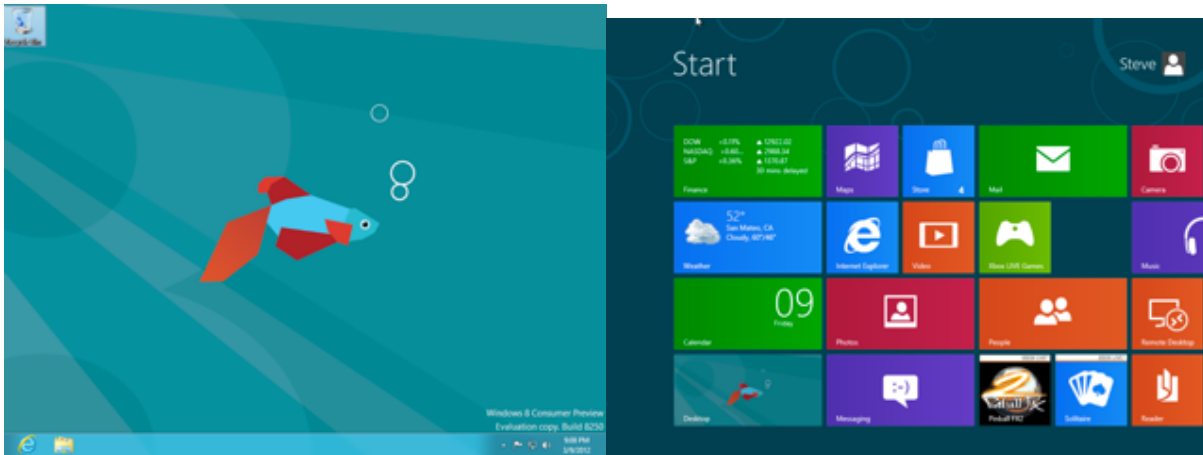


From: Steve Gimnicher <steve@gimnicher.com>
Subject: Communication from your Computer Guy: Current Status of Microsoft Windows
Date: March 11, 2012 11:06:53 AM PDT

2 Attachments, 67 KB



Recently, Microsoft released their Windows 8 Consumer Preview Evaluation Copy. Windows 8 is a Microsoft effort to bridge the divide between traditional desktop computers and tablets and other mobile devices. The user interface basically comes in two variations: the one above on the left that looks very much like an enhanced Windows 7 desktop and the one on the right (called "Metro") that looks very much like the latest Windows smartphone. The Metro interface is largely targeted for touchscreen devices although it is available for mouse and keyboard interfaces as well. Microsoft has not announced a general release date as yet, but most people believe it will be released before the end of the year. I have installed the Consumer Preview and have been playing with it. The left interface takes a little bit of getting used to (e.g., the Start button is gone), and the right interface with a mouse and keyboard takes a lot of getting used to. It remains to be seen how Windows 8 does in the marketplace. A quick 5 minute overview of both interfaces can be seen here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxbHawhzACA>

With the fairly imminent release of the new Windows operating system, it is a good time to take stock of the status of the current supported Windows operating systems. Windows XP was first released on October 25, 2001. There have been three service packs released for it, the last one (SP3) became available on May 6, 2008. Support has ended for all XP versions except SP3, which will end on April 8, 2014. End of support means that Microsoft will no longer ship updates and bug fixes and software vendors will likely no longer support that version of the operating system.

Windows Vista was first released on November 30, 2006. Vista SP1 came on out February 4, 2008, and Vista SP2 on May 26, 2009. Windows Vista support will end on April 11, 2017.

Windows 7 was first released on October 22, 2009. There has been one service pack (SP1) and it was released on February 22, 2011. Windows 7 support will end on January 14, 2020.

In my experience, Windows XP SP3, Windows Vista SP2, and Windows 7 SP1 are fairly stable operating system platforms. Windows Vista for sure has been the most problematic and the slowest. Windows 7, being the most recent operating system, supports and exploits the latest hardware and has the broadest vendor support. If you purchase a new computer, it will have some variation of Windows 7 on it.

So, how does all of this affect you? Well, first of all in terms of your current system, you should make sure you have the latest service pack installed. You can determine this by left-clicking the Start button and then right-clicking "My Computer" or "Computer" (depending on which version of Windows you have) and then left-clicking "Properties". On the resulting screen you will see a heading called "System" followed by the details of the version of operating system you are running. If you don't have Service Pack 3 for Windows XP, Service Pack 2 for Vista, or Service Pack 1 for Windows 7, then contact me to discuss your options.

If you are running Windows 7, then you have a fairly new computer and likely are in good shape.

If you are running Windows Vista or Windows XP and are thinking it is time to get something newer and faster, then you have several options:

1) You could purchase a new Windows computer (I recommend with Windows 7 Home or Professional 64 bit) and migrate your current data and settings from your old computer to your new computer. Any applications you have purchased or downloaded will need to be

reinstalled on the new computer (i.e., they cannot be migrated). In some cases you can upgrade from Vista to Windows 7 without having to do a clean install, depending on what version of Vista you have. Updating and configuring a new computer and migrating data all typically takes 3 to 4 hours and is one of the services I provide. If you want to attempt it yourself, be certain that all your data is first backed up to some external device.

2) You could purchase a Mac. Most of your data will migrate, but your applications and potentially older peripherals will not. If you have any Windows applications that are not available on the Mac or don't have all the features you require on the Mac (e.g., most Quicken or Quickbooks products), then you could migrate your entire Windows environment to the Mac using a product called VMWare Fusion for the Mac. I have this configuration on my personal computer and it works very well, but it takes many hours to set up properly. Again, contact me if you are interested in discussing this option.

3) You could purchase an iPad. This option is applicable if all you do on your computer is Internet browsing, email, listening to music, viewing videos, viewing photos, or playing certain games. In addition, you can take and edit photos as well. If you create or manipulate long documents or run specialty applications (again, like Quicken), then the iPad cannot completely replace your current computer.

As always, I hope you have found this information useful. If you do not wish to receive these emails in the future, let me know. This newsletter, as well as all past newsletters, can be found on my web site (www.gimnicher.com/steve).

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