Windows 10…do not despair it's not completely hopeless *REVISED*

Note: You will need some skills to do this, either achieved in the process or previously hard earned, but hey anything really worth doing is hard. The cost is money is basically zero in dollars, depending on what you PayPal donate to the people who wrote these programs, which you should do.

To experiment with, use a machine that you don't need for anything else. I am serious here. If you must, at least install free VMware player software and install it in a virtual machine.

There is a little know version of Win 10 called LTSB (Long Term Service Branch), available from 2016-2019 It is an add-on to an SA Win10 Enterprise license which is not available to most people. It uses an SA Enterprise key for activation. It was primarily intended for factory machinery and kiosks. Some software may not run on this version. None are known to me at this point.

Its primary features are what is **not** there:

1. No Cortana,
2. No MS Store
3. No Telemetry
4. No Crappy Apps
5. No Forced Updates
6. No Edge Browser
7. No Xbox

But since it is still Windows 10 which is a devolved, stripped down, and perverted version of the Windows we all knew and loved, (me since 1988) it needs some serious work to make it usable. After all, Win10 was designed primarily for Mobile and Cloud computing for phones and tablets. No one is supposed to be using desktops or non-touchscreen laptops anymore according to MS.

Download an MS evaluation copy to install and play with

This is the first thing your should do going down this path. It will not activate and will work for 90 days and then quit. Before that time however you will have figured out if this is workable for you or not.

Downloads come from the sites listed. Modifications will be in the following areas:

- **Classic Shell (www.classicshell.net)**
  Download, install and configure this alternate interface to your preferences.

- **Winaero (www.winaero.com)**
  Download, install and configure Winaero Tweaker. It is pretty amazing on what it will let you do the reconfigure Win10. It's almost daunting how many settings it provides access to. This program reminds me of all the good software I have used over the years and we don't have now, in this silly mobile app-centric phone and cloudy world.

- **Aero Glass for Win8.x (www.glass8.eu)**
  Works on Win10 based on your current version.

- **Vista Icons (https://vista-icon-pack.en.uptodown.com/windows)**
  You can play like a kid with these.

- **Vista Gadgets (https://download.cnet.com/s/gadgets-for-windows-vista/)**
  Be careful where you get these. It's best to be cautious about where you get Gadgets from. Gadgets are as powerful as they are is because they have deep access to your system. Malicious code in a Gadget can truly wreak havoc. Cnet.com has been a trusted site for all downloads for many years now.

If you decide this is the right approach for you, do the following:
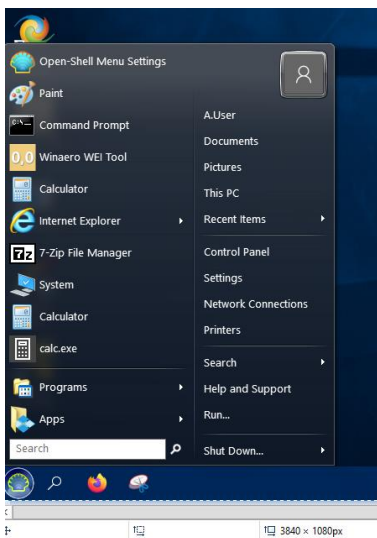
I am not going to walk you through everything step by step with screen shots. (that would be a book that I would need to sell) So some of this you will just need for figure out for yourselves.

