**Windows 10: Ready or Not?**

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Many have joked that every other version of Windows is a good one—people liked XP but not Vista, 7 but not 8. Now, Microsoft has leapfrogged 9 and gone straight to 10. You probably see a pop-up asking you to upgrade every time you turn on your computer, but is it worth making the jump right away?

First, you should know that upgrading now may cause problems on campus. Metropolitan State University’s Wi-Fi network isn’t playing nice with Windows 10 yet, so early adopters will need to use StarLAN, which requires a new login every four hours, to get online. With that in mind, the official Information Technology Services (ITS) recommendation is “please wait a bit.” And remember, ITS can’t provide tech support on your personal devices.

If you’re OK with that, the changes aren’t too shocking. Windows 10 feels a lot like Windows 7, with design inspiration taken from Windows 8. The Start menu has returned to the bottom-left corner. You can resize and rearrange programs easily, without the constant pressure to go full-screen. Some good ideas are borrowed from competitors: managing multiple desktops in Task View is basically how Mission Control works on Mac, and the notification center is the same thing you see when swiping down from the top on an Android or iPhone.

Some additions are more gimmicky. Like to play video games? The Xbox integration lets you stream and record video as you play. Need a personal assistant? Cortana can be pretty helpful. Want sports scores on demand? Get live updates in your Start menu.

These gimmicks have additional implications: privacy conscious users may find the data reporting built in to Windows 10 worrying. Most of it is tied to Cortana, because she needs to talk to Bing servers in order to retrieve information like weather reports when you ask for them. More personal details like calendar appointments and names may also be recorded, allowing for convenience features; you might dictate an email, or get a reminder to leave early and beat traffic.

If the idea of a computer learning your life to anticipate your needs creeps you out, you can disable most of these options. However, it appears that no matter how many switches you flip to off, there’s no way to completely stop data collection. Technology blog Ars Technicadid a thorough sweep for every possible connection to Microsoft’s servers and found that some are simply impossible to disable. This is a concerning change from previous versions.

All that aside, Windows 10 is still a bit buggy. Some apps don’t display notifications correctly, and file search may not bring up all results. If you're an average user who doesn't need anything more complicated than a web browser and some Office programs, you're probably fine. (Expect another article when we find out if Office 2016 will be free for students.) If you're a power user with a suite of technical programs installed, like Adobe Creative Cloud or the various Autodesk programs, you might want to hold off.

On any previous Windows version, the obvious advice would be "wait for the Service Pack," the big update that fixes most problems. But Windows 10 won’t have one; it's getting upgraded a little bit at a time, forever. That's the promise of being "the last Windows." Microsoft doesn't want to deal with the problem of having hundreds of millions of users split between different versions anymore. They want Windows 10 on every computer; the question is, do you want it on yours?

Fortunately, you have plenty of time to mull it over. Windows 10 will remain free to upgrade until July 29th, 2016. With eleven months to decide, I'll be giving it a little more time to mature before upgrading my own machine.