

# Tiles

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## *Information Guide*

Organize your Windows desktop life

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## **Specifications**

Title:	Tiles
Version:	0.98 (beta)
Developer:	Stardock Software
Requires:	Windows XP, Windows Vista, or Windows 7
Price:	Free (optional DLC is available for purchase)
Download:	<a href="http://www.stardock.com/products/tiles">http://www.stardock.com/products/tiles</a>

**Summary:** Tiles is a program that enables users to organize their Windows PC work into pages of tiles. Tiles appears as a side-bar on a user's display. At the top are the labels for each page such as "My Tiles" or "Documents" or "Apps". Users can then drag and drop programs, documents, website URLs onto Tiles. If the program is running, users can hold the shift-key down and drag the app onto Tiles immediately. When the program is inactive, it appears as an icon. When it is active, it appears as a live preview tile.

## **Introduction**

In 1995, Microsoft introduced the Start bar. The bottom of a typical user's screen was dominated by a thin bar with a "Start" button on the left. The user clicked on the Start menu to go through all their programs. The rest of the Start bar was reserved for running tasks and the notification tray and clock.

In the decade and a half since then, Microsoft has tweaked the Start bar but otherwise kept the same general design in place. In the forthcoming Windows 8, Microsoft will be attempting users to migrate away from the traditional desktop metaphor to a new "Metro" experience.

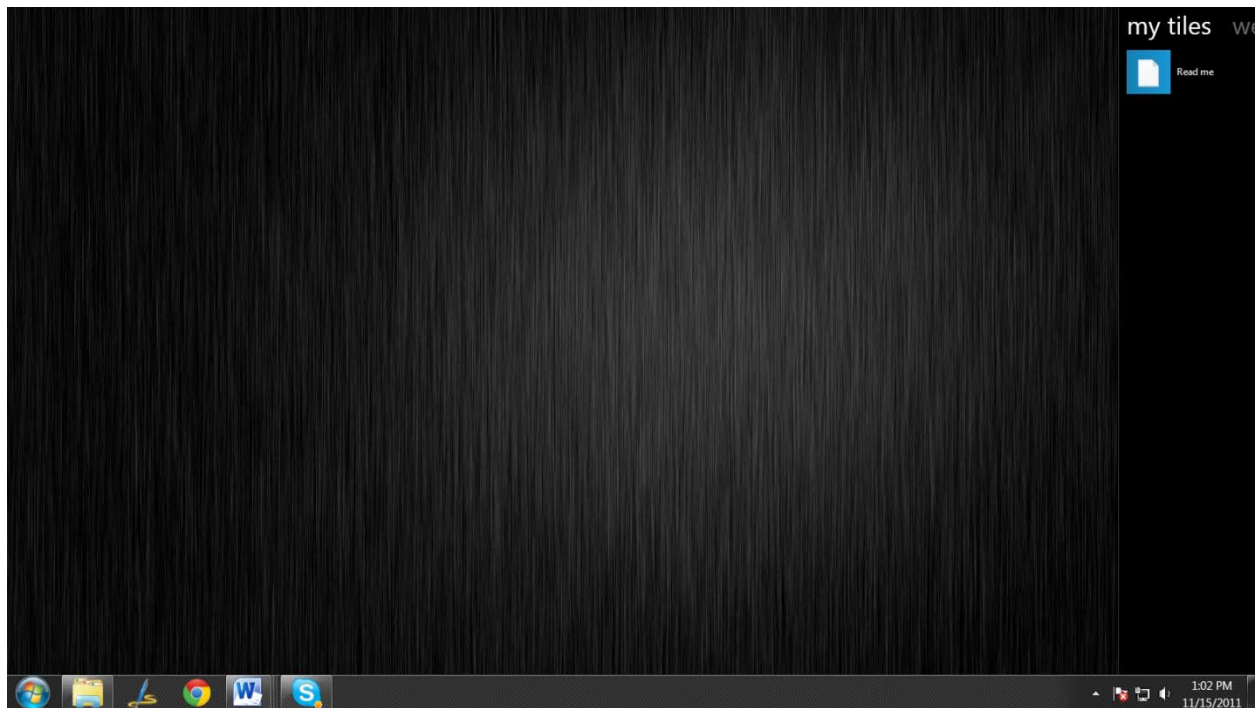
While Stardock appreciates Microsoft's work on the Metro and its recognition that the Start bar has not scaled well with the way people utilize their Windows PC, the Metro experience is problematic for traditional PC users (i.e. non-tablet users).

