Live From Microsoft's Windows 8 Launch Event

Microsoft [1] will officially launch Windows 8 [2] to the public today at a major event in New York City. The general release of the company's next-generation operating system has been planned for a while, with a growing tide of pre-release software and plenty of hardware unveilings, including Microsoft's own tablet, the Surface [3].

The event kicks off at 10 a.m. Eastern. *Mashable* will be on the scene — keep your browser pointed right here for live updates as they happen, with commentary from our team of tech experts and enthusiasts. Feel free to join the conversation with a comment.

After today, it will be up to the buying public to determine if Microsoft's big gamble with Windows 8 was worth it. To make Windows suitable for mobile devices like tablets, Microsoft re-engineered it from the ground up, incorporating touch and connectivity at the root. As a result, the user interface is completely different from older versions of Windows. It remains to be seen whether customers will respond to it, but even if they don't, the old Windows desktop is just a keystroke away in Windows 8.

Microsoft's job today is to explain clearly to the world why Windows 8 is a major step forward, and the reasons customers shouldn't fear it. And although all of Microsoft's manufacturing partners have revealed their Windows 8 lineups, the company may still have surprise or two. After all, Microsoft did keep the Surface a secret [4] until right before it was unveiled.

What do you think of Windows 8, and what surprises might might Microsoft still have?

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