



Ready or Not, here comes Windows 8

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Ready or Not, here comes *Windows 8*

Even though it is hard to picture how Microsoft could top Windows 7, here comes **Windows 8**. This has major ramifications for you, especially if you have an older computer.

- **Is Windows 8 the Next Vista?**
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About Windows 8: Microsoft has announced the release of their new operating system, Windows 8, with a general availability date of **October 26**. This means that you can expect Windows 8-equipped computers to start showing up in retail stores about that time, and shortly thereafter you won't be able to find any more Windows 7 machines.

I have installed Windows 8 on one of my computers and have been experimenting with it, and here is my prediction:

I believe that Windows 8 is going to be disastrous for Microsoft's business as well as for the major computer manufacturers.

I also believe that its market acceptance will be worse than Windows Vista, if that is possible.

After the Vista debacle in 2007-2009, Windows 7 was (and still is) a major turnaround. It is extremely solid and reliable, and superior in function and performance to Windows XP. For the last year or so, Microsoft has been talking about Windows 8, when they were sitting on the best operating system they had ever come out with. Why replace that? Is it only because they need the revenue? I've been dreading Windows 8 because I didn't see how they could go

anywhere but downhill. Windows 8 is worse than my worst fears.

Why It Is So Bad: Microsoft has a lofty goal of unifying the operating systems between a PC, a tablet and a smartphone. More on this in future installments, but the immediate result is that Windows 8 is dramatically different from Windows 7 and Windows XP, their two long term success stories. It is the **least intuitive** operating system I have ever seen, and as a result, it is highly unlikely that you will be able to just sit down and figure it out.

Starting with Windows 95, Windows has always had a Start button – the place to go when you want to run a program. It has been that way for 17 years. Well, guess what? Windows 8 has no Start button, so figuring out how to run programs that you don't run all the time is a real challenge. And, most programs do not have a red X in the upper right corner where you can bail out if you want to. Frankly, with some programs I still haven't figured out how to close them.

Where's My File? Microsoft seems to be on a mission to blur the line between what is on your computer and what is somewhere on the Internet (the "Cloud") (but so is Apple and everyone else). We may be headed in that direction but I am not sure that the average user is quite ready for this "I don't care where it is as long as I can access it" approach to computing. Cloud based file storage has its advantages but you will need to understand the pitfalls as well.

What I'll Be Recommending: I am going to recommend that you try to replace any older Windows XP machines that you have before Windows 8 takes over the stores.

By November 15th, you likely will not be able to find any more Windows 7 computers in the stores. So, if you want a new computer but want to avoid Windows 8 (and you will), you will have to hope that you can special-order a computer from Dell et.al. with Windows 8 downgraded to Windows 7 at the factory, just as they did when Windows 7 came out and people still needed XP. Buying a Windows 8 computer hoping to downgrade it yourself (or have SimpliTek do it for you) is not likely to be feasible, or if feasible, very labor intensive and expensive.

Microsoft will try to sell the Windows 8 pig-in-a-poke for at least a year, probably 2, before giving up and replacing it with something better. So, however old your Windows XP computers are, add 2 years to that before you will be able to replace them with a decent operating system. For a lot of computers that is going to be too late.

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In Part 2, I'll try to explain why Windows 8 is designed the way it is. I think you will agree that its design priorities could not have been more skewed.

Buy a Windows 7 computer while you still can.
Or plan on buying a Mac.

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