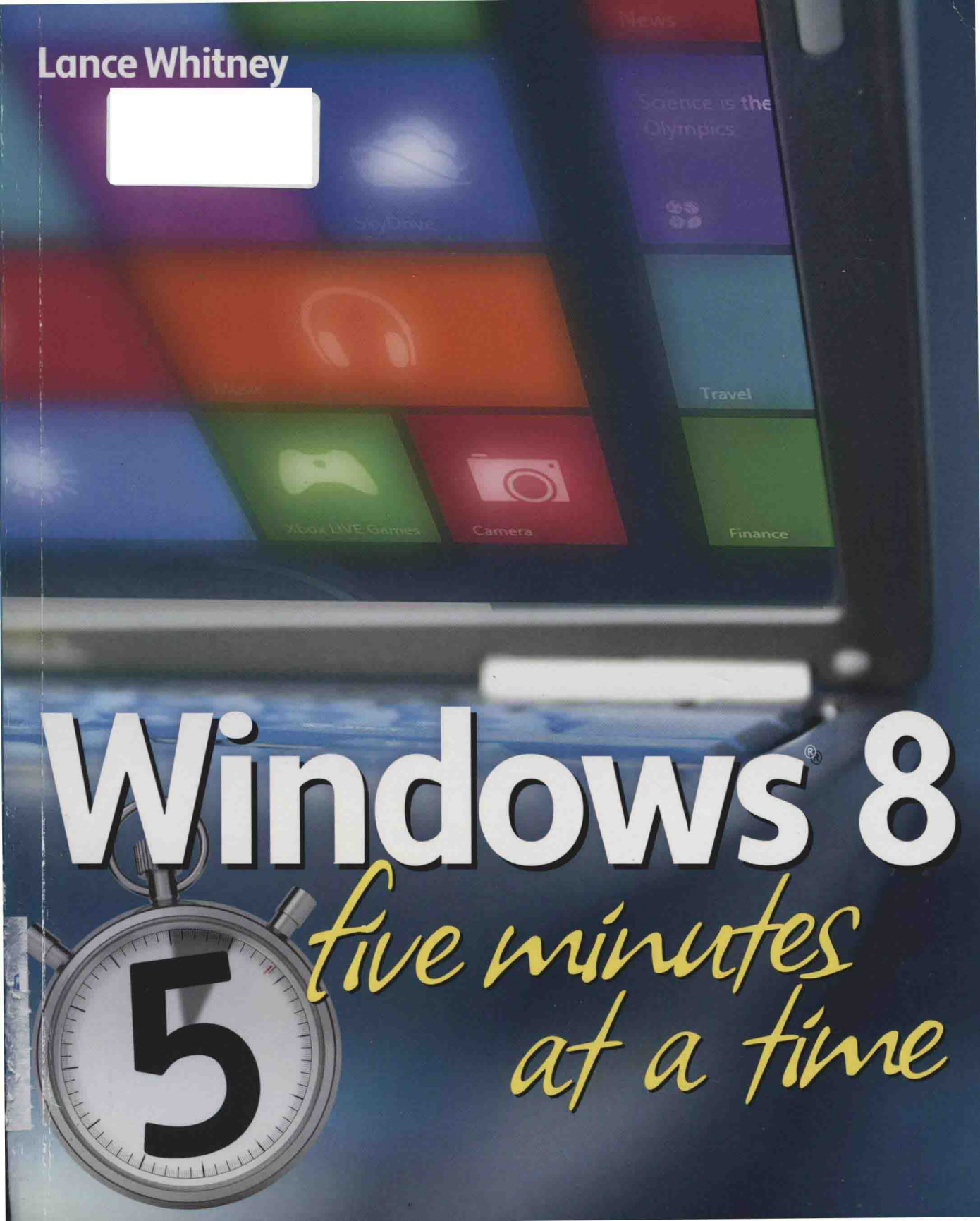

Lance Whitney

Windows® 8

five minutes at a time

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Lance Whitney

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He and his wife share their home with two cats — Mr. Putter and Miss Kitty — both of whom insisted on appearing in this book.

You can follow Lance on Twitter at @lancewhit.

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To my wife Cely and to my parents.

Introduction

Windows 8 represents the most radical change to Microsoft's operating system since Windows 95 was released 17 years ago. With its new Start screen and interface, the latest version of Windows is an attempt to create a single operating system designed to run on both traditional PCs and tablets.

But no one likes change. People used to the familiar Start menu and features of Windows 7, Vista, and XP may find Windows 8 challenging and frustrating, at least until they learn all the tips and tricks for navigating and using the new operating system.

This book is designed to share many of those tips and tricks so that you can move beyond the challenges and frustrations to take full advantage of the new flavor of Windows.

