

Steam drops support for Windows 8, opens door for alternative OS computing

By [Lindsey Schutters](#)

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Valve's popular gaming platform Steam announced that it will stop supporting the Windows 7, Windows 8 and Windows 8.1 operating systems from 1 January 2024. Users who still run these outdated versions of Windows will no longer receive any updates or technical support from Steam and may experience reduced functionality or compatibility issues with Steam and its games.



Valve removed all web links to SteamMachines in 2018, two years after it launched the initiative.

Steam urged its users to upgrade to a more recent version of Windows, preferably Windows 10, to ensure the best performance and security of their gaming experience.

This decision to drop support for the older operating systems was driven by the need to use an updated version of Google Chrome, which is embedded in Steam and provides core features for the platform.

According to the latest [Steam hardware and software survey](#), only about 2.5% of Steam users still use Windows 7, Windows 8 or Windows 8.1 as of December 2023.



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These operating systems have already been discontinued by Microsoft, which means they no longer receive security patches or feature updates, making them vulnerable to malware and other cyberattacks, which could compromise the user's PC, Steam account or games.

Steam is not the only gaming platform that has moved away from the older versions of Windows. [Epic Games Store](#), GOG Galaxy and [Origin](#) have also announced that they will require Windows 10 or higher for their future updates and releases.

Why not go chrome?

Users running powerful Windows 8 machines, however, could convert their now unsupported rigs to Chromebooks or Chromebox using [ChromeOS Flex](#). While the Google Play Store is not supported on this solution, Linux apps are.

A fully supported (Beta) option is a new [Chromebook Plus](#). Google developed the Chromebook Plus standard to ensure consistent performance on fully supported hardware that takes advantage of ChromeOS features like Play Store compatibility, Google Security, fast boot and long-term updates.



Acer was the first manufacturer to bring the Chromebook Plus to SA. Source: Lindsey Schutters.

Acer was one of the first PC makers to bring these [new Chromebooks](#) to South Africa and they more than meet the Steam minimum specification for around R10,000.

“Creativity, productivity and connectivity are the hallmarks of our customers’ dynamic lifestyles – and the capabilities in the new Acer Chromebook Plus laptops sure help our customers do more of what they love,” said James Lin, GM for notebooks at Acer when the 515 and 514 were announced in October last year.

“Acer Chromebooks have been trailblazers since the market’s inception – and now we’re excited to deliver a new tier of devices possessing the quality, performance and features that customers value most.”

Browser based computing

Moving the gaming audience over to ChromeOS could be the shot in the arm the operating system needed to move out of

the classroom and into the mainstream.

With the pace of cloud migration speeding up, it is become more possible to do all computing functions through the browser and not be confined to the Google suite of services.

Microsoft's productivity apps are available on the cloud with a Microsoft 365 subscription and Windows users can boot a full Windows 365 experience in the browser as well.

Valve runs an alternative OS on its own Steam Deck handheld gaming console and uses the same Proton environment to increase game compatibility that is behind Steam's compatibility with ChromeOS.

The Linux-based custom operating system does fall short with compatibility with some AAA games, but savvy gamers can find other solutions to scratch their premium gaming itch, like cloud gaming services such as Xbox Game Pass through a Chromium-based WebRTC browser.

ABOUT LINDSEY SCHUTTERS

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