
TO: Electronic Futures AVU Customers

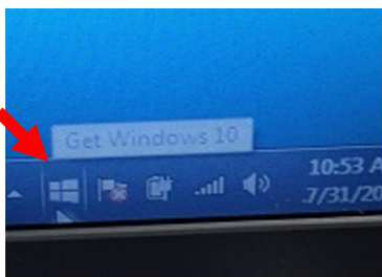
DATE: 14 August 2015

SUBJECT: Windows 10 Initial Release – Customer Advisory

Introduction

In preparation for the release of Windows 10, and as part of their strategy to encourage and streamline early adoption among customers, Microsoft rolled out two updates to customers running Windows 7 and Windows 8 in recent months (KB3035583¹ and KB2952664²). In addition to preparing the computers to actually run the update to Windows 10, these updates install an application in the system tray (see Figure 1), which encourages and facilitates users “reserving” (downloading) and installing Windows 10 overtop of their existing operating system, in addition to possible future software offerings at the discretion of Microsoft.

Microsoft officially released Windows 10 to the public on July 29th. Many customers have downloaded and installed Windows 10, some unintentionally, with varying degrees of success. Some users have found their older hardware (purchased more than a year ago) to be incompatible or not fully supported, resulting in losses of functionality that range from lack of sound or video playback, on up to total lack of system usability, requiring rollback or re-installation of their old operating system.



“Get Windows 10” Applet
Installed by KB3035583

¹ <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/kb/3035583>

Recommendations

In addition to facilitating delivery of new features and technologies to customers, Windows 10 is anticipated by many to be the definitive answer from Microsoft to close the gap (perceived or actual) between the expectations of end-users, and their experiences to date with Windows 8.

That being said, considerable experience has taught us the following general principles apply to any initial release of a new operating system:

1. In the first year or so after initial major release of a new operating systems, there is usually a high rate of offering for patches and security updates, as problems are detected and corrected. This period consists of two Life Cycle stages of a technology product, referred to as “bleeding edge” initially, transitioning into “cutting-edge”. This peak may be shorter or longer depending on the rate of market adoption for the operating system, and the responsiveness of the manufacturer to reported issues. Many businesses will choose to wait a year or more after the initial operating system release, before making any decision to adopt it as a standard and deploy it in their organization. Typically this happens in the “Modern” stage, which is usually signaled by the rollup of the first few months’ patches into a Service Pack. Deployment in the latter Life Cycle stages results in an improved security posture (less risk of a zero-day vulnerability being exploited, assuming your current O/S is still supported and patched), improved productivity (there is downtime associated with deployment of patches and updates), better change management and migration tools, and reduced overall risk to the organization.
2. Many hardware and software manufacturers do limited or no compatibility testing of the older generations/versions of their products with new operating systems. As a result, compatibility should never be assumed, unless the manufacturer has published information stating that your specific model and version of their product has been proven compatible with new operating

² <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/kb/2952664>

systems. In many cases, even with recent product, compatibility testing / “designed for” logo certifications and related publishing will not occur until some months following the general public availability of a new operating system.

In the absence of official testing and validation of compatibility from the manufacturer, additional third-party compatibility information may be available from web-based sources such as discussion groups, detailing the experiences of other users who have attempted to use the product with the target operating system. Such information may or may not be accurate, and any configuration examples, instructions, or workarounds may not be appropriate for your specific case. Consider all the risks before deciding to attempt an installation based on information from sources other than the manufacturer. *In particular, be very wary of websites other than that of the original equipment manufacturer, which offer software such as drivers or online “fixes” to problems. There are many web-based distribution channels for malware & that masquerade as self-help resources like this.*

3. Past experience with installing new versions of an operating system overtop of an old one (known as an “in-place upgrade”), have shown that sometimes the resulting system will become unstable within a period of months, and may experience fatal crashes, ultimately requiring a “clean” install anyway, nullifying the convenience of your in-place upgrade.

Therefore, instead of an in-place upgrade, we suggest customers wishing to deploy a new operating system on an existing machine that is already using an older version do so using the following steps to deploy it:

- a. Verify your individual computer hardware components (ie. Video card, sound card, network card, printer, etc) are known to be compatible with the target operating system by the manufacturer(s)
- b. Ensure you have, or can download, stand-alone installation media for all programs you currently run on your existing system (unless you no longer need them). This includes license strings/keys and configuration files. You will need this media to reinstall the

application(s) cleanly on your new operating system. Only install applications that have been verified by the author as being compatible with the target operating system.

- c. Backup all your data files from your original machine to external media, such as DVD or a USB CD-Rom. Ideally, to minimize the chances you missed something, back up your entire hard drive in this manner (or use a disk imaging program).
- d. Reformat the hard drive(s) in your computer
- e. Obtain a retail / stand-alone copy of your desired new operating system, and install.
- f. Reinstall the desired programs on the new operating system
- g. Restore your data and application configurations from your backup.

In addition, specifically for this case:

4. Given the way this has been made available directly to end-users to install, people managing networks for businesses that do not wish to adopt this new operating system initially should take deliberate steps to reduce the possibility of an end-user that has administrative permission to their computer may inadvertently or deliberately install Windows 10 prematurely with the “Get Windows 10” Applet. We recommend that such steps should include
 - a. not approving the updates KB3035583 nor KB2952664 on your WSUS server or on your PC’s (note that by default, WSUS automatically approves updates, so at least one of these may already have been approved and deployed in your organization if your WSUS was left with the default configuration)
 - b. If you get your updates from Microsoft directly (ie. If your business doesn’t use a local WSUS server), hide the updates on your workstations
 - c. If you have computers that already have had these updates installed, uninstall them (go to Control Panel – Programs and Features, select “View Installed Updates” from the left-hand pane of the window, sort it descending by installed date, then and find these updates in the list. Right-click each, and click Uninstall. Once the removals have been completed, go to Control Panel, Windows Update, and click “Check for updates now”. If these two updates are offered again, right-click each one, and click “Hide”.

- d. Warn your users that if they still see a message offering to “Reserve your copy of windows 10” for any reason on a computer in your organization, to ignore it.
5. Customers who have already upgraded an existing computer to Windows 10 through the “Get Windows 10” Applet can, within one month of their Windows 10 installation, revert back to their original operating system. See the link in the “Additional Resources” section below for details.

Additional Resources

Privacy considerations of Windows 10:

<http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20150807-windows-10-is-not-really-free-you-are-paying-for-it-with-your-privacy>

Windows Compatibility Center:

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-ca/windows/compatibility/compatcenter/home>

Instructions to revert from Windows 10 to your previous operating system (assumes you used the “Get Windows 10” Applet):

<http://www.pcadvisor.co.uk/how-to/windows/how-downgrade-windows-10-to-windows-7-8-3615606/>

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This document reflects the general Life Cycle recommendations of the author alone, not Microsoft, and is not intended in any way to reflect negatively on the merits of Windows 10. The author has not reviewed or tested Windows 10 at time of writing. It is intended strictly for information purposes; to assist our customers in making educated choices that are based on their specific circumstances. Users are encouraged to do their own research and seek information from multiple sources during that research.

This information is provided on the express understanding that the reader assumes any and all responsibilities for actions they take on their computer system(s).

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