

Upgrading your business to Windows 10

A comprehensive guide from the Microsoft experts at Softchoice

Introduction

Windows 10, the newest version of Microsoft's operating system, has proven to be its best yet. After only six months the operating system has been adopted by more than 200 million users, including 22 million businesses and education customers. That's a faster uptake than any operating system in the history of Microsoft.

In the fall of 2015, Softchoice developed an earlier edition of this guide entitled "Should your business upgrade to Windows 10?" It is no mistake that by the spring of 2016 our guide is now titled "Upgrading your business to Windows 10". The question of whether or not to upgrade is fast becoming moot, as the operating system proves mature, easy to deploy and full of significant game-changing benefits.

When organizations like the U.S. Department of Defense commit to upgrading 4 million devices to an operating system it's more than a subtle hint of its market readiness.

So, if the question isn't whether to upgrade, then why have a guide? This edition of Softchoice's Windows 10 upgrade guide is to help you understand the advantages of the new OS, and considerations that need to be made prior to upgrading.

In the guide's first section you will find an overview of a number of reasons to upgrade: from the glossy new features attracting the everyday users; to the more advanced, important changes that affect your organization's security and productivity levels; to the future innovations you could otherwise find yourself locked out of.

Its second section focuses entirely on the most impactful changes coming to Windows 10 for businesses: licensing, software updates and patch management. Windows 10 has introduced a whole new paradigm in operating system management, one that must be looked at. It's generally good news, but important for you to know.

In the final sections we provide information on how to proceed, should you feel now is the time for your to upgrade for some or all of your users, and how we can help.

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A quick word of caution: While we strive to be as up-to-date as possible, even re-releasing our guide to be as current as possible, information from Microsoft HQ is evolving regularly. Some answers regarding licensing, etc., can change. This guide is best used to assist with planning and start conversations internally. For more assistance in weighing your options or to chart a path forward, contact a Softchoice Account Manager today for access to our expert advice and professional services.

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1 Are we there yet? Is it time to upgrade to Windows 10?

As we said, it's no longer a question of whether to upgrade to the latest Windows operating system, but more a question of when. For many businesses the time is now, because, as you'll read on, you may be impairing your organization by delaying migration. Still, key questions such as budget, requirements and time must be considered. Making the leap to a new Windows operating system is never a small decision.

To give you some direction, we've scoured through hundreds of resources to find the most crucial and exciting reasons your organization would want to upgrade. As well, we will take a close look at the advancements that have occurred since the operating systems launch in July 2015, especially its updates in late fall.

A new vision of computing and productivity

When Windows 10 launched, Microsoft called it: "A more human way to do." The global rollout was accompanied by a stylish video presenting the new ways our children will interact with the digital world—such as via ever-present touch screens. Windows 10, from Microsoft's perspective, is not just an operating system, but a new vision for how the world relates to technology.

This remains important for us to understand, since this new vision will have a positive impact on their workforce, productivity and user satisfaction.

