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Dave McClure • Apr. 29, 2013

From the [“Bleeding Edge”](#) blog.

I've made no secret of the fact that Windows 8 – which I unceremoniously dubbed “the Frankensystem” – is a desperate effort by Microsoft to force people to buy things in their “store.” Seeing Apple and Google rake in oodles of cash with crippled cell phone apps and ringtone downloads, Microsoft decided to go them one better and convert their entire Windows operating system to something that looks and works like a cell phone screen.

But the company has leaked that in late June it will release Windows 8.1, code named “Blue,” which will be every bit as exciting, and ground-breaking, and wonderful, as the original Windows 8 was.

Yawn.

Windows 8 has been an unmitigated disaster for Microsoft, following in the grand traditions of Web TV, “Bob,” that stupid animated paperclip, desktop “channels,” and Windows 98SE. Consumers hate it, corporations are stunned by the training and support requirements to enable people to use it, and even the legion of Microsoft “fanboyz” have to swallow hard before pretending to like it.

So Microsoft is working on a new version called Windows 8.1...which will fix absolutely nothing about this Franksystem that will make it attractive to users. Let's review the changes in Windows 8.1 that have been leaked to some tech journalists:

- **The Start Button is back, and does virtually nothing.** Taking away the Start

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- **A “Boot to Desktop” option.** This will allow you to boot up directly to the classic desktop, a la Windows 7. Only it takes you to a desktop that is missing the start button and will keep trying to force you over to their Start Screen so you can ~~buy more stupid, crippled apps~~ enhance your user experience with apps that don't work as well as they used to.
- **Enhanced customization of the start page.** For the people who just love the start page, this new version will likely offer some advanced customization features, like the ability to use differing sizes of tiles, and a smaller search pane.
- **Internet Explorer 11.** Okay, whatever.
- **New apps.** No you still will not have a PDF reader that works, but you will have better integration with Microsoft's Skydrive, and the ability to run two apps side-by-side.

The problem is that Microsoft continues to ignore the screams of anguish from Windows users who won't ever own a Windows phone or tablet, don't want to spend untold hours trying to figure out how to do the things they used to do with ease, and don't want to spring for a new, touch-screen monitor.

Microsoft has again blundered badly in its read of the marketplace. And its reward for doing so is to watch its core market in PCs tank badly. Tech market researcher IDC [reports](#) that worldwide PC shipments plummeted 14 percent in the first quarter of the year, the steepest decline ever since IDC started watching the PC market in 1994.

So what can the Redmond Giant do? Sadly, its options are now limited. The introduction of the new version of Microsoft Office, and the online Office 360, will help this year. But if the company ever hopes to recover its status as the pre-emptive operating system manufacturer, it will need to drop its insistence that PC screens look and work like a 2.5-inch phone screen. And begin to listen to the legion of loyal Windows fans who at present feel betrayed and bewildered.

But that means it may well also lose any future in the Windows Phone market, and

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