Microsoft job postings hint at changes coming for Windows Blue

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(Phys.org)—Postings on Microsoft's Career web site appear to confirm widely spread rumors that Microsoft is planning to offer regular updates to Windows 8, similar to the way Apple updates its operating system, i.e. on a yearly basis. Code named Windows Blue, updates appear to be targeted at not just the internals' of the operating system, but the user interface (UI) as well.

In one job posting for an engineer, Microsoft reveals the company is looking for someone to join its Windows Core Experience Team, which

the listing says will entail working on making improvements to the UI, including such fundamental aspects as the Start experience, the application lifecycle, how windowing works and overall personalization.

Microsoft diverged dramatically from its traditional UI when it launched Windows 8, of course, a move that most industry insiders have attributed to a desire to meld the look and feel of all of the various platforms on which Windows appears—computers, smartphones, tablets, etc. Updates to the UI, while applying to its most basic components, are not expected to result in major changes to the user experience though—if Microsoft is working on that, users won't likely see it till Windows 9 makes its debut.

In another job posting, the company says its Excel Mobile Office team is looking for a development lead with a lot of experience to help implement something they call Windows Phone Blue—a likely code name for the development of applications to run on Windows smartphones to coincide with changes the company is making across its entire sweet of operating systems and the applications running on them. The idea is, apparently, to create a version of Excel that can run on a smartphone, but will still look like versions of Excel running on a computer or tablet.

Up till now, Microsoft has followed a traditional pattern with its Windows operating system—they would create a major revision and then send out patches to fix known problems while working on the next major upgrade. But that was before smartphones and tablets and hybrids and all the rest. Now, it appears the company feels it needs to be not only more responsive, but to act proactively to tweak their product between major releases—a strategy that should allow them to keep their operating system looking fresh.

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