Digital Workplace transformation drives Windows 10 adoption
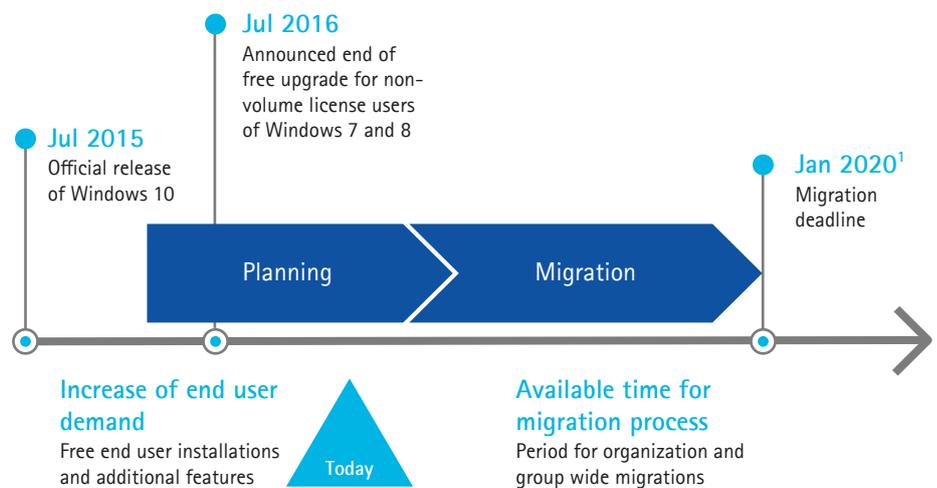
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The digital workplace is one essential enabler for future, sustainable competitiveness of enterprises. It needs to be flexible, empowering the productivity of employees while increasing their work environment satisfaction. In parallel it has to address critical business requirements related to mobility, remote collaboration and security. Microsofts Windows 10 operating system is a "must consideration" when looking at the transformation to a future-proof digital workplace platform.

Introduction

The demand of Accenture's clients for Digital workplace strategy consulting to shape their future workplace target picture is strongly growing. So far Windows 10 was slowly impacting the market given that extended support of Windows 7 is still running until beginning of 2020. Nevertheless as Gartner reports indicate enterprises are ahead of a strong demand for Windows 10 caused by enforced consumer adoption, improved features and considerations for a cost optimized rollout. Therefore Accenture recommends to start with the preparatory work and planning for the Windows 10 migration latest in 2017.

Figure 1: Clients should start their migration planning for Windows 10 immediately to avoid time pressure

Gartner recommended to start with the preparatory work and planning for the Windows 10 migration in early 2016, regardless of when the organization will perform the migration

Jul 2016
Announced end of free upgrade for non-volume license users of Windows 7 and 8

Jul 2015
Official release of Windows 10

Jan 2020[1]
Migration deadline

Planning

Migration

Increase of end user demand
Free end user installations and additional features

Today

Available time for migration process
Period for organization and group wide migrations

1: Extended support for Windows 10, released in July 2015, will end October, 2025

Advantages

Online services
Windows 10 enables Online services with its new Edge Browser. Edge supports modern web standards, e.g. improved HTML5 and CSS support, frequent updates and will therefore enable rapid application development in enterprises.

Integration in Cloud Services
The integration in Cloud Services is enhanced as services like OneDrive and Office365 are better integrated into the platform. Windows 10 can more easily deploy, integrate and manage cloud services and applications, e.g. Office 365 Single-Sign-On, One Drive Synchronization and Backups, Microsoft Azure Active Directory Join and MS Intune for Mobile Device Mgmt (MDM).

Mobility
Windows 10 over-comes device-centric application provisioning and enables Mobility. Universal applications run on laptops, desktops, tablets, phones and other devices. The same applications can be accessed independently of the device to give users a seamless and consistent experience. Given that Windows 10 market share is still very limited on smartphone and tablet devices the Integration with Office 365 MDM features and Microsoft Intune allow the management of non-MS based devices at relatively low cost. With the new provisioning package option, Windows 10 is also better suited for the realization of BYOD[1], COPE[2] and other mobile strategy scenarios[3], because new devices can be configured as an enterprise device by the user without the need of a setup by the IT department.

Security
Missing separation of personal and corporate data is a significant Security concern for many enterprises. With Windows 10 this separation is possible through the Enterprise Data Protection (EDP) feature, it enables IT departments to wipe corporate data remotely without impacting any personal data of the user.

