



Windows 8 is a shameless money-grab



Adam Rollins

Lately I see a lot of commercials for Microsoft's new Windows 8 operating system. I'm impressed by Microsoft's willingness to do a total overhaul of its interface, but I don't see any reason to upgrade.

I recognize that Windows 8 has some significant new features. For the first time, the Windows interface is completely compatible with touch screen devices, which is appropriate considering current technological trends. Along the same lines, Windows 8 has tablet/smartphone-style "apps" and an "app store."

These new features, however, do not warrant an upgrade. Here are three reasons why:

1. From what I've seen, Windows 8 does nothing Windows 7 couldn't do. "Beneath the new interface design, it does not offer any radical new computing power," according to a Nov. 29 Reuters article.

2. "Apps" are supposed to be small applications for devices with small processors. Labeling full-sized Windows 8 programs as "apps" is just a marketing gimmick.

3. The Windows 8 home page does offer quicker access to prioritized information like email, news and weather, but here "quicker" is just the difference of a few seconds. Big whoop.

Part of my distaste with Windows 8 is that it's such a big change. I like Windows 7. It is simple, clean and functional. I see no reason to "upgrade" from my uncluttered desktop to the explosion of color and information that is the Windows 8 home page. Just looking at the busy, visually noisy screen is enough to give me a headache. If this were the only issue, I still might give change a chance.

But my dislike extends to Microsoft itself. It is bad enough putting up with Apple's incessant drive to convince consumers you're behind if you don't buy a new iPhone every Christmas. Now it seems Microsoft is getting into the same marketing mindset. They are updating Windows unnecessarily, just to sell more of their newly released tablets and smart phones.

I get that Microsoft is a business that needs to sell its goods to survive. However, the rate at which they release new operating systems is crucial. Software is not the same as other goods like cars and furniture. Just because my neighbors drive hybrids and sit in ergonomic chairs doesn't mean I have to spend the money to do the same.

But with computing technology, there is a standardization of use which requires that everyone be up-to-date. By pushing the pace of OS changes, Microsoft is making paying for updates a more frequent necessity.

The victims here are schools, libraries and businesses, which provide computer access as part of their services. Updating entire computer labs and public computer centers is a major expenditure for these institutions, and many, if not most of them only recently upgraded to Windows 7 from the old Windows XP, including Truman.

Now Microsoft tells these unfortunate people their money was wasted, because they soon will have to upgrade again to Windows 8. It's like moving the finish line back from a runner who has just finished a 5K. It's like selling ice cream they know is about to expire. It's like waiting three hours at the DMV only to find out you were in the wrong line.

If Microsoft wants to maintain customer loyalty, maybe they should start treating customers with a little more respect. I don't mind new things. In fact, I love new things. I just don't want to have to replace all of my old things just to get one new thing (I'm looking at you, Xbox 360).

Adam Rollins is a sophomore communication major from St. Charles, Mo.

Gender stereotypes are unfair



Garrett Kelsey

The great artist Haddaway once said, "What is love. Baby don't hurt me. Don't hurt me. No more." Like the song above implies, I'm talking about the L-word. No, not that one. The other one. Love, OK? I'm talking about love. Or to be more specific, I'm talking about the reasons that people love each other.

On paper, constantly dealing with another person's feelings and thoughts sounds obnoxious. I think that is where the "friends with benefits" idea comes into play. Having a friend to satisfy one's sexual urges while ignoring the emotional attachments that might come along with it, is thought to be a nice middle ground. Yet, when I describe a situation like "friends with benefits" what do you immediately think of? Is it some cheesy romantic comedy? Who do you think would initiate such a relationship? Do you think

it is more often a man or a woman?

The most common stereotypes of relationships are those that say women only are involved in relationships for the love and the emotional side of things and men only are in relationships for the sex. These are two very different stereotypes, but also very similar, being based in flawed logic. Both are based on age old gendered ideals and stereotypes.

It is no secret that men commonly are thought to be more sexual in their personalities than women are. Conversely, the stereotype is that women are more emotional and get attached to other people in their relationships much more easily. Frankly, I think these stereotypes are a bunch of bologna. Quick example — what about a lesbian couple? Is there absolutely no sex in that relationship?

First off, the idea that women don't have sexual stakes in relationships is just plain false. While studies have shown women think about sex less often than men do, the interesting part is that the more comfortable the person was sexually (as determined by a survey) the more frequent their reports of sexual thoughts, according to an article posted by psychologytoday.com. So, it's more the person than simply their gender.

