Lecture 4: Windows 8.1 (Cont’d.): Personalizing your Windows 8.1

Personalizing the Start Screen:

You can customize the start screen through the settings charm. When you open this from the start screen you will see a personalization link appear in the top right of your screen.

The Personalization panel is separated into three sections. The top section contains different background images that can be used on your start screen. In Windows 8.1 some of these images are animated, and the last two available in the list will always be a blank background and your desktop wallpaper.

Next is the color of the start screen background. You will see there are many colors available at the bottom of this section on a slider. When you choose a color on this slider, a series of 18 shades for that color will appear in the main box above it.

The bottom section in the panel, the accent is not just the main shade for the pattern on the background but it is also the accent for buttons, switches, the App Bar, and notification text on the start screen, PC Settings, and in app settings and menus.
Personalizing the Desktop:

There are two ways to access the desktop personalization options on the desktop. You can select personalization from the top right of your screen after opening the Settings charm, or you can right-click in any blank space on your screen to display a personalization option.
The main personalization options display a series of themes that you can choose from. Some include a single wallpaper, and others include multiple wallpapers that the desktop will cycle through on a specified schedule. You can click any theme to activate it.

**Desktop Background** allows you to set one or multiple images as your desktop background. To select multiple images with your keyboard and mouse, hold down the *Ctrl* key when you click each one. At the bottom of the window is a picture position option and, if you have selected multiple images for the desktop, a *change picture every...* option where you can set how often the desktop background will change.

**Color** is where you can set the color for your desktop windows. This can be a fixed color or, if you click the color swatch option, the desktop windows will change color to match and compliment the desktop background wallpaper.
Sounds is where you can change the default sounds that Windows 8.1 makes, for example the startup and shutdown sounds.

Screen saver should only be used if you are still using an older Cathode Ray Tube (CRT) monitor with your PC and not a flat panel screen. Screen savers help avoid CRT monitors from having images physically burned onto the screen when left for long periods of time. If you use a flat panel display with your PC this can’t happen and you will use much less electricity by having the screen turn off after a period of time instead, which is the standard setting.

Making Windows 8.1 Easier to Use:

These include large text, high-contrast themes, and an on-screen magnifier for people with vision problems to help with the keyboard, mouse, and even using the PC with just voice control or without a screen. You access the Ease of Access settings by clicking the Settings charm and then clicking Change PC Settings in the bottom right corner of your screen.

Narrator will read text and other items on screen to you when you move or mouse over them or highlight text. When pages load, such as in apps or on a web page, text will be read automatically.

Magnifier is used to make items on screen larger and easier to read. The magnifier zooms in on the screen, effectively making the desktop or apps larger than your PC’s monitor. A magnifying glass control will appear on your screen, which, if you click it, will reveal the full magnifier controls. On this control panel are zoom controls and a views menu that you can use to dock the zoom lens to the bottom of your screen. You can turn off the Magnifier by closing this control window.

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**High Contrast** allows you to set color schemes for the desktop and apps where the contrast between background and foreground items is very pronounced. This can make things much easier to see and text easier to read.
**Keyboard** includes four main options.

- *Displaying* the on-screen keyboard all of the time
- *Turning on Sticky keys* which allow you to activate keyboard shortcuts such as Ctrl + C by pressing one key at a time instead of both together
- *Toggle keys* which plays a sound when you press the Caps Lock, Num(ber) Lock, or Scroll Lock keys
- *Filter keys* ignores multiple keystrokes, useful if you find yourself hitting a key twice or more instead of just once

**Mouse** includes high-contrast options to make the mouse pointer more visible, an option to use your keyboard’s cursor keys to move the mouse pointer, and the ability to slow down the mouse when you also hold down the Ctrl key.

**Other options** include whether Windows 8.1 animates windows and apps when they are opened or closed and how long pop-up notification stay on the screen.