

# **Microsoft Windows 10 End-of-Life on October 14, 2025.**

## **How Will the Windows 10 End-of-Life Impact Pelican Preserve**

The end of life (EOL) for Windows 10, scheduled for October 14, 2025, will significantly affect users with older computers that cannot be upgraded to Windows 11 due to stricter system hardware requirements. It is estimated there could be as many as 2,000 residents' computers will not qualify for an upgrade to Windows 11.

Additionally, many of the PPCA Town Center business computers upgraded in 2019 are just inside the 6-7-year acceptable range of Windows 11 hardware compatibility. As such, a migration plan should be created to upgrade all of these business computers to Windows 11 and replace any older computers that are found to be incompatible.

## **Upgrading to Windows 11**

As of 2025, approximately 400 million computers worldwide cannot be upgraded to Windows 11 due to hardware incompatibilities. It is estimated that Windows 11 currently runs on only 30% of active computers, while Windows 10 still runs on about 60% of active computers. The increased system hardware requirements for Windows 11 have also raised concerns about electronic waste, as many functional Windows 10 computers may become obsolete.

This enforced obsolescence is primarily due to Windows 11's stricter system hardware requirements. Notably, Windows 11 upgrades are generally limited to Intel's 8th-generation processors and newer, meaning only computers produced within the last 6-7 years have a reasonable chance of being compatible.

While some older computers may be able to install Windows 11 using unofficial methods, Microsoft advises against this due to potential stability and security issues. These unsupported systems may not receive critical updates, leaving them vulnerable.

Microsoft provides the PC Health Check tool to assess Windows 11 compatibility. To use it:

- Search for "PC Health Check" in the Windows taskbar.
- If not installed, download it from <https://aka.ms/GetPCHealthCheckApp> and follow the installation prompts.

## Windows 7 End-of-Life Versus Windows 10 End-of-Life

When Windows 7 reached its EOL on January 14, 2020, it only had a 15% market share, while Windows 10 had a 68% market share. Upgrading from Windows 7 to Windows 10 was relatively simple, as users could perform an in-place upgrade while preserving applications, settings, and data. Most computers running Windows 7 or 8.1 could transition to Windows 10 with minimal issues.

In contrast, upgrading from Windows 10 to Windows 11 presents more challenges due to strict hardware requirements, leading to a higher number of devices becoming obsolete.

## Potential Impacts of Windows 10 End-of-Life

### 1. Security Vulnerabilities

- No more security updates: Windows 10 will no longer receive security patches, making systems vulnerable to new threats.
- Increased risk of cyberattacks: Without updates, Windows 10 systems become prime targets for hackers, increasing the risk of data breaches and malware infections.

### 2. Software Compatibility

- Software vendors will gradually phase out support for Windows 10, leading to incompatibility with newer applications.
- Hardware manufacturers will stop updating drivers, potentially rendering peripherals like printers and graphics cards unusable.

### 3. Lack of New Features

- Users will miss out on performance improvements, UI enhancements, and system optimizations exclusive to Windows 11.

### 4. Regulatory and Compliance Concerns

- Businesses running Windows 10 may face compliance issues, as unpatched systems can violate industry security standards.

### 5. Limited Support Options

- Microsoft will cease providing official support, forcing users to rely on third-party assistance or online communities.

### 6. Potential Workarounds

- Some users may attempt to use unsupported methods, such as third-party security software or alternative operating systems like Linux. However, these solutions may not be user-friendly for non-technical individuals.

### 7. Upgrading Challenges for Older Hardware

- Computers that do not meet Windows 11's requirements may face performance issues if forced to upgrade.
- Users may need to upgrade hardware components or purchase new devices.

### 8. Loss of User Confidence

- Users aware of security risks may feel uneasy using outdated systems, potentially affecting productivity and trust in their devices.

### 9. Pressure to Upgrade

- Microsoft is actively encouraging users to transition to Windows 11 through full-screen prompts and marketing campaigns.
- Less tech-savvy users may struggle with the upgrade process and data migration.

### 10. Extended Security Updates (ESU) Costs

- Microsoft offers Extended Security Updates (ESU) for Windows 10 at \$30 per year.
- The availability of this service beyond a one-year period is uncertain.

## Windows 10 Migration Options

Users whose computers cannot upgrade to Windows 11 have several options:

- **Purchase a new Windows 11 computer:** The easiest and most secure solution.
- **Upgrade hardware:** If feasible, upgrading components (e.g., CPU, RAM) may allow an existing device to meet Windows 11 requirements.
- **Use third-party security software:** While not a complete substitute for Microsoft updates, additional security measures can help mitigate risks.
- **Switch to a different OS:** Linux distributions can provide a secure alternative for older hardware.
- **Continue using Windows 10:** This option carries significant security risks.

## Windows 11 vs. macOS: Cloud-Based Integration

Microsoft is gradually integrating more cloud-based features into Windows 11, mirroring some aspects of Apple's macOS ecosystem. While it does not fully replicate Apple's seamless iCloud experience, Windows 11 has introduced several macOS-like elements:

- **Centered Taskbar & Start Menu:** Resembling macOS's Dock.
- **Rounded Corners:** A UI design change similar to macOS.
- **Minimalist Interface:** A more streamlined UI, akin to macOS's simplicity.
- **Snap Layouts:** Comparable to macOS's Stage Manager.
- **Widgets Panel:** Similar to macOS's Notification Center.
- **Translucent Effects:** Enhanced visual aesthetics similar to macOS.

## Windows 11 Cloud-Based Features

1. **Microsoft Account & OneDrive Integration**
  - Syncs settings and files across devices, similar to Apple's iCloud Drive.
2. **Phone Link (Similar to Apple Continuity)**
  - Allows syncing notifications and messages from Android and iOS devices to Windows 11.
3. **Windows 365 & Cloud PC**
  - Enables users to access their Windows environment from any device via the cloud.
4. **Android App Support**
  - Windows 11 supports Android apps through the Microsoft Store, bridging the gap between Windows and mobile ecosystems.
5. **Microsoft Edge & Cloud Sync**
  - Syncs browsing history, passwords, and settings across multiple devices, similar to Safari's iCloud integration.
6. **Xbox Cloud Gaming**
  - Allows users to stream and play high-end games without powerful hardware.

While Windows 11 is becoming more cloud-integrated, Apple's ecosystem remains more seamless due to its tight integration between hardware and software across macOS, iOS, and iPadOS.