

# At a glance: Changes coming with Windows 8.1

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Computing devices running the Microsoft operating systems are seen at the start of Microsoft Corporation's unveiling event of its new operating system upgrade 8.1 at the Computex Taipei 2013, one of the world's largest IT exhibitions, in Taipei, Taiwan, Wednesday, June 5, 2013. Computex will run from June 4th through the 8th. (AP Photo/Wally Santana)

Microsoft plans an update to its Windows 8 system to address some of the complaints and incorporate other feedback received since the radical makeover to the operating system came out in October.

Microsoft isn't saying yet when [Windows 8.1](#) will come out, beyond later this year, although a test version is scheduled to be released June 26. It will be a free download for existing Windows 8 users.

Here are highlights of the planned changes:

— Windows 8.1 will let users launch the [operating system](#) in a desktop mode that resembles the setup found in older versions of Windows. Before, Windows 8 users were automatically taken to a full-page startup screen that displays applications in a mosaic of interactive tiles instead of static icons.

— Microsoft isn't restoring the traditional start button on the lower left side of the screen, as requested by many users, but it is restoring a logo in that spot and will let users add favorite applications, such as Word and Excel, to a horizontal tool bar while working in the desktop mode.

— Windows 8.1 will lean heavily on Microsoft's Bing [search technology](#) to simplify things. As with Windows 8, the search bar can be found by pulling out a menu from the right side of a display screen. Rather than requiring a user to search categories such as files or apps separately, Windows 8.1 will make it possible to find just about anything available on the computer or on the Web with a single, comprehensive search.

— The update will include a built-in connection with Microsoft's online [storage system](#), SkyDrive, to back up photos, music and program files.

— Internet Explorer 11, the next generation of Microsoft's Web browser, will come with Windows 8.1.

— The new version will have a lock-up screen that will display a slideshow of a user's favorite pictures.

— Windows 8.1 will offer easier ways to move apps on the start screen and change the size of each app's on-screen tile.

— Although Windows 8 allowed people to run two apps side by side, people were limited in how they could configure the screen. Windows 8.1 will give users more options to determine how much of the screen each app takes while showing up to four different programs.

— The Outlook email app will come for free with a lightweight version of Windows, called Windows RT, designed for tablets such as Microsoft's Surface.

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