I don't want to seem as though I'm saying women are sex crazy, I'm saying men aren't necessarily sex crazy. While certainly we have to recognize that in every group there will be an exception to the rule, but we need to see that they don't deter-

mine the bar. The stereotype that men are the only party sexually invested is just silly.

My second point is men are just as emotionally invested in relationships as women. In fact, if one were to solely base their view of relationships on cinema, you'd be forgiven for thinking that men are all emotionally disinterested and distant, while women are super sensitive and weak because they are so gosh darn emotional.

False. I have personally comforted several men crying like babies regarding their relationship troubles and even have been one of them myself. Why did this stereotype even come to exist in the first place? I think it's worth asking ourselves why we idealize aloof and cold men.

The overall point to take away from this is to look at all relationships from a neutral perspective. Don't assume all a man wants in a relationship is a sexual partner and don't assume that women always want their relationships to end in some fairy tale love story. While humans might like to categorize things as black and white, I think the world is mostly gray and people usually have much deeper reasons for doing things than we might realize.

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When does the United States have a responsibility to intervene in foreign conflicts?

"The U.S. should intervene whenever human rights are being violated in an atrocious fashion and the country's own government can't do anything to stop it."

Amy Soto junior

"The U.S. government should intervene during foreign conflicts when there are widespread and obvious human rights violations."

Alexus Wong senior

"Human rights must be in jeopardy and we must have a stable economy when intervening in foreign conflict."

Grace Horn freshman

"The U.S. should intervene only when we have the resources available and without it hindering our own economy and if we know that what we do will make a big difference."

Jeremiah Johnson freshman



AROUND THE QUAD

Women deserve opportunity to serve in combat



Sarah Muir

For a country that prides itself on sex equality, the current military policy that prevents women from being assigned to combat units seems to belong to a bygone era. It is time to end this policy once and for all. Four women in the military seem to agree, as they filed a lawsuit against Leon Panetta, the Defense Secretary, with the American Civil Liberties Union representing them, according to a Nov. 29 Washington Times article.

The first reason this policy should be abolished is simple fairness. Military positions should not be restricted because

of sex alone. It violates the enormous and largely successful efforts in America to create equality for women on all fronts but specifically in the workforce. The ACLU and the four women they represent openly call out this policy for what it is: unconstitutional, according to the Washington Times article.

The policy does more than violate the notion of fairness. It also prevents women who serve in the military from receiving recognition for the roles they serve. Currently, the military can play word games with the policy and simply "attach" women to units instead of actually being assigned to them, according to a Jan. 2011 CBS News article. This means women are serving roles that essentially are the same as being assigned to a combat unit, but not receiving the credit for it. Doing away with this policy would eliminate the loophole and allow women to be fully acknowledged for the work they do for the military.

Finally, the policy has a damaging effect on the careers of women serving in the military. Only two women have achieved the status of a four-star general, primarily because it is hard to reach without the

combat experience they officially are being denied, according to a Nov. 28 Minneapolis Star Tribune article. Being denied combat experience prevents women from access to about 10 percent of Army and Marine Corps occupational specialties, according to a January 2011 CBS News article. This policy is keeping women out of positions, not because they aren't qualified for them, but because the military policy prohibits them from being qualified.

Supporters of this policy offer two arguments for keeping it: women would be a distraction, and women are not physically capable. However, upon closer examination, neither of these arguments offers a convincing stance to keep the current policy.

A popular argument against having women in combat units is that it will distract their male counterparts and ruin unit cohesion. Empirically, this doesn't seem to be true. A report issued by the Military Leadership Diversity Commission found that placing women into units that previously had been open to males only did not hurt unit cohesion or have any negative effects, according to the CBS News article. Additionally, a separate report found

that women "had a positive impact on mission accomplishment," according to the CBS News article. Besides, let's give men a little more credit than that. I think they are capable of doing a job without being constantly distracted by the presence of a woman.

Secondly, supporters of the policy bring up the argument that women aren't physically capable of serving these roles. Besides making generalizations, this argument truly misses the point. Combat is physically tough, and not everyone can fulfill the requirements it demands. That includes men and women. Just because there might be a smaller percentage of women who can make that cut doesn't mean the entire sex should be denied a chance. Getting rid of this policy doesn't mean "weaker" people suddenly will be on the front lines, it only means women are guaranteed a fair chance to serve their country how they want to.

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