

Deep Thinking on Windows 8

Written by Tim Wray
Sunday, 14 October 2012 00:00

I am really personally conflicted over Microsoft Windows 8.

See, I have built an entire career around Microsoft MS-DOS and Windows. The first version I ever used was [Windows 3.1](#) . The first version I ever owned (by parental proxy in my teenage years, close enough) was [Windows 95a](#) .

I feed my children with the IBM PC Compatible. Repairing it, manipulating it, programming it, cleaning it, for about 100 users. I pay my bills with it. I have purchased a home with it. I created this very website with it. No offense Apple fans, but I have a tight place in my heart that the Mac or iPad, as well as any other tablet or new era device can touch. The PC still reigns supreme in the world, behind the scenes, on the stage, on the internet, and to, I agree, a fading extent in the home.

I do not understand the directions Microsoft seems to think necessary to head with Windows 8. The release candidate is so touch-centric, that even on a desktop, it tells you to "tap" messages instead of click them. It is totally unnatural.

I liken this to perhaps what it felt like to the few die-hard users of home computers back in the mid 1980s, when the best way to use a computer was to program your own little BASIC programs and save them on floppy diskettes or even audio cassette tapes.

Deep Thinking on Windows 8

Written by Tim Wray

Sunday, 14 October 2012 00:00

//

I would really hate to see Microsoft dump themselves down the tubes with these latest moves. I have used one individual Windows Phone 7 phone, and I found myself impressed with the fluidity. Most of the Android phones I had seen had a tendency for slowdown and sluggishness, this particular phone had the size and feel of an iPhone. Very nice.

Even with that, I am unsure of Microsoft's direction on this. I don't feel these tiles have a place on the desktop; it is just too much of a wicked change from the classic Windows model. I'm not sure how you can take something that in theory of operation has changed only a little bit since August 1995 and try to breed it with a touch-centric phone interface. It just doesn't make much sense to me.

I don't care for the iPhone, but I do like Android a bit, I like the openness and freedom of the interface. If you want to do something interesting or unorthodox with it, you can, no "jail breaking" required.

Still, there is no place for a touch interface of that caliber on the desktop version of Windows, unless perhaps a touchscreen is detected on the system. Otherwise, it should switch to a standard Windows 7-esque desktop. Unfortunately, this is not the case with Win 8. You get the

Deep Thinking on Windows 8

Written by Tim Wray

Sunday, 14 October 2012 00:00

formerly-known-as-metro tiles along with the desktop any way you go.

I have been using the release candidate sparingly on a laptop at the house. Is it usable? Yes. Thing is, I find that I try to remain in the desktop mode. Most applications I run, I hit the Windows key and enter the first few letters of in the search, just like I have done since Windows Vista. Interestingly, most things, such as the calculator and notepad, launch in their classic versions via this method. Maybe this is in place to please old-school PC users like me, who are primarily keyboard-centric vs. Mouse or (ugh) touchscreen-centric users.

I will grant one thing; this version of Windows is FAST. I have not clocked it, but it certainly starts faster on this particular early Core 2 Duo laptop (2GB RAM) than Windows 7 does, and 7 cold boots reasonably fast on it. They have most certainly improved the kernel, while at the same time unnecessarily revolutionizing the user interface.

I hope this does not start a decline of Windows. Granted, Windows is most certainly in no danger of decline, with [September 2012 usage share at 84%, Mac OSX at 6%, and all the other OS and devices \(all phones and tablets included\) making up the other 10%](#)

. I would expect MS to make concessions if there is major backlash, as there was with Windows Vista. Vista had speed flaws on a lot of hardware looking back, but it wasn't even as drastic a change as Windows 8 from its predecessor.

Other things I do like: Adding the ribbon to the file manager is a slick move. The squared off

Deep Thinking on Windows 8

Written by Tim Wray

Sunday, 14 October 2012 00:00

corners of the windows themselves make me think back to the earlier days. It looks clean without the edge "borders" like in Win3.x and the Win95 family. The USB sound effects are less jarring. Internet Explorer (which I am really not a fan of in general) is rather responsive even on aging (5 year old) hardware like I am testing on.

Windows 8 will be officially released on October 26th, 2012, 10 days from this writing. It will be interesting to see the adoption rate across the planet.