

Windows XP End of Support



Making the Move to Greater Accessibility with Windows 8

Many people with disabilities have relied on the Windows XP operating system since its release more than a dozen years ago. This is especially true of people who are comfortable with the assistive technology they have long used with Windows XP—even though subsequent versions of Windows have far surpassed Windows XP in terms of accessibility features as well as speed, functionality, and web and multimedia capabilities.

Since 2010, Microsoft has been alerting customers about the end of support for Windows XP on April 8, 2014. This marks an opportunity for people with disabilities—as well as schools, businesses, and other organizations that serve or employ them—to learn about the advanced accessibility features in Windows 8, the newest and fastest version of Windows.

Windows XP will still work after April 2014, but computers that run it will be more vulnerable to security threats because Microsoft is not only discontinuing technical support but also automatic updates and downloadable security patches. This makes upgrading important not only for individual users, but also for companies and organizations that have security and privacy compliance obligations.



The Windows 8 Advantage

Windows 8, which runs on the latest desktop, laptop, and tablet PCs, allows users with disabilities to do all of the things that Windows XP makes possible, while opening up a vast array of new capabilities and experiences. It also supports the new generation of accessibility tools and third-party assistive technologies that have dramatically expanded the ways that people with disabilities work, communicate, create, and participate in society.

Here are some of the many advantages that Windows 8 offers over Windows XP for users with disabilities:

- Navigation using touch, mouse, or keyboard
- Ease of Access Center with greatly expanded array of personalization options
- Speech recognition for dictating documents and executing commands
- Faster, better, and more customizable Narrator screen reader
- More customizable On-Screen Keyboard
- Visual notifications option to replace system sounds
- Broad ecosystem of compatible third-party assistive technology products
- Enhanced Magnifier



When people with disabilities are better able to see, hear, create, and use digital content, they have more opportunities to collaborate with coworkers, take advantage of educational opportunities, and access services.

Upgrading also means enjoying the advantages that Windows 8 offers over Windows XP for all users:

- Real-time scanning for viruses, spyware, and other malware
- OneDrive free cloud storage
- Super-fast Bing Smart Search
- Internet Explorer 11 web browser, with built-in touch capabilities
- Skype real-time video and voice communications service
- Numerous built-in apps, including Mail, Camera, Maps, and Calendar
- Support for more than 100,000 apps available from the Windows Store



What Does End of Support Mean?

Consider the computing environment when Windows XP was designed around the turn of the century: WiFi connections were rare, smartphones were a recent innovation, and blogging and social networking were in their infancy. Online services and cloud computing were new to most businesses and consumers.

Windows XP, for all its strengths, was simply not created for the computing world we live in today—both in terms of how we use computers in our daily lives and the types of security threats that exist in the interconnected online world.

The end of support for Windows XP means no more automatic updates, downloadable security patches, or technical support for Windows XP computers. This change is a normal part of a product's life cycle, and Windows XP has already been supported longer than any other version of Windows.



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