Microsoft

Microsoft Center of Excellence
NEWSLETTER

What We Saw at
WPC 2016 in Toronto
A Whole World of Changes for Microsoft

Microsoft

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WPC Overall Impressions
It's All about the Ecosystem

WRITTEN BY LANE SHELTON

Welcome to our special edition newsletter where we'll be covering the big things we learned this year at Microsoft's annual Worldwide Partner Conference (WPC) in Toronto. We've got an article about each of the "bigs", but I wanted to start out with my overall impressions of the conference and what it means for our customers, partners, and ultimately for Microsoft themselves. WPC is the annual event where Microsoft gathers partners large and small from around the globe, and we spend a week together jockeying for position in long bathroom lines and also learning about what Microsoft has in store for their new fiscal year, which runs

July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017. I've been in the Microsoft business for 20 years now, and I think this my ninth or tenth WPC, but I was struck this year with how completely Microsoft's world has changed. It's so cliché to say "everything is changing," so let me tell you specifically what struck me.

There was some of the traditional rah-rah about the Windows OS (I'd be scared if there wasn't), but it wasn't the usual speeds and feeds. Nor was there much speeds and feeds about anything really. I saw presentation after presentation of Microsoft partners using their cloud stack to build and deliver

solutions to customers—everything from core business functions like workflow automation to monitoring and managing solar power assets in Africa. I also saw many presentations about customers using the same cloud stack to design solutions for themselves and their customers. The common thread was the cloud stack. It wasn't "we hosted this in Azure" or "this was how our SQL database worked," but "here's how we used combinations of things like Azure, Power BI, SQL, etc. to do X," where X = the business outcome. There are a lot of people out there using the cloud stack to solve for X, and I was amazed at the vastness of it, the interconnectedness of it.

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We've been talking about Microsoft's emerging cloud ecosystem and writing about it for some time, but WPC reminded me of when I realized in the mid-2000s that the internet revolution had truly arrived. Remember the dot-bomb of 2001? I believe it wasn't that the tech had failed, but it hadn't matured enough to really go mainstream like it eventually did. The early days of cloud felt a bit like the dot-bomb in that regard, too much too soon. Now it looks like a real thing, with real and meaningful work being accomplished in ways that were never before possible. That's exciting to a geek like me: it makes the world feel full of new possibilities, and the ecosystem that Microsoft built is going to play a major role in shaping how we do business because it is at the core of digital transformation.

In the trenches where I normally live, I see customers grappling with their own digital transformations. From the business perspective, they're trying to figure out if Microsoft's ecosystem can deliver the outcomes they are looking for, from a technology perspective if they can adapt and evolve with stretched resources, and from an investment perspective if they can get there in a way that doesn't cripple them financially in the process. It's not an easy set of questions for any business to ask. WPC 2016 showed me that asking those questions is worth it, because I saw in a real way where those questions can lead in those customers and solution providers that achieved the outcomes they hoped for.

Pictures and Postcards

Below are some other things that struck me at WPC this year:

1) Manifest destiny in software-centric Tomorrowland: My favorite session was the conversation between Jeff Immelt of GE and Satya Nadella. A couple of things Immelt said were seminal, although I'm loosely paraphrasing because I was too busy watching and thinking to take good notes. First, he said that every industrial business is going to become a software business, and then proceeded to share how that happened at GE. This reminded me of another CEO of a giant conglomerate who recently revealed that over half their employees are now software

developers. Everyone is getting into the software business, in no small part because the cloud ecosystem is making that possible in all kinds of new ways. Immelt also said that the key to success in digital transformation is not letting someone else create the rules for you. Digital transformation is a DIY project—no one knows your business better than you, and so the best solution is to embrace a platform, an ecosystem, and leverage it to create your own digital destiny. It's why we see Microsoft and others building out their ecosystems and platforms more than focusing on new applications—the smart money is on making your own applications and creating the experiences that best suit the outcomes you are looking for.

2) Everything as a Service = Small Apps and Crazy Bundles: The world Microsoft is building has some major building blocks like the OS, SQL, Exchange, Skype, etc. But it's also a new world of fast-paced, focused developments like Customer Lockbox, Advanced Threat Protection, and Delve Org Analytics. Remember when they released the new "E5" plan that was all about hosted Skype? Buried inside were little apps like Org Analytics and Lockbox—they had nothing directly to do with Hosted Skype, but they were new and MS needed to make them available somehow, so they threw them into E5. Now they're shifting that around (see p. 5) into something that makes more logical sense—but that's two major licensing changes in a very short period of time, and we see that becoming the new norm. Less new "SQL" and more new "Lockbox" as Microsoft fine-tunes their ecosystem. That means paying close attention to your investments and bundles to make sure you know what you have and how to get new things you don't have. Licensing is probably going to get more confusing, but what else is new?

