

Microsoft's "Blue" Update: Desktops' End?

Written by Marco Attard
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Microsoft confirms its Windows plans following leaks of "Blue"-- an even more tablet-centric Windows 8 update described by pundits as yet another step towards the end of the Windows desktop.



According to the leak Blue overhauls the Windows 8 PC Settings app, putting more Control Panel functionality within a touch-friendly UI. It also includes a handful of new gesture controls, 2 more Live Tile sizes, half-screen app snapping, further SkyDrive integration, 4 new Start Screen apps (Alarms, Calculate, Sound Recorder and Movie Moments) and Android-style screenshot sharing.

The company admits the leak in an official blog entry by Corporate Communications VP Frank X. Shaw, who says "product leaders across Microsoft are working together on plans to advance our devices and services, a set of plans referred to internally as "Blue.""

Shaw continues "our customers have already experienced the ongoing rhythm of updates and innovations over the past 6 months... This continuous development cycle is the new normal across Microsoft-- we'll tune everyday experiences as well as introduce bold, connected and exciting new scenarios."

The blog gives does not specify the products set to receive a Blue update, but the rumour mill suggests Windows 8, Windows RT, Windows Phone 8, Windows Server and multiple online

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services will gain coordinated updates.

But will Microsoft truly kill the desktop PC? Traditionalists might be disappointed to learn the Start button continues to remain, well, dead (or rather replaced by the All Apps button) but one can still dip into desktop mode to run legacy programs or tweak deeper Control Panel settings.

Then again the eventual death of the desktop in a future Windows version might bring an end to complaints on the schizophrenic hopping between UIs Windows 8 currently demands...

Either way, expect more details to emerge at the just announced Microsoft BUILD developer conference on July 2013.

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