

Is Windows 10 really free?

Yes, Windows 10 is really free for most computers, no subscription required

Windows 10 Is Almost Here: Here's What You Need to Know

Windows 10 will be released on July 29, 2015. Microsoft is already advertising it to Windows 7 and 8.1 users.

Windows 10 is available for free to most computers out there. Assuming your computer runs either Windows 7 Service Pack 1 or Windows 8.1, you'll see a "Get Windows 10" pop-up as long as you have Windows Update enabled. This allows you to reserve that free upgrade.

Even if you're using Windows 7 without Service Pack 1 or the original version of Windows 8, you can upgrade to the latest versions of Windows 7 or 8 for free and then get your Windows 10 upgrade.

Microsoft has previously said this Windows 10 upgrade will be "free for the first year." This means that this free offer lasts a year — from July 29, 2015 to July 29, 2016. You have a year to get your free upgrade. If you don't upgrade by July 29, 2016 and try to upgrade on July 30, Microsoft won't give you Windows 10 for free.

If you do upgrade within the first year, you get Windows 10 for free, permanently. You don't have to pay anything. Even after it's been a year, your Windows 10 installation will continue working and receiving updates as normal. You won't have to pay for some sort of Windows 10 subscription or fee to continue using it, and you'll even get any new features Microsoft adds.

Then What Exactly is "Windows 10 as a Service"?

If Windows 10 is completely free, then what is all this talk about Windows being a "service" going forward?

Well, to hear Microsoft tell it, they're changing the way they develop and deliver Windows. This is tied together with Windows 10 being "the last version of Windows," as some are saying.

Windows 10 will be updated and developed on an ongoing basis going forward. Microsoft won't work for three years on a Windows 11 with new features and attempt to sell you an upgrade. Instead, they'll continue adding features and improvements to Windows 10 itself on an ongoing basis. You won't have to pay for these features. Windows 10 will just receive regular updates with the features that would otherwise have been held onto for Windows 11.

You Won't Be Able to Disable (or Delay) Windows Updates on Windows 10 Home

Microsoft says Windows 10 will be "always up-to-date," and they mean it. There's no way to turn Windows Update off.

In this way, Windows 10 becomes more like Google Chrome — something that's continually updated in the background. That's why you can't disable Windows Update on Windows 10 Home, and you can only delay updates on Windows 10 Professional. Microsoft wants to get all modern Windows computers on the same version of Windows and keep them updated, creating a single platform for developers to target and a single platform they have to support with security updates.

Windows 10 is more like the operating systems on a Macbook, Chromebook, iPhone or iPad. You don't have to worry about paying to upgrade to the next version of the operating system — you just get those improvements for free.

## Free For “The Supported Lifetime of Your Device”

Microsoft doesn’t say that your PC will continue getting free updates forever. Instead, they say that those feature updates and security updates will continue “for the supported lifetime of your device.”

Microsoft hasn’t actually explained what this phrase means, but it has a bit of an obvious explanation to it. Windows can’t continue to support old hardware forever — Windows 10 won’t run on PCs from 20 years ago. Whatever version of Windows exists twenty years from now probably won’t support today’s Windows 10 PCs. Microsoft gets to draw the line of when they want to stop supporting old hardware with future updates.

Of course, Microsoft could change tactics in the future, releasing Windows 11 in five years and declaring that older devices are no longer within their “supported lifetime.” But this is clearly Microsoft’s plan right now — you shouldn’t worry about having to spend money for an existing Windows 10 install in the future. It’s free.