

Microsoft Windows 7 support and sales cutoff dates worth knowing

Summary: *Don't worry, though, Windows 7 fans: There's still another year until PC makers won't be allowed to sell new machines with Windows 7 preloaded.*

By [Mary Jo Foley](#) for [All About Microsoft](#) | December 6, 2013 -- 14:40 GMT (06:40 PST)

The long, slow march toward end-of-life of Microsoft's currently most popular operating system is underway.

As of October 30, 2013, Microsoft ceased selling boxed copies of Windows 7 at retail. (ZDNet's [Ed Bott](#) posted back in April of this year about the pending October 30 cut-off date (<http://www.zdnet.com/where-can-you-find-a-pc-running-windows-7-7000013418/>), but a few stories have popped up this week about it, so this is just a reminder.)

This October 30 cut-off date **doesn't** mean that OEMs or retailers are no longer selling PCs with Windows 7 preloaded. I can verify after a trip earlier this week to the Datavision computer store in New York (as part of my ongoing hunt for a new Windows PC) that there are plenty of Windows 7 PCs still for sale. [OEMs can continue to sell PCs preloaded with Windows 7 until October 30, 2014](#) (<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/products/lifecycle>).

Microsoft's explanation of what these dates mean, via its [Windows Lifecycle Support Page](#) (<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/products/lifecycle>) e:

"Note that when the retail software product reaches its end of sales date, it can still be purchased through OEMs (the company that made your PC) until it reaches the end of sales date for PCs with Windows preinstalled."

Mainstream (free, Microsoft-provided) support for Windows 7 with Service Pack 1 installed isn't until [January 13, 2015](#) (<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/products/lifecycle>). Microsoft will continue to provide security fixes for Windows 7 for free until the end of extended support, which is January 14, 2020 -- unless Microsoft ends up extending that support date, as it did with Windows XP.

If you're in the market for a new Windows 7 PC, Bott posted earlier this year about [where you'd be most likely to find one](#) (<http://www.zdnet.com/where-can-you-find-a-pc-running-windows-7-7000013418/>).

Users purchasing [Windows 8.1 Pro](#) also have downgrade rights to Windows 7 Pro (http://www.microsoft.com/oem/en/licensing/sblicensing/pages/downgrade_rights.aspx#fbid=CrksiNyW41x?windows). The Frequently Asked Questions [FAQ document about downgrade rights is here](#) (http://www.microsoft.com/OEM/en/licensing/sblicensing/Pages/what_to_do_downgrade_rights.aspx#fbid=CrksiNyW41x).

Update: Speaking of end-of-support dates, there were a few reports this week about the [Chinese government supposedly requesting an extension of Windows XP's planned end-of-support date](#) (<http://www.neowin.net/news/china-wants-microsoft-to-extend-windows-xp-support-past-april-8th>) of April 2014.

Microsoft's official response to this request (via a company spokesperson) is no.

The long version of that statement: