

Microsoft to release Windows 8 on October 26

July 18 2012



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Windows unit boss Steven Sinofsky revealed the Windows 8 debut date at a sales meeting, Microsoft communications manager Brandon LeBlanc said in a blog post.

Windows 8 will be available in 109 languages across 231 markets worldwide, according to LeBlanc.

Microsoft has promised to make the new operating system available in August for computer, tablet or [smartphone](#) makers to build into hardware.

It "is simply the biggest deal for this company in at least 17 years," Microsoft chief [Steve Ballmer](#) said last week, referring to the time since the launch of the game-changing Windows 95 operating system.

"It's the glue; it's the foundation of everything Microsoft is built on."

Microsoft reported that it has sold more than 630 million licenses of Windows 7, and that the software powers the majority of business [desktop computers](#).

Windows 7 went public in October 2009.

The latest version of the operating system that is the norm for personal computers will also be used on many smartphones and [tablet computers](#), including Microsoft's own Surface tablet to be launched this year.

The Redmond, Washington-based firm has gone on record stating that Surface tablets would hit the market when the Windows 8 operating system became publicly available.

Windows 8 allows users readily to store and share personal data among various devices under the "SkyDrive" cloud [computing service](#).

Rivals Apple and [Google](#) offer such services, which let people store digital data on servers in the Internet "cloud" and access files from devices of their choosing.

The new Microsoft system will support a wider range of devices, including touch- and stylus-based smartphones and tablet PCs as well as

desktop and laptop machines.

Versions of Windows 8 have been tailored for chips used to power various mobile devices.

The software giant has been trying to expand its presence in the booming market for smartphones and tablets, which is currently dominated by Apple and Google.

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Citation: Microsoft to release Windows 8 on October 26 (2012, July 18) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-07-microsoft-windows-october.html>

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