Understanding your Business's IT in plain english

Software

The clock's ticking for Windows 10: **Are you ready?**



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If your business is still running on Windows 10, you're officially running out of time.

It reaches end of life on 14th October. Which means the end of free support from Microsoft. No more security updates, no more bug fixes, and no more technical help if things go wrong.

Still think you can put off upgrading? Think again.

Cyber criminals love outdated software. They know businesses delay upgrades and leave themselves vulnerable. Without security updates, Windows 10 will become a prime target for malware, ransomware, and data breaches – risks that could cost your business thousands or even put you out of action.

You could pay for Extended Security Updates (ESU). But with the cost stacking up to hundreds per device, it's an expensive sticking plaster. And after three years, even that won't be an option.

Here's the good news: You can upgrade to Windows 11 for free if your devices are compatible. It's packed with business-friendly tools and has been designed with productivity and security in mind.

But not every computer running Windows 10 is compatible with Windows 11. Now's the time to check your devices.

If you leave it too late, you might find yourself scrambling to replace hardware, train staff, and migrate systems… causing unnecessary downtime and stress for you and your team.

What Windows 10's end of life means for your business

Ok, so it's not like your computers will suddenly stop working on the morning of 14th October. You'll still be able to turn them on, open your apps, and get work done.

But here's the harsh reality: Running an unsupported operating system is a ticking time bomb for your business.

From the moment Microsoft stops providing updates, your systems will become more vulnerable. You could start having software issues, and your IT headaches will multiply.

Here are some of the things to consider:



No more security updates

Right now, Microsoft regularly releases security patches to fix newly discovered vulnerabilities in Windows 10. These updates help to protect your business from hackers, malware, and ransomware attacks.

On 14th October, these security updates stop.

And guess what? Cyber criminals know this too.

They actively look for businesses still using outdated systems, scanning for weaknesses they can exploit.

Without Microsoft's ongoing security patches, Windows 10 will become an open door to cyber threats, and it won't take long for attacks to ramp up.

Think it won't happen to you?

Small and medium sized businesses are prime targets for cyber crime because they often lack dedicated IT teams. In fact, 43% of cyber attacks target small businesses – and many never recover from the financial and reputational damage.

Downtime, fines, and lost trust

A security breach isn't just a tech problem, it's a business disaster. If attackers get into your systems, you could face:

- **Operational downtime:** Can your business afford to be offline for days or weeks while you recover?
- **Financial losses:** Ransomware costs businesses an average of £3.79 million
- **Fines for non-compliance:** If you handle customer data, running outdated software could cause you to break data protection laws
- **Lost customer trust:** If sensitive data falls into the wrong hands, how confident will your customers feel about working with you?

Extended Security Updates (ESU)

Microsoft knows some businesses will drag their feet, so they're offering Extended Security Updates (ESU)… but at a price:

- **Year 1: $61 (£48) per device**
- **Year 2: $122 (£96) per device**
- **Year 3: $244 (£193) per device**

That's $427 (around £337) per device over three years just to keep getting security updates. And that's without any new features, improvements, or technical support. If you miss any years, you'll have to pay for them too.

Software & hardware compatibility issues

Windows 11 isn't just a security upgrade; it's the new standard for business applications. Software developers will abandon Windows 10 in favour of Windows 11. And new applications will be designed to work with the new system. This means:

- Your critical business apps may stop working properly
- New features and updates might be unavailable to you
- You'll fall behind competitors using newer, more efficient software

Your hardware could be affected, too. Some printers, scanners, and peripherals may stop receiving driver updates, meaning they could become unreliable or stop working altogether.

No help when things go wrong

Ever had an IT issue and needed to contact Microsoft for help? That option disappears on 14th October.

If something breaks or a major issue crops up, you'll be on your own. No more security updates, no more bug fixes, and no more official support from Microsoft.

At that point, every problem will take longer to fix and cost more money… if it can be fixed at all.



Is your business ready for Windows 11?

Microsoft has set strict hardware requirements for Windows 11, and some older devices aren't compatible.

The sooner you check whether your computers are ready for the upgrade, the sooner you can plan your next steps – whether that's upgrading existing devices or investing in new ones.

So, how can you find out what you need to do?

Step 1:
Use the PC Health Check tool

The fastest way to check if your computers can run Windows 11 is by using Microsoft's PC Health Check tool. ***Here's how:***

1. Google *"Windows PC Health Check"* and download the tool directly from the official Microsoft website.
2. Install and open it on each of your business devices.
3. Click *"Check now"* to instantly find out if the device is compatible with Windows 11.

