AHS Computing is in the process of testing the Consumer Preview of Windows 8. The new operating system is a radical shift by Microsoft to focus on the consumer and the proliferation of tablet devices. Windows 8 will be touch screen ready thus creating a platform that can be ported across all devices.

The major change however is the disappearance of the beloved Start menu (although there are ways to bring it back). The new interface is called Metro. Essentially the interface is an array of live tiles of information like what song is playing, thumbnails of recent photos and subject lines of recent emails. Similar to what is displayed on a Windows smart phone, Microsoft is bold in it’s attempt to provide dynamic information to the user on the desktop in a clean & uncluttered manner.

For users this will be a fundamental shift in how users will think about their computing experience.

Other highlights include:
- Windows 8 introduces the Microsoft Store, a direct result of Apple’s successful iTunes.
- The Ribbon Interface that is in Office 2010 will not transfer to Windows Explorer
- ‘Chars’ are another type of menu used in conjunction with the new Start menu. The settings charm is contextual to the app you are using, incl. volume, brightness etc. This also offers restart & the power options.

If you are interested in previewing Windows 8, please contact a member of AHS Computing to get setup on our test environment. We would be interested in hearing feedback about the new Operating System.

It’s either sink or swim for Microsoft. Will Windows 8 be a success like Windows 7 or a failure similar to Vista? Time will tell.

For a preview of the install process check out: [http://www.ahs.uwaterloo.ca/~llwillia/windows8/windows8.html](http://www.ahs.uwaterloo.ca/~llwillia/windows8/windows8.html)

On January 18, 2012, the US House of Representatives met to discuss the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA). The bill was meant to expand the authority of the United States in dealing with trafficking of copyrighted materials online.

The way the bill would work would be by restricting US citizens access to sites from other countries. Also, if any infringing content was found on a site, the site would be temporarily shut down and would be given a court date to settle the issue. Companies such as: YouTube, Wikipedia, Facebook, Reddit, and other smaller sites where user content is its main resource. If this bill passed, offenders would be faced with harsh punishment. Ten infringements within six months could earn you up to five years in jail.

This may seem like it is only a US problem. In reality, if SOPA worked for the US, other countries could adopt the same policies and eventually we could end up with a world where international communication could be non-existent. Stopping online piracy is a very good idea and SOPA has good intentions, but the changes it is trying to implement are too drastic and severe. Thankfully, on January 20, 2012, SOPA was withdrawn “until there is wider agreement on a solution” (stated its author Lamar Smith), due to massive disapproval from almost every internet user.
In response to the MacBook Air, Dell has released the new XPS 13 Ultrasound. It’s the size of an 11” laptop with the display of a 13” model. More viewable area, better portability with less weight, bulk and squinting. With a carbon fiber base the device is cool to the touch. With the latest i5 & i7 Processors from Intel, this tiny laptop packs a big punch and will service even the most demanding users. Check out the Dell site for more information.

Troubleshooting your Computer

One of the worst things to occur to a computer is to have a hard drive failure. There are many warning signs that might indicate this problem:

- No Operating System is detected
- Your system won't boot
- The computer hangs on startup
- Your computer is making strange noises

If you are concerned about the safety of your files, watch for these warning signs and make sure that you backup your files regularly.

MAC News

The leader in the tablet market is pushing forward with the iPad 3 (to be released on March 16). It has been called “Resolutionary”. What’s new? HD screen (1 million more pixels than an HDTV), 5MP iSight Camera, iOS 5.1, a faster processor and it now comes in white.

Mapping the N: drive using a Mac has never been easier. AHS Computing has programmed a script to mount the drive automatically upon login. If interested please contact a member of our team.

The new version of OS X Mountain Lion is to be released in Summer 2012. Primarily there are changes to the UI. For more information on the new changes, check out this CNET blog.

Updates from the Computing Office

- In February, AHS Computing migrated all N: drives to the new Network Appliance. The quota for Faculty & Staff is 10GB (increased from 2GB) and for Students 2GB (was 200MB). We are currently investigating providing researchers a similar solution.
- In other parts of Campus, the Virtual Private Network (VPN) will be required to Remote Desktop (RDP) to your Office computer. Effective March 15, users will no longer be able to directly connect to their office workstations from off-campus using RDP. Instead, staff will need to make use of the campus VPN service in order to connect to their office workstations from off-campus.
- Check out the AHSCO Facebook page, http://on.fb.me/ahscomputing. We will be posting information about trends within the world of computing
- Due to the fact 2012 is a leap year, we will completing clock adjustments to computers in the Faculty
- AHS Computing has migrated its webpage over to the Waterloo CMS. To see what the new look and feel is like visit, http://www.uwaterloo.ca/applied-health-sciences-computing