3) Microsoft is back in the platform business: I've said this before and I'll say it again—Microsoft is at their best when they're one step removed from the customer experience. I don't mean that in a bad way, but where I see Microsoft shine is when they are building the things that we use to build the experiences and outcomes we want for our constituencies; when they build the foundation and frame,

but we paint the walls, put in the furniture and hang the pictures. The cloud ecosystem is really platform-writ-large: Microsoft knitting all of their technologies together into one system, and we're beginning to see the power of that platform manifest in the real world.

It was an exciting and thought-provoking WPC—more cerebral and engaging than I think I was expecting!
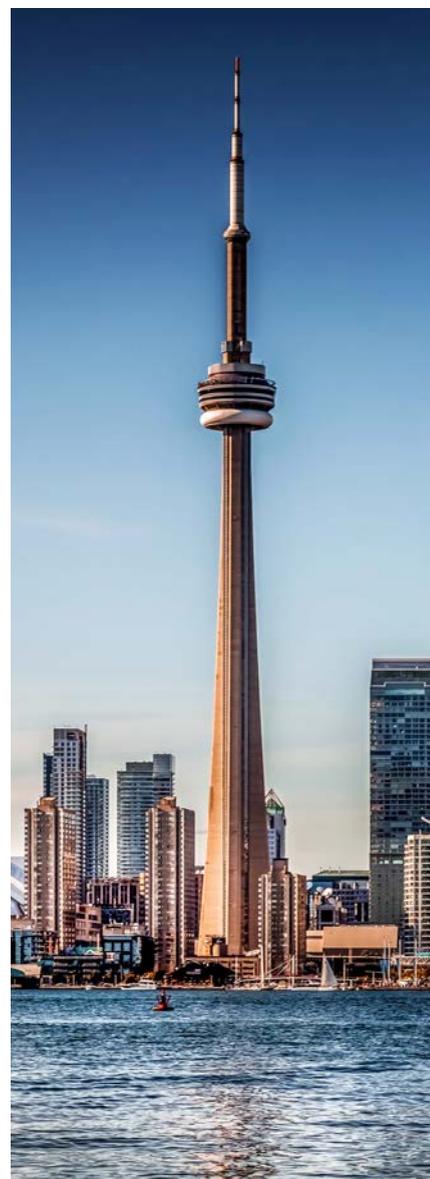
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What's New and What's Changing:
Announcements from and around WPC

Microsoft Rationalizes Their Project Online Lineup

To simplify and streamline subscription plans for Project, Microsoft will make the following changes effective August 1, 2016:

■ Project Lite will be renamed to "Project Online Essentials"

■ Project Online will be renamed to "Project Online Premium without Project App"

■ New: Project Online Professional—For project managers to plan, manage, and collaborate on projects

■ New: Project Online Premium—Includes project portfolio management capabilities that enables organizations to get started, prioritize project portfolio investments and deliver with the intended business value

Both Project Online Pro and Premium plans include the Project client. In addition, Microsoft is retiring the following effective December 31, 2016:

· Project Pro for Office 365

· Project Online with Project Pro for Office 365

Moving forward, there will basically be three subscription levels for Project: Essentials, Professional, and Premium.

Windows OS Enterprise User Subscriptions Get E-ified

Microsoft is making some changes to Windows OS Enterprise subscriptions—they've introduced the "Enterprise E3" subscription to their Cloud Solution Provider program. This is basically the same Windows Enterprise subscription that is currently available under MPSA and Enterprise Agreements. It's designed to give Cloud Solution Providers the ability to deliver fully managed solutions across the Office 365 and Windows stacks.

They've also introduced a NEW "Enterprise E5" subscription, which includes everything in the Windows Enterprise/E3 plan, plus Windows Defender Advanced Threat Protection (WDATP—new advanced, proactive security enhancements to Windows 10).

We'll be discussing this further in our next issue—there are more details, but we're still working through them. For now, E3 is normal Windows Enterprise as a user subscription, and E5 adds WDATP.