Stardock, the world's leading developer of desktop enhancements, has been in the process of helping PC users migrate to a more effective means of using Windows. Last year, Stardock released Fences. Fences is a program that lets users utilize the Windows desktop area in a new way. Many early reviews of the Windows 8 Metro interface have compared Metro to Fences.

This year, Stardock has developed Tiles. Where Fences organizes the desktop, Tiles enables users to organize their tasks.

## Tiles in Action

When first loaded, Tiles is literally, a blank page.



## Rethinking how you use Windows

We've been trained to use the Start bar for decades now. Tiles is not designed to replace the Start bar. It is designed to let users *focus* on the tasks they care about. So don't try to think of Tiles as something you are supposed to use *instead* of the Start bar. Tiles is something new, let its features work naturally for you.

## Beginning the journey

At first, users are likely to simply drag and drop things onto the My Tiles page. There have been program launching utilities and “Side bars” for years (starting, ironically with Stardock’s own Control Center back in the 90s). So it’s understandable if new users treat Tiles as “another Sidebar” program at first.



And as a task launcher, what users will notice is that when a task is launched it becomes an active tile – users can quickly differentiate between what is a tile and an active tile by the preview they see.

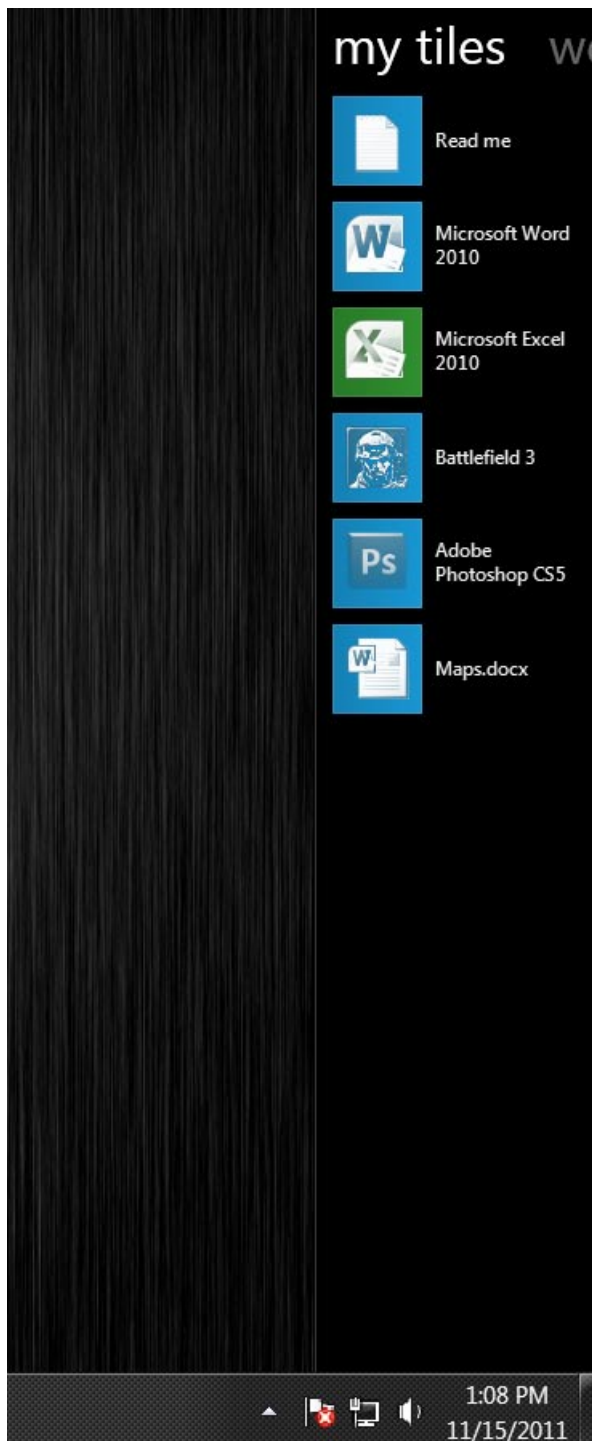


Figure 1: At first, new users will likely treat Tiles as yet another program launching utility. This is fine.