You'll see a message like this:

"This PC meets Windows 11 requirements."

This means you're good to go. This computer is ready for the upgrade.

Or…

"This PC doesn't currently meet Windows 11 requirements."

This could mean:

- A small setting needs to be changed
- You need a minor hardware upgrade (like more RAM or enabling TPM 2.0, a security chip)
- The device is too old and needs replacing

Step 2:
Check Windows 11's system requirements

Windows 11 has higher security and performance standards than Windows 10. To run it, a PC needs to meet the following spec:

- **Processor:** 1GHz or faster, at least dual core, 64-bit processor.
- **RAM:** 4GB or more (8GB+ is recommended for businesses).
- **Storage:** At least 64GB of free space.
- **TPM 2.0:** A security chip required for Windows 11.
- **Secure Boot:** Enabled in your BIOS settings.
- **Graphics Card:** Compatible with DirectX 12 or later.
- **Display:** 9-inch screen or larger, with at least 720p resolution.

Most business computers from the last 3–4 years should be compatible, but if your device is older, it might not meet these standards.

Step 3:
Fix compatibility issues (if possible)

If the PC Health Check tool says your device doesn't meet the requirements, don't give up just yet. Some issues are easy to fix and could save you thousands in hardware upgrades you might not need.

Common fixes:

- **Enable TPM 2.0:** This is a security chip. Some PCs have this feature turned off by default. You can enable it in the BIOS settings (although please be very careful if you touch these. Better to ask an IT professional)
- **Enable Secure Boot:** Also found in the BIOS, this security feature may just need turning on
- **Upgrade your RAM or storage:** If your device is just short on memory or disk space, a small upgrade could fix the problem.

If your PCs can't run Windows 11, what's next?

If your devices aren't compatible with Windows 11 and can't be upgraded, you have two choices:

Option 1: Stick with Windows 10 and pay for Extended Security Updates (not recommended. It's not a long-term solution).

Option 2: Invest in future ready devices that can run Windows 11. If your hardware is more than 5 years old, replacing it now makes sense. Not only will you be ready for Windows 11, but your business will also benefit from improved performance and security.

Remember that ordering hardware and setting up systems can take weeks or even months, especially if supplies run low closer to the end-of-support deadline. If you need to upgrade your devices, start doing it now - don't wait until the last minute.



Why upgrading to Windows 11 is worth it

If you're hesitating about making the switch, remember that Windows 11 isn't just a fresh coat of paint on Windows 10. It's a faster, smarter, and more secure system designed to help businesses work better.

Security that protects your business



One of the biggest improvements in Windows 11 is security. Cyber threats are becoming more sophisticated every year, and Windows 10 simply wasn't built to handle the latest attacks.

Windows 11, on the other hand, includes advanced security measures that help protect your data from malware, ransomware, and other cyber threats.

One of the key security upgrades is hardware-based protection. Windows 11 requires devices to have the Trusted Platform Module (TPM) 2.0, which strengthens encryption and makes it much harder for attackers to steal sensitive data.

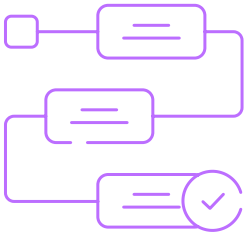
Encryption helps to protect your data by converting it into a secret code that only authorised people can read. So even if cyber criminals get access to your system, they can't see the information.

Windows 11 also enables Secure Boot, a feature that prevents malicious software from loading when you start your computer.

Beyond these built-in protections, Windows 11 automatically applies stronger encryption to safeguard your files. It uses complex algorithms to scramble data, making it unreadable to anyone who doesn't have the correct decryption key.

If your business handles customer information, financial records, or confidential files, these security features are going to become essential.

A smoother, more efficient workday



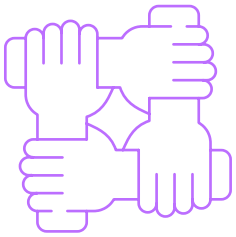
Windows 11 has been optimised to use resources more effectively than Windows 10, meaning your devices will run smoother, start up quicker, and handle multiple tasks without slowing down.

It also has a cleaner and more intuitive look, with a new Start menu that's simpler and less cluttered. All of this helps you get to your most-used apps and files with fewer clicks, making it easier to find what you need.

