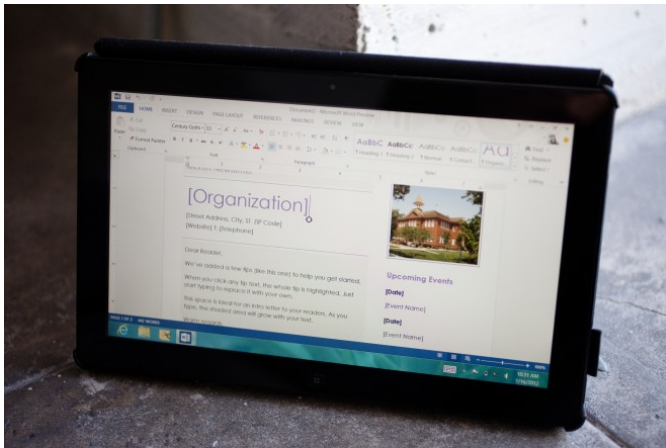


Microsoft Previews Touchable Office

Written by Marco Attard
18 July 2012

Microsoft reveals the Office 2013 customer preview-- now with a consistent touch-based interface shared across Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and the other familiar Office modules.



Supposedly available by early 2013, Office 2013 follows the Windows 8 "re-imagining" with a tablet-centric interface and a clean Metro-style look.

A touch mode brings up special navigation icons on screen as it "flattens" the UI. Users can pinch to zoom into images, tables and charts, while a "Read Mode" makes on-screen text easier to read and activates swipe-based controls.

Online integration is also deeper-- a few clicks allow users to search for and integrate online images and SkyDrive acts as a secondary storage location.

While the enhanced 2013 features generally represent good news for future Windows 8 customers, they might mean less so for current users. Microsoft says Windows XP and Vista will not support Office 2013, instead demanding an upgrade to (at least) Windows 7.

However the majority of PC users still uses older Windows versions. According to Net Applications Windows 7 accounts for 41.59% of PC users tracked on June 2012, while 50.33% (43.61 + 6.72) use Windows XP or Vista.

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The preview announcement follows the confirmation of the Windows 8 launch date-- October 2012, revealed at the Microsoft Worldwide Partner Conference earlier last week.

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