A Host of Changes to Enterprise Cloud Suite and EMS Compositions

We'll also be blogging and writing on the exact details as they become available, but at WPC this year Microsoft announced a series of tweaks and changes to their "big cloud" bundles, Enterprise Cloud Suite and the Enterprise Mobility Suite:

Enterprise Mobility Suite becomes "Enterprise Mobility and Security E3"—it will be the same tech soup as the current EMS bundle, but this move spins off some naming changes:

■ Azure AD Premium becomes Azure AD Premium P1

■ Azure RMS Premium becomes Azure Information Protection P1

■ Cloud Discovery plus some other bits becomes Cloud App Security

Introducing the new Enterprise Mobility and Security E5—this is everything in EMS E3 plus some new things coming down the road:

■ Azure AD Premium P2: Everything in P1 plus new Identity Protection and Privileged Identity Management (IPPIM)

■ Azure Information Protection P2: Everything in P1 plus automatic classification and labelling functionality (ability to automatically assign various classification levels to information assets)

■ Generally available sometime in Q4, 2016

New EMS bundles mean new Enterprise Cloud Suite Bundles as well. Also, Enterprise Cloud Suite is getting a naming makeover to Secure Productive Enterprise E3 (SPEE3)

■ SPEE3 is basically the same configuration as the Enterprise Cloud Suite today. You get:

· Office 365 Plan E3

· Windows Enterprise E3 (see above)

· Enterprise Mobility and Security E3

■ If you want to get the full and ultimate range of the Microsoft cloud ecosystem, then you need to go SPEE5 (Secure Productive Enterprise E5). In this upgrade you get:

· Office 365 Plan E5 (E3 + hosted voice and some other bits)

· Windows Enterprise E5 (see above)

· Enterprise Mobility and Security E5

So what happens if you want Office 365 Plan E5 with Windows Enterprise E3, but you also want Enterprise Mobility and Security E5? Aside from sundering the laws of physics, we're working on figuring all that out—so look for more to come.

Got all that? There's a test at the end of this newsletter. Kidding—but on a serious note, expect more of these types of tweaks as Microsoft continues to expand and rationalize their cloud ecosystem. That's most evident right now in their security stack—they've been developing a host of solutions, and one day they bond together to form "identity management" that further specializes into Identity Protection, etc. It's the evolution of their security stack playing out in licensing, and it will continue to evolve.

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But Wait, There's More!

If you've hung in there with us this long, you deserve a medal. So we'll be more pithy about the rest of the changes:

1) MPSA and Enterprise Advantage—the Future of EA?
Remember when Microsoft recently raised the Enterprise Agreement minimum qualification to 500 seats? MPSA Advantage is basically EA quality but paired with MPSA flexibility—only Enterprise Advantage will be an option for customers up to 2,400 seats. It's an EA replacement if you have less than 500 seats, but may also be an enticing option if you are bigger. There will be more to come on this as it doesn't officially roll out until 2017. We also don't know when the program will expand to customers larger than 2,400 seats, and nothing has been announced, save that we believe Microsoft's intention is to eventually phase out the EA entirely, replacing it all with the MPSA framework.

https://blogs.technet.microsoft.com/volume-licensing/2016/07/01/introducing-enterprise-advantage-on-mpsa/

2) Windows Server 2016: Core Based, CBB, LTSB, Nano, Oh My
Big things are coming to a Windows Server OS near you this fall, according to the latest from Microsoft. We already wrote extensively on the transition to a core-based licensing model (still need CALs, so I guess it's a Core/CAL model?)—but let me take a moment to say it again: start preparing ASAP if you have a big Windows Server footprint. It's important to get out ahead of this. We also now know that the licensing is changing, the deployment options are changing—big changes all around. We'll also be writing more on these new developments, so stay tuned!

https://blogs.technet.microsoft.com/windowsserver/2016/07/12/windows-server-2016-new-current-branch-for-business-servicing-option/

3) System Center 2016: The Peanut Butter to Server 2016's Chocolate
It wouldn't be a Windows Server release without a corresponding announcement about System Center. We were thinking that SC 2016 would follow after the release of Server 2016, but Microsoft announced they will both launch in September. System Center will go core-based for licensing just like Windows, which makes us glad they are releasing them together because it would have been confusing to license Servers by Core/CAL and System Center by Proc/CAL.

https://blogs.technet.microsoft.com/systemcenter/2016/07/12/system-center-2016-to-launch-in-september/

