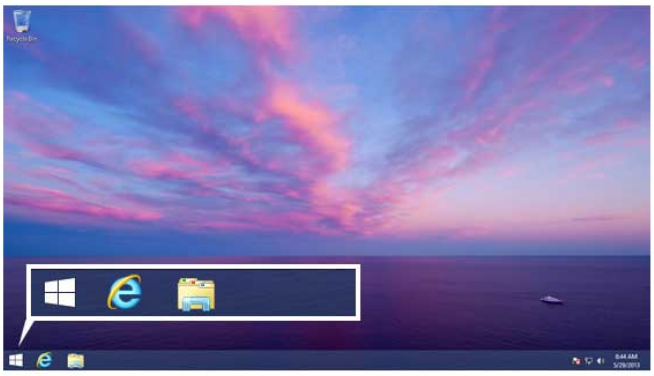
Microsoft marks the next step towards the release of Windows 8.1 (formerly known as Blue) and passes the update (both Windows 8.1 and Windows RT 8.1 versions) to its hardware partners.



The update rolls out from 18 October 2013 as well devices carrying the latest version of the OS such as tablets, lightweight notebooks, 2-in-1 devices and regular PCs.

“In many ways, this marks a new day at Microsoft, reflecting a number of rapid release firsts," a company statement says. "Thanks, in part, to customer feedback and an unparalleled level of collaboration across product teams, Windows 8.1 is a significant update. We have delivered in a very short time an update to the OS that will bring an even greater unified experience for our customers."

Windows 8.1 brings a number of changes to the OS, chief of which being the return of the Start button on the bottom left corner of the desktop. Clicking the start button triggers a new Start screen (not the legacy Start menu) with a custom All Apps view.

Users can also skip the Windows 8 Start Screen and boot straight to desktop, and get new splitscreen app options, Internet Explorer 11, new gestures, new apps and enhanced SkyDrive functionality as well as a number of new personalisation options and different tile sizes.

Go Readying Windows 8.1 For Release