Figure 2: By default, Tiles doesn't care if an app is "minimized" or "maximized". Such concepts are irrelevant. Tiles are active or inactive.

## The Intermediate user

Eventually, the user will graduate beyond using Tiles as yet another program launcher and begin to see that it has different pages as the top.

This is where Tiles starts to shine:



Figure 3: User adds a Docs page which automatically shows their most recently used documents

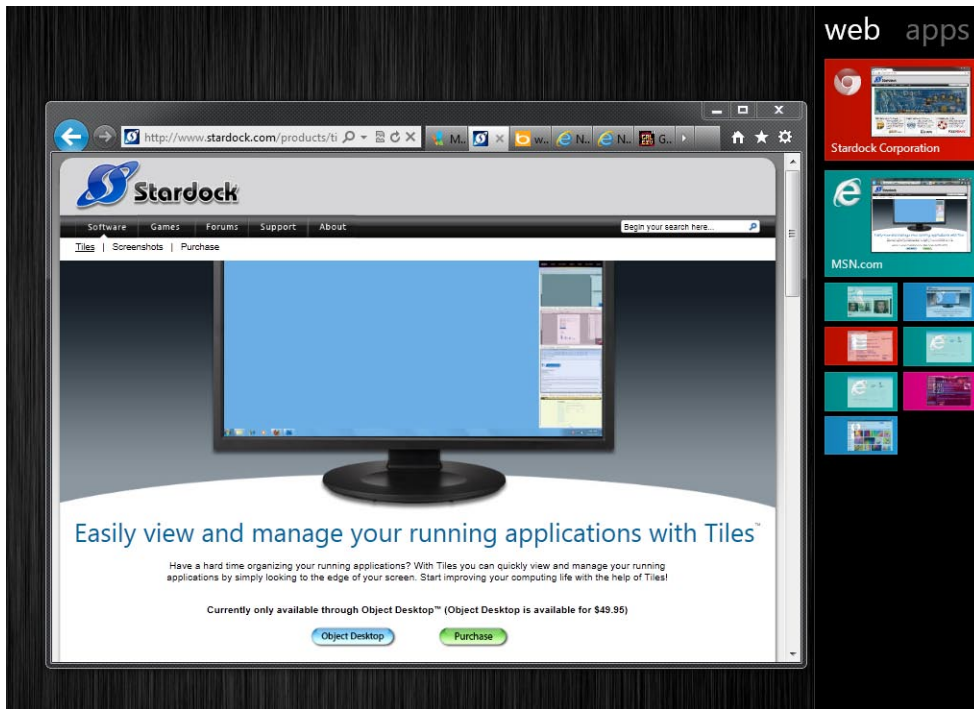


Figure 4: Or a page to handle the websites they're on.