People new to Windows 8 should find this book helpful, though it's also geared toward those who've already dabbled with the new version. Even users who have been working and playing with Windows 8 might still find themselves in uncertain territory. You may be confused or discouraged by certain aspects of the new version. You may be uncertain where to find or how to use certain features. Or you may already feel comfortable with Windows 8 but simply want to discover more of the hidden shortcuts and other surprises lurking about.

Though Windows 8 is aimed toward both PCs and tablets, this book is directed strictly toward PC users. Tablet owners can tap and swipe their way throughout the Start screen and Windows 8 apps. But PC users can just as easily navigate and work with apps via traditional mouse and keyboard, a topic covered by several tasks throughout this book.

The book is divided into four sections. The first three sections — The Basics, Be Imaginative, and Beat the Clock — are task-oriented. All three sections contain a series of unique tasks, each with individual steps. By following the steps and completing each task, you should gain a greater understanding of Windows 8 and its various applications and features.

As the title promises, each task is designed to be completed in five minutes or less. But don't worry, there's no stopwatch. You can take as much or as little time as you want with each individual task. The goal is to learn from the task so you can use that knowledge to more easily and effectively work with Windows 8.

Most of the tasks are designed to be self-contained, so you can pick any task anywhere in the book, rather than having to go from start to finish. Some tasks refer to other tasks as prerequisites, but those are noted in the book.

The fourth section — Inquiring Minds — is a Q&A that answers common questions that you may have about Windows 8.

As with anything new and different, Windows 8 can present obstacles to people accustomed to the traditional look and feel of previous versions of Windows. But the information in this book should give you greater control of the new environment so that you can more easily feel at home.

What Is New in Windows 8?

The most dramatic change in Windows 8 is the one that stares you in the face just after you log in — the Start screen.

Replacing the traditional Start menu familiar to longtime Windows users, the new Start screen is based on tiles. Instead of clicking a Start button to open a cascading menu of folders and shortcuts for your applications, a Start screen appears where you click on tiles to launch your apps and features.

People used to launching their software programs through the Start menu may at first be thrown off by the Start screen. It is a totally new and different way of organizing and opening your applications.

The Start screen does lack some of the benefits of the Start menu. For example, you can organize your Start screen tiles into groups, but you cannot organize them into folders, as you can your Start menu shortcuts.

But the Start screen offers some advantages. It can display live tiles with updated information and let you pin specific types of information directly on the screen. As such, the Start screen serves not only as a launching pad to open your apps but as a way to view new information, notifications, and other items of interest all in one place.

The familiar desktop still exists as well, only now it is set up as another app. Click on the Desktop tile on the Start screen, and the same screen and environment found in past versions of Windows appear.

You can customize and personalize the desktop by setting up shortcuts so that you can quickly access your favorite programs. The desktop environment itself has been beefed up with a revamped Task Manager and File Explorer, and new tools such as File History, Storage Spaces, and Hyper-V.

Those who choose not to use the Start screen can still easily use the desktop as their primary working area.

Windows 8 Editions

For Windows 8, Microsoft trimmed down the number of editions available compared with previous versions of Windows.

Individual PC users have a choice of Windows 8 (standard) or Windows 8 Pro. Windows 8 Pro offers several advanced features not found in the standard edition; otherwise the two are virtually the same.

Windows 8 Enterprise is available for businesses that have enterprise licensing agreements with Microsoft. So this version would not be available to individual users unless deployed by their organization's IT department.

The differences between Windows 8 (standard) and Windows 8 Pro are described on the following page.

Feature Comparison: Windows 8 versus Windows 8 Pro

Table A.1 lists the features in both Windows 8 and Windows 8 Pro.

Table A.1 Windows 8 versus Windows 8 Pro

Feature	Windows 8	Windows 8 Pro
Upgrade from Windows 7 Starter, Home Basic, or Home Premium	x	x
Upgrade from Windows 7 Professional or Ultimate		x
Start screen	x	x
Semantic Zoom	x	x
Live Tiles	x	x
Windows Store	x	x
Apps (Mail, Calendar, People, Messaging, Photos, SkyDrive, Reader, Music, Video)	x	x
Connected standby	x	x
Microsoft account	x	x
Desktop	x	x
Installation of desktop applications	x	x
Updated File Explorer (previously called Windows Explorer)	x	x
Windows Defender	x	x
SmartScreen	x	x
Windows Update	x	x
Enhanced Task Manager	x	x
Switch languages on the fly (language packs)	x	x

