



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on September 15, 2015

## Microsoft Forces Windows 10 “Upgrade” Even When Users Refuse It

As more and more people have become aware of the spyware nature of Windows 10, many have decided not to take Microsoft up on their “free upgrade.” People all over the world decided to either switch to some other operating system (such as Linux) or just stay with Windows 7, 8, or 8.1. Now Microsoft admits that it is forcing the update to those who are using those previous versions of Windows, even if they have declined the “upgrade.”



Last week several tech news websites reported that users are getting the updates as part of the “automatic updates” to Windows 7, 8, and 8.1, even though many of these users declined the offer to download and install Windows 10. As [arstechnica.com reported](#):

You might be in the process of acquiring Windows 10 — whether you want the free upgrade or not. Microsoft has confirmed that it is “helping upgradable devices get ready for Windows 10 by downloading the files they need” in the event that owners decide to migrate to the new OS, even if they have heretofore passed up on “reserving” their free upgrade from Windows 7 or 8.

As *The New American* [reported previously](#), “Many of the new features and settings of Windows 10 have been deemed spyware by computer security experts.” In fact, according to the [Microsoft Services Agreement](#) and its accompanying documents — to which one must agree in order to use any Microsoft products or services — the software giant of Redmond, Washington, is allowed unhindered access to view, save, and share any data stored on or accessed using any computer running Microsoft Windows. As we wrote in that article:

To install the Windows 10 upgrade, users must agree to the Microsoft Services Agreement and its accompanying documents. Few will ever read the terms of these documents since they span some 40,000 words and would run 110 pages if printed. As is to be expected, most of the terms are written in legalese and are not overly easy to understand. There are some parts of the terms that users need to be aware of, though, because agreeing to them grants Microsoft the right to read, save, and share anything stored on or accessed using any computer running Microsoft Windows as well as any computer using Microsoft products or services.

When many users declined the upgrade, Microsoft changed the way it issues updates to Windows 7, 8, and 8.1. Initially, the company stopped providing anything that resembled adequate release notes to explain to users what the update is or what it does. Then, Microsoft began rolling out updates that bring Windows 7, 8, and 8.1 into line with the “spyware” elements of Windows 10. As we [reported](#):

Because Microsoft’s [Services Agreement](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) apply to all products and services offered by Microsoft, it looks as though the company is expanding its spying to include Windows 7, 8, and 8.1. According to [hakspek.com](#), “new updates that are being deployed to all Windows 7, 8 and 8.1 machines will turn their computers into a big piece of spyware, just like” Windows 10. As



the article explains:

The updates in question are KB3075249 and KB3080149. If installed, these updates are known to report your data back to Microsoft servers, without user interaction. KB3075249 Microsoft Update adds telemetry points to “consent.exe” in Windows 7, 8 and 8.1, allowing for remote monitoring of everything that happens within the operating system. KB3080149 ensures that all “down-level devices” receive the same updates and treatment as Windows 10 boxes get.

So, now that Microsoft has convinced some 50 million users to “update” to Windows 10 (with more than 14 million of them doing it in only the first 24 hours the download was available), it seems to have its sights set on those who have heeded the warnings about Windows 10 being spyware. By sending these Windows updates — many of which will be downloaded and installed by default — Microsoft is expanding its spyware empire.

Since then, Microsoft has taken the unheard of approach of sending the Windows 10 installer files to any computer running Windows 7, 8, or 8.1 that has automatic updates enabled. It appears that even the scores of millions of users who have “upgraded” to Windows 10 (at the expense of their liberty and privacy) are not enough for Gates and company. Even with the ability to turn on many of Windows 10’s spyware features in Windows 7, 8, and 8.1, the company wants more. Windows 10 is better able to accomplish the data-mining Microsoft wants because, as we previously reported:

When Microsoft announced the “free” upgrade, many were left wondering why the Redmond giant would give away licenses to use the new operating system. Now it appears that the reason is simple: greater data-mining opportunities. Windows operating systems have long included security weaknesses that leave users vulnerable to spying and data-mining from others. What is different with the newest iteration of Windows is that Microsoft is directly involved in that spying and data-mining and has built the entire operating system in such a way as to allow it.

Besides the obvious issues involved in forcing an update to computer users who don’t want it, there is the fact that the files involved take up some 6GB of storage. Downloading such files can cause serious problems for users who don’t have unlimited Internet access. Several users have reported going over their monthly limits because they were not even aware of the downloads. Others have complained that the files slowed down their Internet connections.

Microsoft has set this up in such a way that the downloaded files are hidden from easy view. Deleting them requires a little more than basic computer skills, but it can be done. The real issue, however, is the fact that the whole Windows 10 fiasco shows that Microsoft is not acting in a way that is worthy of trust. Users can remove the files, refuse to update to Windows 10, delete questionable updates that come in to their Windows 7, 8, or 8.1 machines, and hope that Microsoft doesn’t already have another plan in action to force spyware back onto their machines, but is it worth it?

This writer has suggested what he feels is a better solution: switch to an operating system that respects your liberty and privacy. Many are finding Linux to be the best choice. As we previously reported about the difference between Microsoft and Linux:

By way of comparison, users who install any of the various distributions of the Linux operating system do not consent to any such agreements. In fact, the closest thing in Linux to any of this is a feature in Ubuntu that allows users to search Amazon from their desktop screen. That feature is easily disabled by clicking a single button.

Maybe users of Windows 7 and 8 who are concerned about privacy and liberty should consider



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declining Microsoft's offer for a free upgrade and simply "upgrade" to Linux.

Considering the lengths (and depths) to which Microsoft is willing to go to force its spyware on users, migrating to an operating system that is more trustworthy may not be merely optional anymore. It's starting to look like a necessity.

[In the interest of fairness, the writer of this article has been a Linux user for several years and does not use any Microsoft products or services. This article was written on his System76 Bonobo Extreme running Ubuntu 14.04 using LibreOffice 4.2.]



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