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Playing with Windows10

Many of my loyal readers have questioned me about the upcoming release of Windows 10, the replacement for the somewhat-deservedly maligned Windows 8. As you may recall, my initial take on the early beta versions of Windows 8 were full of positives... until Microsoft removed the traditional Desktop screen and all the menus. I then lambasted Microsoft along with, well, pretty much everyone who tried to use Windows 8 on a Desktop or Laptop computer. The free update to Windows 8.1 fixed many sins, but by then it was too late (see sidebar).

In the interest of doing some research, I decided to get a preview copy of Windows10 and test it. You know, see if Microsoft has redeemed itself. If you are not interested in Windows 10, I'll give you the short take, and send you off on your way to something more interesting: Windows 10 will be worth the effort, Microsoft has restored the Desktop and Menus. There, now go do something fun. Everyone else, read on...

Happy News, the Desktop is fully restored! **More Happy News**, the good 'ol Menus are back! **Even Better News**, the old menus have been improved, and now make more sense.

Upon my first glance, Windows 10 looks like Windows 8, but the comfort of the familiar Desktop screen caused great rejoicing. The Start menu is back in place with a twist: it shows the menus for traditional software, but also shows an expanded box with the newer "Apps" menus. Kind of like having your cake and eating it too. I like it – you have the option to do either if you are on a traditional old-school desktop or laptop computer with a mouse and keyboard.

If you have a mobile device, or a touch-screen enabled computer, you will get a different look: the touch-based Start Screen will appear instead of the desktop. This little bit of magic is based in code that detects which type of computer you are using and adjusts the initial screen to match. Nice Touch. (ha ha, get it?)

Under the Start Menu, you will see a much-improved organization of options. For example, in prior versions the Control Panel, Printers, and Devices were somewhat separated. To me, these are all related and should be under one menu. Windows 7 and 8 sort of fixed it, but still had the old "Control Panel" concept. That's all fixed in Windows 10: everything about making changes to the computer is grouped under a single "Settings" menu. The submenus under that are logically grouped as well: "Printers", "Devices", "Personalizations" etc. Finally, one place to go to make changes! There are many more improvements, but too early to detail those yet. Windows 10 is slated to be released sometime in August 2015, so we will have to wait till then.

-John Becker

The Windows 8 Disaster

The most telling clue of the magnitude of the Windows 8 disaster is in the fallout from it. In the market, it was the **slowest-selling operating system, ever**. As a result, the entire upper management of Microsoft changed over within the space of a year.

Gone is none other than Bill Gates, Founder and Chairman, Steve Ballmer, CEO, Steve Sinofsky, Chief Software Architect, and most of the upper-level Windows 8 decision-makers.