

Carl Bulger (left) presided.

PRESENTATION: by Microsoft's Steve Deming

Stephen Deming (sdeming@microsoft.com) is a Microsoft Partner Solutions Advisor who lives in the Washington area. He has spoken to us at least three times in the last ten years and been a "hit" each time. This time he came prepared to discuss three recent, or soon to be released, Microsoft Products: Windows 8, Windows Surface RT and Windows Surface Professional tablets, and Office 2013.

Windows 8 became available last September. Since the Windows 7 operating system has been so popular and successful, why did Microsoft introduce Windows 8? Two reasons: (1) Microsoft has been coming out with a new version about every three years. Windows XP was an exception, but Steve pointed out that Windows XP Service Pack 2 brought out many improvements in XP which together were the equivalent of a new version of Windows. (2) Microsoft needed an operating system for mobile applications and touch-sensitive screens to compete with Apple's I-Pad and other tablets.

In Windows 8, Microsoft has introduced increased performance, security, and tablet computing while maintaining compatibility with Vista and Windows 7 operating systems. It will work on Vista and Windows 7 computers as well as most tablet computers, but not I-Pads.

Input to Windows 8 computers and tablets can be accomplished via touch-sensitive screens or via older inputs such as a mouse, keyboard, touch pad, voice (e.g., Dragon Naturally Speaking), and gestures (Kinect). Touch Pads are now available that will sense simultaneous inputs of two fingers. Touch Screens are available that can accept simultaneous inputs from five to ten fingers.

Steve logged in to his tablet computer by swiping the screen in a prearranged pattern he had saved during Windows 8 setup. After logging in, he swept a finger from the right side of the tablet toward the center of the screen. This displays a column on the right side of five icons called "Charms" and an array of applications and functions on the remaining screen. The five charms (icons) displayed on the Charms Bar on the right side of the screen are Search, Share, Windows (Start), Devices, and Settings. Microsoft explains these well: <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-8/charms#1TC=t1>. Steve Deming pointed out that these have components common to

all Windows apps. Search, for example, will search in any Windows apps. Whether you are viewing the desktop or in an application, if you just start typing what you want to search for, it will appear in the search box and the result of the search will be displayed.

Instead of tiny icons and wordy menus, Windows 8 displays “tiles”, rectangular boxes with names of applications (apps) or functions displayed in groups. The tiles are large enough for your fingers to tap on them to select them, or to push them around on the screen, individually or in groups. Steve demonstrated how he could drag a tile from one group to another. First, he shrunk the display of tiles by straddling a group with two fingers and moving the two fingers together. The magnification was reduced enough that several groups could be seen. He then placed a finger on the tile he wanted to move, dragged it up or down out of the group and then sideways to another group and dropped it in. He could have also formed a new group by dragging several tiles individually to a new location above, below, or in-between other groups.

All apps are displayed if you sweep your finger up from the bottom. Sweeping in from the left side allows the resumption of previously opened apps. Sweeping down from the top displays application specific submenus or tools.

The corners of the display are reserved for keyboard and mouse inputs. The START button or menu is in the lower left corner. The Charms are triggered in the upper right corner. The lower right corner is unique to applications.

Recommended: <http://www.pcworld.com/article/2013138/maximize-your-first-30-minutes-with-windows-8.html>

Windows Upgrade Assistant (to see if your computer and software are compatible with Windows 8): <http://bit.ly/SdUxFo>

Microsoft Office 2013: http://www.techrepublic.com/blog/window-on-windows/microsoft-office-2013-is-now-available/7193?tag=nl.e064&s_cid=e064

Last Fall, Microsoft introduced the Surface RT, a lightweight tablet with an ARM processor, an energy efficient processor used in I-Pads, various other tablets, and smartphones. In February 2013, Microsoft is introducing a more advanced tablet, the Surface Pro. The Surface Pro has an Intel processor, shorter battery life, longer boot time, slightly more weight, the choice of a cover with an actual keyboard, and the

capability to run full-fledged apps such as Microsoft Office. The Surface Pro can accommodate two operating systems (dual boot) each in its own partition. Besides Windows 8, you could install Windows 7, or a Linux operating system.

Both Microsoft tablets have USB ports, a micro SD slot, a standard connector for an HDMI cable to connect the tablet to a TV or monitor, 10.5 in. diagonal touch screens with High Definition resolution and 16:9 aspect ratios. The screen protector also is a keyboard with tactile feedback and contains a “kick stand” support to hold the screen in an inclined position behind the keyboard when it is attached.

Windows 8 computers and tablets have increased security over Windows 7 computers. For example, their “Trusted Boot mode” prevents malware intrusions before the operating system is booted up.

Office 2013 is also coming out in February. Rather than selling it, Microsoft is going to sell subscriptions. You will be able to access it in the cloud allowing you more mobility. The Professional version of Office 2013 will allow direct insertion into Word 2013 of pictures from the internet; also PDF documents with high text to graphics ratios. Office 2013 will not be compatible with Word Perfect.

There are many reviews of the Windows 8 operating system and the Surface RT tablet on the internet and in magazines and newspapers. Reviews of the Surface Pro tablet and Office 2013 are beginning to emerge. You might want to read, watch, or listen to them before purchasing.