Migrating to Windows 10: a practical guide
Look before you leap – Things to consider before migrating to Windows 10
There’s a bunch of good reasons to migrate all the Windows-devices in your corporate environment to Windows 10, especially if you have not kept pace with previous upgrades to Windows 8 or even Windows 7. Microsoft is urging everyone to migrate as quickly as possible, but there’s a number of questions you need to ask yourself before you actually take the leap.

Upgrades are never easy in an enterprise context, because of all the dependencies between hardware and different applications. And software upgrades rarely offer a good Return on Investment. Upgrades take up quite some budget and quite some time, but fortunately, in the case of Windows 10, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Let’s look at a recap of the Windows 10 benefits:

- Built to deal with the modern security threads
  - More secure access for employees (2 factor authentication, use of biometrics)
  - Better protection against malware (whitelisting applications, preventing credential theft)
  - Enterprise Data Protection avoids (accidental) data leakage
  - Separate personal user data from corporate data, also in BYOD
How fast should you go?

What pace you take may depend on the Windows version you currently use. Microsoft already ended mainstream support of Windows 7 and extended support will end in January 2020. New devices with Intel’s 6th generation processor (code name Skylake) are only supported until July 2018 on Windows 7, so the sooner you migrate, the better, if only from a financial perspective. While 2020 may still seem a long way off, but many companies that needed to migrate from Windows XP to Windows 7 missed the boat although they also had ample time to make the move. So even if you are not migrating immediately, start planning to get there in time. Know that a migration may take anywhere between six and 12 months.

- Managed for bringing continuous innovation
  - Integrates perfectly with cloud solutions, like Office 365 and Azure Active Directory
  - Less administrative effort
  - Easier upgrading and patch management

- Enhanced productivity for end-users and IT staff
  - Your employees are likely to use Windows 10 already on their personal devices
  - Windows Store for Business helps distribute application
  - Leverage device innovation

- Windows 10 works perfectly on non-touch device with keyboard and mouse
- It feels natural to use on a 2-in-1 (laptop that can also be used as tablet with touch)
- For certain scenarios being able to use a pen is big advantage.
- Intel’s 6th generation (code name Skylake) and later processors offer better performance on Windows 10
What version are you on?

Moving from Windows 7 or Windows 8 towards Windows 10 is not so difficult, as a number of tools are provided to make the move as smooth as possible. However if you find yourself among the unlucky few that for whatever good reasons are still stuck on Windows XP, the journey to Windows 10 will not be without its stumbling blocks. As companies who moved from XP to Windows 7 experienced, this proved to be a significant change that involved implementing new backend infrastructure as well. If you are still on Windows XP, that delayed investment in backend infrastructure will now catch up with you. For XP users, the best option may be to perform a clean install of Windows 10, rather than invest in a migration that requires steps from XP to Vista, from Vista to Windows 7, from Windows 7 to Windows 10. That’s a lot of potential for glitches. The ideal migration starts with Windows 7 Service Pack 1 or the latest version of Windows 8.1.
A move toward a new operating system is always a good moment to consider hardware replacement. The easiest migration of all may consist in simply replacing all existing end user devices by Windows 10 gear, but that is certainly not the most cost-effective way of handling the migration. And may not really prove necessary either: hardware requirements for Windows 10 are not so different from the demands Windows 7 or 8 made on the machines:
- Processor: 1 GHz or faster
- RAM: 1 gigabyte (32-bit) or 2 GB (64-bit)
- Free hard disk space: 16 GB
- Graphics card: Microsoft DirectX 9 graphics device with WDDM driver

Besides these minimal requirements, there’s more to consider if you want to take full advantage of all features in Windows 10. Devices that are not equipped with a proper camera or a fingerprint reader will not be able to let Windows Hello log you in through facial or fingerprint recognition. So the full replacement of hardware may still be an option, especially considering shiny new machines always make the end-user happy.
How compatible are your apps?

Apart from your current hardware, one of the important checks you need to perform is for compatibility of the applications. So start compiling an application inventory of every app that is in use inside the organization. Here you need to look both at the existing so called ‘fat-client’ apps that you are using, regardless of whether you have developed these yourself or bought them off the shelf, and at the browser-based apps. Yours would not be the first company to be caught off-guard with web-applications that require a certain version of Internet Explorer to display content correctly. The new Edge browser is quite different from Internet Explorer, so a careful analysis is no luxury. When testing the apps it’s never a bad idea to involve a number of ‘power users’ in the process, as they probably know all the ins and outs of certain applications.

At the same time, their involvement builds confidence and trust with the new operating system in the user community.

Not to be neglected are so-called infrastructure applications like for instance antivirus applications. These may need to be updated too before you can start the migration.

Also noteworthy: check for updates to drivers used by network cards, wireless controllers, graphics drivers, video cards, …
Do you need to train your employees?

Windows 10 is one of those technologies that are adopted faster on the consumer-side than in an enterprise context, but even though some of your internal customers may already be familiar with the new interfaces, you still need to organize all the necessary training efforts. Anyone who has worked with older versions of Windows will quickly catch on of course, but a number of new features may be worthwhile spending some extra time on, for instance for some of the more advanced security features in Windows 10 or the Edge internet browser that succeeds the well-known Internet Explorer.
Should you wait for the next new version of Windows?

There’s good and bad news here. The bad news: you cannot wait. The good news: this is likely the last corporate operating system migration. Microsoft considers Windows 10 as its last version of the popular operating system and will offer Windows-as-a-Service in the future, bringing small updates and incremental enhancements instead of big, disruptive, upgrades.
Now that you have found the answers to the most pressing questions, it’s time for you to start planning. And ask yourself one final question: will you go on this journey alone? Or rely on an external partner to guide this process? A good start may be to attend an ‘Assessment for Deploying Windows 10’ workshop to evaluate your situation and gauge where you may need an extra couple of hands.
Are you ready for more?

Migrating to Windows 10 is inevitable, so it’s best to get ready now and stay up to speed on the latest capabilities. So go ahead and request our **Adoption Package on Windows 10** which gives you the choice between a 1-day assessment or a more comprehensive 3 to 5-day assessment.

Don’t miss this opportunity to get all the information you need on what your future workplace could look like.

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