Consideration Points

Application compatibility was a challenge for all Windows operating system upgrades so far. According to Accenture client experience applications running on Windows 7, 8 or 8.1 will very likely run on Windows 10 without problems. The incompatibility of old Windows XP drivers has to be considered though – the corresponding applications should be checked and tested in advance and if possible upgraded to newer versions. The 64-bit version Windows 10 does not contain any mode for legacy 16-bit applications anymore – if necessary a deployment of the 32-bit version of Windows 10 is should be considered.

For a productive deployment scenario only a few **infrastructure updates** are necessary. In order to have the full functionality the update of the System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM) to SCCM 2012 R2 SP1 or later. This is prerequisite to manage and deploy different branches, Click2Run updates for Office 365 apps or cumulative updates that will come with the new deployment model.

The **hardware devices** of in-place Windows 7 or 8.1 deployments will be still supported by Microsoft until the end of the corresponding support lifecycles, including devices using the Intel Skylake architecture introduced in autumn 2015. The Microsoft support for these devices was extended to January 2020[4]. Many enterprises consider to do an operating system upgrade together with the end device life-cycle. In this case an early rollout readiness is required.

A lot of enterprises are using **virtualized workplaces** to reduce onsite service cost and device dependencies. The option to run a Windows 10 user interface on WTS[5] based environments requires Windows Server 2016 – older versions will lead to an inconsistent user experience. Windows 10 on Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) is a proper way to avoid this situation. **The new evergreen approach** introduced by Microsoft has advantages but also bears challenges for existing change and release processes.

Figure 2: Evergreen Approach

*Conceptual illustration only
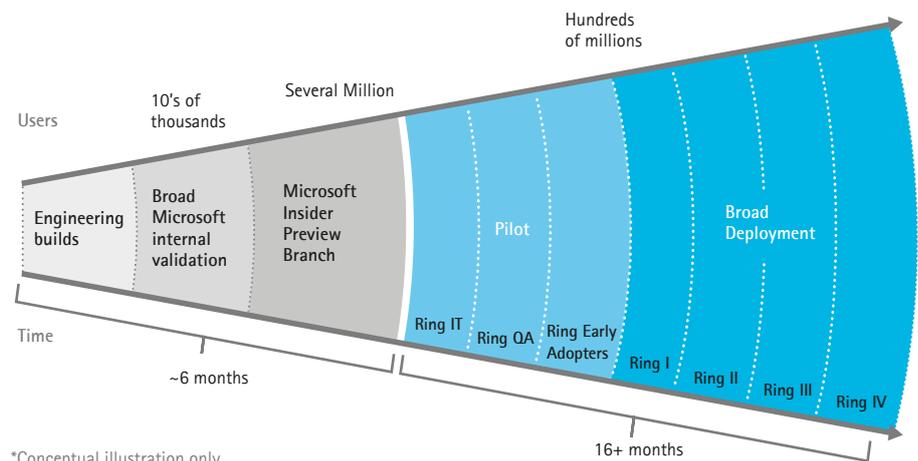
Microsoft will usually release a new Windows build every 4 to 8 months and only the last two are supported. Different service branches (Current Branch (CB), Current Branch for Business (CBB) and Long Term Servicing Branch (LTSB)) are introduced to allow the IT to balance between innovation, flexibility and stability for mission critical systems.

Best platform for the Digital Workplace

The final deadline for the migration to Windows 10 is set by Microsoft. The extended support of Windows 7 ends in January 2020. Given the advantages for a Digital Workplace environment and the considerations for a cost efficient upgrade strategy it is the right time to start planning of a Windows 10 adoption now.

Step by Step instead of Big Bang Migrations

The relatively low migration hurdles and the remaining Windows 7 support period can be used to start with piloting early adaptor environments, e.g. for mobile workers, BYOD concepts and cloud service integration like Office 365. A step-by-step migration potentially in sync with device life cycle is possible to keep migration costs low.

Accenture is your partner for Digital Workplace transformation

Accenture has deep experience and proven delivery capabilities in workplace and infrastructure transformations at large scale. We serve more than 625 clients all over the world, we consult vendor independent and have strong strategic partnerships with all major workplace and IT infrastructure vendors to integrate the best solutions into your workplace target picture. We aggregated our technical expertise about Microsoft products in Avanade, our joint venture with Microsoft. Together we are leading the market in workplace transformation including Office 365 integration and are delivering best in class solutions for our clients.

Furthermore Accenture is leveraging a proven methodology and frameworks that allow a quick start into your digital workplace transformation journey.

1 BYOD: Bring your own device
2 COPE: corporate owned, personally enabled
3 Beside BYOD and COPE, CYOD (choose your own device) and hybrid forms can be suitable for a company
4 https://support.microsoft.com/de-de/help/18581/lifecycle-support-policy-faq-windows-products
5 WTS: Windows Terminal Server

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