4) Azure Stack Pushes to 2017, but There's a Good Reason for It
We loved the idea of Azure Stack, but Microsoft listened to customer feedback telling them it's too complex and customers aren't ready to take on MORE complexity—even when the promise of Azure Stack technology is so cool when you think about hybrid cloud environments. So they're pushing the release to sometime in 2017 and focusing on partners like Dell, Lenovo, and HPE that can make it more consumable. That's undeniably a smart move and kudos to Microsoft for taking a better approach.

https://azure.microsoft.com/en-us/blog/microsoft-azure-stack-delivering-cloud-infrastructure-as-integrated-systems/

5) SQL Data Warehousing as a Service (DWaaS?): GA in Azure
Microsoft announced GA Azure SQL Data Warehouse—which is the ability to stand up a data warehouse in Azure with all the scalability and elasticity that comes with not building the same thing on prem. Just like data warehouses—the details are too massive to describe adequately in a couple sentences, so check out the blog post below!

https://blogs.technet.microsoft.com/dataplatforminsider/2016/07/12/the-elastic-future-of-data-warehousing/

6) Announcing the Microsoft Professional Degree Program
This was one of my personal favorites of WPC. Microsoft announced the launch of the Professional Degree Program—with the initial offering aimed at Data Science professionals. If you are the Data Science field, Microsoft has assembled University-grade learning and launched this degree program to give you the opportunity to sharpen the saw. According to a study cited in the blog post, by 2018 we could be facing a shortage of 140,000+ people with deep analytical skills, so get cracking!

https://borntolearn.mslearn.net/b/weblog/posts/announcing-the-microsoft-professional-degree-mpd-program

Microsoft

Dynamics 365: A One–Stop Cloud Solution
Achieve Your Digital Transformation

WRITTEN BY GINA MONTGOMERY

July 10—13, 2016 marked this year's Microsoft Worldwide Partner Conference in Toronto. More than 14,000 partners from 144 countries gathered to network and learn about Microsoft's FY17 initiatives and new offerings. We heard loud and clear that we are entering the fourth Industrial Revolution, and our customers are transforming digitally. Satya Nadella, Microsoft's CEO, stated, "Digital transformation requires systems of intelligence that are tailored to each industry, each company, each micro-task performed by each person. Systems that can learn, expand, and evolve with agility as the world and business changes." Part of Digital Transformation includes reinventing business processes. With Microsoft's announcement of Dynamics 365 coming this fall, we will now have a platform to help us succeed with this transformation.

Dynamics 365 will bring together the best of Microsoft's CRM and ERP cloud offerings into one cloud service with specific, purpose built apps for each of your key business processes. Dynamics 365 will introduce a disruptive and customer centric business model to allow you to build what you want and buy just the capabilities you need, while ensuring all roles have access to all the data they need to be successful in their jobs. Since Dynamics 365 will provide customers a modern and familiar experience with built-in insights, intelligence, and workflow, the possibilities are endless. Microsoft uses a common data model and consistent application platform to ensure consistency, interoperability, and extensibility. This extensibility also includes natural integration with Office 365.

Dynamics 365 will offer many different business enablers and opportunity for improvement on existing productivity and intelligence within your organization. Start with what you need relative to your business by creating apps that fit roles, industries, and businesses. With Dynamics 365, data and insights are transformed into action for intelligence where it's needed, business users are empowered to change and adapt without IT, and organizations can reimagine their business model with a consistent, flexible, extensible platform.

Dynamics 365 Availability and Purchasing
When and where will Dynamics 365 be available? Microsoft has indicated that the Enterprise edition of Dynamics 365 will be available worldwide in the fall of this year. The Business edition will be made available in the same timeframe in the US and Canada with a phased roll out to additional geographies. We will share out a formal announcement on the release date of Dynamics 365 as information becomes available.

How much will Dynamics 365 cost? The business application industry has traditionally presented customers with a range of siloed applications. Microsoft has indicated that they will support the traditional approach and allow customers to license Dynamics 365 by application (Financials, Operations, Sales, Marketing, etc.) However, they will also be able to license users by "role." This new role-based approach will give customers the flexibility needed to support modern, more agile, more diverse employee roles—enabling them to access functionality across all applications within Dynamics 365. We'll share additional details on pricing closer to availability.

Drop us a line to learn more about this.

