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Windows 10 – Should I Upgrade

On July 29th, Microsoft released Windows 10, their newest Operating System. What made it unique was that it was not a usual rollout for Microsoft. There were no complete lines of Windows 10 computers available. In fact there was a mix of Windows 7, Windows 8 and only a few Windows 10 computers for sale at first.

What was even more remarkable was that Microsoft has made Windows 10 available to existing users of both Windows 7 and Windows 8 for free. In the past, they had sold upgrades for $100 to $200 or more with each new release. This free upgrade offer will be available for one year, until next July 29, 2016 by which time they hope that most users will have upgraded.

There has been some speculation that they want to migrate Windows onto a platform similar to Microsoft Office 365 where they encourage you to lease the software for an annual fee. This has been met with mixed results with many users still opting to purchase Office 2013 rather than go with the Office 365 model. Future pricing aside, it seems that users can upgrade to Windows 10, if they want to, for free at the moment.

We have upgraded all of our computers to Windows 10 in early August with mostly positive results. Our first upgrade to Windows 10 Pro - 32 bit edition did affect our Libra Accounting software adversely at first and it wouldn't run. After some research on the internet we found that by activating Legacy Mode we were able to resolve this problem and now Libra operates without problems and if anything appears to be a little faster.

Another experience that I had with my own computer was that the DVD drive seemed to disappear from Windows Explorer and I was no longer able to use it. By updating all of my drivers a little while later this reappeared and has functioned normally ever since.

There is definitely some potential for problems to occur with various hardware and software combinations. As always, it would be wise for users to check with the manufacturer of their software to determine whether or not the upgrade may affect normal operations.

That being said Microsoft does provide a recovery option that allows users to revert to their previous Windows version for a period of 30 days after the upgrade is applied. Beyond that you would need to do a full reinstallation of your old Windows version.

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So Windows 10 is free for many users, has some nice improvements and will bring you up to date technologically. Whether you do upgrade depends a lot on your relative aversion to risk and your willingness to invest some time and possibly some money in getting everything working again after the upgrade.

The way in which Microsoft is promoting Windows 10, via the normal Windows update routine, makes it very easy for users to start the upgrade accidentally. In this case a user who tries to abort the in process upgrade can cause serious problems with their computer.

We have had one user upgrade to Windows 10 only to find his computer would not start properly afterwards. The only option at this point was a software reset which fixed Windows 10 but effectively deleted all of his other software. Once we reinstalled Microsoft Office and the like, all was ok once again.

For this reason, we suggest that clients wanting to upgrade do so on one trial computer initially and then if all goes well, initiate a supervised conversion of the remaining computers at a later time.

Some factors that may play into your decision to upgrade would include:

Unlike Windows XP & Vista, Microsoft has announced that it will extend support for Windows 7 until 2020 so there is no great rush to upgrade from those versions.

The interface is a little different and will take some getting used to but it is basically an amalgam of Windows 7 and Windows 8 and hence presents less of a culture shock than Windows 8 which was really more of an operating system for tablets and touch enabled devices. A Windows 10 upgrade on a desktop will look a lot like Windows 7 with a few operational differences.

For Libra Accounting System users there are different issues in play. If you currently use Windows 7 or Windows 8 – 32 bit edition then it will work natively under Windows 10 – 32 bit edition after the upgrade.

For 64 bit editions support for Windows XP Mode has been discontinued in Windows 10 so you will need to use an alternative such as the free Oracle Virtual Box or VM-Ware. Users with the Windows System Manager will operate normally under Windows 10.