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of its legacy operating system. What does this mean to accounting professionals? A lot, depending on the uptake rates of the new system and whether clients jump on the b

Dave McClure • Jan. 24, 2015

Microsoft has officially announced Windows 10, which purports to be the final version of its legacy operating system. What does this mean to accounting professionals? A lot, depending on the uptake rates of the new system and whether clients jump on the bandwagon.

Windows 10 has already been released to developers and others who have registered to receive Preview Versions of the system under the Microsoft Insider Program. The release date for the Production Version will be available sometime after the Microsoft

Build 2015 conference next April, and will contain information about final features

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Windows 8.1 for the first year.

Beyond these, however, are a slew of corrections that may – or should – deliver on the promise of a multi-platform, robust operating system that can rival OSX and others. Here are just a few of the features tucked under the hood:

- **The Cortana Digital Assistant.** Introduced as an app for the Windows Phone last year, Cortana has earned respectable marks as a rival to Apple's Siri.
- **The return of the "start" button.** For those who are enamored of the newer "metro" desktop design, it is available at the touch of a button, and switching back and forth between the two, while largely unnecessary, will be simple.
- **A new browser, code-named "Spartan."** This new operating system appears to end Microsoft's divergence from other browser platforms, and offers the ability to annotate web pages, read pages more quickly, and easily share pages with friends. The Cortana personal assistant will be built in.
- **A Continuum Mode to switch between platforms.** This is designed to make apps more portable across phones, tablets and PCs, easily moving from mouse-and-keyboard apps to touch-screen devices.
- **A new Office 365 for Windows 10.** It will include Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and OneNote.
- **Support for the Xbox gaming environment.** There will be a new app for Xbox on the PC, which will integrate with Xbox ne (but apparently not Xbox 360) for better PC-based gaming.
- **Support for voice commands and hand gestures.**
- **Support for holographic computing via Microsoft HoloLens.** I am not sure how this feature will play out for accountants (other than placing a 10-inch woman in white on a partner's desk to whisper "Help me, Obi-Wan. You are the last hope of the rebel alliance.") If you are ready for holographic accounting, you can find out more here, at the official Microsoft HoloLens page.

As noted above, this is not the final feature set, and it is not uncommon to see

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