Windows 8

Next week, Microsoft will begin shipping the latest version of its Windows operating systems: Windows 8. Windows 8 is a bold move for Microsoft in that it is an overhauled system with a radically different user interface. It is intended to be a "one size fits all" operating system capable of running on everything from older, mouse-driven PCs to brand new, touch-controlled tablets. I expect that there will be much to love and much to hate about this new system.

If you ask me whether you should immediately upgrade your existing computers to Windows 8, my answer is a resounding NO. This is the same answer I would always give for upgrading to a brand new operating system. I say this for the following reasons:

- A new operating system as a huge engineering effort. Unless you want to be on the "bleeding edge", you should give the operating system time to mature and time for the vendor to get at least the first round of bugs fixed. The very earliest you should even consider upgrading is after the first service pack is released.
- Your existing external devices might not work. Again, time is needed for the vendors to verify or modify their device drivers to work on Windows 8.
- Your existing applications might not work. Again, time is needed for the application developers to make their applications work well on Windows 8.
- With Windows 8 especially, you may find the learning curve to be very steep, even for performing the most basic operations. Here is a humorous video of someone trying to use Windows 8 for the first time: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4boTbv9_nU

Just as was the case with the introduction of Windows 7, I expect that computer manufacturers in the near term will give buyers an option to purchase a new computer with Windows 7 instead of Windows 8. But, as soon as Windows 8 matures, this option will no longer be offered. If you are ready for a new computer, then that would be the time to consider Windows 8 (as opposed to upgrading your existing computer). By purchasing Windows 8 with a new computer, you will have the time to learn it at your leisure, while still having the safety of your current computer with its current operating system.

If you want to see Windows 8 in action, see http://reviews.cnet.com/windows-8-review/ (Note: in this video, a touch screen monitor is used, but it will work the same with a mouse).

If you want to learn a lot more about Windows 8, here is a great article: http://www.techradar.com/us/reviews/pc-mac/software/operating-systems/windows-8-1093002/review

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 (http://steve.gimnicher.com).