Bob's Help Desk
When you need help you can trust!

Upgrading to Windows 10

I have been using the Windows 10 Insider Preview for a year now, testing the new builds and evaluating the condition of the new operating system.

When Microsoft released the product at the end of August, I was convinced they had rushed the release before the product was ready for Prime-Time. Friends and family members who asked my opinion were told "Wait until it is more stable". Many of my friends who either didn't ask or ignored my advice, were met with issues like Windows being totally unresponsive after the upgrade, and meeting up with functions that refused to work. I have one friend who purchased a new laptop to use in her profession with Windows 8.1 on it. There was no way that she could use Windows 8.1 for her work, so she immediately upgraded it to Windows 10. I keep getting questions from her asking how to make it work correctly. My response is: "You have to wait until Microsoft gets around to fixing it!" It has been a very traumatic experience for her, because she has been delayed in doing her work, or had to go use a different computer to accomplish what she needed. Others who have fallen to the temptation to click on the "Get Windows 10" icon on their taskbar, were greeted with dead non-responsive computers. Fortunately, they were able to restore back to Windows 7 in order to get the use of their computer back.

Well, 2 months after the official release of Windows 10, I feel that they have gotten most of the major bugs worked out of it, so it might be time for some of the more adventuresome users who like a challenge, to take the plunge. But, remember this, you might still run into some Apps or functions that don't work the way you expect them to, or at all. You have until August of 2016 to upgrade for free, so if you are not willing / able to put up with some issues with the product, wait a while. If you are ready to take the challenge and are not dependent on your computer for your livelihood, then go ahead.

BUT, take the following items into consideration:

1. If you are using **any** anti-virus product other than Microsoft's Defender, uninstall it before performing the upgrade. This has been the biggest issue people have run into when upgrading. You can re-install your AV program after the upgrade with no problem. **DO NOT** just run Microsoft's Defender. It is worthless!
2. During the upgrade, you will be presented with a series of screens asking for your preferences, DO NOT just click on "Use Express Settings"! Go through the Customization screens and turn off the settings that you feel violate your personal privacy. There are many of them where MS expects you to allow them to use your online activity and your personal information for their own and their Partners' advertising. Turn these off if you are concerned about your privacy. Don't get impatient, go through them all.
3. After Upgrading, if you want to verify your settings you can go into the "Settings" App and select "Privacy". Go through these settings carefully. There are a lot of them, and they cover a lot of territory.
4. **Cortana** is designed to be a digital personal assistant much like Siri on IOS devices. As such, to get the most benefit from it, you have to let her access most of your personal life, like tracking your location, and monitoring all of your activity online. Remember, all of this information is going into the Microsoft databases and will be used by MS and their partners to display advertising to you. You have to decide whether you want them nosing in on you.

5. **Microsoft Edge** is Microsoft's replacement web browser for Internet Explorer. Be sure to go through the specific privacy settings in Edge itself to protect or provide information you are comfortable with.
6. **Wi-Fi Sense** – Microsoft wants you to share your Wi-Fi network logon credentials freely with your friends. If you leave Wi-Fi Sense turned on, your computer will automatically give your Contacts access to your personal Wi-Fi network and other networks whose credentials you have saved on your computer. MS says the your contacts can not share your credentials with anyone else, which they can do if you just give them your password, so it is supposed to be more secure. I'll leave this to you to decide.
7. **Sync your Settings** allows you to sync the settings between your multiple devices. If you have more than one computer, or Windows phone and tablet, you can have the same GUI experience on all of your devices, by Syncing your settings. It can make your experience with multiple devices more pleasurable and efficient.
8. **Updates from more than one place** - Oh boy! This is a great one. Microsoft wants to set your computer up in their massive Peer-to-Peer network and use your computer and your Internet bandwidth to provide Windows updates to other peoples' computers. This is very similar to the Bit Torrent file sharing system that is used by many to share files. Be very careful with this. If you have a metered or a limited bandwidth Internet connection, leaving this turned on can slow down your own online experience or push you over your bandwidth limits and cost you money.

In Conclusion:

Microsoft has declared that Windows 10 will be the final Windows you will ever use. They will not be producing new Windows Operating systems, they will just upgrade this one. So, you will need to upgrade to Windows 10 at some point. If you are concerned about paying for it, then you will want to upgrade within the one year. If you are happy with what you are currently running, you can just keep using it, and you'll get Windows 10 when you buy a new computer. The choice is up to you.

So this is a good outline to get you thinking about your online privacy and what Windows 10 is doing to thwart your attempts to keep your online presence private. If you already allow Facebook and your phone to track your every move, and you provide your Friends with all your personal thoughts and habits via Facebook, and Twitter, etc, then the Windows 10 activities shouldn't worry you much. If, though, you try to keep your information and activities private, you will want to be careful of the settings in Windows 10 and how much of it you want to give out.