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Microsoft reveals Windows 7 pricing and upgrade info

No upgrade "edition" for UK due to EU's browser ruling, XP users entitled to discounted upgrade prices

by Amy-Mae Elliott published on 25 June 2009

Microsoft has revealed the retail pricing, and upgrade information for its next operating system, ahead of its 22 October launch.

As many of you will know, Windows 7 will be available in three flavours to consumers - Home Premium, Professional and Ultimate. The "Starter" edition, aimed at the netbook market will only be sold to businesses, so pricing has not been revealed to us at this stage.

Microsoft, and its retail partners, will be offering various pricing structures for the software, dependent on whether customers are upgrading, pre-ordering or buying the full version after its on-sale date.

The basic retail pricing for the full versions is high - £169.99 for Home Premium, £219.99 for Professional and £229.99 for Ultimate, however as Laurence Painell, Windows OEM & WGA product manager for Microsoft UK explained to Pocket-lint in a briefing, it's unlikely consumers will be forced to pay that much if they are savvy.

Those in the know have a month or so's window in which they will be able to pre-order a copy of Windows 7 Home Premium for £49.99, as long as they do so between 15 July and 14 August. Professional will be available for £99.99 under the same pre-order scheme.

Microsoft says Windows 7 pricing is cheaper than Vista's was. To put it into context with competitors, Apple will be releasing Snow Leopard, its next OS in September - UK pricing has not been confirmed, but upgrade customers in the US will be paying \$29.



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Laurence Painell explained to Pocket-lint that this launch is more complicated than previous ones, as unlike previous releases, in the UK Microsoft will not be offering upgrade edition, all consumers will have to buy the full product.

This is down to the recent "ramifications" from the EU ruling that means Microsoft cannot bundle Internet Explorer into its new OS, so an update from an older OS that does have Internet Explorer built in is not going to be possible.

Although upgrade editions will not be available, full editions at upgrade pricing will be. Upgrade pricing is set at £79.99, £189.99 and £199.99 and such cheaper versions will be available for use on any computer that is already licensed for an earlier version of Windows XP or higher.

This means that consumers, and business customers, who have held off Vista for various reasons will be able to upgrade straight to Windows 7, a move that will prove popular, and could arguably entice millions still stuck with XP, to make the leap to a more modern OS.

And, for those that can't, or don't want to hold off buying a new computer over the summer (essential for the back to school market) Microsoft has announced the Windows 7 Upgrade Option Program.

This kicks off on 26 June and means anyone who buys a PC from a participating retailer with Windows Vista Home Premium, Business or Ultimate on it, will all receive an upgrade to the corresponding version of Windows 7 from Microsoft at no cost.

However, there may be a cost from the retailer, and only certain PCs will be eligible with a logo scheme to verify which, so a little research is required for anyone wanting to go down that route.

The Windows 7 Upgrade Option Program will be

available until 31 January 2010.

Finally, Microsoft has revealed the global release timescale for all the different language versions of Windows 7. On 22 October, as well as the English language version, the company will release Spanish, Japanese, German, French, Italian, Dutch, Russian, Polish, Brazilian Portuguese, Korean, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese and Chinese (Hong Kong) versions.

Then on 31 October, the remaining 21 languages will become available: Turkish, Czech, Portuguese, Hungarian, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Finnish, Greek, Ukrainian, Romanian Arabic, Lithuanian, Bulgarian, Estonian, Slovenian, Hebrew, Thai, Croatian, Serbian Latin, and Latvian.