Microsoft

Build Your Solution on an Azure Foundation

Take Advantage of New Technology

WRITTEN BY ROSS RAMSDELL

Microsoft has announced that the Azure Solutions site has been launched on Azure.com. This new site will enable partners and customers to easily find information on cloud solutions that can be built in Azure. The information provided on cloud solutions is served up via customer "stories," quick links to apps available on the Azure Marketplace, links to solutions partners, enterprise ready templates, starter kits, and more. The following are the solution areas available on the new site, as well as a brief description of each:

■ **Digital Marketing**—Engage with customers around the world with rich, personalized digital marketing experiences. Quickly build and launch digital campaigns that automatically scale based on customer demand. Analyze and improve campaign effectiveness with the power of data analytics.

■ **Mobile**—Connect with your customers wherever they are. Create tailored experiences based on your customers' interests and behavior. Reduce your time to market with cloud services, tools, and DevOps designed for delivering mobile solutions.

■ **E-Commerce**—No matter what you sell, you need secure and scalable e-commerce solutions that meet the demands of both your customers and business. Engage customers through customized products and offers, process transactions quickly and securely, and focus on fulfillment and customer service.

■ **Business Intelligence**—Transform your company's data to support informed decision

making. Gain deeper insight into your data to stay in the know and spot trends as they happen. With modern business intelligence, your entire organization can understand and quickly act on data.

■ **Big Data and Analytics**—Deliver better experiences and make better decisions by analyzing massive amounts of data in real time. Get the insight you need to deliver intelligent actions that improve customer engagement, increase revenue, and lower costs.

■ **Predictive Maintenance with IoT**—Predict equipment failures before they happen, and systematically prevent them—for millions of machines across the globe. Use streaming data from sensors and devices to recognize warning signs, predict equipment maintenance needs, and preemptively repair equipment, saving you time and money.

■ **Remote Monitoring with IoT**—Bring the Internet of your things to life. Connect and monitor all of your devices, assets, and sensors. Increase visibility into performance and efficiency, plus enable innovation and improve business outcomes through previously untapped data.

■ **Development and Test**—You're delivering more features faster—keep up with a comprehensive set of development and testing tools for your team to collaborate and deliver at cloud speed. Quickly create consistent development and test environments on your terms through a scalable, on-demand infrastructure.

■ **Backup and Archive**—Protect your data and applications no matter where they reside to avoid costly business interruptions or to meet compliance requirements. Securely extend your on-premises backup storage and data archive solutions to the cloud—reducing cost and complexity, while achieving efficiency and scalability.

■ **Disaster recovery**—Even a minor outage can put you at a competitive disadvantage. Be ready with a business continuity plan that includes disaster recovery for all your major IT systems—without the expense of secondary infrastructure.

■ **SAP on Azure**—Quickly deploy SAP solutions across dev-test and production scenarios on the most comprehensive cloud platform—providing unparalleled performance for even the largest SAP workloads.

■ **SharePoint on Azure**—Not ready for SharePoint Online yet? No problem. Host your SharePoint farms in Azure, scale rapidly based on demand, and save on infrastructure costs. Whether it's for development, testing, staging, production, or disaster recovery purposes, Azure is a perfect home for your SharePoint workloads.

Azure provides cloud-based solutions to support the demands of your business. Building and running your solutions on Azure helps you reduce costs, gain agility and differentiate your business.

Drop us a line to learn more about this.

Microsoft

Discover Surface as a Service
Stay Current with a Subscription to the Latest Hardware

WRITTEN BY JONATHAN CLARK

Surface as a Service was the latest hardware announcement at Microsoft's Worldwide Partner Conference last week in Toronto. The Surface device will now be offered as a subscription service, which will function much like a leasing program. Surface as a Service also includes the option to lease with subscriptions to Office 365, Azure, and even Windows 10. Combining cloud subscriptions services with a device subscription service creates a complete solution, from beginning to end.

Cloud service providers will be able to sell Surface as a Service to enterprises who may struggle to refresh their devices quickly. Purchasing the complete solution of hardware and software makes the refresh process more efficient and allows you to stay up to date with the latest and greatest in device and software updates.

This program will be run by the distribution centers, and we will be able to work closely

with them to create the most effective and seamless way to transact these processes. They are in the development phase of rolling out these programs, and it will be something to look and prepare for in the near future! Be sure to stay tuned for more information as we receive it.

Drop us a line to learn more about this.