Watch the Windows 10 intro video

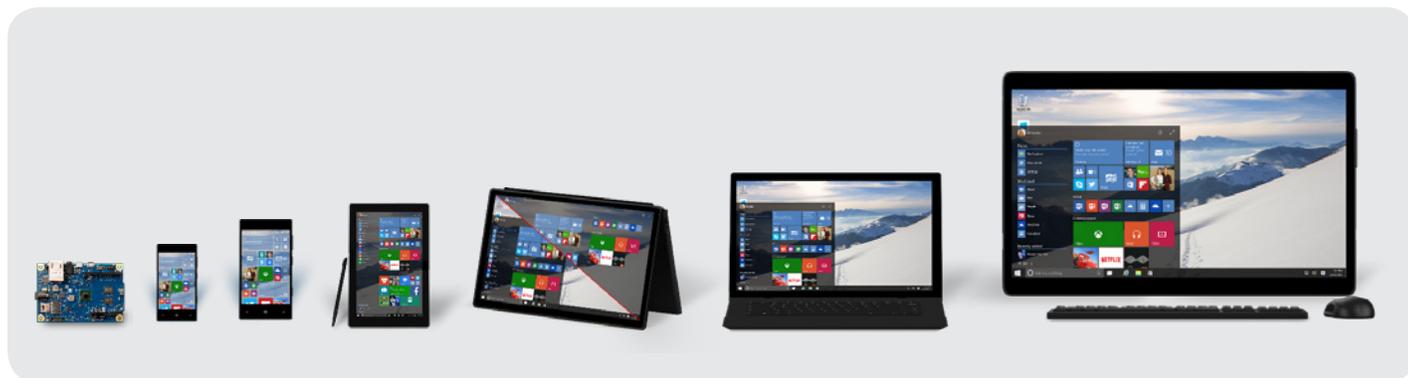


1 Are we there yet? Is it time to upgrade to Windows 10?

Familiarity: “It’s the Windows you know, only better”

Windows 10 combines the best of Windows 7 and Windows 8. As Microsoft has put it, “It’s the Windows you know, only better.” Many organizations remained on Windows 7 to avoid the frustrations of Windows 8, when the Start Menu was replaced with mobile-inspired live tiles. In Windows 10, the much-loved Start Menu makes a comeback—with some improvement. Microsoft has combined strengths of both OSes, bringing together the same list-like search function we know from the Start Menu and a simultaneous view of the touch-based, live tiles layout. These tiles are customizable and provide real-time insight into what is happening in your favorite apps.

Live tiles can be a productivity boon, so the bottom line: business users will welcome the return of the Start Menu and will likely find Windows 10 helps them get to their work faster and more intuitively than ever.



One converged experience for a mobile workforce

Windows 10 offers a truly converged, unified experience regardless of what device your users are on—desktop, laptop, tablet, smartphone or the fast emerging two-in-one (“phablet” or “tabputer”). Everything is built for touch and mouse.

All these form factors enable users to be truly mobile and create a dynamic workforce that works in whatever way is best for the situation. Applications sync between device form factors, and the user experience is optimized based on activity and device. While past versions of Windows hinted at this unified experience, all fell short in some key aspects.

This is an important consideration, since as new and improved ways to compute emerge, Windows 10 will be the platform on which they run.

For organizations implementing a BYOD (bring your own device) or the more likely CYOD (choose your own device) policy, Windows 10 offers broad hardware options across a single platform.

1 Are we there yet? Is it time to upgrade to Windows 10?

Better security and support

Windows 10 comes with the latest support and security features that other versions simply didn't have.

From a security perspective, Windows 10 benefits from the latest, up-to-date security patches and updates. This will be looked at further in the next section, but is an important reason to investigate migrating.

On the support side, Microsoft promises to cover and continually update Windows 10 until 2025. For users on ageing versions of Windows, this makes a move to Windows 10 even more attractive. Importantly, Windows 7 will be end of service in 2020. So, it could be in your best interests to switch now to an OS that will be around longer, depending on your short- and long-term objectives.

Consider as well the issue of hardware support. When Intel introduced its Skylake processor microarchitecture in August 2015, it was announced that this latest CPU would see full software support on Windows 10 (or would see reduced support if an upgrade occurred after July 2017). In late March it was announced that software support would be extended by a year. Still, a need to upgrade in order to take advantage of best-of-breed software is on the horizon.

Obviously, we can expect to see faster support and service when an issue is identified with the latest operating system than we would with an older one.

More speed, versatility and compatibility with Edge

Tying together Microsoft's new vision of computing is a new web browser, known as Edge. In it, organizations will find plenty to love, and should consider it for their users, especially those who work almost exclusively on the Web.

Edge is touted to be faster than the popular Chrome browser on a number of levels, by as much as 112%*. On top of that, it's introducing a number of new ways to engage and collaborate with content online, such as a tool that lets you sketch and doodle right on a Web page (think of using this during a screen-share, to present information on a web-page).