A standout feature for multitaskers is Snap Layouts and Snap Groups. This allows you to neatly organise your open windows, making it easier to switch between tasks. If you often work with multiple documents, emails, or spreadsheets at the same time, this feature can offer a big boost to productivity.

Windows 11 also has a smarter notification system, helping you and your team stay on track without being interrupted by constant alerts. With built-in Focus Sessions, you can set dedicated work periods with fewer distractions. Concentrate on the things that matter.

Collaboration is easier than ever

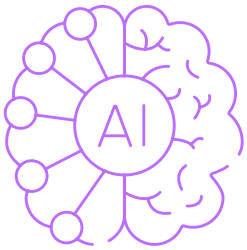


With remote and hybrid work becoming the norm, seamless collaboration tools are more important than ever. Windows 11 integrates Microsoft Teams directly into the system, making it faster and easier to connect with colleagues, no matter where they are.

Instead of launching a separate app, Teams for Windows 11 is built into the taskbar – making video calls, instant messaging, and file sharing possible with just one click. This means fewer delays, smoother meetings, and more efficient teamwork.

If your business already uses Microsoft 365, you'll also benefit from deeper integration with apps like Word, Excel, and Outlook. This makes it easier to share and edit files in real time.

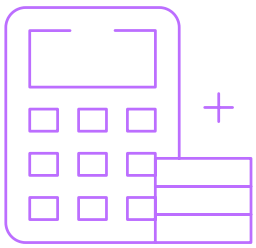
AI-powered productivity with Copilot



One of the most exciting features in Windows 11 is Copilot, an AI-powered assistant designed to help businesses work smarter. Copilot can assist with tasks like summarising emails, organising schedules, automating repetitive tasks, and even generating reports.

Copilot can help cut down on admin time, allowing you to focus on higher priority work. It's like having a virtual assistant built directly into your computer, ready to help whenever you need it.

Delaying your upgrade comes at a cost



Some businesses hesitate to upgrade because they worry about the cost or disruption of switching to a new system. But waiting will cost you more in the long run.

The longer you stay on Windows 10 after support ends, the more you'll have to spend on fixing security issues, dealing with compatibility problems, and paying for Microsoft's expensive Extended Security Updates (ESU).

Upgrading to Windows 11 now means your business can take advantage of powerful new tools that improve security, workflow, and collaboration. And since the upgrade is free for compatible devices, there's no reason to wait.

How to plan your smooth transition to Windows 11

Upgrading your business to Windows 11 isn't something you want to do in a last-minute panic. Put it off until October and you'll find yourself scrambling to train staff, migrate systems, and possibly having to upgrade devices – all while trying to keep your business running as usual.

The smart move is to plan ahead. A smooth transition means less disruption, fewer headaches, and a more efficient workforce once the upgrade is complete.

So, where do you start?

Step 1:
Take inventory of your devices

Before anything else, you need to know which computers in your business are ready for Windows 11 and which ones aren't.

If you haven't already done it, now's the time to run Microsoft's PC Health Check tool on every device (see Step 1 in the earlier section, "Is your business ready for Windows 11?").

If all your devices pass the test, great news: You can move on to planning your upgrade.

If some fail, you need to decide whether they can be upgraded (for example, by adding more RAM or enabling TPM 2.0). Or if they need replacing. The sooner you figure this out, the more time you have to budget for new equipment.

Step 2:
Decide when to upgrade

Timing is everything. You don't want to upgrade in the middle of your busiest season or critical projects. Choose a period when downtime will have the least impact on your business.

If you have multiple employees or departments, consider staggering the upgrade rather than doing everything at once. Upgrading in phases means that if something unexpected happens, you still have functional systems in place.

For larger teams, start with a small group, like one department or a few testers. This lets you smooth out any issues early on without disrupting the whole business.

Step 3:
Back up everything before you start

Upgrading an operating system is usually straightforward, but there's always a risk of data loss or unexpected errors. Before you upgrade, make sure you back up all important business data.
This includes:

- Customer records
- Financial documents
- Employee files
- Emails
- Software settings and licenses

If your business already uses cloud storage, this step is simple. Just verify that everything is synced properly. If not, now's a great time to consider setting up a cloud backup solution, so your data is always protected.

Step 4:
Test key software and devices

Not every application or device will automatically work with Windows 11. Some older software may need updates, and some printers, scanners, or external hardware might need new drivers.

