

Microsoft Windows 10, is this the Make or Break Product for Microsoft?

by Ross Hendry

On 20th November 1985, Microsoft released version 1.0 of their new graphically based operating system, 29 years later they are due to offer what is probably the make or break version of Windows as an operating system, Version 10.



Why make or break? Because the market place has changed and consumers now have many choices of operating system available to them, for example: Apples OS X, or the Android operating system/s (the most used of all operating systems since 2013), or indeed Linux, so consumers can choose.

In the past it was a no brainer! Windows was a constant, we used it at work and/or learned to use it at school and for the first 25 years everything was familiar as Microsoft Windows was improved, we grew with them. Yes they had their failures, notably Windows Millennium Edition and Windows Vista, but in the most part they met their users' expectations and we could work around the problems as we knew our way around Windows or just put up with the lack of speed.

That was of course until 2013, when they launched Windows 8, and they completely failed to meet their users' expectations by producing an operating system which, to be fair, worked well, was fast, efficient and secure. However, they completely took their users for granted by providing a user interface that did not make any logical sense to their loyal customer base - failing themselves and more importantly their customers who now had much more choice. Very hastily introducing Windows 8.1 and giving it away free to Windows 8 customers, they tried to recover the situation. In fairness it did improve things, but it was and is not Windows XP or Windows 7!

Microsoft has decided to offer its Windows 10 operating system as a free upgrade for the all genuine users of Windows 7, 8 and 8.1. Here is a direct quote from Terry Myerson (Terry Myerson is Microsoft's Executive Vice President of Operating Systems).

"This week we shared more details about Windows 10 editions. Today, I thought I would provide answers to some questions we've received regarding how this will work for Genuine vs. Non-Genuine Windows.

With Windows 10, we have extended an offer to our Genuine Windows 7 and Windows 8.1 customers to upgrade to Windows 10 for free. Once a customer upgrades, they will continue to receive ongoing Windows innovation and security updates for free, for the supported lifetime of that device.

These customers purchased their genuine Windows license from our valued OEM partners, which ensures Windows is properly installed, licensed, and not tampered with. Windows 10 offers our customers an even more secure and modern experience. Bringing all of our customers to Windows 10 improves the ecosystem for developers which makes Windows better for all of our customers. We are working hard to make the in-place upgrade experience from Windows 7 or Windows 8, to Windows 10, seamless for the customer. Throughout the Windows world, I am humbled by the excitement being associated with this opportunity to upgrade to Windows 10."

The launch date for the new OS has not been agreed but it is expected to be sometime in July 2015, but what is it like? Microsoft offered a taste of the new OS in the Windows Insider program, which I have been able to take part in over the past few months and I like what I have been using. It is fast and stable and pleasingly I can find the items I need to use. I was not able to try Cortana, the new speech interface as advertised on the TV, but more down to earth items such as the Start Menu, which was completely missing on Windows 8, is back and far more refined, and may easily be switched to work with PC or Tablets and mobile telephones. It also blends the old-fashioned desktop and the modern Windows interface.

Personally I cannot wait to try the new operating system when it is released and I will definitely be upgrading my PCs to it within the first year, which brings me to a very important point.

I have not seen any information on what the new Windows operating system will cost. I know that there will be 7 versions and that if I take the free upgrade I can have it for the life of the device, but what will it cost to add it to a PC if I build it myself?

My feeling is that we are seeing a fundamental change in the way Microsoft will charge for its software and operating systems. I really do suspect that we will be subscribing to Windows on a monthly or annual basis, this will entitle you to all upgrades and new features when they are released and theoretically you will also get the latest versions when released. We are going to need to start to think of Microsoft Windows not as a product but as a service more on this in the coming months.



Ross Hendry is the proprietor of Interface Consulting and Engineering, who has over 42 years experience in Communications, Computer Technology and Direct Marketing. (See advert below).

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