Feature	Windows 8	Windows 8 Pro
Multiple monitor support	x	x
Storage Spaces	x	x
Windows Media Player	x	x
Exchange ActiveSync	x	x
File history	x	x
ISO/VHD mounting	x	x
Mobile broadband support	x	x
Picture password	x	x
Remote Desktop (client)	x	x
Reset and refresh your PC	x	x
Snap	x	x
Touch and Thumb keyboard	x	x
Trusted boot	x	x
VPN client	x	x
BitLocker and BitLocker To Go		x
Boot from VHD		x
Client Hyper-V		x
Domain Join		x
Encrypting File System		x
Group Policy		x
Remote Desktop (host)		x

Windows 8 Requirements

The requirements listed by Microsoft include the following:

1 GHz or faster processor

1GB RAM (32-bit) or 2GB RAM (64-bit)

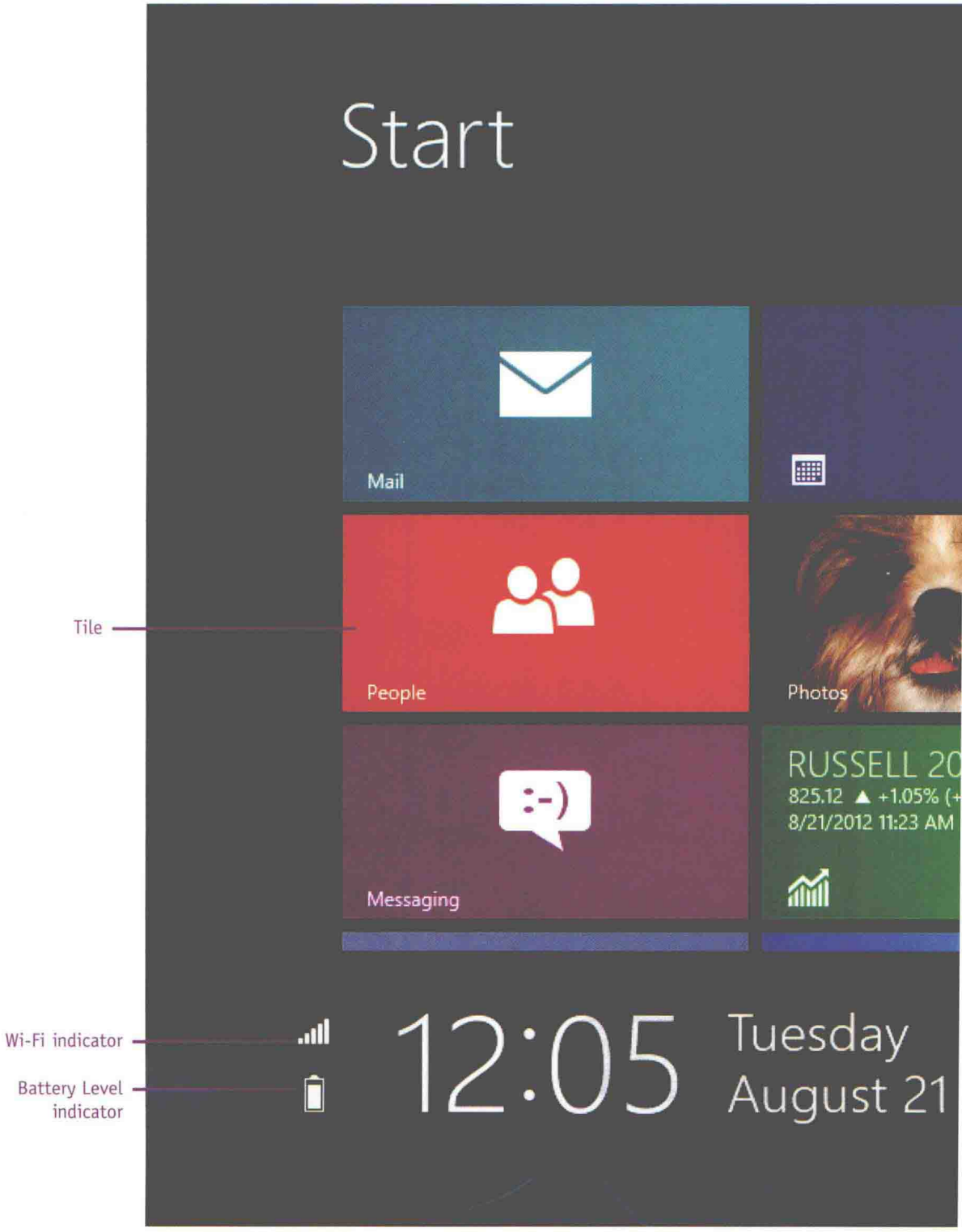
16GB available hard drive space (32-bit) or 20GB (64-bit)

DirectX 9 graphics device with WDDM 1.0 or higher driver

1024 × 768-pixel screen resolution to run Windows 8 apps

1366 × 768-pixel screen resolution to snap Windows 8 apps

Windows® 8 at a Glance



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