Microsoft

Get to Market Faster with Xamarin DevOps Tools

Streamline the App Development Process

WRITTEN BY PATRICK RENZI

As a small ISV start up, you truly face a tough task. How can you compete against more established Software developers without deeply cutting into your bottom line? Creating new IP takes time, and testing that IP takes even longer. You could cut time by developing your application for only one platform. Developing for iOS only could reach a larger subset of clients, while developing for Android may take less time. Even if focusing on one platform does save time, you're limiting the audience of mobile users that you can reach. If only there was a tool that could simplify the coding process to normalize your app across all platforms. Someone must have been listening, because now there is.

Xamarin is a DevOps tool that was created for the sole purpose of normalizing your applications and cutting your time to market. Recently purchased by Microsoft, Xamarin is now available to all Azure and Visual Studio Customers. It works by automating the process of testing your application's coding across all the major mobile platforms and

form factors. The tool will then "normalize" the code, ensuring that your application can be distributed for use by all mobile users. This increases your total footprint and offers you a better chance to reach the highest number of clients possible.

The Xamarin tool allows you to free up your developers' time to start work on new projects and builds. And since the automation tests your applications across all platforms it ensures that the client experience will be a successful

one. Getting your applications to market faster helps you realize revenue sooner. Increasing sales while cutting operating costs—I believe that's called a win-win. With the power and scalability of the Azure cloud to serve as the backbone to your new end user experience, what will you build next?

Drop us a line to learn more about this.

Microsoft

Windows 10 Free Upgrade Offer Coming to a Close

But the New Features Are Just Starting to Roll Out

WRITTEN BY ASHLEY LOFARO

The one-year anniversary of the Windows 10 release is right around the corner, and Microsoft just announced the operating system is now on 300 million active devices. Thanks to improvement-focused processes like the Insider Program and constantly testing new builds, Windows 10 has the highest customer satisfaction of any version of Windows. What's even more unique about this release is that a lot of these upgrades to Windows 10 have been for free thanks to Microsoft's Free Upgrade Offer—but that will soon be coming to an end on July 29, 2016.

After July 29, you can get Windows 10 pre-installed on a new device, purchase up-grades through volume licensing, or purchase a full version of Windows 10. Once you upgrade to Windows 10, you'll notice it getting better and better. Now that Windows is delivered as a service, you'll receive that latest innovations and upgrades for free.

The first innovations came to us on November 12, 2015, less than 6 months after Windows 10 launched. The November Update, as it is called, gave IT professionals more control over their users' updates with a new free service called Windows Update for Business. This service integrates with existing company tools, such as System Center, to control update deployment and provide security updates

sooner. It features peer-to-peer delivery to ease bandwidth consumption when updating remote sites, along with Distribution Rings, which allow waves of designated users to receive updates when specified by the IT team. Even time is manageable with Maintenance Windows, which allows IT to set specific timeframes when updates can happen or not, so business will not be interrupted.

Another manageability feature introduced to us in November was the distribution of apps with Windows Store for Business. Businesses can now take advantage of acquiring large amounts of applications, or having another outlet to distribute their own custom line of business applications. IT professionals can go to a Web-based portal and sign in using their Azure AD account to choose the applications that they want for their business. They have the option of choosing whether the apps should be hosted online in a private company store or if the apps will be offline and distributed within the company's network to specific users.

These were just the highlights of the first Windows update. It's now July, and Microsoft has already announced the next installment of innovations available starting August 2nd , appropriately named the Anniversary Update. One of the exciting features in this update will be the extension of Windows Hello.

Windows Hello is a secure way to sign into your Windows 10 device without a password by using biometrics like facial recognition or a fingerprint reader. This will now be extended to Microsoft Edge and Windows apps to allow biometric sign-on to secured sites without a password.

Another update in July will be Windows Ink. Inking is already very popular on Windows 10 devices, as users enjoy the ability to quickly jot down notes in OneNote—but now that functionality will be extended to other apps. You will be able to use your Windows 10 device to write on sticky notes or draw on a whiteboard digitally. Windows Ink will also be integrated into Maps and Microsoft Edge.

The Free Upgrade program might be coming to an end, but new innovations will keep coming for free to those who have made the move to Windows 10. This allows users to rely on Windows 10 as the familiar, productivity-boosting environment that we have come to love—but with the added benefit of know-ing the platform will stay current across all Windows devices, thanks to Windows as a service.

Drop us a line to learn more about this.

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