It's no secret that Internet Explorer has fallen out of favor with end users in recent years. With Edge, give users what they want, out of the gate. It's left to be seen if Edge will follow through with its enormous promises of being among the best browsers on the planet. If you are hoping to bring it to your users, a leap to Windows 10 is in order.

1 Are we there yet? Is it time to upgrade to Windows 10?

November 2015 updates

Already there have been numerous significant updates to Windows 10, most coming a mere four months after its launch, but many of which are important for business users, such as:

- Seamless, secured roaming of users across Windows 10 devices using Azure Cloud.
- The ability to utilize Microsoft Passport for domain accounts on the corporate network.
- The ability to create a private corporate store to manage and distribute apps in the organization.
- Greater ability to manage deployments to groups in your enterprise and to align updates (more on this in section 2)
- The ability for enterprises to turn off telemetry.
- Support for Windows 10 home for most MDM settings.



Enhancements to Azure AD Join	Enhancements to Microsoft Passport	Windows Store for Business	Windows Update for Business	MDM support for BYOD	Enhancements to Telemetry Control	User Experience Enhancements
Seamless, secure roaming of users settings across Windows 10 devices, via your Azure Cloud	Utilize Microsoft Passport for your domain accounts on the corporate network. (AD/AAD Hybrid mode) Iris support (Beta)	Centrally acquire manage and distribute Windows Store apps in your organization. Create your own private store with your corporate LOB apps and curated free apps.	Manage deployment to internal groups (rings) in your enterprise for controlled rollout of Current Branch for Business (CBB) updates. Manage updates to align with your business rhythm (maintenance 'no-update' windows.	MDM support for Windows 10 Home for most MDM settings.	GP/MDM Controls enabling enterprise to fully turn telemetry off.	Enhancements to Cortana, Edge, Continuum, Support for Continuum for Phone on selected Phone devices.

1 Are we there yet? Is it time to upgrade to Windows 10?

Best-of-breed hardware

Already manufacturers have launched excellent 2 in 1 devices that take full advantage of Windows 10 features, in particular its converged experience. **Here is a comparison:**



Model	Dell Latitude 7275	Lenovo Miix 700
OS	Windows 10 Pro	Windows 10 Pro
Display	12.5" FHD Touch - 1920x1080	12.0" FHD IPS - 2160x1440
Processor Options	6th Gen Intel Core m5-6Y57 Dual Core, 1.1GHz, 4MB cache 6th Gen Intel Core m7-6Y75 Dual Core, 1.2GHz, 4MB cache	6th Gen Intel Core M3 6Y30, 900 MHz Dual Core, 4MB cache 6th Gen Intel Core M5 6Y54, 1.1 GHz Dual Core, 4MB cache 6th Gen Intel Core M7 6Y75, 1.2 GHz Dual Core, 4MB Cache
Memory	4-8GB DDR3 SDRAM	4-8GB LPDDR3 SDRAM
Storage	128GB M2 2280 SATA3 256GB M2 2280 PCIe 256GB M2 2280 SATA3 Intel 180GB M2 2280 SATA3 512GB M2 2280 PCIe	64GB SATA III 128GB SSD SATA III 256GB SSD SATA III
Battery Life	Up to 10 hours	Up to 9 hours
V-Pro	Option	No
Cellular	SIM Card Slot option	No
Camera	8 Megapixel (back), 5 Megapixel (front)	5 Megapixel w/Flash (back), 5 Megapixel (front)
Ports	2 x USB 3.1 Type C (Thunderbolt), SD 4.0 Memory Card Reader	1x USB 3.0 (doubles as Power Charge), 1x USB 2.0, Micro HDMI, microSD, 1/8 Audio Combo
Keyboard	Included (option of Slim or Premier)	Included
Pen	Option	Included
Dock	"Dell Dock (130W) or Dell Thunderbolt Dock (180W)"	USB dock with 3x USB 3.0 (1 always on), 2x USB 2.0, DVI, DisplayPort, Ethernet, Combo Audio jack, Kensington lockable
Weight	1.61lbs (730 g)	1.7 lbs (780 g)
Starting MSRP CAN	\$1,999.00	\$1,079.00
Starting MSRP US	\$979.00	\$799.00
Warranty	1yr	1yr