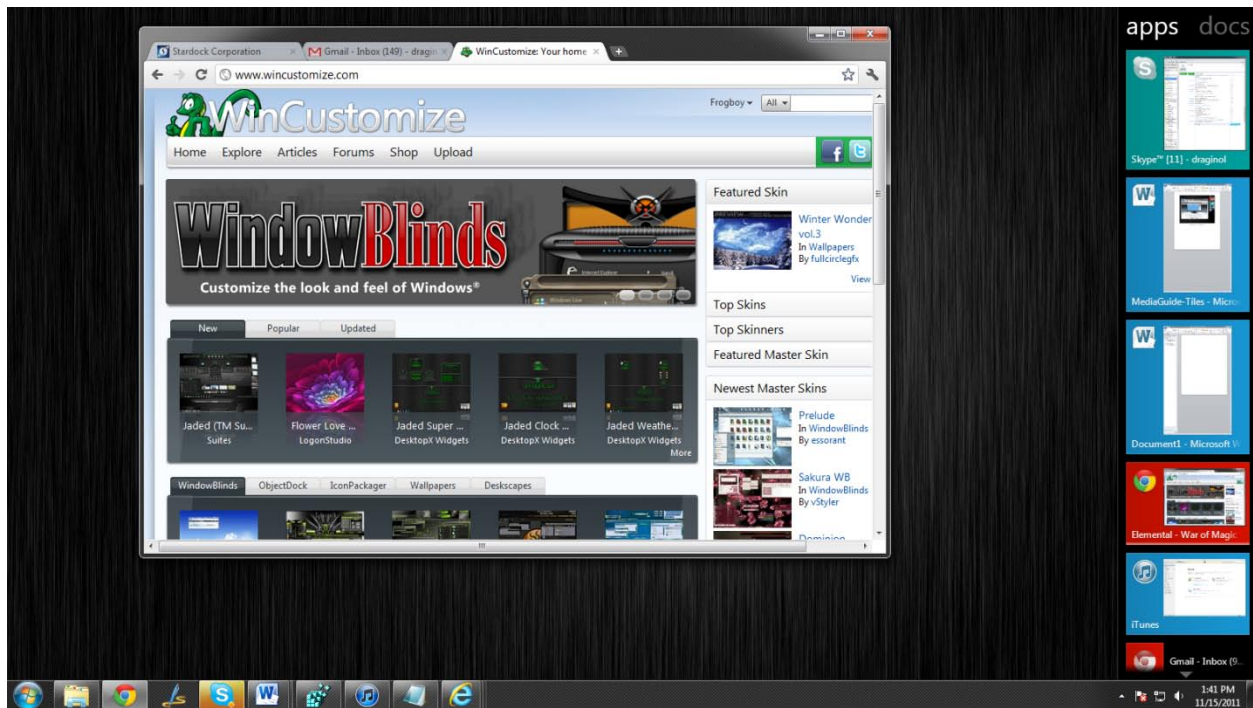


Figure 5: A page that just shows non-minimized running programs – very handy in multi-monitor setups

Users switch between pages by swiping with their mouse (or on a touch device with their finger) the page headings at the top. Similarly, using their mouse (or finger) they can swipe up and down on a given page to see all the tiles.

## The next level: POWER Users

While novice users might look at Tiles as a simple program launching utility and intermediate users might use Tiles to unclutter their running tasks by setting up pages for their web surfing versus their work versus their documents, advanced users are likely to treat pages as projects unto themselves...

### Customizing

Advanced users might start to customize Tiles:

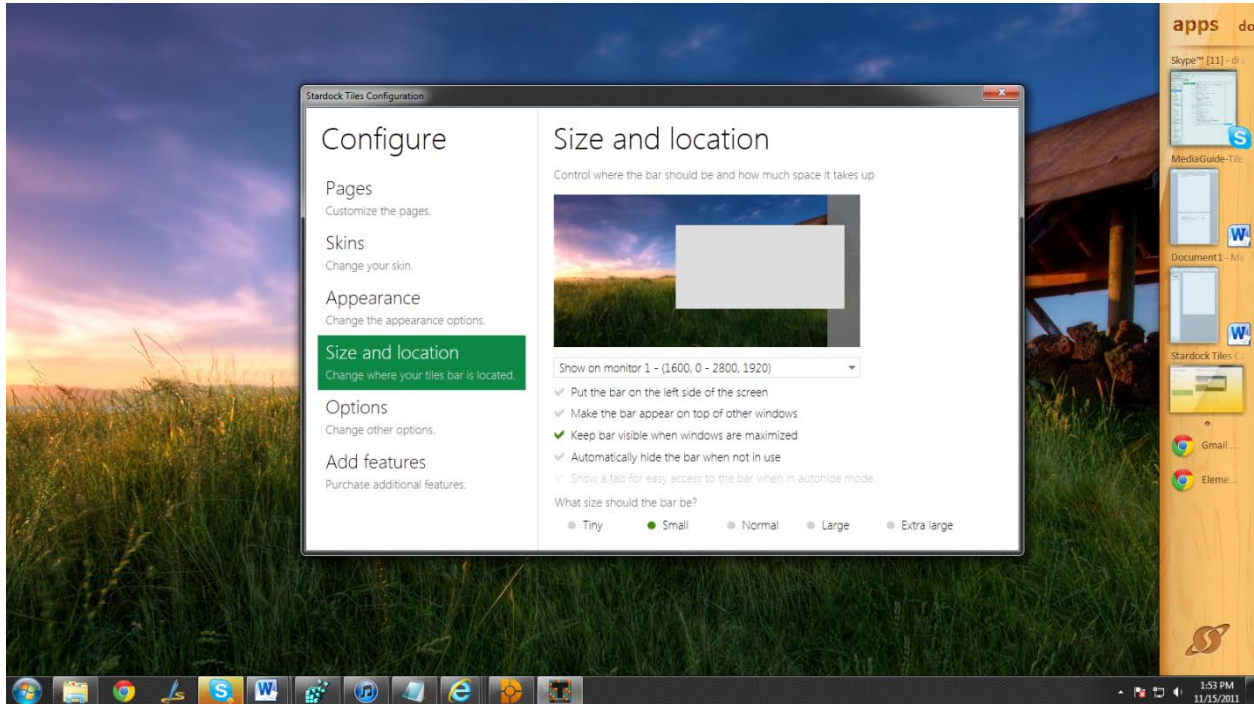


Figure 6: Users can skin Tiles, change its size and location

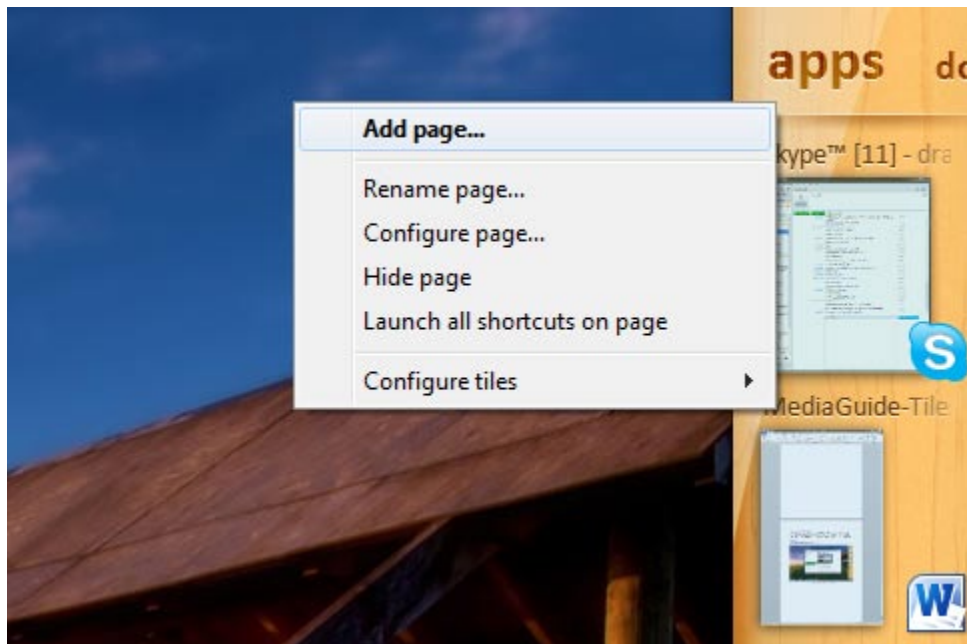


Figure 7: Creating specific pages for different projects

