

Windows 8/8 Pro/RT: What is Exactly What?

Written by Marco Attard
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Confused with the differences between the various consumer flavours of New Windows? Don't worry, you are not alone. According to The Verge, [even Microsoft employees](#) find the various differences between 8, 8 Pro and RT somewhat baffling!



Complicating matters further are all the Windows 8 devices hitting the market-- not only the Surface (and its various variants), but also all the laptops, tablets and hybrids various vendors have on offer. With the imminent Windows 8 launch, we believe it is time you learn exactly what makes each version tick... and which your customers should buy come October 26.

First off, it is important to note how Windows 8, Windows 8 Pro and Windows RT look very similar to each other. All carry the same touch-friendly tile-based Start Screen UI, as well as an optional desktop mode. However, while 8 and 8 Pro only vary slightly from each other (similar to the differences between Windows 7 Home/Home Premium/Professional Editions) Windows RT is a completely different beast.

Windows 8 is a full-featured PC OS, and a true follow up to Windows 7. It is available to retailers in standalone form as either Windows 8 or Windows 8 Pro. Both run on standard x86 processors from Intel and AMD, and run all software from either retailers, the online Windows Store and other 3rd party programs.

Enterprise functionality differentiates Windows 8 Pro, through features such as Remote Desktop server, Active Directory domain support, Encrypting File System, Hyper-V and BitLocker.

A number of tablets will carry either Windows 8 or Windows 8 Pro, including a future version of

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the Surface tablet.

On the other hand Windows RT is not a retail product-- it is only built into specific devices (such as the Surface RT). Being designed for low power ARM processors, Windows RT does NOT run legacy or 3rd party software. It only supports apps from the onlin Windows Store (apart from a built-in Office 2013 version).

In other words, Windows RT is the Microsoft take on iOS... a closed garden locked for all but those with Microsoft approval.

In summary-- Windows 8 and Windows 8 Pro are "true" Windows versions able to run all legacy software, Windows RT is the tablet-only variant running only Windows Store apps. Thus, the differences are really only skin deep.

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