

Windows 8: a review essay

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Windows 8 is Microsoft’s attempt to penetrate the tablet market now dominated by Android and Apple’s iPad. With the new generation of computers designed to run the OS, it is also an attempt to bring up the PC to a new level of usage and productivity.

Pleasure of Two Worlds

Windows 8 on the new generation of laptops and PCs (those with touchscreens especially designed for Windows 8) allow users to enjoy the pleasure of using a laptop and a tablet at the same time. One can switch from using a real keyboard and a virtual on-screen keyboard. One can switch from using the touchpad, the mouse and the screen to navigate and perform tasks. All of these devices could be attached to the computer at the same time Switching is just a matter of tapping the screen or touchpad, or clicking the mouse.

Lack of Apps

The chief criticism of Windows 8 is the lack of apps available for it. At the time of its launching, there are only about 10, 000 apps available compared with 700, 000 apps available for Apple's iPad.

Understandably, Windows 8 is very new in the market. It was only launched in mid-2012. At the same time, Windows 8 is being positioned to a different market from the purely tablet market. It seems to be aiming for professionals who use their laptops more for productivity and only secondarily for entertainment and social media networking.

One can reasonably expect that in time more apps would be available for Windows 8. One should keep in mind though that the apps that would be coming out in the market would mainly be targeting Windows 8 target customers.

Power to Run Office

Windows 8 has been designed to be able to run full versions of Microsoft Office—Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Aside from these three, Windows 8 RT, the OS for purely tablet devices, cannot run other software like Photoshop or MS Outlook. Happily, the desktop version of the software can run practically any software that runs on any previous Windows system.

Desktop Feature

For the laptop or PC version of Windows, one of the most welcome features is the desktop feature. It appears as an app at the start window of the tablet. Clicking it brings one to the desktop reminiscent of the old Windows versions. It is not exactly the same. However, an old-time Windows user can

easily navigate through the desktop and find out how to use it. Even if one uses old software on the desktop, one can still use the touchscreen. One can simply point touch the screen to accomplish certain tasks. This feature however is not available in the tablet version of Windows 8.

The desktop also loads faster than those in previous versions. It loads almost as fast as any tablet. However, Windows 8 does not seem to run or perform well in older PCs. It runs well on the new generation of PCs developed especially for Windows 8.

A Hint of the Future

The desktop app or feature somehow gives one a hint of the future or of what Microsoft is preparing for. Many people would surely want the ability to have a tablet to carry along and a laptop or desktop for heavier kind of work. At present, the desktop is somehow an artificial way of separating the tablet functions and the desktop functions in the sense that one is still using the same computer. Some tablet models come with a separable keyboard. It feels like a laptop when it has the keyboard attached. Still, it has essentially a tablet. It does not have the large capacity hard drives of laptops and desktops nor the peripherals like an optical drive, ports for printing, mouse, and other devices.

Given the new tablets and laptops, it would seem that Microsoft is preparing that eventually laptops would be capable of separating its screen from the keyboard and CPU. The separated screen would function just like any other tablet without the desktop capability. With the keyboard and CPU, it becomes a full-fledged PC. In effect, one has two computers: a tablet and a laptop.

Of course, this is wishful at this point. It is something that Windows 8 seems to hint at already.

Conclusion

Windows 8 is truly a workhorse of system. It allows users the ease, pleasure and speed of a tablet. At the same time, the regular version of Windows 8 (for PCs and laptops) the full power of all the previous versions of Windows. It's a productivity tool more than anything else.

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