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I have now downloaded and installed the official 2.5-Gigabyte Windows 8.1 upgrade/fix/enhancement to the much-maligned Windows 8 operating system. And the official verdict is, if you absolutely love Windows 8k this is an upgrade that will provide you with wonderful, helpful tweaks and improvements.

If you hate Windows 8, this “upgrade” will make you suicidal.

So what has changed in this new version of the most hated Microsoft operating system ever? Here's the short list:

- **There is a new “Start” button.** No, it does not work like the old start button. Instead, it just takes you to the same old Windows 8 ~~Metro~~ Modern User Interface. Never mind that there was virtually no way to escape this interface in Windows 8...now you are forced to look at it in yet another way.
- **There is an expanded “Snap View” that...wait for it...allows you to open more than one application at a time, and re-size the window for each application to your own liking.** You can have up to eight “snap views” open at the same time, so long as you have two 2560×1600 resolution monitors. Otherwise, you get just two. Excuse me, but wasn't this what Windows 95 was all about? Gosh, the ability to open two windows on the desktop at that same time... Snicker!
- **The apps are vastly improved** – to drive you to Microsoft's app store to buy things. But the Microsoft App Store is still a far cry from those of Apple or Google. On the other hand, you get the power of Bing! to help you buy even more stuff from Microsoft!
- **SkyDrive will be even more deeply imbedded into your PC.** This means that your entire bandwidth will be tied up for days trying to synch your desktop with their cloud application, with absolutely no ability to opt out or put SkyDrive on hold so you can actually work on that computer.

So I don't particularly like Windows 8.1. What would I do to make the whole mess

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create a tile named "system utilities" and place all of those apps under it. Frankly, Microsoft has crassly seized control of your desktop and will not allow you to customize it much beyond the color and a few do-dads. It is our desktop, dammit, and we want it back!

- **Quit pushing Skype.** That's a 90's technology that made sense when everyone paid an arm and a leg for a land line. Those days are long over, and I am sick of Skype being in my face every time I turn around. I have unlimited calling and texting on my cell phone. Bye-bye, Skype!
- **Quit crippling applications to make them work like they work on a cell phone.** If I wanted crippled applications, I would use shareware. I didn't pay what I paid for genuine Microsoft applications to find that they work about half of the way they used to.
- **Give me a way to get out of apps.** Nothing is more infuriating than having to re-boot the system to find your way out of some application that used to have a simple "X" in the upper left hand corner. Grrrr. I want the "X" back!
- **Make thing actually work.** SkyDrive doesn't update automatically. Messages in Outlook.Com get deleted for no reason. Notes disappear without an explanation. Word defaults to save documents on SkyDrive, not my drive. For gosh sakes, who put Microsoft in control of my computer???

That's really the crux of the matter. The ability to control your own computer, which has been a facet of Microsoft operating systems since 1982, has disappeared. In its place us an ugly, evil corporation that has seized control of the desktop and allows you to...change the pretty colors, or label the list of tiles they create for you without your permission or interest.

Truth is, I want my flexible, scalable, customizable Windows back. And until I get it, I will stick with Window 7 for my work and home machines.

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