

Windows 10 – are we really ready for it?



by Scott Banks, Gumtree Computer Services, www.gumtreeecs.com.au Sept 2015

Microsoft is enforcing the upgrade for all Windows machines to 10, but are we really ready for it just yet?

Before we go any further, and if we're in time to say so, before you go upgrading your beloved computer to Windows 10 – STOP AND THINK FIRST. THERE IS NO RUSH.

Over the years Microsoft has gone on a rollercoaster ride with their o/s releases with regular successes and failures. Way back when we were introduced to XP. Of course it's not taken long before the world has forgotten how much of a massive headache the early versions were – they were terrible, but within a few major Service Packs XP had become the most stable operating system then seen. Of course, to one-up this system Microsoft wrote Vista which crashed and died faster than a depth charge, with apologies from Microsoft. To repair the damage Windows 7 came along and for the first time in Microsoft's history an operating system worked out of the box (by popular opinion). It was fantastic (high praise, coming from this Microsoft skeptic). Everything worked straight away, it was intuitive, it was well designed, secure and reliable, it liked and connected all your peripherals, and it took to the Internet like a duck to water.



Windows 7 became the staple diet for large organisations everywhere (those that hadn't already gone over to Linux etc), so to build on the hype Microsoft decided to rewrite their systems and called it Windows 8, which headed south straight away, with its emphasis on touch screens & huge square buttons but a loss of logic and intuition that 7 had given us. Big rewrites were made to rescue the situation and v8.1 entered the foray. It corrected many problems but by now the world had abandoned hope for 8.1. Windows 9 never eventuated, but instead a revolutionary new direction in Windows 10 came along. Plenty of hype and majesty abounded, with early developers loving it. Windows users received invites and reminders that 10 was on its way and to upgrade in July 2015. But of course by now everyone had forgotten the inevitable headaches related to previous Windows releases, and within a month or so nearly 72 million machines had upgraded, some facing data ruin and broken computers.



Security and privacy issues

No-one seemed stop and think about the inherent unknown issues that could lurk behind the blue hype, but within days the first problems appeared, to the dismay of the early birds (tch tch tch). Most importantly questions were being asked about security and privacy. In their rush to become the first to experience (you no longer "own" your own software with Windows 10) the new system everyone had overlooked the move by Microsoft to track everything that happens on your Windows computer.

It appears Microsoft, through Windows 10, now has access to most of your shared and private records, while forcing you to sign up with Microsoft accounts to run your schmick new machine, rather than being able to operate it as a private, stand-alone unit.



The other main issue which has surfaced is the problem that Microsoft now, as standard, make updates to your operating systems automatically, without a way of turning this off (excepting for Enterprise edition). Whether you like it or not, whether you're on a generous Internet bandwidth allowance or still running on small and slow connections, you're going to be slugged around 3GB of download just to receive Windows 10. And even worse, these regular updates are then going to sneak in the back end while you're connected, soaking up your limited bandwidth without you even realising. There are

editorials purporting to show ways in which auto updating can be switched off, but world – be ready to spend a fortune on bandwidth now. This is OK for the likes of USA etc where vast amounts of bandwidth cost very little (or nothing at all), but for the rest of us we're going to be paying through the nose, just to maintain an updated system.

Of course this all presumes that you're the vast majority of computer users who are not IT analysts and experts. Over the past many weeks the number of articles written about how to modify W10 and its settings have escalated; every day you can receive tens of emails with temporary fixes, home-made patches, and a growing awareness that Microsoft now “owns” your computer experience.

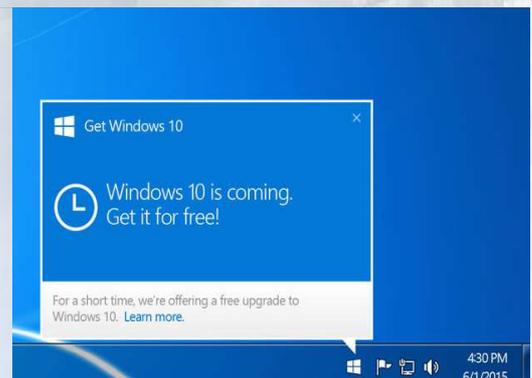
The intentions for the future Windows operating system is to stop rebuilding new releases and instead concentrate on just morphing an existing systems (aka W10) over time. At some point this process must fall behind new technology unless Microsoft can find a way of modifying major sections of their project to allow for major future hardware gains and technological direction. For example, 32-bit systems will probably disappear in favour of the much faster and more efficient (but less supported) 64-bit architecture. The theory is that we'll never see another new Windows version by name.

“WAIT BEFORE YOU UPDATE”

Basically, the best advice to give for late 2015/early 2016 is to WAIT BEFORE YOU UPDATE. We have until July 2016 to use our free Windows 10 upgrade (if your system can handle it) so why rush in to it? Be ready to risk losing your computer for periods of time whilst updates, patches etc come through to get you back online, or recover your lost data etc.

Why not allow those 70-80 million users around the world act as a test bench for the real world of Windows 10, finding out what works, what's not, how to secure your data properly and how to configure the system so it works the way you were hoping for. Give it a few more months to see how W10 settles in to a safe, secure and reliable routine. If you're on Windows 7 you're in a good place, those on Windows 8 are lost (give up and go home!), W8.1 is a learning curve still, and Windows 10 has a very long way to go before the world can call it acceptable.

None the least the learning curve that IT experts and repair staff now need to go on to figure out the nuances of Windows 10.



Before you jump in to the unknown contact us at Gumtree Computer Services for advice on how to approach Windows 10, security, privacy and other issues.

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