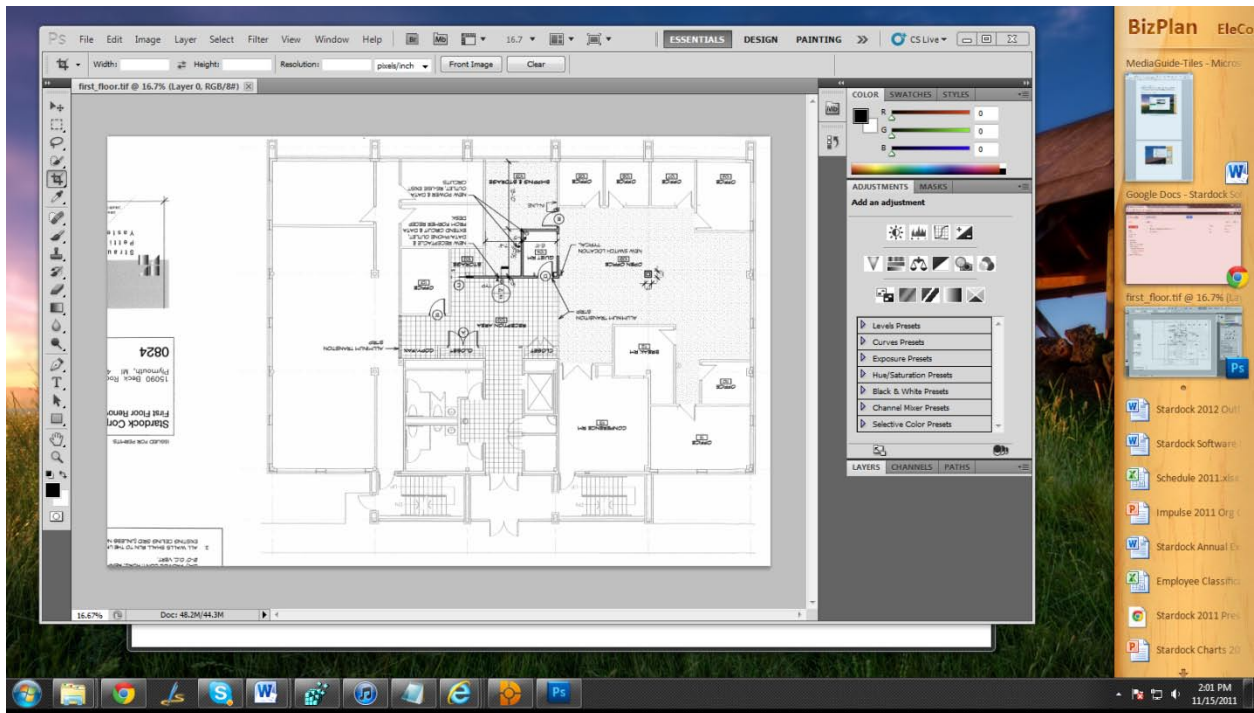


Figure 8: A page dedicated to putting together the current business plan

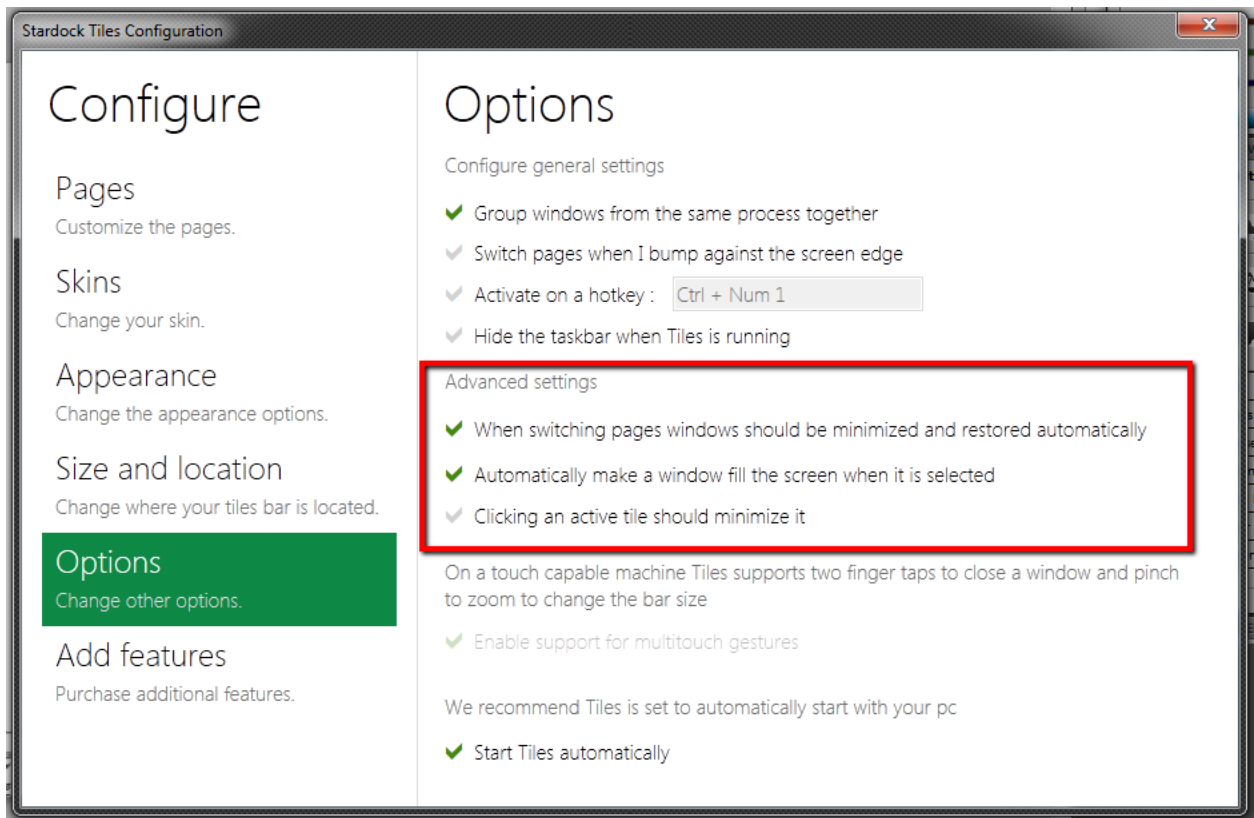


