (not on the tile), the bar at the bottom will appear.



Right-click

We only have one option in the bar, and this is "All apps". Let's click it.

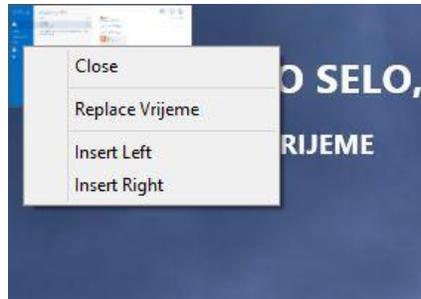


All Apps

Apps window will show us more icons than the Start Screen. Icons represent the applications on the computer, and some of them were available on the Start Screen as well. We also see Windows Accessories and some System related apps.

Closing the Apps

We saw that we can easily open and switch between applications, but how do we close them? One way is to go to the upper left hand corner, right click the application, and then choose the Close option.



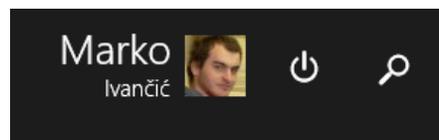
Close App

You could also slide your mouse down when you get to the upper left hand corner to list all apps, and then right click the one that you want to close. Also, when the application is active on the screen, we could go to the top of the window until we see a hand. Then we click and drag our application to the bottom of the scree. This will effectively close the application.

You already noticed that in our Start Screen we have the Desktop option.

Applications that are not designed to run under the new user interface will automatically run in the Desktop environment.

UPDATE 17 April 2014. - Microsoft released a new update to make Windows 8.1 more friendly to desktop users. For example, now we have a Search button and a Power button on the Start Screen itself.



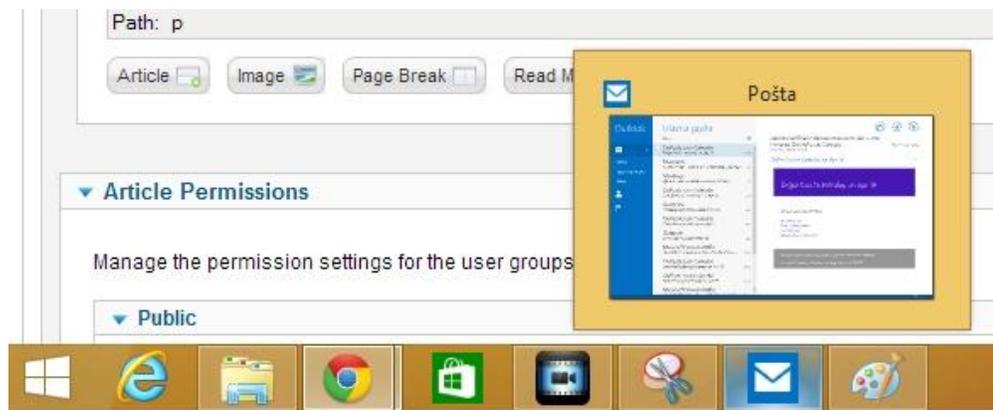
Power and Search Buttons

If we move our mouse to the top edge of the screen on an open app, a line with the Minimize and a Close button will appear.



Minimize and Close Buttons

Windows 8.1 now has a feature to boot directly to the Desktop environment rather than Start Screen. Windows Store apps are now visible on the Taskbar, so we can quickly switch between them or close them from there.



All apps appear in Taskbar

Source: <http://www.utilizewindows.com/8/basics/461-overview-of-new-user-interface-in-windows-8>