



Windows 10 Free Upgrade Offer ends 29th July 2016 - Have you got yours yet?

by Ross Hendry

Microsoft's offer to licensed Windows 7, 8 and 8.1 users, to upgrade their PCs for free ends on 29th July, so you have 9 weeks from when this magazine was distributed to get yours, if you qualify. **300 million users have done so to date.**

Desktop PC Operating System Market Share

In April 2016, Microsoft's Windows 10's market share rose to 14.35%, now the second most used PC operating system. The leader is Windows 7 whose share of the market fell by 3% down to 48.79%; still in third place with 9.66% is the beloved Windows XP, even though the support for this product ended well over 1 year ago! Windows 8.1 is 4th with 9.16%; 8.0 is 5th with 2.95 and Vista 6th with 1.34.

Microsoft still have 89.23% of the desktop and laptop PC operating system market with Apple having 9.20% , Linux has just 1.56%.

Local Uptake of Windows 10

Locally over 50% of my customers have chosen to upgrade to Windows 10 and most have had a successful upgrade; there have been some problems, but as it turns out many of these perceived problems were created by Microsoft. For example, the November 2015 update (build 10586) reset browser changes, and many other settings heavily promoting Microsoft products and in some cases removing third-party products completely.

February 2016 saw a status change for Windows 7, 8 and 8.1 users, the optional Windows 10 upgrade has now become a "recommended update". This is very sneaky in my opinion because it means that if you have Windows updates set to install all recommended updates then Microsoft will automatically install the Windows update even though some users have said no to the "nagging" screen reminding you to.

If you want to stop this happening then you can change the Windows update settings to notify you before any updates are installed. At least this way you may veto the Windows 10 or indeed any other upgrade you are not happy with. For those of you who want to completely remove the 'Get Windows 10' icon and all it entails use the GWX Control Panel, you may download it here <http://ultimateoutsider.com/downloads/>.

Why upgrade?

There are many reasons to upgrade. The main one is because it is the future of desktop and laptop computing. The operating system is secure, fast and very useable. As with all new Microsoft operating systems you will need to look for things, they will probably still be there or you can download the latest Windows 10 compatible version from the Windows store, normally for free.

Microsoft will, I am certain, be requiring a subscription in the future to use their software. The way Windows 10 has been written is to get most users to sample then buy software, games etc from their store; they will be, for the first time, being much more restrictive as to how you may use their operating system and what software will work with it. I have just heard that the search box built into the task bar on Windows 10 will only display 'Bing' results. Even if your default browser is Chrome, Safari or Firefox and you prefer the Google search engine, you will not be able to get Google results from the taskbar search feature.

Want to wait - what is Windows 10 likely to cost?

Currently Windows 10 home is selling at \$119 in US, in the UK £86 and for Pro \$199 in US and in the UK £156. I have no idea what Microsoft will charge as an annual subscription, but I suspect around £1.00 per week for the home/consumer version going up to may be £10 per week for professional versions depending on the version, although when they decide to do this is unknown.

What is the Future for Windows 7 and 8/8.1?

I have recently seen that Microsoft will not be likely to provide upgrades for these operating systems to cope with the new hardware due out from the likes of Intel and AMD the two main

processor and chipset manufacturers. So, although Windows 7 is going to be supported until 2020, that may not be on the latest hardware. The same for Windows 8 that will be supported until 2023. I should note that mainstream support for Windows 7 ended on 13th January 2015 and will end for Windows 8 on 9th January 2018.

Windows 10 is the future of traditional desktop computing as we know it. At present, most businesses will continue to use it until something better comes along. If you are going to work for a living you will need to be able to use Windows at least for the foreseeable future, because although Microsoft have dropped below 90% of all of the desktop operating systems, they are really still the only game in town for a growing business. I cannot see schools moving to any other operating system, so our children will be brought up with it as well.

Older Operating Systems

If you have an older operating system, with a little help you can probably have windows 10 and for free. Contact your IT support person for how to do so. However, the fact that you still have Windows Vista or XP or older means that you may not be able to run Windows 10 on your hardware. Your computer support person will know or be able to check this for you.

Upgrade or Clean Install

It is now possible to do a clean install of Windows 10 rather than upgrading your existing system. A good way of installing the new operating system. I have done this myself as I wanted to start from scratch with Windows 10. So I purchased a new Hard Disk Drive for £40.00 and loaded Windows 10 from the internet onto a completely new hard disk, and I was able to enter my Windows 7 licence code to activate it.

This was a great opportunity to completely reload my programs and other software, and is a great way of speeding up your system and getting rid of any file corruption, dormant viruses and other nasties. The drawback is reloading everything from scratch and the time it takes. Once the new operating system is loaded and working properly, I can get the my precious data from the previous hard disks it is on and tidy it up as I reload it to my computer. Once I do this I am not able to legitimately use the previous version of Windows with the same codes.

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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