Figure 9: Users can make it so that each page is like its own virtual desktop.

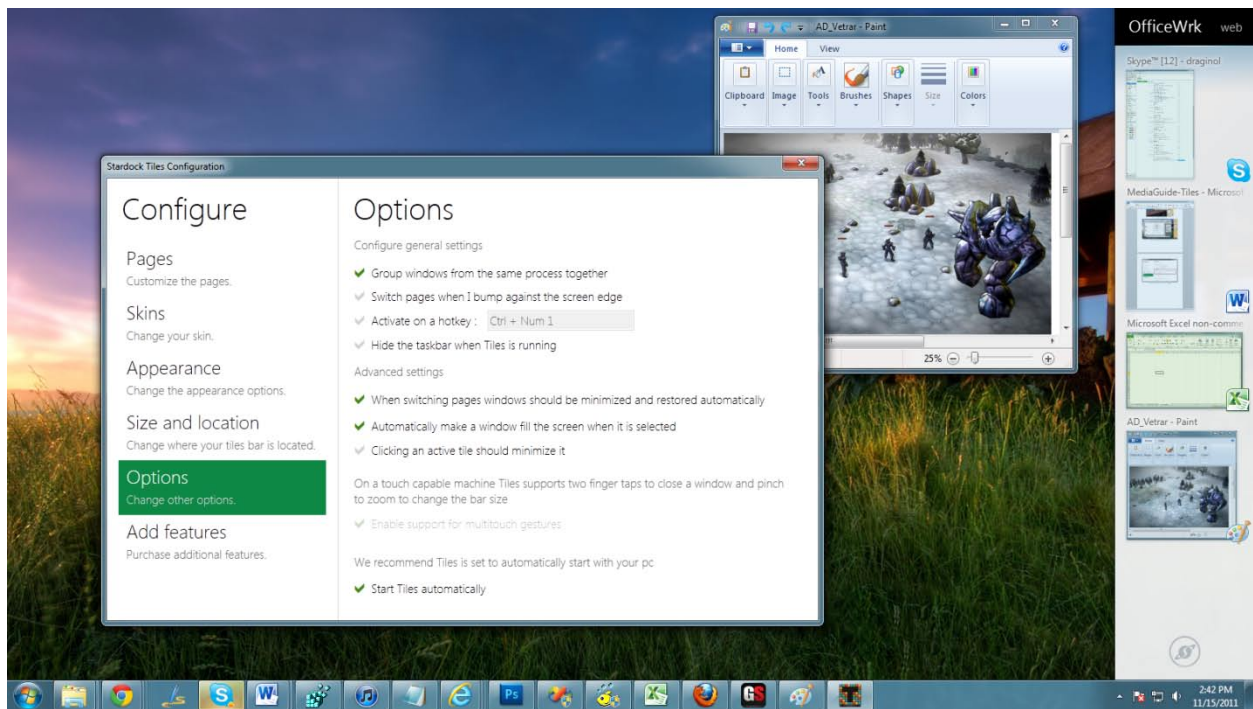


Figure 10: Users can create a page for each project they're working on.