

Why I Stopped Using Microsoft Windows

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February 16, 2023

This is a personal story: a story of corruption, surveillance, deception, and greed. This is how one man monopolized operating systems.

The word computer used to describe an occupation. People, often women, were tasked with crunching numbers by hand. It was a slow and tedious job, but a very important one. Yet, computing goes back much further than this.

Our tale begins in ancient Babylon. Put yourself in the shoes of a grain merchant. The year is 1700 BC, and you are busy keeping track of trades and calculating how much customers owe. It is a challenging task at first look, but you have an abacus. Simply by sliding beads, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division can be done with relative ease.

For hundreds of years, this was the extent of personal computing – nothing but sliding beads. Progress was slow. The first analog computers were used for tracking astronomical events like predicting eclipses, and navigation by stars. The first general purpose computer was invented by Charles Babbage in 1833. It was the first device that resembled modern processors in function, and over the coming century, the computing industry would explode in complexity.

Pause for intensity. Bill Gates was born on October 28th, 1955. His childhood was filled with success (*pause*) and computers. In 1973, Gates attended Harvard, but his passion for writing computer software took over his life. He dropped out after two years to move to Albuquerque, New Mexico at a company called MITS – the company behind the first ever personal computer. He was inspired by MITS to make his own company. Short for microcomputer software, he called it Micro-Soft. Yes, it was originally hyphenated.

Micro-Soft was an instant success. Their first product, a form of the once

popular programming language, BASIC, was a huge hit for hobbyists around the country. In 1981, Microsoft released MS-DOS. A primitive operating system that functioned similarly to the command prompt found in modern Windows. The first version of Windows hit the shelves in 1985 and functioned as a graphical overlay for the strictly text-based DOS platform.

At this point in time, Windows was fairly bare bones. It had a file explorer, a notepad, a calculator, and a clock. The mid 1990s saw the first wave of internet popularity, and early web browsers like Netscape Navigator and Opera saw much success during this period.

Things started to change when the now defunct Internet Explorer was included as a default application. Since software had to be purchased at brick-and-mortar retail stores and installed on three-and-a-half inch floppy diskettes, default apps were given a major advantage. This change caught the attention of antitrust lawyers.

Very noticeable pause Recall the first thing I said, "This is a *personal* speech." So far, this has been nothing but other peoples' stories. So, where do *I* come into this? Well, (*pause*) it is a little more than just me. Here is where *we* come into it.

I am willing to bet that at least 90% of you are running Microsoft Windows. For those who are, the next minute or so is dedicated to *aaaaaall* you. While I'm talking I'd like all of the Windows users to, and please try to do it *silently*, boot up you laptop.

While logging in, some of you, and everyone using Windows 11, will be logging into a Microsoft account. In newer versions of Windows, the Microsoft account has nearly replaced the local user.

Sound absurdly confused Back to the antitrust suits. What the heck were they about? Well, and I'm going to spoil it, Microsoft won. They got away with being able to bundle software into their operating system. Now that all of you are logged into Windows, take a look at the *Start* menu. Look at all of those programs that you didn't install. Candy Crush? Bubble Witch? TikTok? What are those *do-ing* there???

Bloat! Bloat, bloat, bloat. It's all bloat, folks. And it's *NOT* at all necessary. Now, some of these programs are useful. Some. Some of them take up

space. And some of them, usually the more well-hidden ones, are actually *harmful*.

This was a problem almost 30 years ago, and it's still a problem today.