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How Does Windows Work?
(and Android, and Linux, and MacOS)

Windows, Android, and the similar software packages of modern computers, tablets and phones basically have two layers – the user interface and the operating system.

The operating system

The operating system manages how the software interacts with the device itself, such as the display screen, the keyboard, the wi-fi modem and the mechanics of moving data between memory and storage. For example, your computer has no idea what to do with a keyboard until the operating system loads enough software to enable that interaction to take place. That happens every time you turn the computer on.

When the system starts, several programs (called device drivers) are loaded which enable use the keyboard, display screen, disk drives, sound cards, and for phones, all of the hardware stuff that makes the device a phone.

The operating system also provides the software support to the central processor and memory to enable the device to load the programs and the apps that you will run on your device. The operating system also provides the environment where your apps and programs will run. Most of the operating system is behind-the-scenes, but it is, by far, the biggest part of what makes the device work.

The User Interface

The user interface, or GUI (graphical user interface) is a basically thin level of software that creates a visually pleasing, and easily

useable experience for the person using the device. While the user interface is actually a very small part of its functionality, it is often the only feature that the user will form an opinion about. The user interface is what most closely translates to ease-of-use, so it will be of significant importance to most users.

All of the major providers (Windows, Android, etc.) provide a suite of utilities (like a calculator, calendars, text editors, and many others) which will enhance the experience. At its basic level though, all of the various packages have many more similarities than they do differences. At the end of the day, it is often personal preference which is the deciding factor.

According to gs.statcounter.com, Android is on 68% of the mobile phones, Apple IOS is on 56% of the tablets, and Windows is on 62% of the desktop computers.

I have Android on my phone, and while my computers have both Windows and Linux installed on them, I personally use Linux for everything except for my tax software. I am considering a tablet, and it will likely be Android. I also have an MS-DOS clone operating system (circa 1985) installed on my laptop. That's where my preferences are, but does it make a difference? No, not really.

I have a desktop computer that I just repaired. I replaced the hard drive, and it currently has no operating system. Ahhhh, I love having choices . . .