1 Are we there yet? Is it time to upgrade to Windows 10?

Best-of-breed hardware (cont.)

Already manufacturers have launched excellent 2 in 1 devices that take full advantage of Windows 10 features, in particular its converged experience. **Here is a comparison:**

		
Model	HP Elite x2 1012	Microsoft Surface Pro 4
OS	Windows 10 Pro	Windows 10 Pro
Display	12.0" LED-backlit BV UWVA eDP 1.3 - 1920 x 1280	12.3" Touch - 2736 x 1824
Processor Options	6th Gen Intel Core M5-6Y54, 1.1 GHz Dual Core, 4MB Cache	6th Gen Intel Core M3, 900 MHz 6th Gen Intel Core i5 6300U, 2.4 GHz 6th Gen Intel Core i7 6650U, 2.2 GHz
Memory	4-8GB DDR3 SDRAM	4-16GB DDR3 SDRAM
Storage	128GB M2 TLC SSD SATA III 256GB M2 TLC SSD SATA III	128 GB SSD 256 GB SSD 512 GB SSD 1 TB SSD
Battery Life	Up to 10.25 hours	Up to 9 hours
V-Pro	Select Models	No
Cellular	Select Models	No
Camera	5 Megapixel (back), 2 Megapixel (front)	8 Megapixel with 1080p HD Video (back), 5 Megapixel (front)
Ports	1x USB-C/Thunderbolt 3, 1x USB 3.0, 1/8 Audio Combo, Dock	1x USB 3.0, Mini DisplayPort, 1/8 Audio Combo, Dock, SurfaceConnect
Keyboard	Included Travel Keyboard on select models	Optional Surface Pro Type Cover (backlit)
Pen	Included	Included
Dock	USB dock with 2x USB 3.0, 1x USB 2.0, HDMI, VGA, Ethernet	Surface Connect 4 x SuperSpeed USB 3.0, 1 x Ethernet, 2 x Mini DisplayPort , 1 x Combo Audio jack
Weight	1.85 (840 g)	"i5/i7: 1.73 lbs (786g), m3: 1.69 lbs (766g)"
Starting MSRP CAN	\$1,179.00	\$1,179.00
Starting MSRP US	\$899.00	\$899.00
Warranty	1yr	1yr

1 Are we there yet? Is it time to upgrade to Windows 10?

Other great Windows 10 features:

- **Faster boot up and performance:** Windows 10 starts up and resumes faster, making the most out of your hardware, and making users happier too.
- **Built-in security:** Protects against viruses, phishing, malware, and spyware. Regular updates protect you from the latest threats. Its built-in security is designed to work with the software and hardware you already have.
- **Windows Hello:** No more passwords – the option to log in with facial recognition or fingerprint instead.
- **Cortana:** The intelligent assistant comes to Windows, helping users execute tasks such as take notes and set reminders using their voice.
- **Gestures, voice and pen:** Users will be able to use gestures, such as waving their hand, to activate specific applications and accomplish small tasks. Similarly, the OS works nicely with additional input such as pens and voice.



Enterprise licensing and software updates and patch management

This section covers two significant changes to Microsoft's Windows 10: how much it costs, and how it handles software updates. From an IT perspective, these changes are significant and you will need to re-adjust a few things, from budgeting to how you think about Windows licensing as a whole.

But isn't Windows 10 upgrading free?

