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Closing the chapter on Windows 10 and upgrading to Windows 11

Once upon a time, Microsoft promised that Windows 10 would be 'the last version of Windows' but alas, it was not to be. October 14, 2025 marks the end of Windows 10 support, meaning there will be no more security updates or features.



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The next chapter: Windows 11

Let's look at its successor; Windows 11 has been available since 2021, and while the changes are not dramatic, there are several improvements:

Security enhancements



- Requirements for secure boot and a Trusted Platform Module 2.0 harden Windows against malware threats taking control of devices before they start
- Greater support and manageability of passkeys and other password-less authentication methods
- Various attack surface reductions enabled by default

Performance



- More efficient energy use means a longer runtime between charges for mobile workers
- Enhanced performance, particularly for web browsers (not just Edge).
- Quicker & more efficient updates, since they're typically 40% smaller than Windows 10 equivalents

Productivity and usability



- Built-in AI-powered features including summarise lengthy content, critique your writing, generating content and providing assistance. CoPilot is the most well-known, but did you know there are AI features in and coming to Photos, Paint and even Notepad?

- Focus Sessions provide a simple way to minimise distractions for a set period of time

- Virtual Desktops allow you to organise your running apps according to task or role, to make it easier to multi-task

- Better touch and gesture control for touch-screen devices

Plot twist

Every story has one, but your transition to Windows 11 plot twist will depend on your environment and circumstances.

Firstly, the new operating system comes with stricter hardware requirements than Windows 10 and, while fundamental to improving security, it means that organisations should assess their current hardware for compatibility, and budget for hardware replacement where needed.

Whilst Microsoft reports 99.7% of apps for Windows 10 are compatible, you should do your own testing with a focus on line-of-business applications, and any specialist equipment such as meeting rooms. If there are systems that have been neglected, they may need an update or upgrade, which can take time.

Take this opportunity to review your existing management tools and servicing strategies. For example, the Microsoft Deployment Toolkit commonly used by small to medium business to build Windows devices, will not support Windows 11. And for those that maintain a traditional Active Directory-based management model, is it time to embrace modern management?

Last but certainly not least, you'll want to ensure both your end users and support teams are prepared for the update. Depending on your deployment strategy the changes may not be dramatic, but there'll be less friction if the time requirements are well managed, and it is clear what to expect.

A Windows 10 epilogue?

If you need more time to transition away from Windows 10, all is not lost. Microsoft has announced that Extended Support Updates will be available for purchase for up to three years. These have a base cost of $61 per device, doubling each year, though other options and scenarios are available.

Alternatively, those with specialist devices may be using the Windows Enterprise Long Term Service Channel. Providing you're on the latest version, you've got until January 12 2027 before you're forced to upgrade. Be aware though that there is no Extended Support Update option for the LTSC, this really is the end.

While there are valid business reasons for using ESUs to maximise your hardware investment, spread the cost of replacement hardware, or buy time for a complex application upgrade or rollout plan, be mindful of the temptation to delay. Inaction could end up costing you more in the long run.

Write your own Windows 11 story

If you haven't yet explored modern management of your endpoint estate, your Windows 11 upgrade is the opportunity to do so, offering new deployment options, greater flexibility and greater security than the traditional Active Directory model... more on that in our sequel.

The end is nigh for Windows 10. It can take time to plan and refresh your endpoints, so if you haven't already started the time is now.

If you need a hand navigating your endpoint happily ever after, get in touch at ModernWork@waterstons.com.