# Microsoft tees up Windows 10 support of Progressive Web Apps

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We`ve known for a while that Microsoft intended to bring support for Progressive Web Apps (PWAs) to Windows 10 as of Redstone 4 this coming Spring. On Feb. 6, Microsoft officials provided more details about its planned next steps in this space.

microsoftpwa.jpg

Google has been the main champion of PWAs, which are basically web sites and/or apps that behave like native apps. Microsoft also has been offering developers a way to turn their websites/apps into Store apps using its "Westminster" bridge. But now Microsoft is joining forces with Google and other PWA backers.

If Microsoft`s new strategy works, PWAs may help increase the number and quality of apps located in the Microsoft Store. PWAs in the Store will be packaged as an AppX in Windows 10 and be able to run in their own sandboxed container.

Microsoft added Service Workers support in Microsoft Edge back in December 2017 for testing by Windows Insiders. Along with Fetch networking and the Push and Cache programming interfaces, Microsoft now has the technical foundation in place for PWAs on Windows 10, officials said in a blog post today. Microsoft plans to enable Service Worker, Push, and other technologies by default when EdgeHTML17 ships to stable builds of Windows 10.

At the same time, in the coming weeks, Microsoft is going to undertake some "experiments" with crawling and indexing PWAs from the web so they can be listed in the Microsoft Store. Microsoft already has been using the Bing Crawler to identify PWAs for the past year. Officials said they`ve reviewed 1.5 million potential candidates and identified a "small initial set" of PWAs, which the company will make available to Windows 10 users "over the coming weeks."

Developers also have the option of proactively submitting PWAs for inclusion in the Microsoft Store. To generate an AppX with a PWA, devs can use Microsoft`s free PWA Builder tool. By submitting manually, devs will have the option to distribute their apps in the Microsoft Stores for Business and Education, as well.

(A quick note: While Service Worker features will be enabled for the UWP platform and installed PWAs with Redstone 4, they aren`t available currently to those with already published apps in the Store.)

While some (many? most?) Microsoft watchers believe that Microsoft`s support of PWAs means the death -- or at least, the downplaying -- of the Universal Windows Platform (UWP), Microsoft officials continue to insist this is not the case.

In today`s blog post, officials said there are still cases when it may make sense for developers to still do native app development instead of going the PWA route. However, for developers who are working to maintain apps that largely are the same on multiple native platforms along with the Web, PWAs may be the way to go, company officials acknowledged. Additionally, devs who are building brand-new apps also may go with PWA because it`s a faster and more cost-effective option, Microsoft execs conceded.

It`s worth noting Microsoft`s coming Teams client app -- which still is not in the Microsoft Store -- is going to be a PWA, as Microsoft previously announced. I`d think we`ll see lots of other Microsoft apps, going forward, that will be PWAs rather than native, too.

## SZCZEGÓY

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|---|---|
| Firma/organizacja: | Nazwa: Microsoft Corp; NAICS: 334614, 511210; Nazwa: Google Inc; NAICS: 334310, 519130 |
| Tytu: | Microsoft tees up Windows 10 support of Progressive Web Apps |
| Tytu publikacji: | ICT Monitor Worldwide; Amman |
| Rok publikacji: | 2018 |
| Data publikacji: | Feb 7, 2018 |
| Wydawca: | SyndiGate Media Inc |
| Miejsce publikacji: | Amman |
| Kraj publikacji: | United States, Amman |
| Temat publikacji: | Technology: Comprehensive Works |
| Typ róda: | Wire Feeds |
| Jzyk publikacji: | English |
| Rodzaj dokumentu: | News |
| ID dokumentu w serwisie ProQuest: | 1994723504 |
| Adres URL dokumentu: | https://search.proquest.com/docview/1994723504?accountid=27375 |
| Prawa autorskie: | © 2018 Global Data Point. All Rights Reserved. Provided by SyndiGate Media Inc. (Syndigate.info). |

| Ostatnia aktualizacja: | 2018-02-07 |
|---|---|
| Baza danych: | ABI/INFORM Collection |

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