By now, you would be right to assume that upgrading to Windows 10 is free. Microsoft has indeed made the upgrade to free of charge for consumers. And they will be able to download it anytime and upgrade without paying a cent until July 29, 2016.

But this isn't the case for most organizations. In the enterprise setting, the free upgrade is only applicable to Windows Pro users. Most large scale businesses are running the Enterprise version of Windows and that is not covered by the free upgrade offer. The price you end up paying will depend largely on the licensing and contract decisions you make alongside your Microsoft partner, such as Softchoice.

As you will see below, though, free upgrades will be available to any organization with Enterprise plus Software Assurance (SA).

Licensing Details for Windows 10

Two Editions – Both available "Per Device" or "Per User"

Win 10 Pro

- Free upgrade offer until July 29th 2016 from existing Win 7 or 8/8.1 Pro
- OEM, retail or volume licensing upgrade
- SA is NOT available

Win 10 Enterprise

- NOT a free upgrade unless customer has active SA
- SA is optional, but suggested
- SA includes MDOP
- Volume licensing upgrade only



Key Enterprise Licensing Options:

Windows 10 Pro	Small, lower mid-size businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Management of devices and apps• Support for remote and mobile scenarios• Cloud technologies for organizations• Update quality confidence with broad market validation	OEM Retail/ESD VL Free Upgrade
Windows 10 Enterprise	Mid-size and large enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advanced security• Extensive device and app management• Full flexibility of OS deployment & update control• Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack (MDOP)	VL

Windows-as-a-Service, software updates and the “End of Service Packs”

Microsoft has also completely changed the way it delivers software updates with Windows 10. Security patches have continued to come regularly—in fact, slightly more frequently. Instead of waiting years for new features and fixes to be bundled into massive “Service Packs,” Microsoft will release these regularly, and more responsively, in an approach they’ve dubbed “Windows-as-a-Service.”

It’s worth noting that Microsoft is relying heavily on the feedback from millions of volunteers called Windows Insiders, all vocal and enthusiastic beta testers throughout the ramp to Windows 10. Their direction will ensure problems and features are delivered faster and more efficiently than previously possible.

For most, this approach is good news. It ensures Microsoft can fix its errors with the operating system faster. Still, it can potentially spell trouble for larger businesses that require longer test-and-dev times of new releases to ensure application compatibility. If you’re one, what are you to do?

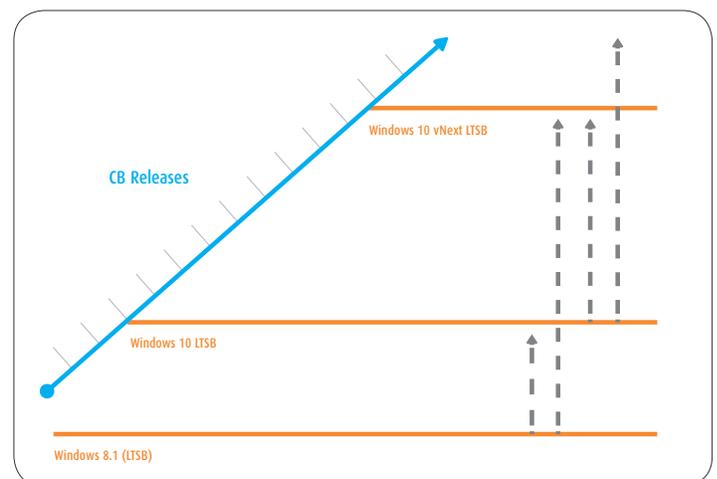
Frequency of Updates – On Autopilot or Manual

Microsoft still needed to address the concerns of larger organizations that are slower to adopt updates, due to stability issues. As mentioned before, updates can be aligned with the rhythm of how your organization needs to deploy them.

