

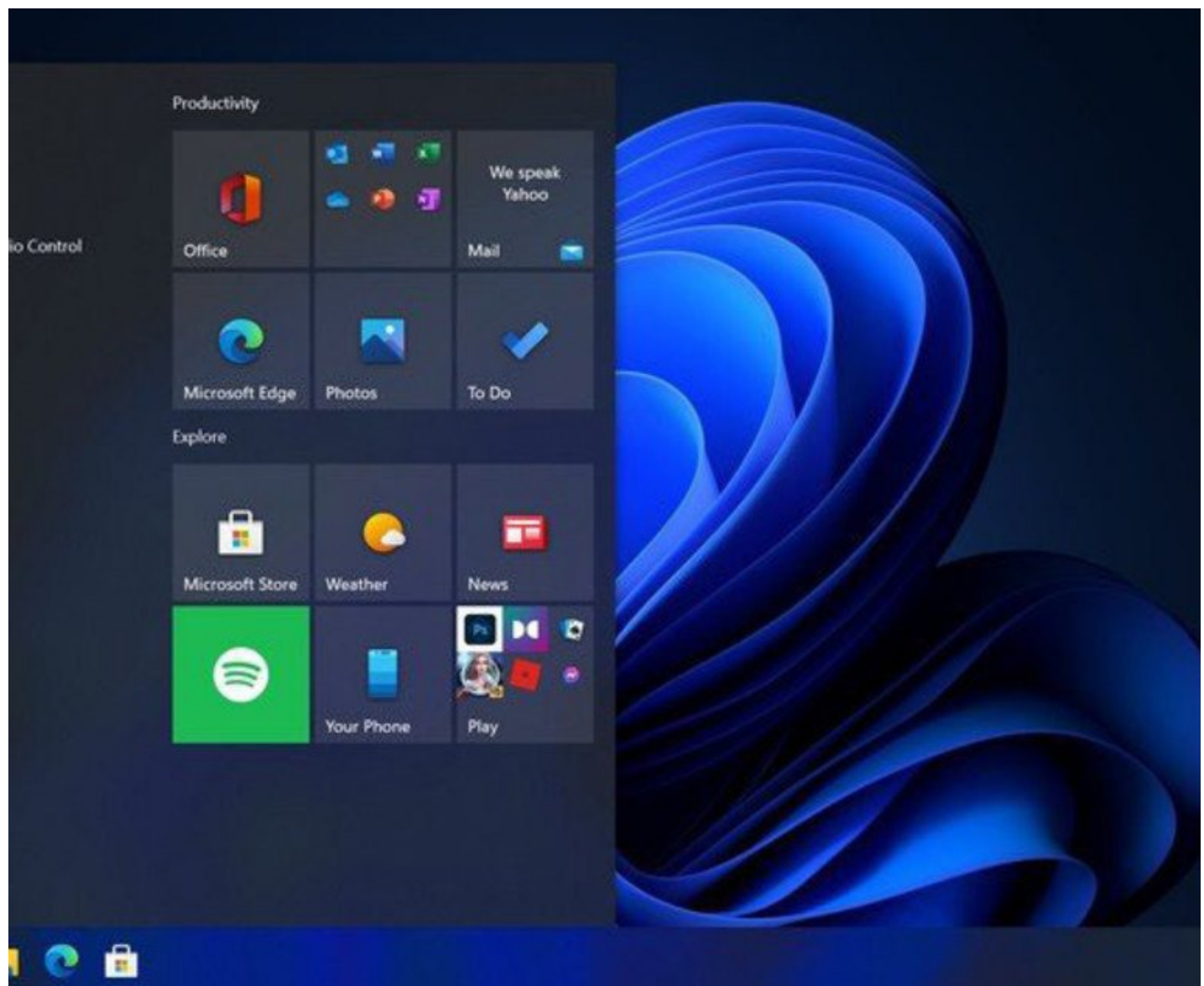
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Law Firms May Not Be Ready for Windows 11 Just Yet

Microsoft is ceasing support of Windows 10 in 2025. The beta version of its replacement—Windows 11—is currently available, but IT providers say it's worth easing into the new system for both infrastructure and budget reasons.

By Victoria Hudgins | July 02, 2021



Microsoft's Windows 11 software. Credit: Microsoft

Microsoft Windows 10 is ubiquitous in the legal market—in fact, the American Bar Association’s 2020 Legal Technology Survey found that 78% of firms used the operating system.

But that may soon have to change after Microsoft announced last month it would stop supporting Windows 10 on Oct. 14, 2025, and officially revealed its newest operating system Windows 11 last week.

Still, for many firms, it’s unlikely the transition will happen overnight—or even for some years to come.

After all, while law firm IT providers said all law firms should upgrade their operating systems to secure their data, they cautioned against moving too quickly, arguing that firms should wait until all of Windows 11’s bugs are worked out.

“I would say as far as the IT departments are concerned, at many law firms as soon as Windows 11 is out for general use I would start playing with it and understanding its limitations and challenges with software compatibility,” said Matthew Bares, operations vice president of Frontline Managed Services, an IT provider to boutique and Am Law 200 firms.

At Benesch the Am Law 200 firm completed a “very initial testing of our technology stack” on Windows 11, said the firm’s chief information officer Jerry Justice.

While the firm will have access to Windows 11 at no additional cost, Justice said the new operating system does introduce potentially significant user interface changes that must be considered before installing it firmwide.

After IT evaluates the operating system’s compatibility, it will be demoed by the firm’s attorneys, support staff and paralegals, Justice noted. After that, IT will use their feedback to develop training to ease the transition to a new system.

“It’s a multistage process. It starts with cost validation, which this doesn’t have, user impact and risk and compliance. There’s multiple layers for anything that comes in that we use,” Justice added.

Still, while some firms have begun the vetting process, many small firms and solo practitioners don’t yet have the in-house IT resources needed to start the transition. “I think there is a different approach obviously for the smaller firms,” Bares said. “To me, you just skip the IT evaluation but wait for the training material and the other applications to be fully compliant and compatible,” he added.

Lisa Hendrickson, owner of law firm IT provider Call That Girl Technology Support, noted that small firms shouldn’t rush to install Windows 11. But she said proactive steps can be taken to prepare for the eventual transition.

“Many computers are not compatible with Windows 11, that’s going to have to be looked at before it is considered,” Hendrickson said. She added, “I would tell people it’s four years out and most people will need a new computer at some point. It’s good to put that in the budget.”

Indeed, with Microsoft ending support of Windows 10 on Oct. 14, 2025, Bares noted the clock is already ticking.

“The end of support is a real date. What the Windows 7

(<https://www.law.com/legaltechnews/2019/10/15/nostalgics-beware-microsoft-products-losing-support-could-put-firms-at-risk/>) end of date showed us is Microsoft is serious about these end of dates,” he said.

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