

Microsoft has stopped selling Windows 7 Professional, Windows 8.1



As of yesterday, Microsoft has stopped selling Windows 7 or Windows 8.1 to system builders. The only way to acquire a copy of these operating systems now is to buy the dwindling stock still available online. Technically, most versions of Windows 7 were pulled off the market two years ago, but Windows 7 Professional was still cleared for sale until October 31, as were all of the flavors of Windows 8.1. The chart below shows Microsoft's sales chart for preinstalled versions of Windows.

Client operating systems and updates	Date of general availability	Retail software end of sales*	End of sales for PCs with Windows preinstalled
Windows XP	December 31, 2001	June 30, 2008	October 22, 2010
Windows Vista	January 30, 2007	October 22, 2010	October 22, 2011
Windows 7 Home Basic, Home Premium, Ultimate	October 22, 2009	October 31, 2013	October 31, 2014
Windows 7 Professional	October 22, 2009	October 31, 2013	October 31, 2016
Windows 8	October 26, 2012	October 31, 2014	June 30, 2016
Windows 8.1	October 18, 2013	September 1, 2015	October 31, 2016
Windows 10	July 29, 2015	N/A	N/A

Windows 10 is listed as being supported indefinitely because, according to Microsoft, it's the last version of the operating system they're going to build. Whether that's actually *true* is a different question altogether, and I ultimately expect it isn't. There's a great deal of institutional expectation built into the idea of periodically updating one's operating system, and Microsoft is the only company currently claiming its current OS is now a static flavor. Android, iOS, and macOS all still use version numbers, and I expect Microsoft will eventually release a "Windows 11" as well, even if it automatically extends upgrades to all current users of Windows 10.

After a number of [fits](#) and [starts](#), Microsoft has agreed to fully support Windows 7 and 8.1 on all Intel Skylake and AMD Carrizo platforms through the planned end date for security fixes for those operating systems (January 2020 and 2023, respectively). Future platforms, like Kaby Lake, Bristol Ridge, and all future APUs from AMD will only be supported on [Windows 10](#). We've previously discussed the long-term difficulty of keeping legacy hardware operational on unsupported platforms — the long and short of it is that while it'll probably be possible to shoehorn Windows 7 or 8.1 on to newer hardware, it'll get progressively difficult as chipset drivers change and new hardware capabilities are added to both platforms. This could be particularly problematic on laptops, where a lack of support for modern power management baked into newer chips could lead to poor battery life.

Windows 10 adoption has slowed in the general populace, but gamers continue to adopt the OS in fairly large numbers. Windows 10 64-bit holds 47.28% of the [Steam](#) market, with Windows 7 64-bit hanging on at 28.99%. Windows 8.1 64-bit is in third place, at 8.63%. Thanks to the [WayBackMachine](#), we can see how adoption has shifted over the last 12 months. In 2015, Windows 7 64-bit was the most popular OS at 37.48%, with Windows 10 64-bit at 23.99% and Windows 8.1 64-bit at 18.62%.

This confirms a trend that we've noticed before: Windows 7 users are noticeably more "sticky" than Windows 8.1 owners, or older users on 32-bit operating systems. While shares of both older OSes have dropped, Windows 7 64-bit is down 8.49%, while Windows 8.1 64-bit is down 10%. Whether this reflects user unwillingness to update off Windows 7 or the fact that more Windows 7 owners had older hardware and are less likely to be on an upgrade path in general is not clear.