- Download an available .iso and key online to a usb drive or burn to a DVD (some searching will be required to find it)
- Scan the .iso with you AV and Malwarebytes
- Use 7zip to unpack the .iso to a folder
- Scan the unpacked .iso with AV and Malwarebytes
- Install Win10
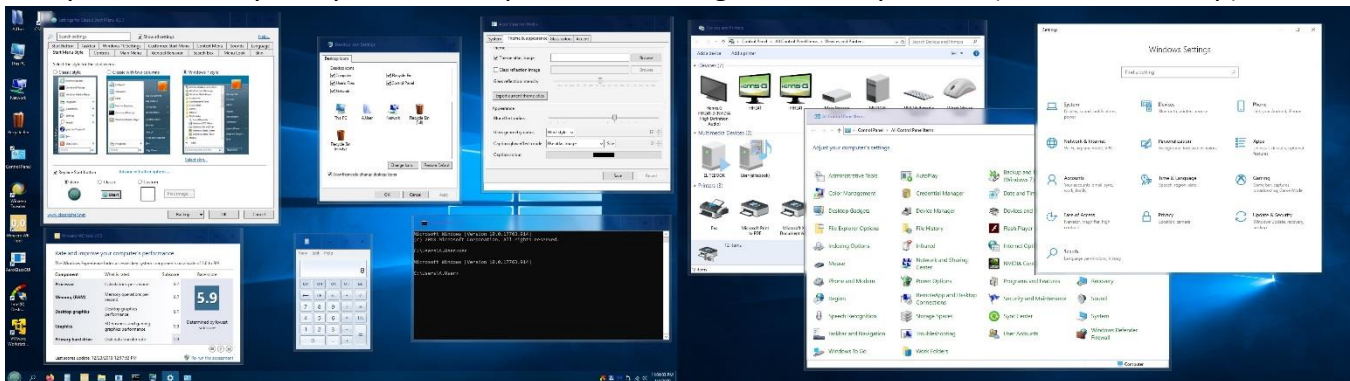- Scan your hard drive with Kaspersky rootkit finder

Once you are sure that your install is clean, you can go about reconfiguring it using the software tools as above.

I would also install Mozilla Firefox and some web browser extensions to keep you from getting tracked and your info stolen while on the Internet. Set the security to Strict. Use DuckDuckGo or StartPage for a search engine that doesn't track you. Use browser extensions to block ads and tracking your browsing history, and use Private Browsing on all sites. You will need to use, train, and update web browser extensions like Privacy Badger, Ghostery, DuckDuckGo Privacy Essentials, and HTTPS Everywhere to block this tracking and personal data theft.

So you can have a Start Menu that looks like this:

And you can make your system desktop look something like this, if you like. (dual screen setup)

Good luck,
Lefty Insider

More about software.

The many reasons for not upgrading to Window 10 include the interface, telemetry, and the poor software apps addressed above. One serious reason for not upgrading is software program access and compatibility. I will address this issue here. I will not address hardware compatibility which is another valid reason.

Loss of the Media Center program is a big deal to me and many others, even though Microsoft says that their telemetry shows that hardly anyone uses it. Introduced in 2002 on Windows XP and upgraded a bit over time, it was in need of a serious upgrade to support streaming, Blu-Ray media, cable TV tuners, and many other things. This would involve not only designing and writing code, the original program development may have been outsourced, and licensing etc. Remember, Microsoft gutted their software testing department, just before the release of Win10 so this beta code could be forced on an unsuspecting public.

Microsoft is typically too far out on their skis compared to the rest of the world. They eliminated support for optical disc media early, because everyone was supposed to be using streaming like them. Unfortunately, much of the world does not have their Internet bandwidth to support this. The same is true with this continuous OS updating that strains peoples Internet accounts, not to mention many small local ISP's.

So part of this is being out of touch with reality and some of it is cost, since Windows is no longer their primary source of income and they have since moved on to all this silliness of mobile, data centers, and clouds.

If you are inclined to try something else for this functionally, try here:
The 5 Best Alternatives to Windows Media Center
https://appuals.com/the-5-best-alternatives-to-windows-media-center/

If you do some desktop publishing, you will notice you now have very few fonts. I have about 300 on my Windows 7 machine and about 80 on my Win10 LTSB machine. This was another foolish move to make the OS smaller for phones and tablets, and perhaps to save money on licensing. You can get free fonts:
https://www.1001freefonts.com/
https://www.wfonts.com/

You can also get rid of the crappy App calculator by down loading and installing the old style one, and the old System Configuration and Task Manager via Winaero Tweaker.

More later perhaps…