October 14, 2025

On October 14, 2025, perhaps 250 million personal computers will potentially be rendered obsolete.

On that day, Windows 10 will no longer receive any security updates. Unlike any previous versions of Windows, which were generally more backward-compatible, its replacement (Windows 11) will only install if you have a specific type of chip installed on your computer. The newer machines have this chip, already. Some slightly older machines can be upgraded to include this chip. However, millions and millions of computer will ***NOT*** *be upgradeable to Windows 11.*

What makes this worse, the malware writers, virus writers and other bad players have already had many months of knowing that there will be lots of unprotected computers out in the world, and they still have several months to get ready to do lots of nasty stuff, when that well-announced deadline has been reached.

IT WOULD BE AN ENORMOUSLY BAD IDEA *to use Windows 10 online, after October 14, 2025. Read on, and I will try to explain some options for you.*

Why is Microsoft Doing This:

Replacing Windows 10: *Microsoft supports their software products for 10 years. That cycle is lapsing in October 2025. Other Windows products had similar cycles. Some business and educational customers will have extended support, and perhaps paid support will be available for a limited time, but for the majority of users, they need to have taken action by the deadline.*

Why Windows 11 is Restricted: *Microsoft explains that it is for data safety and security. This is a valid concern, The chip that your system must now have is called a Trusted Platform Module. Among other features, this chip has a unique security key built into the chip when it is manufactured, which eliminates the need to create and store a security key by less-secure means. A security key is component of data encryption, which keeps your data safe from bad players. It's a good thing. It really is. There is debate whether*

forcing a good thing on the Windows user base is the right thing to do, but entertaining that debate is beyond the scope of my efforts, here.

Will Microsoft Change Their Plans: *Don't count on that!!! However, they have done that in the past. Support for Windows 7 was extended when Windows 8 turned out to be hugely unpopular. Windows XP had such wide customer acceptance, compared to what came next, that it was extended for awhile. My guess, however, is that an extension just won't happen this time.*

Okay . . . What now?

Upgrade Windows: *Go to the Windows Update Screen, in the settings menu, and if your machine qualifies for the update, it will say so on that screen. If you are in a location with reliable internet, download the updates needed to get your system up-to-date, then follow the on-screen instructions to update to Windows 11. If you need help, I would be happy to do so.*

Upgrade your computer: *If Windows update says that your machine does not qualify for Windows 11, find out whether your machine can be upgraded. Some can be, and it is worth looking into it.*

Replace your computer: *If your computer is not upgradeable, it is likely an older machine. You might consider purchasing a more recent model. In addition to it having Windows 11 installed, it may be faster, have more memory, a nicer display, and a warranty. If you aren't looking for a specialty device, the price tags are often quite reasonable.*

Bid Windows Goodbye: *In the early 2000s, I did this (sort of). I bought a new laptop with Windows Vista Home Edition. I wanted to put my own background picture on my home screen, and a popup message appeared, saying that I needed needed to purchase a software upgrade in order to do that. Well . . . no. I installed linux on that machine, and I still use linux. My current machines run both Windows 10 and linux, and I can choose which one when I turn the machine on. I use linux most of the time, and use Windows mostly just to stay current with it, so I can help others. My tax preparation*

software is not available for linux, but that is my only real need for Windows, these days.

There are three major alternatives to Windows: Apple, Linux, and Chrome. All three are good choices, all with their own advantages and disadvantages. The Apple software is kept quite proprietary, and while a good choice, tends to be a bit more expensive.

The folks at Google, the parent organization behind Android and Chrome, developed Chrome with data safety and ease-of-use in mind. Programs run in what is called a shell, which insulates the running program from the operating system. This makes the computer much more insulated from malware. Chrome (and Android) only permit software downloads from their own Play Store, and Google screens the software that is available there. It's not quite a perfect system, but as I see it, it's pretty darn good. Chromebooks are designed to be user-friendly, and loads of school districts make these machines available to their students. Google provides software tools and support to the teachers.

But alas . . . Google's shine has a flip side. They collect an unbelievable amount of data from their users, and are the backbone of a massive, multi-national advertising infrastructure.

Chromebooks tend to be on the inexpensive side, and their computers are geared for the casual, everyday user. Not a bad choice, though.

Some time ago, linux was most appropriate for the technically inclined, and some versions of it still are. However, there are many distributions that have become quite user-friendly, and you might find that after a short time, you won't notice much difference between Windows and Linux. Some linux distributions are continually improving the user experience.

What I use is called Linux Mint. It's free. It comes with Libre Office, very similar to Windows Office, also free. It comes with the free Firefox web browser, but Google Chrome is what I use, and it's free, as is my email program. Security updates are automatic, and happen every couple of days, and sometimes more than once a day. My printer works, my internet works, all pretty much as easy as Windows

does it. There are hundreds (maybe thousands) of free programs to download.

Do I run into situations where I need some technical inclination? On rare occasion. That happens with Windows, also. I also tinker with my computers in ways that most users don't, so some of my need for technical inclination may be for reasons of my own creation.

Do you want to try linux? Do so! I have set up a test user on my laptop, and as long as I am not actively helping someone and need the laptop, you can take it for a spin. Try the word processor, the spreadsheet, the browser. See what it can do for you.

The worst option: *Using Windows 10 after support ends. There is* ***only ONE WAY*** *that this would work. If you make the decision to* ***never, ever go online*** *or to* ***never install any software*** *after October 14, 2025, then this might work. As I mentioned earlier, the people who write malware and viruses are getting ready for the day Microsoft pulls their support. They know that some will make the decision to use Windows 10, anyway.* ***DO NOT*** *be one of them!!!!*

About Windows S-Mode: *New versions of Windows now have a default feature called S-mode, which restricts software downloads to those available in the Microsoft Software Store, much like Android, Chrome and Apple. The software will be screened and perhaps safer than software from other sources. On the flip side, it's a slick revenue stream for Microsoft, as it is for Google and Apple.*

S-mode can be disabled, but once that is done, it cannot be undone. If you choose to disable S-mode, consider the decision carefully.

Personally, I will disable S-mode. I use my computers in ways that most people don't, and I know and accept the risks of tinkering with them, as I tend to do. I can usually tinker my way out of a mess that I have tinkered myself into.

Sources:
https://www.zdnet.com/article/5-ways-to-save-your-windows-10-pc-in-2025-and-most-are-free.

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