

Ballmer says 'Windows Era' everlasting

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Microsoft chief Steve Ballmer, pictured in May 2011, proclaimed an everlasting "Windows Era" as the software giant's board easily won re-election at an annual meeting of shareholders on Tuesday.

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Ballmer along with Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, [Netflix](#) co-founder Reed Hastings and six others saw their positions on the Microsoft board secured with more than 92 percent of votes cast by investors.

In response to a question from a stockholder, Ballmer downplayed the notion of a "post PC-era" marked by smartphones, tablets and other mobile devices supplanting desktop or laptop machines powered by Microsoft Windows software.

"We are in the Windows Era," Ballmer said. "We were, we are, and we always will be."

While the types of computing devices people use evolves so does Windows, he said regarding the [operating software](#) at the heart of Microsoft's empire.

"One of the remarkable things about Windows over the years is that it has adapted," Ballmer said.

"It will be a tablet machine; a reading machine, and a note-taking machine," he said. "We are going to have to push Windows into more form factors."

The Windows 7 operating system and the latest version of Office software have been selling at unprecedented rates to businesses while rivals Apple and [Google](#) have won consumers hearts when it comes to smartphones and tablets.

When called upon to explain Microsoft's plan to protect freedom of expression while doing business in China, Ballmer said the company is careful to do no more than the law there requires.

Microsoft is part of a Global Network Initiative founded to promote global norms when it comes to online privacy and human rights, he noted.

"At every country in the world, I think you are looking at a suite of products and services that have enabled people to express views more widely than ever before," Ballmer said.

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