To avoid surprises, make a list of all the software and devices your business relies on and check whether they're fully compatible ith Windows 11.

Contact software vendors if you need to. Most major applications will work, but it's always worth confirming.

If any of your critical apps won't work with Windows 11, you may need to find alternative solutions before making the switch.

Step 5:
Plan for IT support (just in case)

Even with careful planning, unexpected issues can pop up. Before upgrading, make sure you have a plan for who will handle any problems that arise. This way, issues get fixed quickly and you can avoid disruption.

If you have an internal IT team, make sure they're familiar with the upgrade process and common troubleshooting steps. If you rely on an external IT support provider, check that they'll be available during your upgrade period in case you need help. If you don't have either, get in touch with us and we can help you.

Step 6:
Roll out the upgrade and monitor performance

Once you're ready, it's time to upgrade. Microsoft has made the Windows 11 installation process straightforward. Most devices will switch over to the new system in under an hour.

After upgrading, don't just assume everything is working. Take time to:

- Check all software and hardware is functioning properly
- Make sure employees can access their usual files and applications
- Monitor for any performance issues or unexpected problems

Once you know everything's running smoothly, you can then move forward with upgrading the rest of your business.

Step 7:
Train your team on Windows 11's new features

A new operating system means changes to how things look and work. Windows 11 has been designed to be as user-friendly as possible, but employees will still need time to **adjust to things like:**

- The appearance of the new Start menu
- Snap Layouts for better multitasking
- Microsoft Teams integration in the taskbar
- Security improvements and login changes

A quick training session or even some simple guidelines can make a huge difference in helping staff get comfortable with Windows 11 from day one.



Your Windows 11 upgrade checklist

Want to make sure you don't miss anything when you upgrade? Here's a checklist to help make sure you've completed every step:



Check your devices

- [ ] Run the PC Health Check tool on all business devices
- [ ] Identify incompatible devices and decide whether to upgrade or replace them
- [ ] Plan for hardware upgrades (RAM, storage, enabling TPM 2.0) if needed
- [ ] If necessary, budget for new Windows 11-ready devices

Back up everything before upgrading

- [ ] Confirm cloud backups are up to date (or set this up if you don't have a cloud backup)
- [ ] Back up all important files, emails, and business documents
- [ ] Make sure important software settings and licenses are saved
- [ ] Create a system restore point in case you need to roll back

Test software and devices for compatibility

- [ ] Check your essential business apps are compatible with Windows 11
- [ ] Update software to the latest versions to avoid compatibility issues
- [ ] Test printers, scanners, and other peripherals to make sure they'll work
- [ ] Contact software vendors for guidance if needed

Plan your upgrade schedule

- [ ] Choose the best time to upgrade (avoid busy periods)
- [ ] Plan to upgrade a test device first
- [ ] Decide whether to upgrade other devices in phases or all at once
- [ ] Make sure IT support is available during the transition
- [ ] Communicate the plan to employees so they know what to expect

Install Windows 11 and test its performance

- [ ] Upgrade the test device first before rolling out to the rest of the business
- [ ] Monitor system performance after installation
- [ ] Check that all files, software, and settings have transferred properly
- [ ] Address any compatibility or performance issues immediately

Train your team

- [ ] Introduce employees to Windows 11's new layout and Start menu
- [ ] Show them how to use Snap Layouts for better multitasking
- [ ] Explain the new built-in Microsoft Teams integration
- [ ] Highlight security improvements and best practices

Stay secure and keep systems up to date

- [ ] Enable automatic updates to receive the latest security patches
- [ ] Review cyber security policies to make sure you're following best practice
- [ ] Set up regular system maintenance to optimise performance

Let’s take the stress out of your Windows 11 upgrade

Upgrading to Windows 11 isn’t just about avoiding security risks. It’s about keeping your business running as smoothly, efficiently, and securely as possible.

But making the move takes time, planning, and expertise. From checking device compatibility and backing up data, to making sure all your software still works, training your team, and minimising downtime… there’s a lot to manage.

That’s where we come in.

We can handle everything from planning and installation, to troubleshooting and staff training, so you don’t have to worry about a thing.



Don’t wait until the last minute. Putting off the upgrade could lead to disruption, security issues, or costly delays.
Get in touch and we’ll help you make the move to Windows 11, stress free.

Get in touch.

Acuit

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