There are three distinct paths you can select for receiving updates:

- 1. Automatic:** As with consumer versions, all updates come immediately, without any input from IT or user.
- 2. Short term, “Current Branch Release”:** This gives you the ability to delay updates for up to eight months in most cases, letting the early adopters work out the kinks before accepting your update.
- 3. Long Branch:** Delay indefinitely until your organization is prepared to upgrade. You will need to purchase Software Assurance to get this ability.

The diagram illustrates how this plays out for organizations. >>



[Chart Source](#)

3 Deployment services and advice

The time certainly may be right for a Windows 10 upgrade but, as presented in the previous section, understanding your options is crucial. Picking the wrong licensing and implementation path has already proven costly for many organizations that didn't have proper insight and methodology.

Fortunately our experts have a few important insights to share:

How to determine Windows 10 readiness

Understanding if your environment is ready, and highlighting where your requirements fall short, is the first step in making sure your deployment goes smoothly. Microsoft offers an essential planning asset to get this process started, called the Microsoft Assessment and Planning Toolkit or MAPS. The latest version MAP Toolkit 9.2 is designed for the Win 8.1 environment but can serve as a good starting point in your IT infrastructure assessment in the Windows 10 migration.

This toolkit makes it easy to assess your current IT infrastructure for a variety of technology migration projects. This Solution Accelerator provides a powerful inventory, assessment, and reporting tool to simplify the migration planning process.

After MAPS, your next task is designing and completing a Proof of Concept. With Windows 10, this has become easier with an option to do an "in-place upgrade," a far less disruptive tactic in imaging your new OS environment. At this stage you'll want to focus on application and Internet Explorer 11 compatibility, to ensure your existing business line applications and workflows can function unimpeded.

Microsoft is promising an exceptionally high rate of application compatibility, making this process relatively painless

2 Steps to Windows 10 readiness

1. Run the Microsoft Assessment Planning Toolkit
2. Complete a Proof of Concept, ensuring application compatibility



3 Deployment services and advice

Deployment Options

Above we mentioned how easy in-place upgrades are with Windows 10. But this is not the only path at your disposal. Deciding which way to go will have different implications for your timelines, and planning, so take careful consideration at this stage.

Below are the options for deploying Windows 10, with details on which tools will be required for each one.

Wipe and Load (traditional process)	In-place Upgrade*	Provisioning (Configure new devices)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capture data and settings• Deploy Windows 10 image• Inject Drivers• Install apps• Restore data and settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preserve all data, settings, apps, drivers• Install Windows 10 image• Restore Everything	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply a Provisioning Package to transform an out of box Windows 10 device into an Enterprise device• Remove extra items, add organizational apps, adjust configuration• Provisioning is NOT re-imaging, but rather applying Provisioning package to adjust Windows 10 as necessary
Tools		
SCCM, MDT, WDS, and third party imaging tools	SCCM, MDT, WDS, third party imaging tools, Windows Update	Windows Imaging and Configuration Designer (WICD)

* Recommended for existing Windows 7, 8, 8.1 devices

4 What's next?

This guide only scratches the surface of the questions you should answer before deciding on Windows 10 upgrade. As a top Microsoft partner in North America, Softchoice has expertise in:

- **Microsoft enterprise licensing**
- **Data-driven assessments for objective understanding of usage and needs**
- **End-to-end deployment services, including rolling out new devices**

Windows 10 Accelerator

The Softchoice Windows 10 Accelerator is designed to provide a foundational base to grow from and delivers team knowledge transfer to adopt new methods for managing through the upgrade and provisioning approach. The result is a Windows 10 solution foundation with built-in best practices resulting in a faster and simpler upgrade process.

We can help to fast track your evaluation and adoption of this feature-rich technology. Softchoice completed over 5000 projects throughout North America helping customers discover, plan, deploy, adopt and operate solutions. Using similar delivery best practices, the Windows 10 Accelerator improves returns and lowers risk through effective planning to align technology with desired business outcomes.

Contact your Softchoice Account Manager today to understand the best path forward and how to accelerate your organization's journey to Windows 10.

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